STRESS CONTINUUM MODEL

THRIVING

CHARACTERISTICS

- Functioning Optimally
- Adaptive growth
- A sense of well-being
- Feeling at one's best
- Feeling a sense of control (self-efficacy)
- Physically, mentally and spiritually fit
- Mission-focused
- Motivated
- Calm and steady
- Enjoying life
- Having fun

SURVIVING

CHARACTERISTICS

- Experiencing mild stress that goes away
- Feeling irritable, anxious or down
- Feeling less motivated
- Feeling less focused
- Some difficulty sleeping
- Some muscle tension or other physical changes (i.e. frequent headaches)
- Life feels neutral

*Caused by any stress/trigger

STRUGGLING

CHARACTERISTICS

- More severe and persistent stress
- Leaves an emotional/mental scar
- A sense of loss of control
- Experiencing persistent fear, panic, anxiety, anger, sadness
- No longer feeling like normal self
- Experiences excessive guilt, shame or blame

*Often caused by a major stressor/stress injury:

  - Life threat
  - Loss
  - Moral injury
  - Inner conflict
  - Wear and tear

IN CRISIS

CHARACTERISTICS

- Symptoms persist and worsen over time (30+ days)
- Severe stress causing social or occupational impairment
- Clinical mental health disorder
  - PTSD
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Substance misuse
- Unhealed stress injury causing life impairment
- Feeling numb, lost, or out of control
- Easily enraged or aggressive
- Thoughts of suicide or self—harm
- Withdrawal from relationships

Adapted from the work of Patricia Watson, PhD; National Center for PTSD.