

Window of Tolerance

The Window of Tolerance refers to the range of physiological and emotional arousal that a person can effectively operate within.

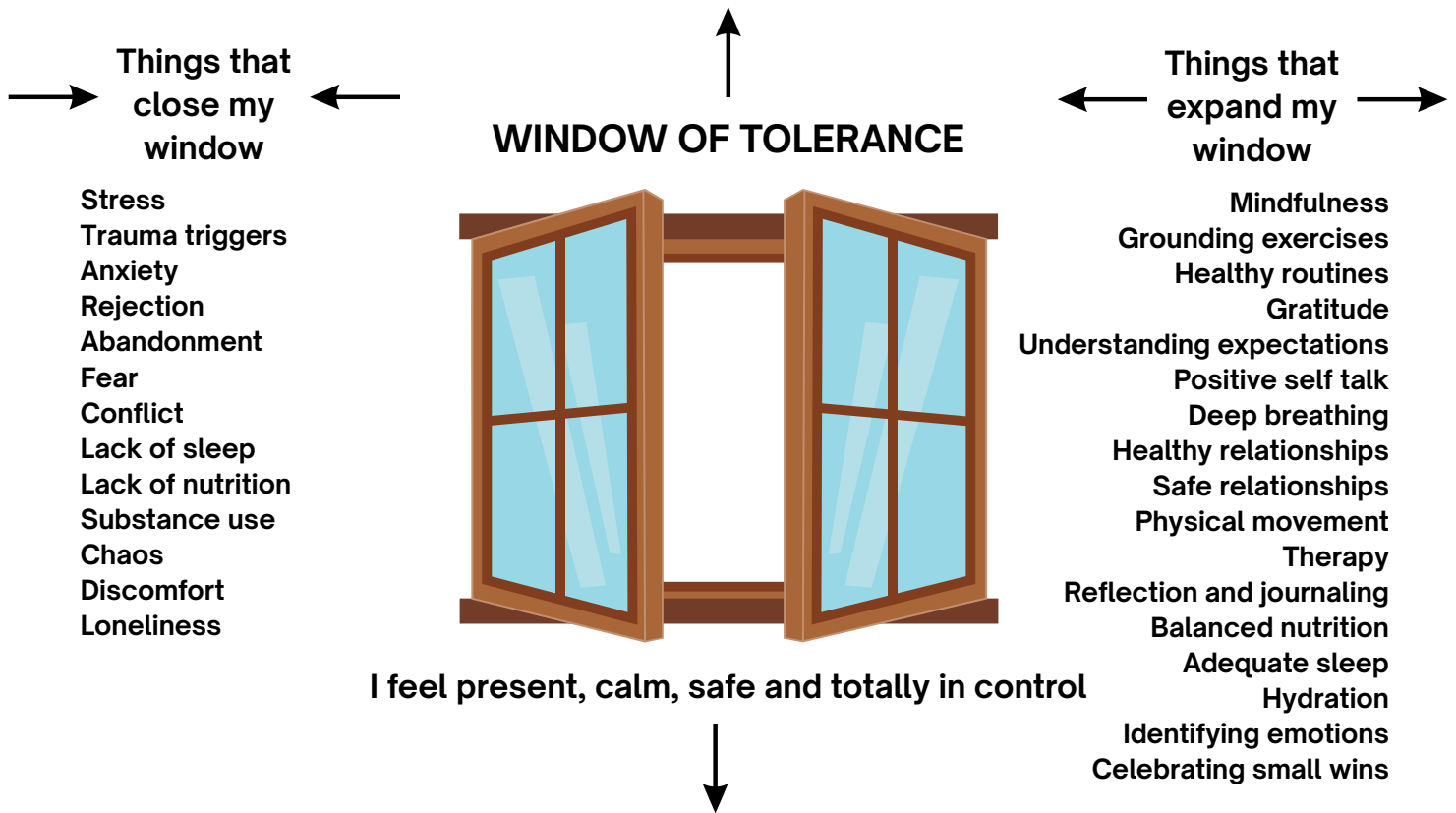
Within this optimal zone, a person is able to process information, integrate experiences, regulate their internal state, maintain cognitive functioning, respond adaptively to the environmental and engage in goal-directed behavior without becoming overwhelmed (hyperarousal) or disengaged (hypoarousal).

A state of heightened autonomic nervous system activation.

Hyperarousal: Feeling extreme anxiousness (possible panic), overwhelmed, out of control and wanting to fight or run away.

Disregulation: Feeling frustrated, agitated, or uncomfortable, yet still in control.

Signs of hyperarousal: sweating, anger, frustration, throwing things, breaking things, name calling, fighting, hot flushes, running away, can't sleep, feeling out of control, outbursts, tense, can't concentrate, memory problems



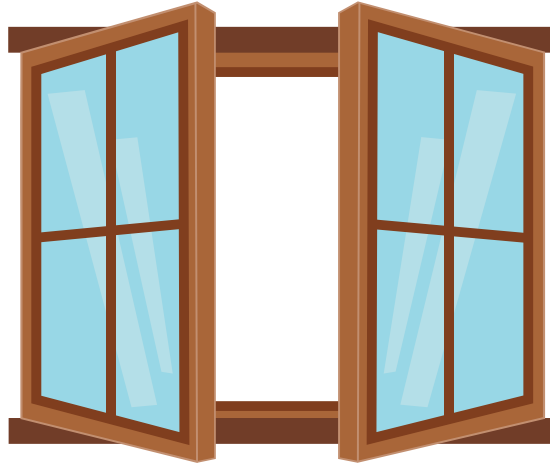
A state of reduced autonomic activation.

Disregulation: Getting close to the stage of shutting down, uncomfortable feelings start to increase, but still in control.

Hypoarousal: Freeze, shut down, becoming under-stimulated and disengagement.

Signs of hypoarousal: Numbness, feeling frozen, zoning out, lethargy, low/no energy, struggling to keep up with conversation, can't concentrate, memory problems, substance use, isolating, binge eating

Increase Your Window of Tolerance



Eat a healthy nutritious meal
Get 7+ hours of sleep
Drink plenty of water
Get some fresh air
Practice gratitude
Brush your teeth
Wash your hair
Take a warm shower
Read something uplifting
Listen to uplifting music
Spend time with friends
Clean or declutter a space
Detox from Social Media
Ask for a hug
Spend time with family
Do something you enjoy
Journal
Practice affirmations
Exercise

Rest in a quiet space
Paint, draw or color
Make your favorite food
Practice grounding techniques
Name your emotions
Reflect on experiences
Try something new
Celebrate small wins
Solve problems gradually
Identify personal triggers

Window of Tolerance Self-reflection

Describe a time when you were recently hyper- or hypo- aroused.

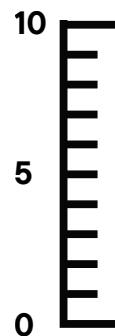
What emotions, sensations and behaviors did you experience?



When did you first become disregulated?

What triggered you?

How intense was the experience?



What helped you to move back toward your window of tolerance?

What support could have been helpful and what could you have done differently?

