

Your nervous system: states and responses

This model shows different nervous system states and how they can overlap.



Overlapping areas show blended states.

We naturally move between different responses.

It can be difficult when one lingers.

Understanding your nervous system states

Our bodies respond differently to stress, safety and connection. This model offers a way to recognise those experiences. The overlapping areas represent blended states - you may notice energy, stillness and connection in different combinations.

Fight

You may feel ready to push back, argue or defend yourself.

Flight

You may feel restless, on edge or drawn to leave the situation.

Shutdown

You may feel numb, distant, low in energy or disconnected from what is happening around you.

Settled and connected

You may feel present and more able to engage with others, rest or respond to what is happening.

Understanding the overlaps

Freeze - energy with a sense of being stuck

You may feel tense and alert, yet find it difficult to move, speak or act.

Play - energy with connection

You may feel lively, curious or excited while remaining connected to yourself and others.

Stillness - quiet with connection

You may feel restful and present, able to be quiet without feeling cut off.

Noticing your experience

You do not need to fit neatly into one area. Your experience may shift, and more than one description may feel familiar.

Which feels closest to your experience right now? What do you notice in your body?