

AI anxiety at work: Staying clear-headed and human

Adaptive module

~20 min

Nearly two in three employees expect AI to make work “less human,” and reassuring lines no longer convince them. This module responds by taking these fears seriously, from FOMO to fatigue from too many tools. It exposes the mechanisms that turn time saved into added pressure, including cognitive debt, and builds a sustainable stance: active discernment rather than defensive resistance, for individuals and managers alike.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Name your fears about AI, such as FOMO and AI anxiety, so you can face them without letting them take hold.
- 02 Place human value in what you choose to fully own (judgment, responsibility, presence) rather than in what “resists” AI.
- 03 Avoid the three traps that drain you: the productivity trap, supervision boredom, and cognitive debt.
- 04 Hold this stance daily (choose your tasks, embrace JOMO, keep your abilities sharp) and, as a manager, protect your team’s sense of purpose.

WHO IT’S FOR

Anyone who wants to stay clear-headed and calm as AI transforms work, and managers supporting their teams.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

For three months, an AI agent has been preparing the month-end closings for the clients of Inès, an accountant: the part of her work Inès liked best. Inès fears becoming less useful and hasn’t told anyone, for fear of seeming replaceable. On Tuesday, Inès is meeting her manager about something else. What does Inès do?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Cognitive debt / cognitive offloading – MIT Media Lab (Kosmyna et al. study)
- FOMO (Fear Of Becoming Obsolete) – contemporary term for AI anxiety at work
- FOMO / JOMO (Joy Of Missing Out) – concepts applied to our relationship with AI

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Lee et al. / Microsoft Research, CHI (2025) – AI use, cognitive effort, and maintaining critical thinking
- Bellemare-Pépin et al., Scientific Reports (2026) – divergent thinking: the best human scores exceed those of the models tested on a word association task
- Resume Now, AI and Workplace Humanity Report (2026), Pollfish survey from October 2025 – 63% of the 1,003 US employees surveyed think AI will make work “less human”
- Reuters/Ipsos, August 2025 poll (4,446 US adults): 71% fear AI will put “too many people out of work permanently”