



Stress and Trauma

What is Stress?

Stress refers to our biological and emotional responses to situations that are new, dangerous, or a threat to our well-being. Stress is not always a bad thing. In fact, we experience stress every day and this can be healthy as it teaches us how to adapt, cope, problem solve, regulate our emotions, and seek support when needed.

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SOME STRESS CAN BE TOXIC

Toxic stress is stress that is frequent, serious or prolonged. In cases of toxic stress, the child has little to no adequate adult support around the situation. This type of stress is the most damaging.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

As a caregiver, you are the best person to help your child cope with stress and trauma. Your relationship with your child is very important.

- Remember that experiencing small amounts of stress with the support of an adult is not bad and will help your child learn how to cope better with stress in the future.
- Remember that children can experience stress and trauma even if they do not look like they are.
- Recognize that your child can experience stress or trauma even when you do not find a situation stressful.
- Teach children how to soothe themselves, e.g., deep breathing, blowing bubbles, laughing, or playing drums.
- Help children release the chemicals that are released in their body during stress, e.g., dance with them, laugh, talk, or go for a walk.
- Try to be consistent and re-establish routines during and after stress and trauma.
- Get outside support for yourself so you can deal with the effects stress and trauma have on you. This will help you support your child.