project reassure

Self-Advocates

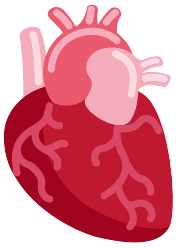
Survival Circuit

The survival circuit is how our bodies and brains respond to threats around us. Our brains are made to respond this way to help us survive threats and stress.

Four Steps of the Survival Circuit

1. Something that we **see, hear, smell, taste,** or **touch tells our brain there could be danger**. The alarm part of our brain reacts right away without thinking.

2. Our brain tells our body to **get ready for possible danger**. The sympathetic nervous system starts acting right away without thinking. The black centers of our eyes get bigger, our hearts beat faster, and we start sweating.



3. The **alarm part of our brain quiets down**. The "thinking parts" of our brain start to figure out what is happening. Our brain thinks about what is going on and compares it to memories of things that happened before. With this new information, our brain decides if we are really in danger or not.

4. If **our brain decides that there is no danger**, it tells our body to relax. The parasympathetic nervous system is turned on. The black centers of our eyes get smaller, and our hearts beat more slowly. This helps us relax and makes it easier to make choices and return to routines.

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