Toxic Positivity / Unintentional Gaslighting
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WHAT

- “Toxic Positivity” is a concept that keeping ONLY positive is the right way to live (Source: Psychology Today)
- Only focusing on positive things in your life and rejecting / ignoring any negative experiences
- Ex. When someone has a miscarriage saying “Well you can try again”
- Ex. When someone loses a job they loved saying “It’s a blessing in disguise”
- Some experts challenge this term since it should be called “Toxic Happiness”
  - Happiness - is an emotion (temporary)
  - Positivity - is a mindset & a skill (discipline)

WHY THIS MATTERS

- When we reject / ignore “unpleasant feelings” – we make them bigger – it’s like we are telling ourselves that those feelings don’t matter
- When we ignore our unpleasant emotions -they may manifest themselves in different ways:
  - Strange Dreams
  - Bitterness, Depression, Addictions
  - Relationship Conflict

THE SOLUTIONS

Tip #1: Know The Difference Between “Toxic Positivity” & “Healthy Positivity”

Toxic Positivity
- Means ignoring unpleasant emotions
- Anyone can do at any time
- Thinks “Fake it till you make it attitude” & aims for good vibes all the time

Healthy Positivity
- Is a mindset to accept ALL emotions (anxious, stressed) & learn from to help you move forward
- Is a mindset that often doesn’t come easily & requires work to develop it
- Doesn’t change the world around you – it changes how you see it

Tip #2: Know Examples of Toxic Positivity & Supportive Comments

Toxic Positivity
- You’ll get over it
- It’s a blessing in disguise.
- Just try again to get pregnant.

Supportive Comments
- This must be really difficult. Thank you for sharing.
- How can I support you?
- I can only imagine how you feel.

Tip #3: Think BOTH (Validate Emotions AND Be Willing To Talk Solutions)

- Only AFTER people have vented, their emotions have been heard, validated and you have provided Supportive Comments – then you can ask if they would like to problem-solve (let them decide – they may or may not be ready)
- Ex. Would you like to brainstorm how to problem-solve this?
- Ex. I have some thoughts – would you like me to share my perspective