

Elder Justice Advocate Project: Trauma Cycle

The danger has passed and our bodies start to eliminate cortisol and other stress hormones

Return to homeostasis

Stressor diminishes or is eliminated

The parasympathetic nervous system initiates a "rest & digest," calming response

Introduction of stressor (traumatic event or events)

- Trauma affects everyone differently
- Trauma is cumulative

Brain signals body about potential threat

The amygdala (responsible for emotional processing) sends out a distress signal to the hypothalamus, which controls the body's autonomic nervous system (ANS), which contains the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems

Assess for danger

The sympathetic nervous system acts like a stimulant, preparing the body for fight or flight. During this period, we are still able to process the situation to determine if the situation is dangerous

Flight, fight, or freeze response

- <u>Fight</u> anger, aggression, defensiveness, explosiveness, arguing
- Flight panic, restlessness, anxiousness
- <u>Freeze</u> dissociation, depression, shutdown, avoidance

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