

What survival looks like

# ***IN SCHOOL***

In collaboration with Beacon Therapeutic Services & Trauma Team



The fight or flight Response (also called hyperarousal or the acute stress response) is a physiological reaction that accrues in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival.

Do you know where I learnt to be brave?  
In school, it's a scary place



*Something unexpected and very frightening happened to me that made me fear for my safety.*

*As a result, my brain and body are 'stuck in trauma time 'as a way to protect me from the scary thing happening again.*

*It's like my brain can't learn that I am actually safe right now.*

*To cope with the feeling that I'm constantly in danger, I swing between different survival modes to keep safe when I feel scared.*

*Why is it so important that you know this?*



*The part of my brain activated to help me survive, is different from the part of my brain activated when I'm calm.*

*I can only learn properly when the calm part of my brain is activated.  
When I'm in a survival state it takes over from my calm brain and I struggle to learn. If I don't feel safe, you won't be able to teach me.*

*The problem is, it's really hard to see when I'm in survival mode.*

*I look very different to how I feel inside and often I can remain in survival mode for so long, that it seems like part of my personality.*

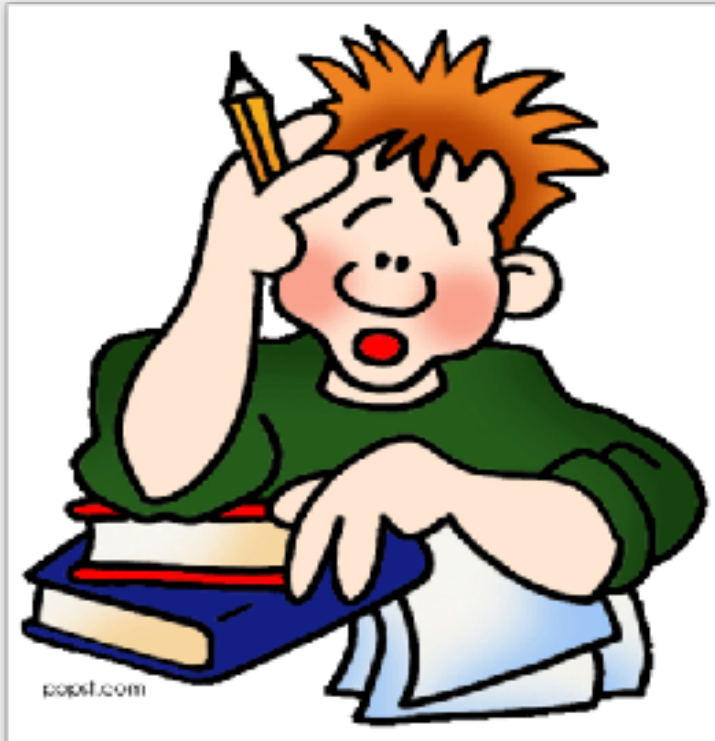
*I would love your help to feel safe so I can learn.  
For you to see that I am in a survival state and it's not a personality trait.  
I really want to learn, I really want to feel ok.*



***Freeze***

## ***What I look like in Freeze...***

- ***Not interested, bored***
- ***Confused, forgetful***
- ***Talking about something else***
- ***Hard to move through the task***
- ***Not listening***
- ***Staring into space, daydreaming***
- ***Clumsy***



## ***What I am aware of...***

- ***My brain is slowing down***
- ***Trying to think of something safe***
- ***I can't do this***
- ***Feeling deeply anxious***
- ***I can hear you're getting frustrated***
- ***Starting to shut down***
- ***I feel under attack***





## ***How my body feels...***

- ***Frozen brain***
- ***If I don't move, you can't see me***
- ***Everything feels like a dream***
- ***Under attack***
- ***In a fog***
- ***Disconnected***
- ***Numb***



## ***What's happening in my Inner World...***

- ***I can't bear your rejection***
- ***I need to feel safe***
- ***Shame, I hate myself***
- ***I'm scared I don't know what's going to happen***
- ***When I fail at this you'll send me away***
- ***When you realise I can't do this, you won't want me in your class anymore***



