

CARE Outreach

Understanding Trauma

Plain language guide to fight/flight/freeze/fawn, triggers, and grounding.

What is Trauma?

Trauma is our whole-person response to experiences that overwhelm our ability to cope. It can be acute (a single event), chronic (ongoing), or complex (multiple/long-term).

Trauma responses are normal adaptations to abnormal stress.

Common Responses — 4F Model

- **Fight:** agitation, anger, confronting perceived threats
- **Flight:** restlessness, avoidance, perfectionism, overworking
- **Freeze:** numbness, shutdown, indecision, dissociation
- **Fawn:** people-pleasing, over-apologizing, conflict avoidance

Grounding in the Moment

- 5–4–3–2–1 senses check (name 5 things you see, 4 touch, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste).
- Box breathing (inhale 4 • hold 4 • exhale 4 • hold 4).
- Orienting: name the date, place, and one thing you are grateful for.

When to Reach Out

If symptoms persist or interfere with daily life, connect with licensed providers or call/text **988** for crisis support.

Resource	How it Helps	Link
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	24/7 text/call/chat support	https://missouri988.org
FindTreatment.gov	Locate mental health/substance use care	https://findtreatment.gov
MOBHC — Get Help Now	Community mental health centers in Missouri	https://www.mobhc.org/get-help-now

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