

Understanding Stress

(and what to do about it)

MYTH

Stress is bad for mental health & should be avoided.

FACT

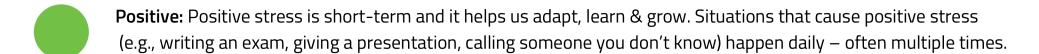
Most stress is actually good for us & avoiding it can be harmful!

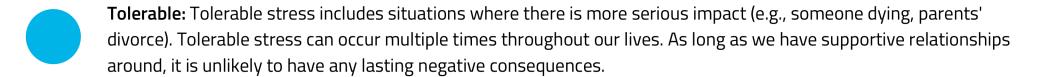
MENTAL HEALTH

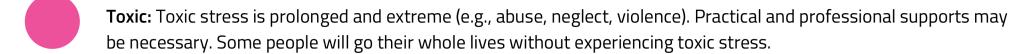
is the capacity to successfully adapt to life's challenges. It includes a wide range of thoughts & feelings.

Good mental health isn't about avoiding or protecting ourselves from experiencing stress. We can strengthen our problem-solving skills & build resilience.

Not all stress is the same









Remember: Toxic stress is the only type of stress that's actually bad for us. Experiencing positive or tolerable stress can help us become stronger, healthier and more understanding human beings!

So what can we do?



Change how we think about stress. Reframe the stress response as our body preparing to tackle a challenge. Stop using the word anxiety when we mean stress response.



Choose a calming strategy to help face the stressor. Sometimes our stress response can feel intense (especially if our previous pattern has been to avoid it). Breathing or other strategies to lower our stress response may be helpful.



Engage in planning strategies to face the stressor (eg., create a study plan for an upcoming exam, reach out for support, etc.). When we face the stressor & solve the problem, the stress goes away. We are left with new skills for the future. We have successfully adapted!

