

# A Trauma-Informed Care Practice Supports Patients and Team Members

Learn to recognize the different types of stress and signs of trauma. It can help you identify when you, a friend, a loved one or a team member may need help.

## Types of stress

- **Positive stress:** While every child experiences stress differently, a little stress is a normal part of healthy child development. The first day of child care, meeting new people, or getting an immunization at the pediatrician's office can cause positive stress.
- **Tolerable stress:** Tolerable stress turns the body's alert system up higher and for longer. As long as these experiences are short-term and made easier with support from caring adults, most children recover from difficulties like natural disasters and pandemics, the loss of a family member, or a serious illness.
- **Toxic stress:** When the stress children feel is strong, frequent, or prolonged, it can disrupt healthy brain development and impact the way they think, feel, and grow well into adulthood. Without a caring environment, attention from caring adults, or other protective factors to soften the effects of toxic stress, children who've experienced trauma have higher risks for physical, mental, and behavioral health problems throughout their lives.

## Symptoms of trauma and toxic stress

- **Changes in thinking:** Confusion, disorientation, heightened or lowered alertness, poor concentration, difficulty identifying familiar objects or people, memory problems, and/or nightmares.
- **Changes in emotions and behavior:** Anxiety, guilt, denial, grief, fear, irritability or Intense anger, emotional outbursts, depression, withdrawal, panic, feeling hopeless or overwhelmed, difficulty sleeping, changes in sexual behavior, excessive alcohol consumption, and/or temporary loss or increase of appetite.
- **Changes in physical health:** Fatigue, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, profuse sweating, thirst, headaches, visual difficulties, clenching your jaw, and/or aches and pains. Seek immediate medical care if you experience chest pain or difficulty breathing.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/resilient/trauma-toxic-stress.htm>

**(800) 236-3231 WI (800) 775-0304 IL**  
**Remember if you need help.**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and no-cost benefit that provides several services to Advocate Aurora team members and leaders. All services are at no cost and are confidential. These services are not documented in Epic and are not usually reportable on licensing applications.

