

mental health  
**literacy**



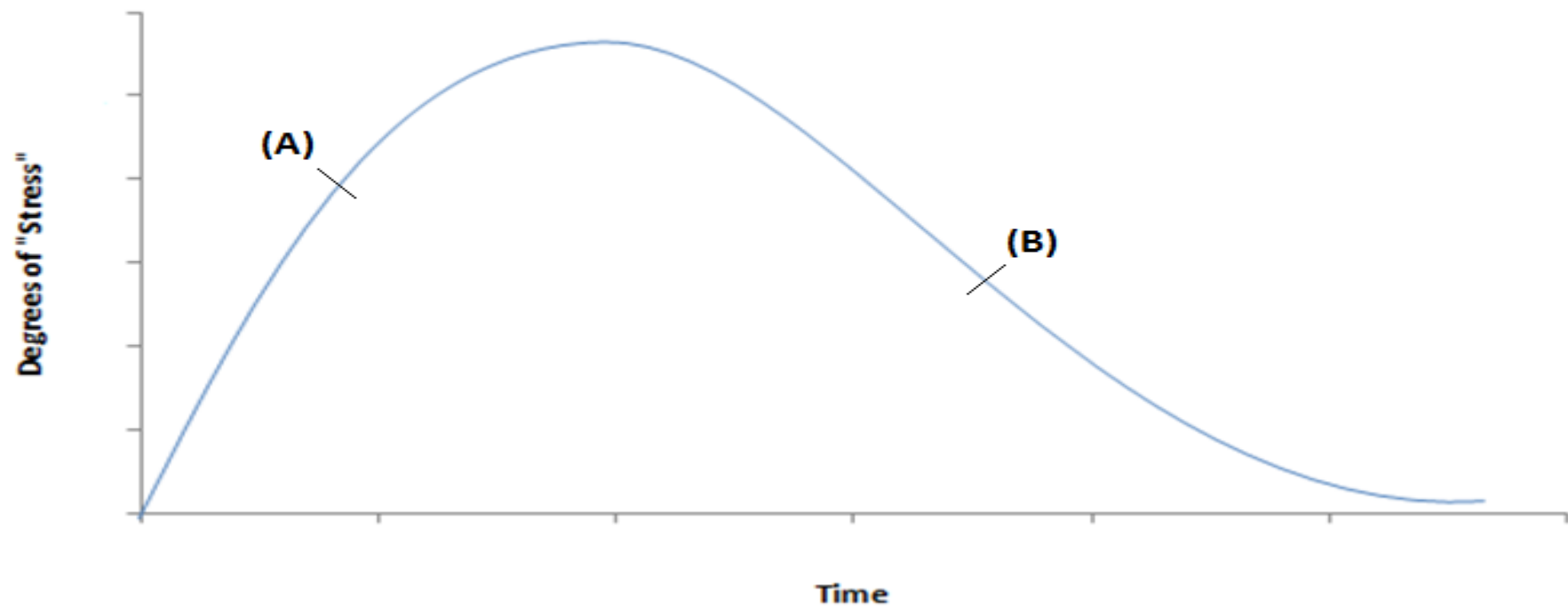
# **MANAGING MY STRESS RESPONSE**

Module 7

# THE PURPOSE OF THE STRESS RESPONSE

- It is very helpful to understand the normal stress response and how to use that understanding to REALLY help you succeed in life.
- The purpose of the stress response is to alert you to a challenge that you need to address.
- When you successfully address the challenge, the stress response resolves and you have a new skill: you have become more resilient!

