

Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn Personality Types

When attachment, connection and safety are provided inadequately or are not available within childhood, this can alter how the brain develops, and can create one of four personality types with their corresponding survival strategies and defence styles. This can present as one type alone, or as a combination, and can present as mild or extreme. These personality types are developed to prevent or avoid further trauma.

Fight

People who develop a 'Fight' Personality type have an unconscious belief that 'power and control' create safety, prevent abandonment and protect love. This means that they believe in order to survive, they must pursue power and control others. In order to feel safe, their threat response is to actively attack, confront or rage at others. They will often try to connect with others by controlling them, and demands perfection. This personality type can develop within an environment that did not sufficiently enforce boundaries and limits, enabled overindulgence and allowed intimidation. Common characteristics of those with a 'fight' personality type includes having an incessant monologue, criticizing others and raging, and can display behavior in the form of assertiveness, or bullying. When making decisions they can often be impulsive, and will avoid isolation.

Flight

People who develop a 'Flight' Personality type have an unconscious belief that 'perfectionism and achievement' will make them safe and lovable. This means that they believe in order to survive, they must escape into thought (an obsession) and action (a compulsion), and may micromanage others. In order to feel safe, their threat response is to actively achieve, perform and think obsessively. They will often try to withdraw from others by staying focused on their own personal performance, and is compelled by perfection. This personality type can develop within an environment that produced a hyperactive response to family trauma, ranging from perfectionist 'A-student' behaviour, to uncontrollable, disruptive behaviour. Common characteristics of those with a 'flight' personality type includes worrying, having performance anxiety, being an over-achiever and being a thrill seeker, and can display behaviour in the form of being efficient, or a perfectionist. When making decisions they can often be over-analytical, and will avoid inaction.

Fawn

People who develop a 'Fawn' Personality type have an unconscious belief that 'in order to be accepted in a relationship they must forfeit all of their needs, rights, preferences and boundaries'. This means that they believe in order to survive, they must keep others happy and please, and are often exploited by others. In order to feel safe, their threat response is inactive: to conform to other's wishes. They will often try to connect with others merging with people, and wants to achieve social perfection. This personality type can develop within an environment that teaches that safety and love can be earned by being compliant and serving others. Common characteristics of those with a 'faun' personality type includes being the entertainer, agreeing to please others, having a high concern with fitting-in and flattering others, and can display behaviour in the form helpfulness, or servitude. When making decisions they can often defer to others, and will avoid conflict.

