



## Learning from the Past

**Learning objective:** This team-building activity can help develop awareness of personal coping strategies.

**Time required:** Approximately 30 minutes, depending on group size.

**Materials required:** Handout or email with a list of questions to be distributed in advance of meeting.

### Instructions:

*In advance of the meeting, send an email or memo asking team members to consider a challenging work stressor they've dealt with in the past and to reflect on the list of questions (see below).*

*At the beginning of the meeting, help put everyone at ease by letting them know that they are only being asked to contribute what they are comfortable sharing regarding a work-related challenge they may have faced in the past.*

*Be the first one to share your example and answers. You can then ask for volunteers to share theirs. It may be most effective to go through the list of questions with each person rather than jumping from person to person. Get everyone to contribute and allow as many people to share as possible within the meeting timeframe.*

*As individuals are speaking, take the opportunity to prompt them to consider the coping strategies they may have used.*

### Suggested wording:

Most of us will face a range of work-related stressors. This is an inevitable part of working life. We can likely deal with stressors more effectively if we have appropriate personal or social supports around us. In preparation for the meeting today, I asked you to consider a challenging work stressor you dealt with in the past. I will share my example and then each of you can share yours. The questions were:

- What helped you effectively navigate different aspects of the stressful situation?
- What were the personal coping strategies you used? (Going for a walk, talking to someone, deep breathing, etc.)
- What supports did you access or use (personal and at work)? (EAP, co-worker, etc.)
- Were there other supports available that you could or should have accessed or used?
- How can you use this information to assist you or others when facing a stressful situation in the future?

Identifying and evaluating what has helped in the past can help us be more effective in managing future stressors. The discussion today can help us become more aware of the variety of strategies that others have used that may assist us in coping.

**Activity developed with help from:** Dr. Joti Samra, Program Lead, Centre for Psychological Health Sciences, University of Fredericton.