What survival looks like...

FOR ME

Created by

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With thanks to Dr Katy Savage for her invaluable contribution
When I was little, some wires got connected to the wrong places in my brain. Often I think and feel like I'm under attack even when I'm actually very safe. My brain activates **survival** mode to protect me.

I don't even know that I have gone into **survival** mode. It happens so often that this part of my brain is really strong and rules over the **calm** part of my brain. It is difficult to turn it off by myself and I need your help!
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.

When I'm in a survival state it takes over from my calm brain and I struggle to play well with friends, listen to what you are asking me to do, move from activity to activity, stay safe walking down the street or even eat my dinner!
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.

Please help me work out what's going on for me by going through the four survival modes with me, they are called fight, flight, freeze, and submit. How I feel is right for me so there is no wrong way of doing this. Even if we don't end up filling anything in, just stopping and trying to find out what's going on for me will make a difference to my Inner World.

I would love your help to feel safe so I can enjoy my time with my friends, make my relationship with you stronger and feel happier in different places. I really do want to feel ok.
What I look like in Freeze...

What's happening on the outside?

Some ideas to help you
- Not interested, bored
- Confused, forgetful
- Talking about something else
- Hard to move through the task
- Not listening
- Stubborn
- Staring into space, daydreaming
- Clumsy
What I am aware of...
What's happening on the inside, just below the surface?

Some ideas to help you
- My brain is slowing down
- Thinking of something safe
- I can't do what you want
- Feeling deeply anxious
- Hearing you getting frustrated
- Starting to shut down
- I feel under attack

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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
When do I go into Freeze?
When does what you've written down so far, happen to you?

Some ideas to help you
At School
In a School Play
When someone shouts at me
When I am asked to do something I don't want to do
At a party
Somewhere loud
What's happening in my Inner World...

What's really happening deep deep down?

- I need to feel safe
- Shame, I hate myself
- I'm scared I don't know what's going to happen
- When I fail you'll send me away
- When you realise I can't do what you've asked, you won't want me anymore

Some ideas to help you

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You can help me feel safe by...

What can your trusted adult do to make you feel ok?

Some ideas to help you

- Stay with me, don't leave me alone
- Deep breathing
- Spinning on a swing
- Digging in the garden or in some sand
- Tell me that I'm ok & that I'm safe
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Gently wonder where I've gone
- Tell me kindly who I am & what we're doing
- Climbing & hanging
- Rolling or cycling downhill
- Watching TV
- Cup of hot chocolate & a piece of toast
- Soft teddy in bed with me
- A nice warm bath & a warm towel
What I look like in Flight...

What's happening on the outside?

Some ideas to help you
Running away
Keeping SUPER busy
Not coping with free time
Needing to be first
Bumping into people
Avoiding chores or playing
Baby talk or silly voices
Hyperactive, giddy & silly
Hiding under tables
What I am aware of...
What's happening on the inside, just below the surface?

Some ideas to help you
Unable to focus
Lonely
Panic
Feeling bad, movement is distracting
Shame
Overwhelmed
Worried about what's happening next
Anxious, apprehensive

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How my body feels...

Some ideas to help you
Escape, run & hide
Painful joints
Numb
Vibrating
Ready for action
Jumpy & tense
Sick

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When do I go into Flight?
When does what you’ve written down so far, happen to you?

Some ideas to help you
At School
When I feel overwhelmed by a request
When I hear a loud noise
At bedtime
At a friends house
Celebrations
What's happening in my Inner World...
What's really happening deep deep down?

Some ideas to help you
- 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
- I need you to find me every single time

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You can help me feel safe by...
What can your trusted adult do to make you feel ok?

* Keep me close by
* Happily find me if I'm hiding
* Deep breathing
* Crunchy foods
* Give me a easy & familiar chore to do
* Make things predictable
* Hanging from monkey bars
* Tell me I'm safe, show me a safe place I can go to
* Heavy blankets
* Kindly talk though what might be tricky
* Tug of war
* Cup of warm milk
* Hot water bottle
* Soft teddy
What I look like in Fight...

What's happening on the outside?

Some ideas to help you
- Hot & bothered
- Angry & aggressive
- Controlling
- Lie or blaming
- Shouty & argumentative
- Pushing away friends/siblings
- Demanding
- Inflexible

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What I am aware of...

What's happening on the inside, just below the surface?

Some ideas to help you:
- I'm in danger
- Really scared
- Terrified of this feeling
- I am all alone
- I feel bad
- Frightened
- Unimportant
- Invisible
When do I go into Fight?
When does what you've written down so far, happen to you?

Some ideas to help you
At home
During transitions
Endings
At School
At friends houses

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What's happening in my Inner World...
What's really happening deep deep down?

Some ideas to help you
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

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You can help me feel safe by...
What can your trusted adult do to make you feel ok?

Some ideas to help you
- Give me a something to do that makes me feel important
- Support me socially
- Match my energy
- Chewy foods – especially sweet & salty foods
- Make things predictable
- Deep breathing
- Hanging & swinging
- Climbing
- Connect & show empathy before exploring the consequences of my behaviour
- Warm bath with lots of bubbles
- Warm milk
- Hot water bottle
- Super soft teddy & blanket
What I look like in Submit...

What's happening on the outside?

Some ideas to help you
- Socially withdrawn
- Compliant
- Quiet
- Unable to think, just yes or no answers
- Passive
- Resigned
- Sleepy
- Neutral expression
- Low mood
What I am aware of...
What's happening on the inside, just below the surface?

Some ideas to help you
I can't think
Tummy aches
Tired
Sad
Lonely

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How my body feels...

Some ideas to help you

Worn out, no energy
Guilty
It's given up
Slow
Tearful
Poorly
When do I go into Submit?
When does what you've written down so far, happen to you?

Some ideas to help you
At school
When I am asked to do something I don't want to do
At a party
Somewhere loud
Celebrations
What's happening in my Inner World...
What's really happening deep deep down?

Some ideas to help you

- Why can'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 myself safe
- I want to die
You can help me feel safe by...
What can your trusted adult do to make you feel ok?

- Repetitive simple tasks
- Weighted blanket
- Swinging
- Building with lego or play-dough
- Tell me I'm safe
- Deep breathing
- Hot chocolate & a biscuit
- Spending time with a trusted adult
- Do the task with me
- Wrapping up in a soft blanket & watching TV
- Tell me what to do without showing frustration
- Warm bath & a warm towel
- Warm pyjamas