

BLUE KNOT FOUNDATION

FACT SHEET: Stress Response

PLAIN ENGLISH



Stress

- We all experience stress or threat at different times. This turns on our stress response
- A part of our brain identifies the threat. It tells our body and brain that we are in danger

Stress response

- When we are in danger we can be scared or upset. We can panic
- When our stress response takes over, our thinking brain switches off. We go onto automatic. This is how we protect ourselves
- Our stress response is part of our biology. It helps us survive danger
- We do not think or plan
- We respond to stress in 1 of 3 main ways
 1. We fight.
 2. We run away (flight).
 3. We freeze (shut down)

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Arousal

- When we fight or run away, we are jumpy (agitated). We call this hyperarousal
- When we freeze, we shut down. Sometimes we go numb. We call this hypoarousal
- Sometimes when we freeze, we dissociate. This means we disconnect from what is happening now

Calm

- When the danger goes, our thinking brain turns on. Our body becomes calm
- We can rest and repair. This happens with 'normal' stress. Trauma is different