



## Stress and Trauma

### 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. 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.

### Trauma

Trauma is the lasting emotional response to experiencing harm or a threat of harm. This threat can be real or perceived.

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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. 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 or if you do not find the situation stressful.
- Teach children how to soothe themselves (e.g., deep breathing, blowing bubbles, laughing, or playing drums).
- Help children get rid of the chemicals that are released in their bodies 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 that stress and trauma have on you. This will help you support your child.

If you are concerned about the impact of stress on your child, connect with your healthcare provider.