

Strategies to Avoid the Submit-Fight Cycle

Review the video, *The Fear Cascade in Practice*, in the *Trauma and Resilience Navigation Essentials* toolkit to learn more about the Submit-Fight Cycle. This dynamic can occur unintentionally when working as a team with youth in schools and in ICFs. Below are strategies that leaders can review and demonstrate for team members to help avoid the Submit-Fight Cycle.

Strategy One: Descriptive Directions and Descriptive Praise.

- **Descriptive Directions.** Describes how the requested action helps the school, home, community, family, or others.
- **Descriptive Praise.** Describes how the person and their actions have made a meaningful contribution to the school, home, community, family, or others.

Instead of:	Descriptive Direction	Descriptive Praise
"Wipe that up!"	"We need to clean the tables to help keep everyone healthy."	"Thanks for cleaning the table, that will really help keep us all from getting sick from germs."
"You need to quiet down!"	"It would really help everyone stay calm if we can keep our voices quiet while playing."	"Wow! You guys are super quiet and that really helps keep all the kids calmer and our classroom a safer place for everyone!"

Strategy Two: Provide Choices.

Offer options of what youth can do when they want to do something that is not available or not safe. Consider including pictures as well as words when offering choices, especially for youth that may have difficulty processing verbal communication. In stressful situations, visual supports become helpful for those with typical verbal communication skills. Choices, even if not the preferred choice, can create a situation where both the adult and youth have some control and can avoid a submit relationship.

Strategy Three: Reflect, Honor, Connect.

Acknowledge what someone has communicated, respect their perspective (you do not need to agree), and offer ways to move forward to build a relationship. Learn more about the Reflect, Honor, Connect strategy by reviewing the video and resources about this strategy in the *Trauma and Resilience Navigation Essentials* toolkit.

Strategy Four: "No" in Translation.

Avoid words such as "No", "Stop", "Don't". Instead phrase requests or directions in a way that offers options, provides information, and avoids triggering an unsafe reaction. Learn more about the "No" in Translation strategy by reviewing the video and resources about this strategy in the *Trauma and Resilience Navigation Essentials* toolkit.