# STRESS CONTINUUM MODEL

## READY
(Green)

**DEFINITION**
- Optimal functioning
- Adaptive growth
- Wellness

**FEATURES**
- At one's best
- Well-trained and prepared
- In control
- Physically, mentally and spiritually fit
- Mission-focused
- Motivated
- Calm and steady
- Having fun
- Behaving ethically

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/stress_first_aid.asp

## REACTING
(Yellow)

**DEFINITION**
- Mild and transient distress or impairment
- Always goes away
- Low risk

**CAUSES**
- Any stressor

**FEATURES**
- Feeling irritable, anxious or down
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of focus
- Difficulty sleeping
- Muscle tension or other physical changes
- Not having fun

## INJURED
(Orange)

**DEFINITION**
- More severe and persistent distress or impairment
- Leaves a scar
- Higher risk

**CAUSES**
- Life threat
- Loss
- Moral injury
- Wear and tear

**FEATURES**
- Loss of control
- Panic, rage or depression
- No longer feeling like normal self
- Excessive guilt, shame or blame
- Misconduct

## ILL
(Red)

**DEFINITION**
- Clinical mental disorder
- Unhealed stress injury causing life impairment

**TYPES**
- PTSD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance use disorders

**FEATURES**
- Symptoms persist and worsen over time
- Severe distress or social or occupational impairment

# STRESS CONTINUUM MODEL

| Now what? | Now what? | Now what? | Now what? |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Take time to savor the good<br>• Help others who are struggling<br>• Keep using your go-to coping strategies<br>• Let go of feeling guilty for feeling good (Yes, sometimes this happens!) | • Try to let go of some to-do list items<br>• Add 1-2 coping strategies (exercise, limit social media)<br>• Reconnect to purpose (What do I want to stand for right now?)<br>• Use deep breathing to hold steady during difficult moments<br>• Connect with support system | • Focus on meeting basic needs<br>• Establish boundaries where possible<br>• Inform supervisor and identify next steps for bouncing back<br>• Let support system know (FYI: You aren't a burden for doing this.)<br>• Consider a consult with a professional | • Connect with a mental health professional or team<br>• Arrange for time off, whether that is PTO or a leave of absence<br>• Ask support system for help, including supervisor<br>• Focus solely on the short-term<br>• Let go of self-criticism & engage in self-compassion |

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