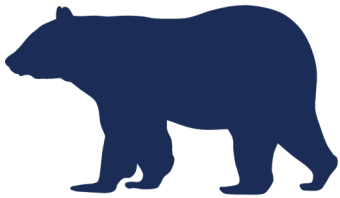


Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Institute

Trauma Reactions

Most of us have heard of the 3 standard trauma responses, fight, flight or freeze. There are two additional standard responses to trauma, hide and fawn/appease.



Fight kicks in when we feel that we need to fight to survive. A person fights in an attempt to remove the trauma by matching power for power. Our brains send signals throughout the body to rapidly prepare for the physical demands of fighting. Signs of fight response include the urge to punch someone or something, crying, upset stomach, and/or feeling intense anger.



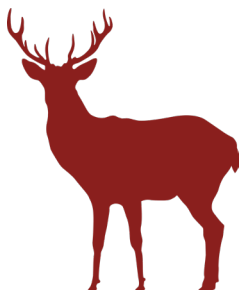
Flight is the desire to remove ourselves from the trauma by disengaging, escaping or avoiding. Flight typically occurs when we don't feel strong enough to fight back and attempts to remove ourselves from the trauma as quickly as possible. Flight can be physical or mental (daydreaming, going to "another place" to detach from immediate danger).



Freeze happens when we aren't sure what to do and we dissociate from the trauma and shut down. We stop listening to people and may numb ourselves to avoid thinking. In freeze mode, we may experience pale skin, a sense of dread, a loud, pounding heart, feeling stiff, heavy, cold or numb, and a decreasing heart rate.



A **hiding** individual attempts to disconnect or become invisible. This can also be physical and mental (daydreaming to avoid reality). Sometimes hiding involves masking our true selves in order to survive long-term trauma. In some cases, we may gradually lose connection to our authentic selves and have no idea who we truly are.



Fawning occurs when we downplay our personal needs and instead focus on people-pleasing behavior. In order to get the situation to go away, an individual will try to determine what the person in power wants and give it to them. The fawn response is typically prominent in people who grew up in abusive families or situations.