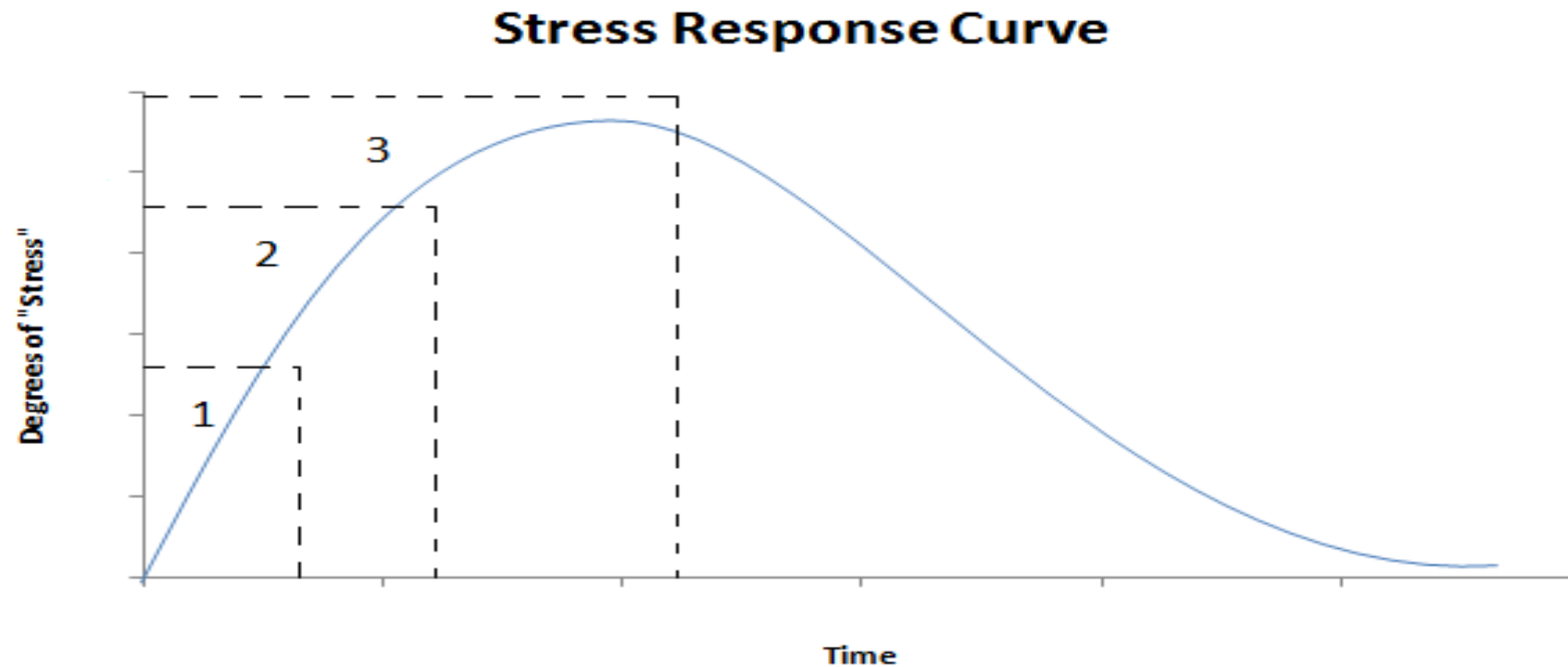
## Stress Response Curve



# STRESS RESPONSE CURVE EXPLAINED

- This is how the brain and body normally respond to a stressor.
- This is a healthy response.
- Avoidance of the stressor that is causing the stress response (A) makes the situation worse and decreases resilience.
- Engaging with the stressor and applying problem solving to deal with it (B) leads to adaptation and resilience.

# THREE THINGS TO DO: MANAGING THE STRESS RESPONSE



# THREE THINGS TO DO (1)

When you experience the sensation of the stress response, change how you think about it

- Do:** think – this is my brain and my body getting me ready to solve a challenge in my life. What do I need to do?
- Don't:** think – this is stress; it's bad for me; I feel overwhelmed; I need a break; I can't face this.

# THREE THINGS TO DO (2)

Following (1), figure out what you need to do

- Do:** get advice and support from others – friends, family and those who may have experienced similar challenges.
- Do:** problem solve the situation and apply what you think the solution may be.
- Don't:** AVOID

When you have reached out to others and solved the problem, the stress response will subside and go away, and you will be left with a new skill. Plus, the next time something similar happens, it will likely feel less stressful because you have successfully resolved this situation before.

# THREE THINGS TO DO (3)

Modulate the severity

The simplest ways to decrease the severity of the stress response are:

- 1) Use the breath control technique you can find here: [mentalhealthliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/13-How-do-I-parent-my-teen-2016-issuu.pdf](https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/13-How-do-I-parent-my-teen-2016-issuu.pdf) (pg. 38)
- 2) Use the fist clench technique you can find here: [mentalhealthliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/13-How-do-I-parent-my-teen-2016-issuu.pdf](https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/13-How-do-I-parent-my-teen-2016-issuu.pdf) (pg. 38)



# PRACTISE WHEN NOT FULLY STRESSED

- It is important to practise these three types of responses when you are not feeling the stress response, so that you will be ready when you do experience it.
- Set aside a few minutes a day for 10 consecutive days to “practise” Then practise once weekly thereafter.

# NOW WHAT?

- Can you apply what you have learned in your own life? *Will* you? How?
- Can you apply what you have learned in your classroom? *Will* you? How?