



Strategy Tool: Avoiding Power Struggles

Planning for possible power struggles with students is necessary so that you can prepare your response ahead of time. An important aspect of planning for such events is to reflect on and examine some of your own personal triggers that might prompt you to engage in a power struggle. As you plan for how to address power struggles, revisit the [Dodging the Power-Struggle Trap](#) article for specific tactics to use.

Triggers: Everyone has things that get under their skin and can cause them to have an emotional response. Understanding and recognizing those triggers is the first step in preparing for avoiding power struggles.

Some of my personal triggers are:

If there is a particular student or group of students that you find yourself being triggered by, think about them specifically and how you would address an attempt at a power struggle.

Disengage: It takes two people for a power struggle to occur. Removing yourself from the situation can sometimes be enough to avoid such an incident.

I will disengage from the student and help myself appear calm by:

Interrupt: Once the student's emotions and behavior begin to escalate, you can sometimes alter the direction of the event in a positive and respectful way.

I will interrupt the student's escalating behavior by:



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Deescalate: If disengaging and interrupting techniques don't work to diffuse the situation, helping a student calm down so that you can eventually address the incident is the last step.

I will help the student calm down and manage their intense emotions by:

Plan to Address Incident: After the power struggle has been avoided and dealt with, you may still need to address the behavior that caused the event to occur. Think about whether any consequences are necessary and if the relationship with the student needs to be addressed.