

TOXIC POSITIVITY OVERVIEW

Toxic positivity is an obsession with positive thinking.

It is the belief that people should put a positive spin on all experiences, even those that are profoundly tragic.

Signs of toxic positivity

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-toxic-positivity-5093958>

1. Experiencing guilt or shame for feeling sad or angry
2. Dismissing others' difficult or painful feelings
3. Hiding painful emotions (pretending everything's fine or worse, that everything's great)
4. Reciting "positive" quotes about painful situations
5. Ignoring your problems

Some things we can say if someone is pushing toxic positivity

<https://themighty.com/2021/09/toxic-positivity-how-to-respond-examples/>

1. "Recognizing I'm sad or frustrated helps me process my feelings."
2. "All of our feelings are OK to feel."
3. "My sadness and anger won't last forever because all emotions are temporary."
4. "Grieving the things I've lost helps me work toward a more fulfilling life."
5. "My experiences aren't all happy, and some of them really hurt me."

Some things we can do for ourselves

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/toxic-positivity-during-the-pandemic>

1. Avoid ignoring or stuffing your emotions
 - Sit with them. Avoiding how you feel will only prolong the discomfort
 - Find someone you trust to share how you are feeling and/or write about your feelings
2. Listen and validate how others feel — even when it's different than how you feel
3. Remember, it's OK not to be OK
4. Remember that feelings aren't mutually exclusive
5. Be realistic
6. Recognize toxic positivity messages
7. It's OK to be wary of social media
 - "Protecting yourself from toxic positivity requires critical thinking skills"
 - (and making space to use them — through centering, breathing, making sure your feet are firmly planted)

When we realize we have imposed toxic positivity on others

<https://leaf-caroline.medium.com/the-dangers-of-toxic-positivity-signs-of-gaslighting-tips-on-what-not-to-say-to-someone-who-is-1d9c9b30010b>

1. Be forgiving and compassionate with yourself. Shame will only get you stuck in a negative spiral. Remember, we are all human, and we all mess up at times.
2. Be open and honest. Acknowledge that you may not have validated the person's experiences. Apologize. Become aware of what you think, say and do. Pause and think before you respond.
3. Always be curious. Ask compassionate questions. Ask the person what it is like for them. Don't just try to "fix" the issue.