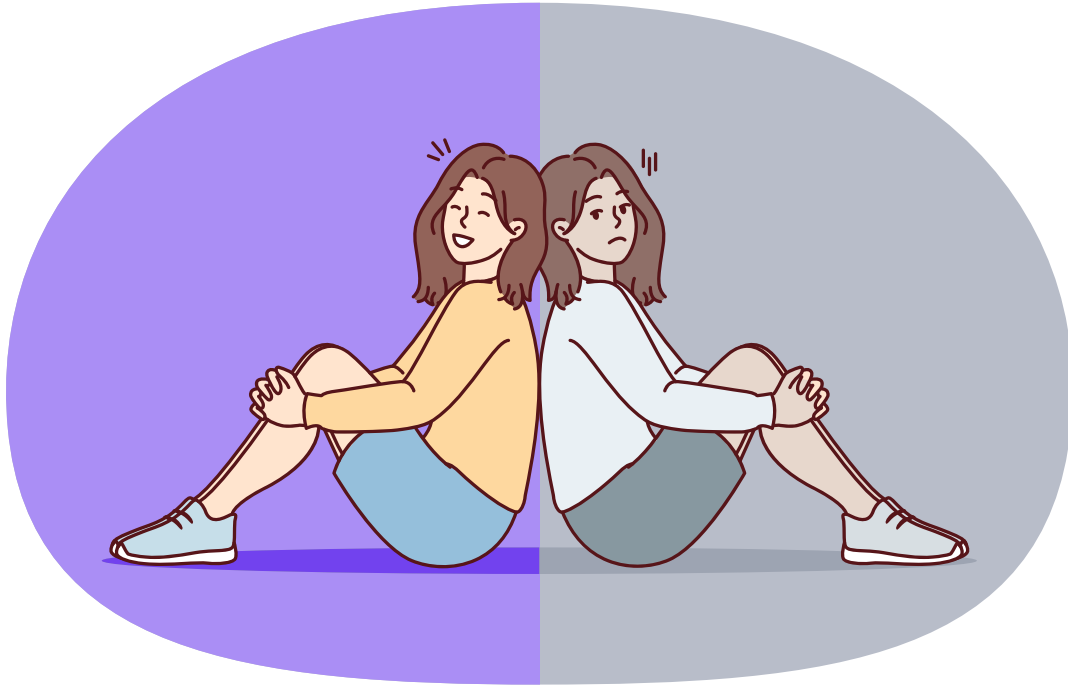


Signs of Toxic Positivity

Toxic positivity arises when people are pressured to downplay or dismiss painful emotions in favor of unrealistic optimism. This expectation can turn positive thinking into a demand to reject negative emotions, disregarding the complexities of the situation (Reynolds, 2022). By recognizing these signs, individuals can better manage toxic positivity within themselves and support others in doing the same.



Minimizing feelings

When someone dismisses another person's feelings by saying things like, "It could be worse," they are minimizing their experience.

Forced cheerfulness

People who constantly put on a happy face, even when they feel sad or frustrated, exhibit forced cheerfulness. For instance, someone might say they are fine with a big smile when they are actually upset.

Pressure to have a positive attitude

Statements like "Just think happy thoughts!" can create pressure to maintain a positive outlook, regardless of the situation.

Avoiding difficult conversations

Avoiding discussions about negative experiences or emotions in favor of lighter topics is a common sign of toxic positivity. For example, a friend might change the subject when someone tries to share their struggles.

Shaming negative emotions

Shaming someone for feeling sad or angry, with phrases like "You shouldn't feel that way," can contribute to toxic positivity.

Overemphasis on gratitude

While gratitude is important, pushing someone to focus solely on what they should be thankful for can overlook their pain. For instance, telling someone who just lost a job to "be grateful for what you have" can feel dismissive.

Reference: Reynolds, G. (2022, September 23). *Toxic positivity*. Anxiety & Depression Association of America. <https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/toxic-positivity>