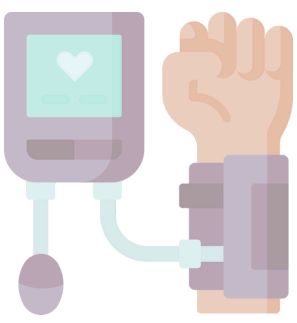
The 3 F's: Fight, Flight, & Freeze

The primary goal of your nervous system is to keep you alive!

If your body thinks that it's not safe, it will immediately find a way to protect you. There are three distinct ways it does that: to fight, flight, or freeze. They each have unique signs and symptoms that you can learn to identify in your body.

"I'm not going down without a fight!"

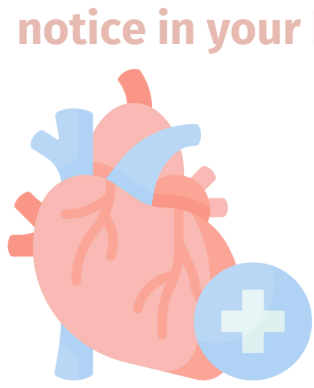
Fight: When you're faced with danger, your body might react is by getting ready to fight. This means you may feel angry and ready to defend yourself. Some signs you may notice in your body are:



- Increased heartbeat/rate
- Changes in temperature, like heat in your limbs or feeling warm
- Changes in posture, like your chest puffing up and your limbs feeling more tense
- The urge to hit or punch

"I need to escape this danger right now!"

Flight: When you're in flight mode, you probably feel scared and anxious. Your body wants to get away from the danger as quickly as possible. Some signs you may notice in your body are:



- Racing heartbeat
- Changes in posture, like pointing your body towards an exit
- Faster breathing
- Feeling jittery or restless
- Thinking about wanting to escape

"My body feels frozen, like I can't move a muscle."

Freeze: If you are faced with a threat and you can't fight or flee, your body might freeze. This means you may feel paralyzed and unable to move or react. This is the body's last attempt to keep you safe. Some signs you may notice in your body:

- Heart rate slows down
- Muscles become tense
- You can't move or feel paralyzed
- Your breathing slows or feels like you aren't breathing

The fight, flight and freeze responses are part of the polyvagal theory, developed by Dr. Stephen Porges. This theory helps you understand how your body responds to stress and danger. By recognizing these responses, you can learn to manage them better and stay safe in scary situations. So whether it's fighting, running, or freezing your body will do what it has to do to keep you alive!

If you'd like to learn more about fight, flight and freeze and making yourself feel more safe and connected again, contact us for a free 15-minute consultation at:

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