

# REAL-TIME STRESS RESPONSE DEACTIVATION FLOWCHART

## 1. NOTICE THE BODY (SENSATION) 🖱️ *This = activation (not danger)*

- Urgency
- Tight chest / gut
- Heat / irritation
- Tunnel vision
- Restlessness
- Freeze

## 2. LABEL THE DISTORTION (INTERPRETATION) 🖱️ *This is meaning—not reality*

- Threat → “Something is wrong”
- Control → “I need to fix this”
- Time → “This must happen now”
- Identity → “This means something about me”

## 3. IDENTIFY THE URGE (RESPONSE PULL) 🖱️ *This = survival strategy activating*

- Escape / avoid
- React / defend
- Shut down
- Control / fix
- Freeze

## 4. INTERRUPT THE LOOP (PATTERN BREAK)

🖱️ *Re-engages the Prefrontal Cortex & Downregulates the Amygdala*

- Slow breath (4–6 sec)
- Widen vision
- Ground body (hands, feet)
- Orient to present time and space

## 5. RETURN TO CONTROL (REGULATION)

Say: “**This is a state, not a signal.**”

- Pause
- Allow sensation
- Choose response
  -  **LOOP COMPLETE** You are back in control

- **If there is urgency → there is activation. No exceptions.**

# REAL-TIME RESPONSE TRAINING SHEET

## SECTION 1 — WHAT DID YOU FEEL? (Body Awareness) Circle what applies:

- Urgency / Tight chest / Dissociation / Gut discomfort / Hot / Muscle tension
  - Frustration / Tunnel vision / Restlessness / Frozen sensation

## SECTION 2 — WHAT STORY DID YOUR MIND CREATE?

- Threat → “Something is wrong”
- Control → “I need to fix this”
- Time → “This is urgent”
- Identity → “This means something about me”

Write it out:

## SECTION 3 — WHAT DID YOU FEEL LIKE DOING?

- Escaping / avoiding
- Reacting / arguing
- Shutting down
- Controlling the situation
- Freezing

## SECTION 4 — WHAT PATTERN WAS THIS? (Match it)

- Escape → Threat / Catastrophizing
- React → Fight / Emotional reasoning
- Shut down → Avoidance / Dissociation
- Control → Hypervigilance / Uncertainty intolerance
- Freeze → Learned helplessness

## SECTION 5 — DID YOU INTERRUPT IT? ( Yes / No ) If YES, what did you do?

Patterned breathing / Muscle Relaxation / Thought Maintenance / Widened vision /  
Realized a greater sense of hope / Consciously choose gratitude / Oriented to present

## SECTION 6 — WHAT HAPPENED AFTER?

- Did intensity decrease?  Yes  No
- Did clarity return?  Yes  No
- Did you regain control?  Yes  No

## SECTION 7 — REFRAME (CRITICAL STEP) Complete this:

“What I felt was: \_\_\_\_\_

What my mind said was: \_\_\_\_\_

What was actually happening was: \_\_\_\_\_

 **FINAL STATEMENT (WRITE IT OUT) “This was a state, not a signal.”**

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## STRESS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

### STEP 1 — BODY CHECK (1–2 seconds)

#### Notice what your body is doing

- Urgency (need to act now)      If you feel urgency, your stress response system is active
- Tight chest / uneasy stomach
- Heat / frustration / irritation
- Tunnel vision (narrow focus)
- Restlessness (can't sit still)
- Freeze (stuck / shut down)

### STEP 2 — WHAT STORY IS YOUR MIND TELLING? (PICK ONE)

-  **Threat** → “Something is wrong”
-  **Control** → “I need to fix this”
-  **Urgency** → “This has to happen now”
-  **Identity** → “This means something about me”

### STEP 3 — WHAT DO I FEEL LIKE DOING RIGHT NOW?

- React / argue →                      **FIGHT** / Try to control everything → **FIGHT (CONTROL)**
- Leave / avoid →                        **FLIGHT**
- Shut down / do nothing →        **FREEZE**
- Go along / people-please → **FAWN**

### STEP 4 — WHAT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING?

#### Match your reaction:

- React / argue →      Brain trying to defend →                      **FIGHT**
- Control everything → Trying to feel safe →                      **FIGHT (CONTROL)**
- Leave / avoid →      Brain thinks you're in danger →                      **FLIGHT**
- Freeze →                      Overwhelmed →                      **FREEZE**
- People-please →      Trying to keep things calm →                      **FAWN**

### STEP 5 — INTERRUPT (MANDATORY) *This is where you take control back*

- Slow your breathing (4–6 seconds) Diaphragmatic breathing + Physiological Sigh
- Look around (widen your vision)
- Stay still (pause and observe 10–30 seconds) observe the impulse but do not act on it
- Say: “**I’m here. I’m safe right here, right now.**” - “**This is a state, not a signal.**”

Pause → Keep breathing → Let it settle → Choose your next action.

*\*Doing this helps calm the stress response and wake up the intelligent part of the mind\**

