# Stoicism

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**Key Terms:**

o   *Stoicism* - a temporary, situation-specific emotional state characterized by feeling of tension, apprehension, and nervousness.

o   *Cognitive*-*behavioral therapy (CBT)* – a common form of psychotherapy that focuses on reframing thought processes that has demonstrated effectiveness in combating a myriad of mental health struggles.

**What is Stoicism?**

Stoicism is an ancient Greek school of philosophy that is based in the idea of accepting negative emotions and controlling them rather than letting them control us and is the inspiration for present-day cognitive-behavioral therapy, also known as CBT (Robertson, 2022). It is commonly described as the ability to endure hardship and pain without showing feelings or complaining. Stoicism teaches that self-control and letting go of so-called distracting emotions allows one to think more clearly, maintain more of a level-head and refrain from developing bias. Stoicism is not a philosophy of having no emotions, but rather about understanding the purpose and reason behind those emotions. Likewise, when you are able to understand what you do not have control over, you are able to put yourself in a position of more control. Stoicism was a school of thought propagated by a Phoenician merchant called Zeno of Citium around 301 BCE. Zeno entered into this philosophical way of life after losing the entirety of his fortune in a shipwreck while on his way to Athens. The representation of Stoicism we know now comes from Zeno’s reaction to that experience and his desire to respond to it in a Stoic manner.

**What are the defining characteristics of Stoicism?**

Stoicism asserts that the highest good is intellectual and moral virtue. Living according to reason and virtue is considered the path to living a meaningful and fulfilling life. The defining virtues of Stoicism are as follows (*What is Stoicism?*):

*Acceptance* – Stoics believe that accepting the natural order of the universe, and recognizing that some events are beyond our control is what will likewise lead to the good life. This presents as focusing on distinguishing between what is boht within our control and what is not.

*Control* – Stoicism encourages the control and overall mastery of one's emotions. Rather than allowing yourself to be swayed by passions, Stoics advocate for maintaining an emotional equilibrium through adherence to reason and self-discipline. This does not denote the suppressing of emotions but rather it means to transform your emotions into more rational responses.

*Love of Fate* – Stoicism teaches that individuals ought to embrace and accept their fate, what is meant for them, which would include both the positive and negative events of life. This concept encourages a gratitude mindset in conjunction with a notion of contentment, regardless of one’s external circumstances.

*Courage –* Stoicism encompasses both moral and physical courage. Physical courage is expressed by facing and enduring adversity without succumbing to negative emotions such as fear. Moral courage involves standing up for what you believe to be right and just, even in the face of social opposition and pressure. Stoic courage comes from the understanding that a person’s own virtue and integrity are far more important than the external outcomes of life or opinions of others.

*Temperance* – Stoicism emphasizes the importance of moderation, also known as temperance, advocating for doing things in the right way and with the right amount of effort, emotion, and so on. Stoicism suggests that excellence is not an isolated act, but a habitual manner of living that can be achieved through temperance.

*Justice* – Stoicism holds the belief that justice is the source of all virtue and that defending one’s ideals while remain just and fair and imperative when developing the Stoic way of life. Stoicism encourages us to view the world realistically, accept what cannot be changed, but work to change what can in a positive manner.

*Wisdom* – Stoicism asserts that wisdom is what enables all the other virtues of Stoicism to create a Stoic. The knowing, the learning, the experience the world offers is what is needed to navigate it. Stoicism advocates for humility, continuous learning, constant skepticism, and seeking great teachers – all which will allow you to distinguish mere information from valuable knowledge that will help you gain wisdom in life.

[Stoicism - Watch on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9OCA6UFE-0&amp;autoplay=1)

**References**

“How Stoicism Could Help You Build Resilience” by Vanessa Lancaster (online article): This article demonstrates a deep examination of how stoicism and resiliency work together. It can be accessed online at: e

“What Is Stoicism? A definition & 9 Stoic Exercises To Get You Started” (online article) This article illustrates what stoicism is through stories and examples. It can be accessed online at:

“Stoicism” by Roderick T. Long (online article) This article describes the Stoic belief and what is stoicism. It can be accessed online at:

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