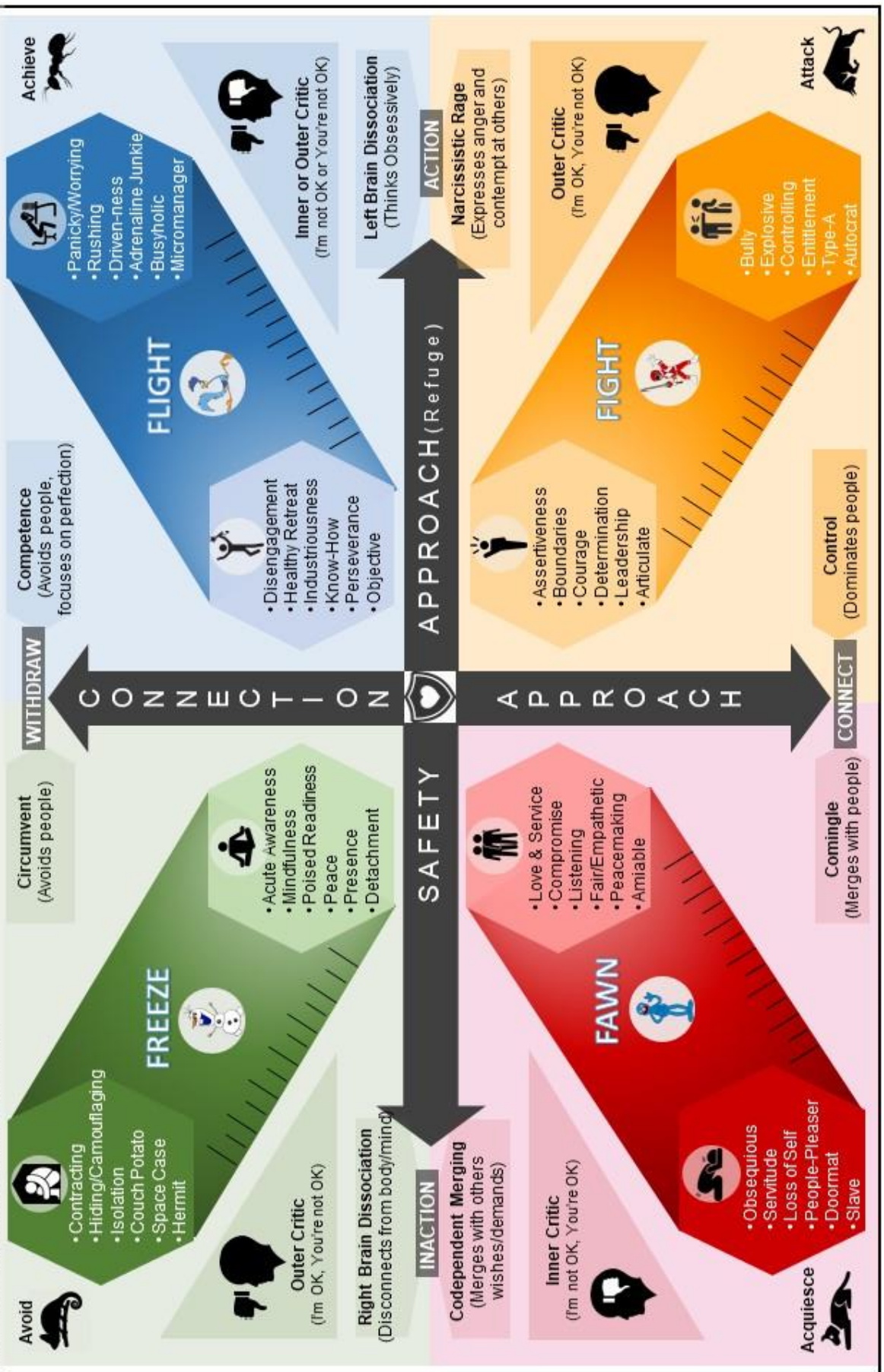
Freeze

People who develop a 'Freeze' Personality type have an unconscious belief that 'people are synonymous with danger'. This means that they believe in order to survive, they must avoid human contact, and are often detached from others. In order to feel safe, their threat response is inactive: to avoid, withdraw and disconnect from themselves. They will often try to withdraw from others by isolating and avoiding people, and is anxious of achievement. This personality type can develop within an environment that blamed them for things that were out of their control, were given no support/abandoned and were not able or allowed to employ a fight, flight or faun response. Common characteristics of those with a 'freeze' personality type includes hibernating, sleeping, daydreaming, constantly watching TV, playing video games or online-browsing, and can display behaviour in the form of being peaceful, or numb/vacant/dissociated. When making decisions they can often struggle, and will avoid people.

The 4F Trauma Personality Types Continuum

Based on Pete Walker's model in the book "Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving" @ComplexTraumaHealing

This model elaborates the 4 basic survival strategies and defensive styles that develop out of our instinctive Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fawn Response. Variations in your childhood abuse/neglect pattern, birth order and genetics result in you gravitating towards a specific 4F survival strategy. Each of these trauma personality types is on a continuum that runs from mild to extreme and positive to negative.



Recovery from Polarized 4F Trauma Personality Types

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It is recommended to self-assess your own hierarchical use of the 4F responses. Try to determine your dominant type and hybrid, and think about what percentage of your time is spent in each of the 4F responses. Recovery primarily involves psychoeducation, redirection of unhelpful responses, grieving, shrinking the critic and skill development. Also, a key recovery goal is to have adaptability – an easy and appropriate access to all the 4F responses.

