

Dysregulation in the classroom



FIGHT

Push back

What it looks like

- Arguing or challenging authority
- Yelling or swearing
- Throwing objects
- Refusing directions

What may be happening internally

- Student feels threatened, embarrassed, or powerless
- Brain shifts into defend mode



FLIGHT

Get away

What it looks like

- Asking to leave the room frequently
- Avoiding work
- Excessive talking or joking
- Distracting peers

What may be happening internally

- Anxiety about failure or embarrassment
- Brain trying to escape perceived danger



FREEZE

Get stuck

What it looks like

- Blank staring
- Head down
- Slow processing
- Not starting assignments

What may be happening internally

- Student feels overwhelmed
- Thinking brain partially offline



FAWN

Please others

What it looks like

- Excessively trying to please the teacher
- Apologizing frequently
- Agreeing even when confused
- Copying others' work to avoid mistakes
- Helping others constantly but avoiding own work
- High anxiety about getting in trouble

What may be happening internally

- Student attempts to stay safe through approval
- Fear of conflict, rejection, or punishment
- Learned strategy: "If I make everyone happy, I'll be safe."