## *You can help me feel safe with the following*

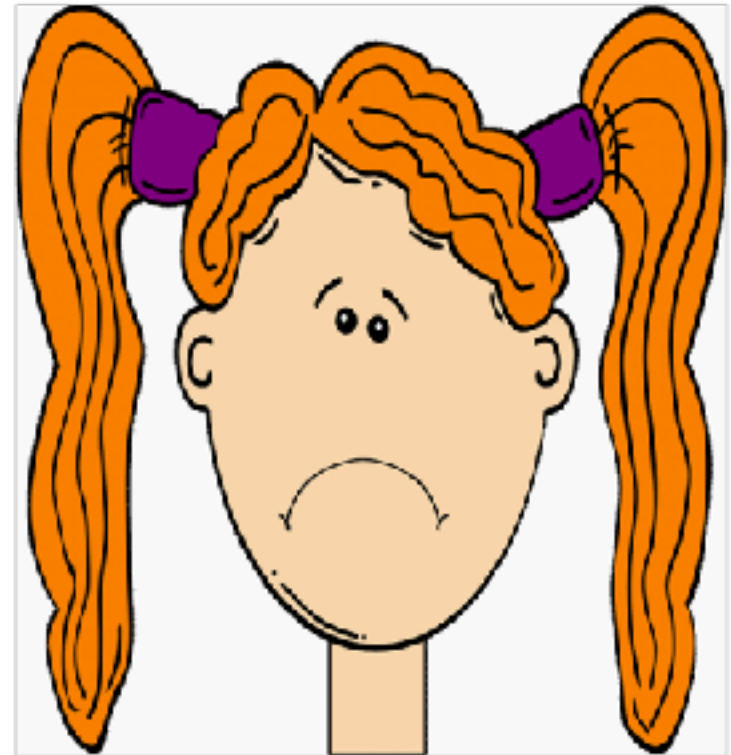
- *Do the task with me*
- *Deep breathing*
- *Tell me I'm ok & that I'm safe*
- *Ask me to push my hands down under my seat & lift myself up off the chair*
- *Gently wonder where I've gone & welcome me back to the room*
- *Make the task smaller & more predictable*
- *Tell me kindly who I am & what I'm doing*
- *Tell me what you want me to do, without showing frustration*



# ***Flight***

## ***What I look like in Flight...***

- ***Run away***
- ***Keeping SUPER busy***
- ***Not coping in free time***
- ***Bumping into people***
- ***Avoiding tasks and activities***
- ***Baby talk or silly voices***
- ***Hyperactive, giddy & silly***
- ***Hiding under tables***



## *What I am aware of ...*

- *Unable to focus*
- *Lonely*
- *Panic*
- *Feeling bad, movement is distracting*
- *Shame*
- *Overwhelmed*
- *Worried about what's happening next*
- *Anxious, apprehensive*





## ***How my body feels***

- ***Escape, run & hide***
- ***Painful joints***
- ***Numb***
- ***Vibrating***
- ***Ready for action***
- ***Jumpy & tense***
- ***Sick***





## *What's happening in my Inner World...*

- I want to escape from this scary moment, but I can't
- I don't want you to see my real feelings, you can't handle them
- I am really worried I can't do what's going to happen next



*You can help me feel safe with the following...*

- *Keep me close by*
- *Deep breathing*
- *Give me an easy & familiar task*
- *Make things predictable*
- *Tell me I'm safe, show me a safe place or person I can go to*
- *Kindly talk though what might be tricky*



***Fight***

## *What I look like in Fight ...*

- *Hot & bothered*
- *Angry & aggressive*
- *Controlling*
- *Lie or blaming*
- *Shouty & argumentative*
- *Pushing away friends*
- *Demanding*
- *Inflexible*



## What I am aware of ...

- *I'm in danger*
- *Really scared*
- *I am all alone*
- *I feel bad*
- *Frightened*
- *Unimportant*
- *Invisible*



## *What's happening in my Inner World*

- *I can't be cross at the people I really want to be cross at*
- *I'm going to push you away before you get rid of me*
- *Unsafe*
- *I hate myself, I am unloveable, I want to die*
- *Why wasn't I good enough?*
- *I need to be in control & make things predictable*



*You can help me feel safe with the following*

- *Give me a role*
- *Support me socially*
- *Match my energy*
- *Make things predictable*
- *Deep breathing*
- *Connect & show empathy before exploring the consequences of my behaviour*



***Submit***



## *What I look like in Submit...*

- *Socially withdrawn*
- *Compliant*
- *Quiet*
- *Unable to think, just yes or no answers*
- *Passive*
- *Resigned*
- *Neutral expression*
- *Low mood*





*What I am aware of ...*

- *I can't think*
- *Tummy aches*
- *Tired*
- *Sad*
- *Lonely*



## *How my body feels...*

- *Worn out, no energy*
- *Guilty*
- *It's given up*
- *Slow*
- *Tearful*
- *Poorly*





## *What's happening in my Inner World...*

- Why couldn't I be better, I'm completely useless
- I hate myself, I am unloveable
- it's all my fault
- nothing will ever feel ok
- I can't keep my self safe
- I want to die



*You can help me feel safe with the following ...*

- *Repetitive simple tasks*
- *Weighted blanket*
- *Building with Lego or play-dough*
- *Tell me I'm safe*
- *Deep breathing*
- *Spending time with a trusted adult*
- *Do the task with me*
- *Tell me what to do without showing frustration*







*Spending just a small amount of time making me feel safe, activates the calm part of my brain and I am ready for you to teach me again.*

*I might need you to do this a few times throughout the task but the more my brain knows how to stay in the calm zone, the less likely I am to go into survival mode.*

*Thank you for helping me every day to make safe and life changing differences to my brain.*

*It's an amazing thing you're doing for me.*

Thank you, InnerWorld Work



