



**THE HINDA INSTITUTE**  
*presents*

# **NAVIGATING TO HEALTH: DIFFUSING AND MANAGING TRAUMA**

**Session 4 - Wednesday, May 6, 2026**

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*Presented by:*

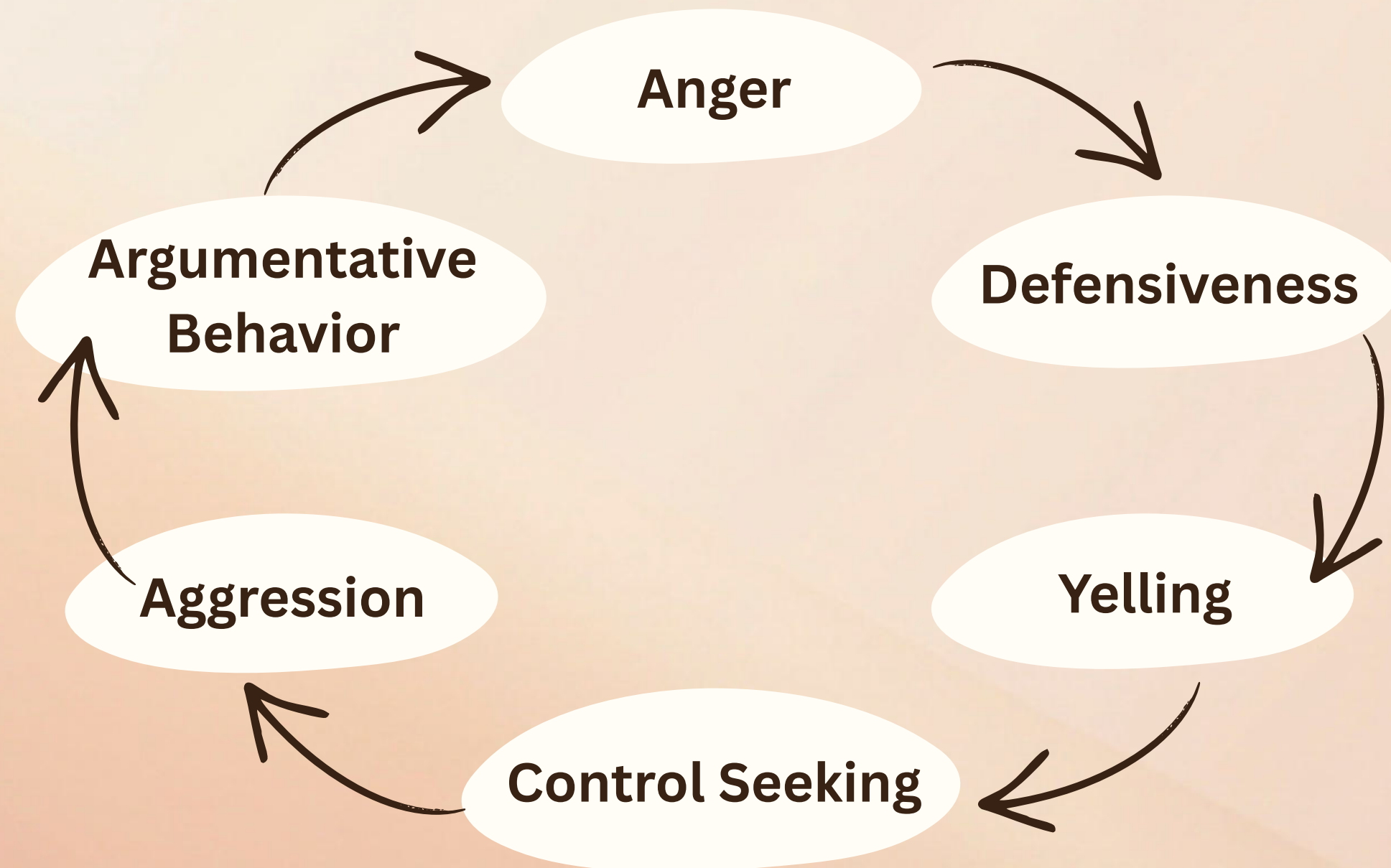
Dr. Stephanie Kutzen, LCSW & Mr. William Bouton

*Final Course Date: Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>*



# Recognizing & Diffusing Trauma Survival Responses: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn Responses Definition

