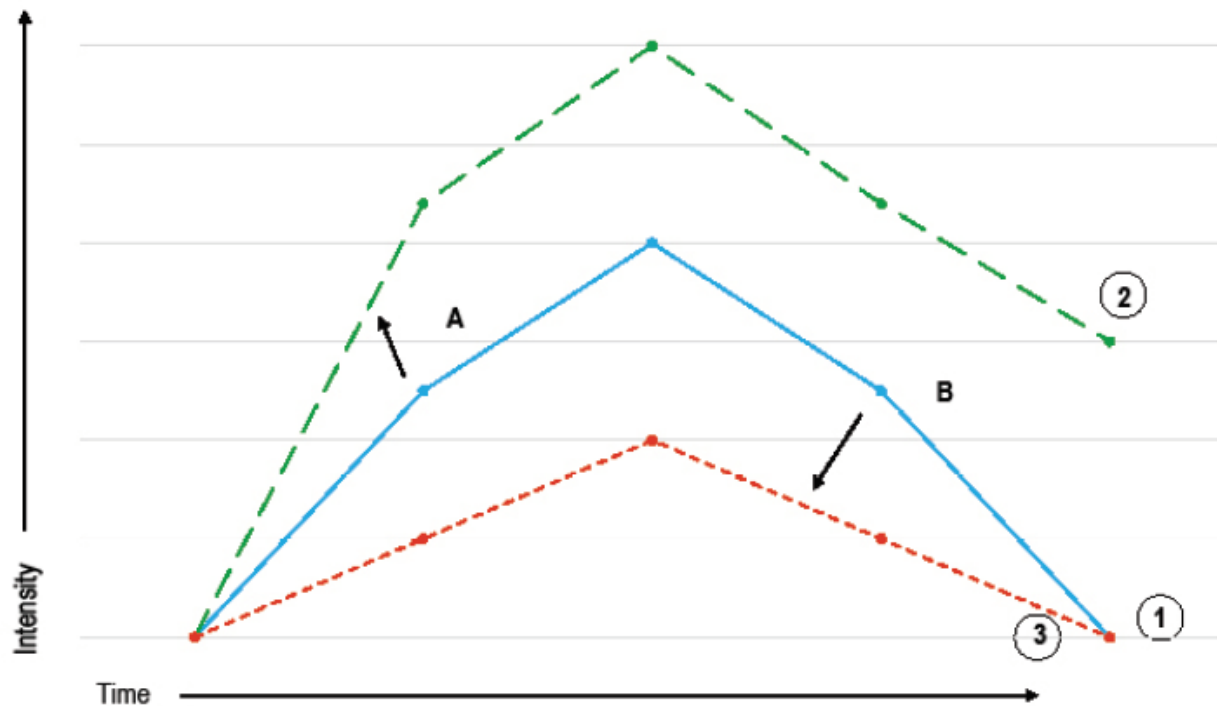


- 1) A challenge occurs in our environment (e.g. an upcoming exam).
- 2) We experience various "symptoms" (e.g. heart racing, rapid breathing, tension, etc.).
- 3) We understand this experience as a signal telling us we have a problem to solve.
- 4) We understand this experience as a signal telling us we have a problem we cannot solve.
- 5) We seek out solutions/strategies to help us solve the problem (e.g. study, ask for help, apply interventions designed to decrease intensity of the stress response).
- 6) We retreat, avoid and place focus on applying interventions designed to elevate intensity of the stress response.
- 7) We meet the challenge successfully and have learned new skills we can apply in the future (e.g. how to manage time, useful study skills, etc.).
- 8) We have not learned new skills and instead now expect that we can't be successful and have learned to fear the stress response.
- 9) Repeated adaptations lead to resilience.

## Understanding the Stress Response



- 1) Normal stress response (physical, cognitive, emotional).
- 2) What happens to the stress response if a person avoids the situation (point to A on line 1). Next time the stressor occurs the response is more severe.
- 3) What happens to the stress response if a person uses their experience of stress to arrive at a solution (point to B on line 1). Next time the stressor occurs the response is less severe.

## Steps to Dealing with “Stress” in a Healthy Way

- 1) When you experience the stress response, make sure you use the right words to describe it. Use the phrase “stress response”. Do not use: “anxiety”, “stress”, “Depression”, “stressed out”, etc.
- 2) Interpret the stress response as positive. For example: “My body and brain are getting ready to take on an important task”, or “I am getting a signal telling me to get ready”.
- 3) Figure out what is causing the stress response. For example: “Why am I feeling the stress response?” or “What is happening in my life that is leading to the stress response?”
- 4) Figure out how to share the problem(s) causing the stress response. Make a plan. One step at a time. Challenge your assumptions. Don’t use all or nothing reasoning. Ask someone for help.
- 5) Apply your solutions to the problem.
- 6) While you are doing all these things, manage your stress response with a stress reduction technique such as Box Breathing.