

# Window of Tolerance

The Window of Tolerance is the space where we are comfortable, and feel safe. You are able to deal with the daily stressors of life without anxiety, exhaustion, or feeling out of control. Hyper-arousal comes from the fight or flight response which can make you feel bursts of anger or could make you shut down completely. It's important to know when you start to feel dysregulated so that you can use coping skills and return back to your Window of Tolerance.

## Hyper-arousal



Feelings of extreme anxiousness, anger, and overwhelm. You may feel out of control. It feels like your body wants to fight or run away - these feelings are almost uncontrollable.

## Dysregulation

You start to feel increasingly agitated, irritable, and frustrated. It feels uncomfortable, as if you are being revved up but not quite out of your control



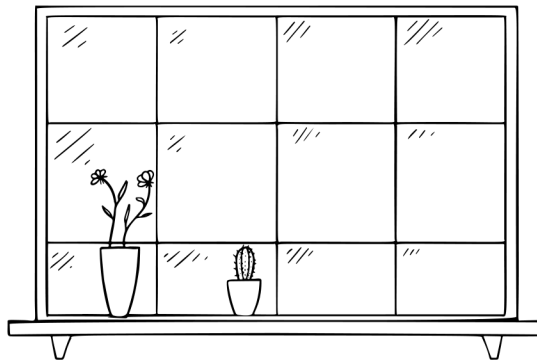
**Stress, trauma and anxiety can shrink your**

### WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

If your window shrinks you may find it harder to stay calm and make good decisions



You feel present, calm and safe. You are able to cope and feel in control



**Relaxing activities, exercise, grounding, mindfulness and help from your support system can expand your**

### WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



## Dysregulation

You start to feel spacey, as if you want to zone out and not be in the moment. It's almost like daydreaming - exiting the here-and-now.

## Hypo-arousal



Your body wants to shut down completely. You may feel physically numb and frozen. You feel distant or disconnected from people with little to no energy. This feeling is out of your control and it just happens to your body

# Window of Tolerance

When you can start to recognize yourself feeling dysregulated you can take action.

The first step to returning to your window of tolerance would be to recognize the symptoms of hyper-arousal. This awareness will act as your sign that a coping skill is needed to return to calm. Look at the signs of hyper-arousal below and tick the symptoms you start to experience when you feel dysregulated.

## How I feel or act when I am hyper-aroused

- Tight Muscles
- Irritated
- Anger
- Anger Outburst
- Throwing objects
- Damaging valuables
- Feeling out of control
- Impulsive
- Argue easily
- Struggling to concentrate
- Can't sleep
- Sweating
- Heavy breathing
- Wanting to run
- Tight Fists
- Fight

What other signs can you think of?

## Coping skills I can use when I feel hyper-aroused

When I feel hyper-arousal coming on I can try...

- Tighten muscles and ease into the relaxation as you release your muscles
- Use calming affirmations/self-talk
- Communicate your feelings and ask for a break
- Step back and allow your mind and body to regulate
- Shift your focus
- Drink a glass of water
- Take a deep breath
- Return to your senses

What other signs can you think of?

## How I act and feel when I am in my Window of Tolerance

I know that I am in the Window of Tolerance when...

# Window of Tolerance

## How I feel or act when I am hypo-aroused

Tick or write down any of the signs or feelings you feel when you start to feel hypo-arousal

- Empty
- Rattled
- Tense
- Jumpy
- Jittery
- Knotted
- Tired
- Numbness
- Blank Slate
- Emptiness
- Sleepy
- Don't feel like talking
- Can't concentrate
- Shut down
- Frozen
- Memory Loss
- No Energy

What other signs can you think of?

## Coping skills I can use when I feel hypo-aroused

When I feel hypo-arousal coming on I can try...

- Engage in and liven your senses - light a scented candle, watch a nature documentary, listen to upbeat music, or eat a textured snack
- Look for and play with different textures
- Roll a pencil between your palms
- Exercise - get your heart beating
- Go for a sensory walk - walk in nature and take 3 minutes to concentrate on your different senses and list what you are experiencing
- Dance to music

What other coping skills can you think of?

## What did you learn from this exercise?

# 63 Coping Skill Ideas

Next time you feel big emotions try one of these coping skills listed below  
- repeat them until you feel calm

- Have a cup of tea
- Find a new hobby
- Do nothing all day
- Watch a movie
- Lay in the sun
- Listen to music
- Laugh out loud
- Go for a walk
- Think about past good times
- Start a collection
- Spend time with friends
- Eat something special
- Look at beautiful scenery
- Color in a coloring in book
- Practice yoga
- Think of loved ones
- Declutter / clean
- Take care of plants /garden
- Play with slime or putty
- Hug soft stuffed animals
- Play with a fidget toys
- Daydream
- Make a gift for someone
- Go outside
- Watch a TV Show
- Take a nap
- Think "I accept myself"
- Play with a pet
- Have some alone time
- Journal
- Dance around the house
- Meditate/pray
- Dress up for no reason
- Do something new
- Light candles
- Arrange flowers
- Sing around the house
- Take a warm bath
- Listen to an audio book
- Blow Bubbles
- Build a small puzzle
- Shake a glitter jar
- Look at the moon/stars
- Say "I love you"
- Camp in the backyard
- Play a video game
- Listen to sound of nature
- Complete a task
- Create a vision board
- Do one act of kindness
- Practice mindful breathing
- Write a compliment list
- Write a letter to future self
- Go hiking
- Write a poem
- Read a book/magazine
- Try Origami
- Reflect at past kindness
- Exercise
- Create art
- Rub soft fabric or a blanket
- Pop bubble wrap
- Small calming scents like candles, sprays and/or lotions)