

# Stress First Aid

# Stress Continuum

| <b>READY</b><br>Green zone                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>REACTING</b><br>Yellow Zone                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>INJURED</b><br>Orange zone                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>ILL</b><br>Red zone                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optimal functioning</li><li>• Adaptive growth</li><li>• Wellness</li><li>• At your best</li><li>• Motivated</li><li>• Calm &amp; steady</li><li>• Physically, mentally, spiritually fit</li><li>• Having fun</li></ul> <p>“No problem”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mild or transient distress and/or impairment</li><li>• Always goes away</li><li>• Low risk</li><li>• Irritable, anxious</li><li>• Loss of motivation</li><li>• Loss of focus</li><li>• Tension</li><li>• Not having fun</li></ul> <p>“I can do it!”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More severe and persistent distress or impairment</li><li>• Leaves a scar</li><li>• Higher risk</li><li>• Loss of control</li><li>• Rage, panic, depression</li><li>• Guilt, shame, blame</li></ul> <p>“Ugh.”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unhealed stress injury causing life impairment</li><li>• Symptoms reach clinical levels</li><li>• Symptoms get worse</li><li>• Severe distress or impairment in job or social life</li></ul> <p>“ !!! ”</p> |



Adapted from the work of Patricia Watson, PhD; National Center for PTSD

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# Stress Recovery

## ILL

- **SAFETY**: Make small positive behavior changes
- **CALM**: Pause... take a time out. Distance from stressor to reduce distress
- **CONNECT**: Get formal behavioral health treatment. Find a mentor.
- **SELF-EFFICACY**: Regain lost ground. Rehabilitate as for a physical injury
- **HOPE**: Reconnect with values

## INJURED

- **SAFETY**: Get help with setting routines and boundaries
- **CALM**: Rest and recuperate; Build tiny health habits
- **CONNECT**: Ask for targeted or sustained support
- **SELF-EFFICACY**: Identify unhelpful ruts; Tackle one issue at a time
- **HOPE**: Ask for aid in reframing unhelpful thoughts; Remind yourself that you don't need to be perfect

## REACTING

- **SAFETY**: Take a marathon approach (pace yourself); Build healthy habits; Set boundaries
- **CALM**: Be disciplined about taking breaks; identify unhelpful thoughts; Focus on what you can control
- **CONNECT**: Seek specific support
- **SELF-EFFICACY**: Build resilience skills
- **HOPE**: Make time to reflect; Seek mentoring/support

## READY

- **SAFETY**: Stay informed; Face facts
- **CALM**: Change expectations; Be patient; Keep balanced
- **CONNECT**: Mutual respect, trust, support, caring
- **SELF-EFFICACY**: Plan and adapt; Focus on prevailing; Make routines; Seek mentoring/training
- **HOPE**: Live by values; Find gratitude; Faith/philosophy

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