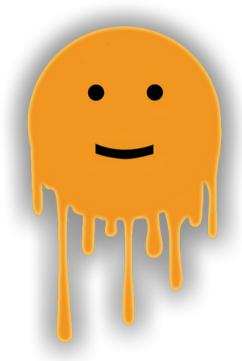# HOW TO PREVENT *Toxic* POSITIVITY AND THE PITFALLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

People often use social media to showcase a seemingly perfect life, while hiding any struggles or pain they may be experiencing. This behavior perpetuates the idea that authentic emotions are unacceptable and that one must always maintain a positive attitude. By using social media to present a false image of one's emotional state, people often deny themselves the opportunity to process and heal from painful experiences, leading to further mental and emotional distress.

> It's important not to label our feelings as positive or negative. Remember, *ALL feelings are valid.*

HERE ARE SOME WAYS WE CAN PREVENT TOXIC POSITIVITY:

- **Be honest and authentic with yourself and others about your feelings**, even if they are difficult to express.
- **Avoid using platitudes or "positive" reframing techniques** such as "it could be worse" to dismiss or downplay the emotions of others. Instead, try to validate other's experiences and offer support.
- **Take the time to acknowledge and process your negative emotions**, rather than dismissing them or trying to "just get on with it."
- **Recognize that it's okay not to feel happy or upbeat all the time**, and don't feel guilty for expressing your true emotions.
- **Avoid minimizing the experiences of others with false reassurance.** Instead, listen actively and offer empathy and understanding rather than unsolicited advice or perspective.
- **Remember that presenting a façade of excessive positivity online or presenting a "perfect" life is often damaging and can lead to further emotional distress**. Be honest and authentic in your online presence, and don't be afraid to ask for help or support when you need it.

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