

FEELING SAFE

When faced with danger or stress, our brains instinctively enter a "fight, flight, or freeze" mode. Prolonged exposure to adversity can cause us to remain in this heightened state even after the threat has passed. This constant hypervigilance, characterized by tension and anxiety, prevents us from accessing the more beneficial resources our brains can offer.

However, when we feel safe, our brains begin to relax. This sense of calm allows us to explore strategies and solutions that can provide relief or a "shelter from the storm" of emotions such as sadness, anxiety, anger, fear, or confusion.

RESOURCES:

A safe space is an environment where individuals can feel assured that they will not face discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other form of emotional or physical harm. To create your own safe space, consider incorporating the following elements:

- Take deep belly breaths to prepare yourself.
- Play music that soothes you.
- Decorate your space with familiar and comforting items, or objects that help calm your senses, such as sensory and fidget items, such as stress balls, fidget spinners, weighted blankets, aromatherapy diffusers, tactile toys (e.g. slime and sand), and more.
- Engage in calming and focusing activities, such as mindfulness meditation, yoga, reading, journaling, arts and crafts, listening to music, breathing exercises, puzzles, and more.



ACTIVITY

A "safety team" or "safety network" consists of trusted adults who will listen, believe, and assist you when you feel unsafe. Establishing a safety team ensures you know who to turn to for support and advice or when you have questions.

You might want to document your trusted adults in a journal, on your computer or phone, or on a sheet of paper that is easily accessible. Inform the members of your safety team so they are prepared to help you if needed. Consider who you would like to include in your safety team today and write it down to have a plan in place.