

FOUR KEY WAYS COLLAPSE/SUBMIT CAN PRESENT IN A CLIENT

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The collapse/submit trauma response is often considered “the defense response of last resort.”

It’s how the nervous system often handles chronic, inescapable trauma.

In a moment of trauma, this defense response can lessen the client’s experience of pain.

But after the trauma has passed, these adaptations interfere with a healthy life.

Here are four key ways collapse/submit might show up in your client:

Compliance / Obedience



Your client might be simply going through the motions of life on autopilot. They may feel detached from bodily experiences, and their feelings no longer guide their actions. For example, a client who experiences domestic violence may no longer be aware of fear, which keeps the person in the situation.

Treatment-Resistant Depression



Experiencing ongoing, inescapable traumatic stress can lead to treatment-resistant depression. The defining feature of this kind of depression is **learned helplessness**. When your client presents with this symptom, it’s important to consider the client’s history (for example, did they experience chronic, inescapable stress?).

Interpersonal Conflict



A patient in collapse/shutdown might have difficulty engaging with others and/or setting boundaries.

Social Avoidance / Desire to Isolate



Collapse/submit can make it difficult for a patient to engage in basic daily activities, like making meals or personal hygiene. They may withdraw socially.

Being able to recognize the many ways that collapse/submit can manifest in your client is crucial for providing effective treatment.