ADULTS & TEENS | EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

# Understanding Fight, Flight, Freeze, and Fawn



### WHAT THIS IS

When your brain senses danger, it can automatically respond in one of four ways. These are survival reactions, not character flaws.

### HOW TO USE IT

1. Read the four responses.
2. Circle the ones you notice in yourself.
3. Note what helps you shift back to safe.

### EXAMPLE

*"I always say yes to everything. I learned it's a fawn response, a way I kept the peace."*

## Fight

- Anger, irritability
- Arguing, controlling
- Feeling tense and ready to defend

**Helps:** Safe ways to release energy, assertive communication

## Flight

- Anxiety, restlessness
- Staying busy, perfectionism
- Avoiding or escaping

**Helps:** Slowing down, grounding, facing small steps

## Freeze

- Feeling stuck or numb
- Going blank, spacing out
- Difficulty acting or speaking

**Helps:** Gentle movement, orienting, warmth, safe company

## Fawn

- People-pleasing
- Difficulty saying no
- Putting others' needs first to stay safe

**Helps:** Practicing boundaries, naming your needs

**The response I notice most in me**

**What helps me come back to safe**

**Go at your own pace.** Skip anything that feels like too much, and stop any time. Trauma education and self-help materials are not a substitute for individualized trauma-informed care.

Educational self-help resource from Therapy with Sazzy, an initiative of Beyond Boundaries Consulting, LLC. It is not a diagnosis or a substitute for individualized professional care. In a crisis call or text 988, or call 911.