

# Stress Response

Blue Knot Foundation fact sheet that explains the different types of stress responses



## 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)

## 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.

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If you or someone you support lives with disability and experiences of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation OR is affected by the Disability Royal Commission, you can call the **National Counselling and Referral Service on 1800 421 458** between 9am and 6pm AEST Monday to Friday and between 9am and 5pm AEST Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

If you or someone you support has experiences of childhood trauma or is considering the National Redress Scheme, you can call the **Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service on 1300 657 380** between 9am and 5pm Monday to Sunday AEST.