## FIGHT - HYPERAROUSAL



## UNDERLYING NEED

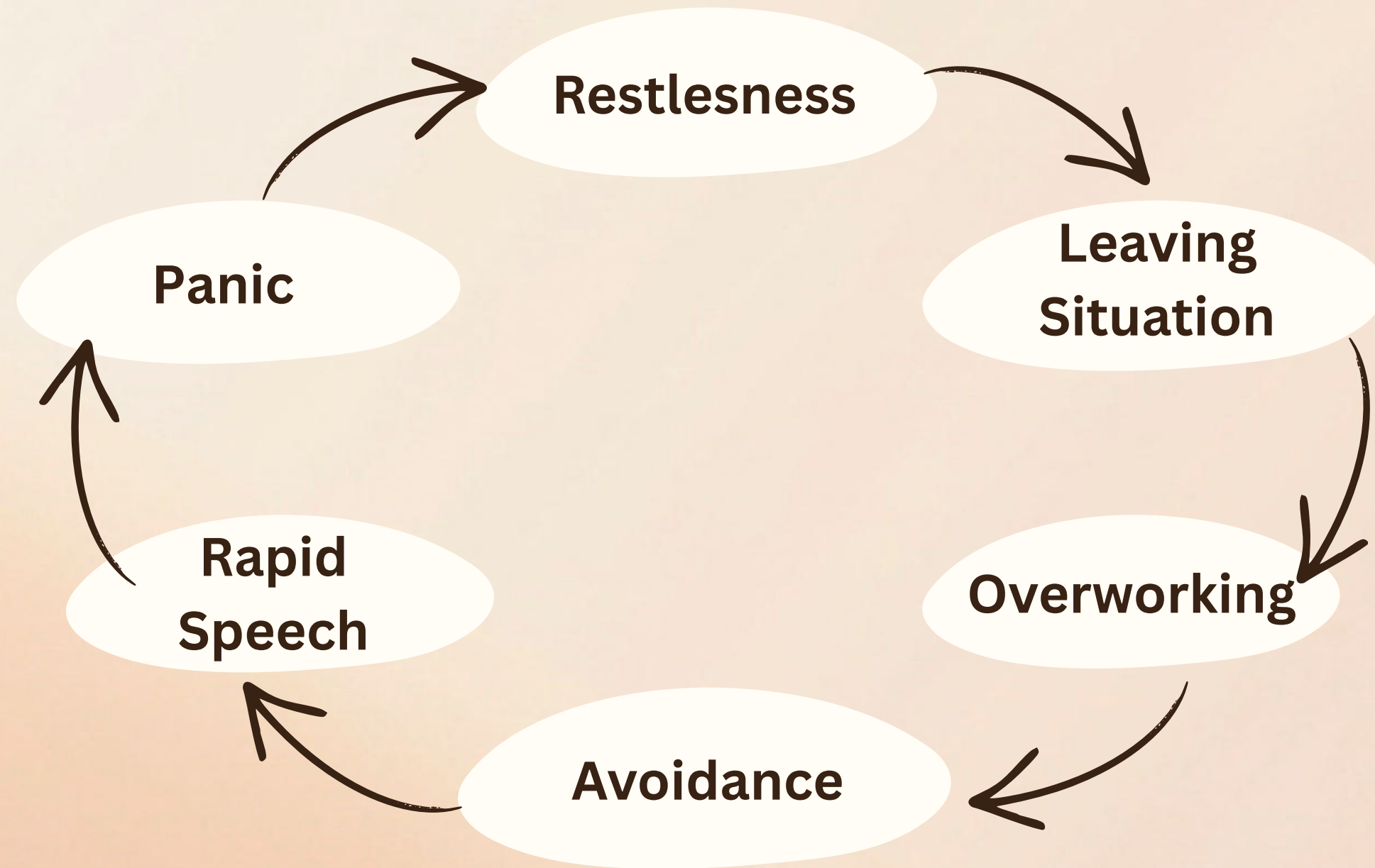
Safety through control



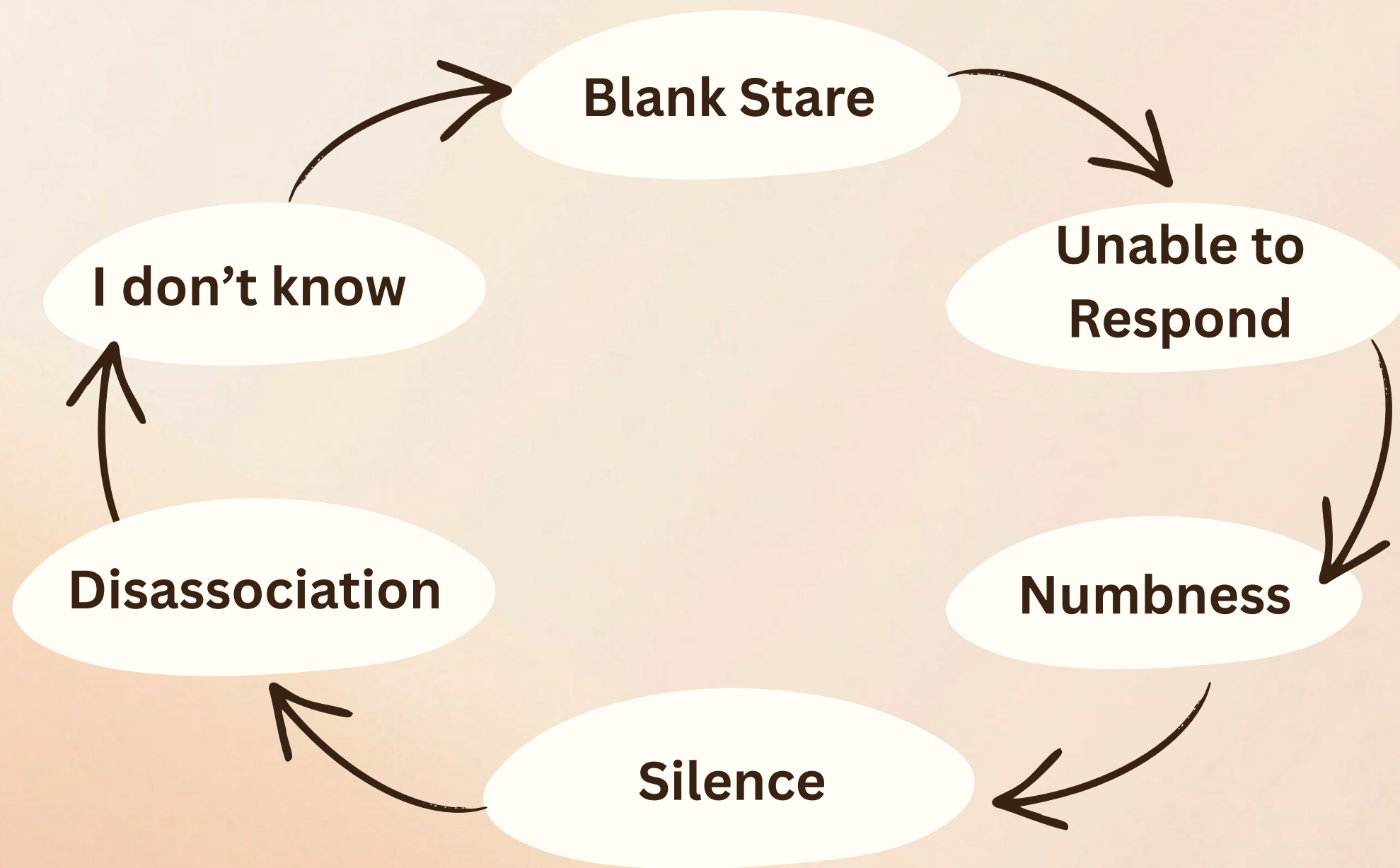
# FLIGHT - ESCAPE

## UNDERLYING NEED

Safety through escape



# FREEZE - SHUTDOWN



# UNDERLYING NEED

Safety via immobility



# FAWN - APPEASING



## UNDERLYING NEED

Safety through compliance



## Discussion

*What Comes to Mind?*

**Do you recognize any of these responses in yourself?**



# Diffusion Skill Building – 4 F's

## FIGHT

**Lower Voice**

**Acknowledge/measure  
threat perception**

**Avoid power  
struggle**

**Think of other  
choices → implement**

## **Longer Term Support**

- Trauma Informed Cognitive Behavior Therapy (T-I CBI)
- Somatic Practice - Five Senses
- Body Work
- Mindfulness Training



# FLIGHT

**Flight Response is  
Energy: Use It!**

**Walk Briskly**

**Do Wall Push Ups**

**I can bolt in 10 minutes  
to regain choice**

**Ground your Senses**



# **FREEZE - Temporary Shut Down**

**Wrap up in a  
warm blanket**

**Begin controlled  
breathing**

**Put on music:  
Sway or tap your feet**

**Hold an ice cube or  
something textured**

**Splash water on  
your face**



# **FAWN - Smoothing things over to stay safe**

**Respond to noticing  
urge to say yes**

**Say out loud:  
“This is my fawn response”**

**Fawning thrives on quick  
responses: pause & think I  
don’t have to answer,  
Say “I’ll get back to you”**

**Key Shift: Reframe from “If  
they’re upset, I’m not safe” to  
“They can be upset, I’m okay”**

**Reflect: What was I  
afraid of; try next time  
to support boundaries**



# Interactive Exercises - Spot the Response: Offer Skills

## Four Breakout Rooms

Group 1: Role is person in Fight response

Group 2: Role is person in Flight response

Group 3: Role is person in Freeze response

Group 4: Role is person in Fawn response



# Participant Take Aways from Exercise



**“Connection diffuses  
what control escalates”**



# Summary Table

Response	Looks Like	Core Need	Diffusion Skill
Fight	Anger, Control	Safety	Lower threat, reach for choice
Flight	Avoidance, Escape	Relief	Slow pace, use energy for
Freeze	Shut down, Silence	Protection	Gentle grounding
Fawn	Appeasing, Compliance	Connection	Support boundaries



# Closing: Questions & Answers

**Final Session: Wednesday, May 20th at 7:00 pm**

