The Growth Zone Model

Stress is not always bad, a little bit of stress or pressure (see the yellow zones) can encourage us to work at our best. If we are not stressed at all or have very little stress, we are more comfortable but we can become unmotivated and feel flat or bored (see the green zones). If we become too stressed (distressed) or are stressed for a long time then that can make us feel out of control, exhausted and not able to cope (see the red zones). We need to find a good balance of just enough stress to motivate us to do our best learning and growth with time to rest.

Diagram 1

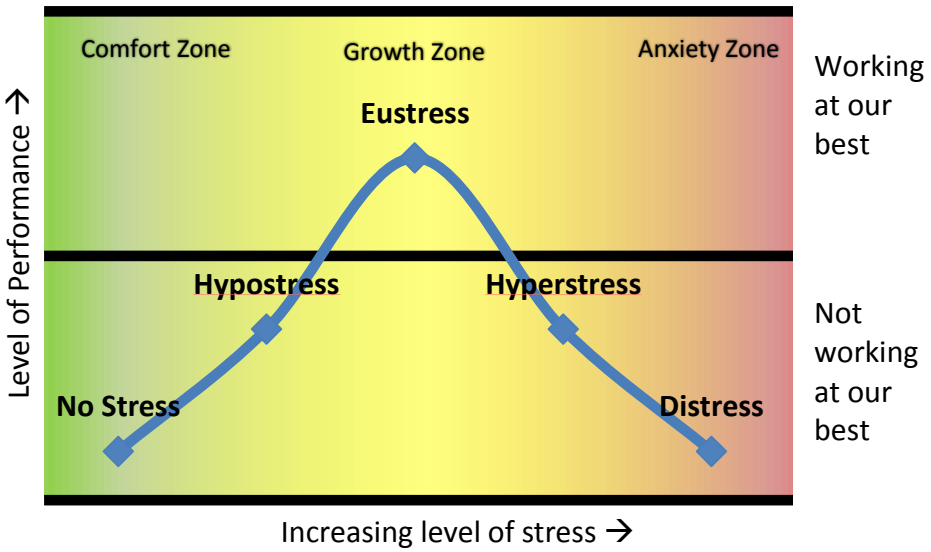
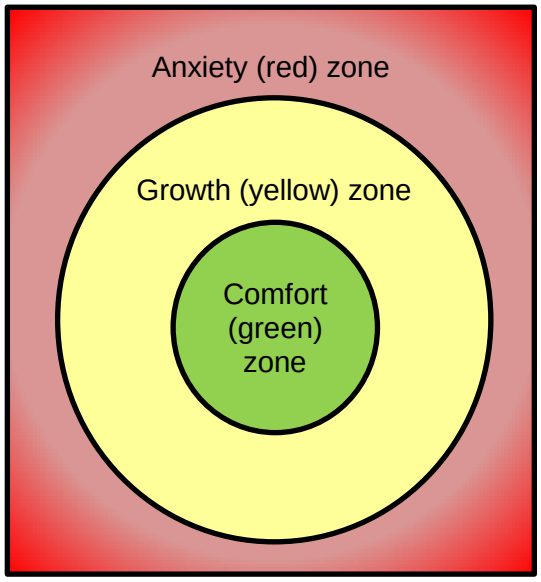


Diagram 2



The **comfort (green) zone** is where we feel comfortable and confident. We practise skills and knowledge we already know.

The **growth (yellow) zone** is where you are being appropriately challenged. **You do not feel as comfortable as you do in the comfort (green) zone but you can manage.** This is the **best place to learn and grow** before returning to the comfort (green) zone to rest and practice.

The **anxiety (red) zone** is where we feel out of control, distressed and anxious. Spot your warning signs of anxiety and use your coping strategies to calm down.

Diagram 1 comparing performance with stress based on work by H. Selve[1] and training developed by Angus and Dundee Educational Psychology Services. Diagram 2 is based on work about resilience in (mathematical) learning by Clare Lee and Sue Johnston-Wilder[2].

[1]Selye, H. (1976). Forty years of stress research: principal remaining problems and misconceptions. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, *115*(1), 53. Retrieved from: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1878603/pdf/canmedaj01483-0055.pdf

[2]Lee, C. and Johnston-Wilder, S. (2016). The construct mathematical resilience. In: Xolocotzin,Ulises ed. *Understanding Emotions in Mathematical Thinking and Learning*. London: Elsevier Academic Press, (In press). Retrieved from: http://oro.open.ac.uk/44220/5/construct%20mathematical%20resilience%20combined.pdf