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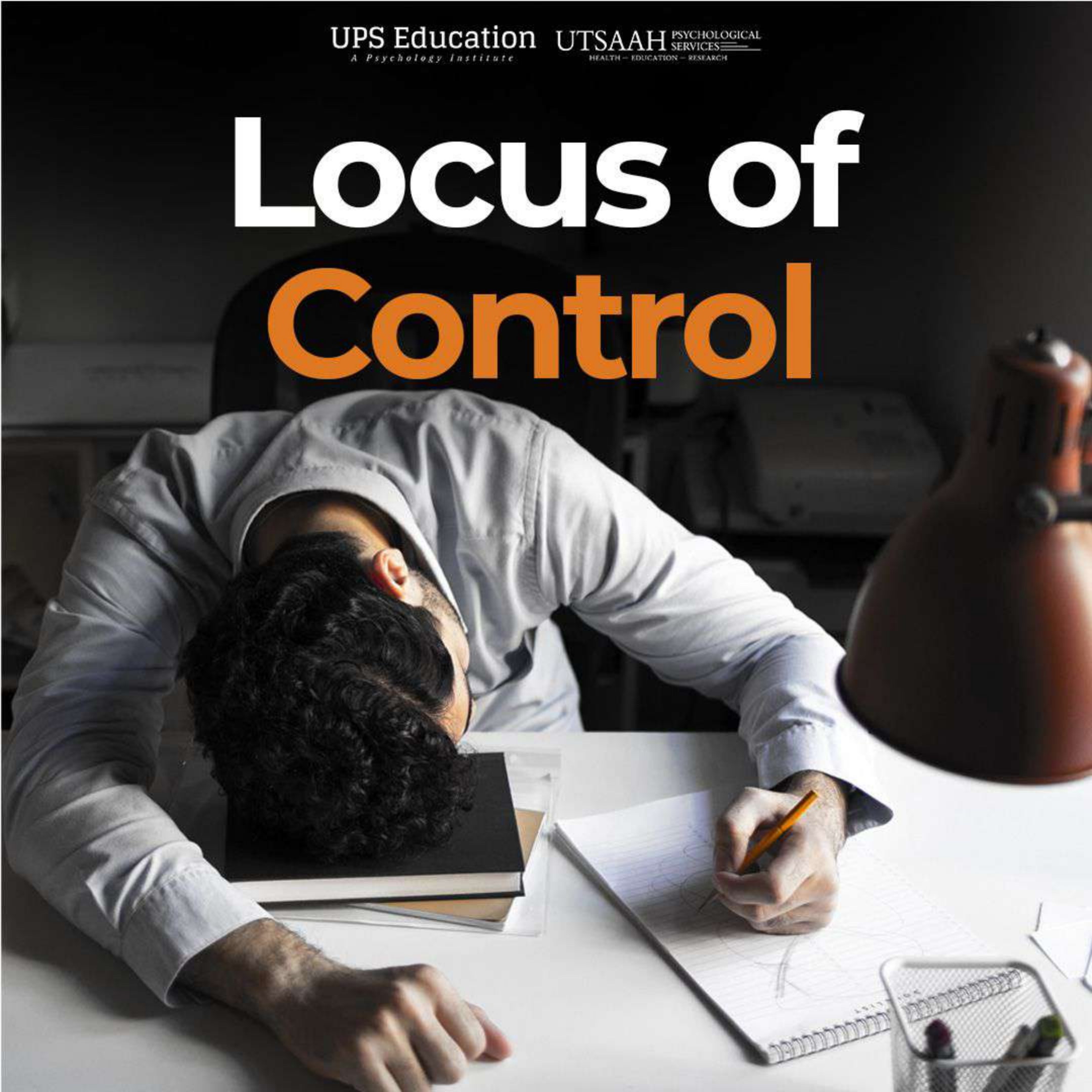
Locus of Control



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Locus of Control describes how much a person believes they can influence the events that happen in their life. This concept, developed by psychologist Julian Rotter in 1954, plays a key role in understanding personal belief systems about responsibility for outcomes. According to Rotter, people's behaviors and decision-making processes are influenced by whether they perceive their life events as internally controlled (within their influence) or externally controlled (by outside forces).

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Internal Locus of Control

Core Belief: People with an internal locus believe their actions directly impact outcomes.

Self-Agency: They attribute successes and failures to personal choices, efforts, or skills.

Characteristics: Typically exhibit high motivation, resilience, and a proactive approach to life's challenges.

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External Locus of Control

Core Belief: Those with an external locus view life events as dictated by outside forces like luck, fate, or others' actions.

Limited Control: Often feel that their actions have minimal impact on outcomes.

Behavioral Tendency: May adopt a passive approach, relying on external support rather than self-driven actions.

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The Influence on Behavior

The type of locus of control a person has can significantly impact their behavior and attitude toward life. Those with an internal locus are likely to take initiative, accept responsibility for their actions, and persist in achieving goals.

In contrast, individuals with an external locus may experience feelings of helplessness or dependency. This mindset can shape responses to stress, resilience, and overall mental well-being, influencing personal growth and adaptation.

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Importance in Psychology

Rotter's concept of locus of control is central to cognitive-behavioral psychology as it helps explain differences in motivation, coping strategies, and personality development. Understanding an individual's locus of control allows psychologists to better predict responses to challenges and aids in developing therapeutic approaches that encourage greater self-efficacy. Recognizing and potentially shifting one's locus can lead to improved personal agency and life satisfaction.

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Conclusion

Developing a more internal locus of control can enhance resilience, self-motivation, and adaptability in the face of challenges. While both internal and external locus of control have their advantages, a balanced approach that combines personal responsibility with an awareness of external factors can lead to better mental well-being.

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