

STRESS RESPONSES

Understand. Recognize. Respond with Care.

Stress is how your body and mind respond to a challenge or demand.

All stress responses are normal! Your responses are not a weakness.

When we feel stressed, our brain and body go into "survival mode" to help keep us safe. There are 3 main types of stress responses. We may feel them in our body, our thoughts, our emotions, and our behaviors.



1 FIGHT RESPONSE

"I'll handle it!"



When we perceive a threat, our body gears up to confront or overcome it.

DEFINITION

A response that prepares us to face or confront the stressor head-on.

EXAMPLES

- Feeling angry or irritated
- Wanting to argue or control
- Clenching fists or jaw
- Racing thoughts about how to fix it
- Feeling restless or on edge

YOU MIGHT THINK:

I need to fix this!
I need to win!
I can't let this happen!



2 FLIGHT RESPONSE

"I need to get away!"



When we sense danger or feeling overwhelmed, our body wants to escape or avoid.

DEFINITION

A response that helps us run away or avoid the stressor.

EXAMPLES

- Feeling anxious or panicked
- Avoiding people or places
- Procrastinating or shutting down
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Wanting to escape or hide

YOU MIGHT THINK:

I can't deal with this!
I need to get out of here!
This is too much!



3 FREEZE RESPONSE

"I can't move."



When the threat feels too big or scary, our body may shut down to protect us.

DEFINITION

A response that makes us feel stuck, numb, or unable to act.

EXAMPLES

- Feeling numb or disconnected
- Trouble thinking or remembering
- Feeling heavy, tired, or "zoned out"
- Not knowing what to do
- Wanting to shut down

YOU MIGHT THINK:

I can't do anything.
I just want this to stop.
I feel stuck.



DID YOU KNOW?



Your body isn't trying to be "difficult." It's trying to protect you! The goal isn't to get rid of these responses, but to understand them and use tools to help your body feel safe again.



REMEMBER

- You are not your stress response.
- You can learn to manage stress.
- You are stronger than you think.

RECOGNIZE YOUR RESPONSES

Write or draw which stress responses you notice most often.

Fight

(When I feel stressed, I...)

Flight

(When I feel stressed, I...)

Freeze

(When I feel stressed, I...)

WHAT HELPS YOU RECOVER?

What tools or supports help your body feel calm and safe again?



Be kind to yourself. All feelings make sense. You are learning and growing every day.

