



Understanding Stress & Building Strength Together

A Guide for Families and Communities During Tough Times

What is toxic stress?

Toxic stress happens when we face serious or ongoing challenges over and over again **without enough support, safety, or connection**. While normal stress goes away once a situation improves, toxic stress keeps the body and mind in “high alert.” Over time, it can harm a person’s physical health, brain development, and emotional well-being.

When life feels uncertain, stressful, or overwhelming, it’s natural for our bodies to react. Without tools or support, stress can show up in various ways in our lives:

- Poor sleep and rest
- Anxiety, sadness and irritability
- Difficulty with relationships
- Having a hard time concentrating at work or school
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches
- Weakened immunity

The good news?

Supportive relationships, caring communities, and simple daily practices can help our bodies heal and recover. It’s never too late to get support.

Learning simple ways to manage stress can help you:

- Stay calm and grounded
- Make clearer decisions
- Protect your health
- Cope with challenges
- Support the people you care about



Stress Busters You Can Start Today

Habits like getting a good night's sleep, moving our bodies, and caring for our mental health can help us heal. When life gets tough, try these proven ways to help your mind and body feel better.



**Supportive
Relationships**



**Quality
Sleep**



**Balanced
Nutrition**



**Physical
Activity**



**Mindfulness
Practices**



**Experiencing
Nature**



**Mental Health
Care**

A Gentle Reminder

- ✓ **Be kind to yourself.**
You're doing the best you can.
- ✓ **Plan and set goals.**
Small steps are meaningful.
- ✓ **Make space for joy.**
Fun moments help your body relax.
- ✓ **Don't worry alone.**
Talking to someone can help you feel supported.



Start healing

For more information and additional healing strategies, scan the QR code



What if I need more help?

It can be difficult to take care of yourself and your loved ones when safety is uncertain or if there's a crisis. Here are resources to support you. Choose the help that works for you.

Tri-City Mobile Crisis Care
866-623-9500

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Call or text 988

Connect to help and resources
Call 211

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Sexual Assault Hotline
800-656-HOPE (4673)

SAMHSA National Helpline
800-662-HELP (4357)

