

We all have automatic defenses: fight, flight, freeze, attach, and submit. These defenses are normal, natural, and spontaneous; we do not get to consciously choose when a defense is activated or which one(s) are activated in response to a given situation. Knowing more about our protective parts (how they have helped us in the past and how they might continue to be activated in the present) can allow us to identify when we are triggered and help our nervous system find its way back to feeling safer, calmer, and in the present moment. The more we do this, the more we teach our nervous system that we are safe now and we have choice now.

SUBMIT/COLLAPSE

Chronic depression, feeling flat, self-hatred, shame, and not wanting to be alive (but not necessarily suicidal) are trademark indicators of submit/collapse. Dissociation also happens with this part. We may feel flat, disconnected, lose time, feel out of our body, or feel fuzzy in our minds. Submit/collapse is our last defense, and often gets used when we have no other choice—we are trapped, powerless, and overwhelmed. Submit/collapse serves to try to turn off our physical and emotional responses to try to distance us as much as possible from the threat.

Do you recognize any of the following?

- Depressed
- Ashamed
- Filled with self-hatred
- Passive
- Want to be dead
- Flat affect
- Numb (emotionally and/or physically)
- Dissociation

IMPLICIT MEMORIES:

There are 5 Building Blocks of Experience (*Emotions, thoughts/beliefs, somatic experiences, urges, 5 sense perception*). When your “submit” survival resource has been activated, what changes in your experience?

Emotions:

Thoughts/beliefs:

Body posture
and sensations:

Urges to move:

5 sense perception:

How old do you feel?

Describe your negative thoughts, emotions, and body movements/ sensations when you think about “Submit” as a short coming.

When have you used this resource? How has “Submit” helped you when you needed it?

Describe your thoughts, emotions, and body movements/ sensations when you think about “Submit” as something that helped you deal with difficult times.

WoT: Hypoarousal. Since submit is a hypoaroused state, it requires bringing energy into the nervous system to find regulation. Adding energy into a system often takes longer than decreasing activation.

Resourcing tools:

- Standing and walking
- Body brushing/containment, squeezing the limbs gently to feel the edges of your body
- Pushing a wall
- Orienting
- Grounding