## The Stress Continuum

Personal reactions to increased complexities fall on a continuum. You may feel little to no impact, or you may feel an increased stress response. When stress is ongoing or severe, this can lead to severe distress, burnout, or traumatic responses. Personal experiences, support systems, coping mechanisms, external stressors, early life experiences, and the length of time we have felt increased stress can contribute to where we fall on the continuum of reactions. Expect that where you are on this continuum can change. It's also important to remember that people will react differently to the same situation, and that is ok.

## **In Crisis Thriving** Surviving **Struggling** "I got this." "Something isn't "I can't "I can't keep this up." survive this." right. Disabling distress Calm and Persistent fear, panic, Nervousness. steady with sadness, increased anxiety, anger, and loss of function minor mood mood fluctuations pervasive sadness. Panic attacks fluctuations hopelessness Inconsistent Nightmares or **Exhaustion** Able to take performance flashbacks things in stride More easily Poor performance Unable to fall or overwhelmed or and difficulty Consistent stay asleep irritated making decisions performance Intrusive thoughts or concentrating Able to take Increased need Thoughts of feedback and to for control and **Avoiding interaction** self-harm or suicide adjust to changes difficulty adjusting with coworkers, family, and friends of plans to changes Easily enraged or aggressive Able to focus Fatigue, aches Trouble sleeping or eating and pains Careless mistakes Able to and inability to focus communicate **Activities and** Restless, disturbed Feeling numb, lost, or effectively relationships you sleep out of control used to enjoy Normal sleep seem less Self-medicating Withdrawal from patterns and interesting or with substances. relationships even stressful appetite food, or other numbing activities Dependence on Muscle tension, substances, food, low energy, or other numbing headaches activities to cope

For resources in addressing stress, moral distress, trauma responses, and burnout, visit:

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