

NEW MEXICO 4-H

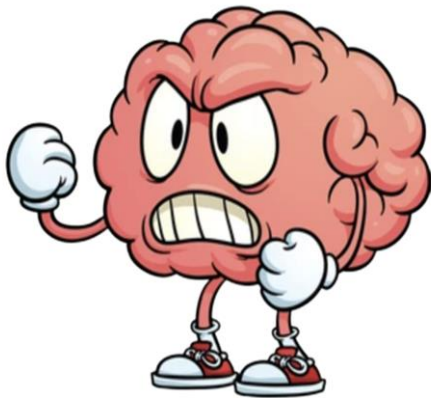
Aggie Next Step

Managing Stress Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Fight

flight

FREEZE



Post Secondary Pathways



Newt McCarty, State 4-H Agent and Chelsey Juenemann, Education Specialist



New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer and educator.

NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

nm4h.nmsu.edu



BE BOLD. Shape the Future.
College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences
Cooperative Extension Service
Extension 4-H Youth Development



Managing Stress: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

LESSON FOCUS

The fight, flight, or freeze response is our body's natural way of reacting to stress. Long ago, it helped people survive danger, but today it can be triggered by tests, presentations, or conflicts. In this lesson, participants will explore how fight, flight, and freeze show up in life, what happens to the body during each, and how recognizing these patterns is the first step toward managing them in healthy ways.

PREPARATION

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough pre/post assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have participants complete the **Pre-Assessment**.

2. Use Think-Pair-Share to assess where participants' knowledge levels and attitudes around stress responses currently exist. Ask: *What are some ways to respond to stress?*

Think – Participants first individually brainstorm ideas that come to mind.

Pair – Participants find a partner or small group and discuss their ideas.

Share – Finish with a class discussion about what they brainstormed. Create a brainstorming web on the board with "Stress Responses" in the center. Write student ideas around the web.

*(Optional video opener: "Fight Flight Freeze – Anxiety Explained for Teens" – 2:41 – See link in the Resources section.)

3. Distribute **Understanding Your Fight, Flight, Freeze Response to Stress & Anxiety**. Read and discuss the definitions of *stress* and *anxiety*. Then, introduce "Fight, Flight, or Freeze." Discuss the origin of these responses and how it affects us today. Allow participants time to fill in the final column with strategies for overcoming each response.

4. Guide participants through the **Stress Reaction Activity** by using the provided instructions.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Explain** the fight, flight, and freeze responses to stress.
- **Describe** how the body reacts during each stress response.
- **Identify** patterns of fight, flight, or freeze with real-life scenarios.
- **Illustrate** an example fight, flight, or freeze scenario and present it to the group.



Managing Stress: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

5. Introduce the **Fight, Flight, or Freeze Storyboard** activity. This activity can be completed individually or in pairs. Participants will create an illustrated, narrated storyboard depicting a fight, flight, or freeze scenario.
6. Participants present their storyboards to the whole group. Each team member should present a part of the team's work to the group. Use the optional **Oral Presentation Rubric** to assess participation and quality.
7. **Exit Ticket** – depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, or students can complete the worksheet in class, as homework, or in the following class.
8. **Have participants complete the Post-Assessment.**

REFLECTION

Stress is a natural part of life, but it doesn't have to control you. By understanding what causes stress and how it affects us, you are taking the first steps to feel more balanced, focused, and in control. Take a moment to think about one stress trigger you want to manage or one strategy you will try this week to help reduce stress in your daily life.





Managing Stress: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

EXTENSIONS

Stress Response in Real Life: Analysis

Participants identify a scene from:

- TV
- social media
- sports
- school experience

Then analyze:

- What stress response is shown?
- Was it effective?
- What alternative response could improve the outcome?

DIFFERENTIATION

Content Support: Break longer tasks into smaller steps with check-in points.

Allow think-pair-share before whole group discussions.

English Language Learners: Pair students with a supportive peer for discussions and collaborative activities.

Provide sentence starters:

- "When I feel stressed, I..."
- "I usually respond to stress by..."

Pre-teach key vocabulary: stress, fight, flight, freeze, anxiety, response, etc.

Process Differentiation: Allow verbal responses or teacher scribing.

Allow participants to respond with visuals (cards with fight, flight, or freeze) instead of movement in the activity.

Advanced or Early Finishers: Challenge participants to create a plan for a calming classroom corner or a teen relaxation room.



Managing Stress: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

RESOURCES

Optional Videos:

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

Fight Flight Freeze – Anxiety Explained for Teens

https://youtu.be/rpolpKTWrp4?si=Fdf7E_wl6CQzwr4h

What is Stress?

https://youtu.be/gnrqG4BBsOA?si=gA-DeXCQ079P_ucg

NM Standards:

NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):

CTE 2.1.9: Listen to and speak with diverse individuals to enhance communication skills

CTE 6.2.1: Understand health and safety standards and concepts

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):

CRP-3: Attend to personal health and financial well-being

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12):

SL1: Participate in a range of conversations

SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence