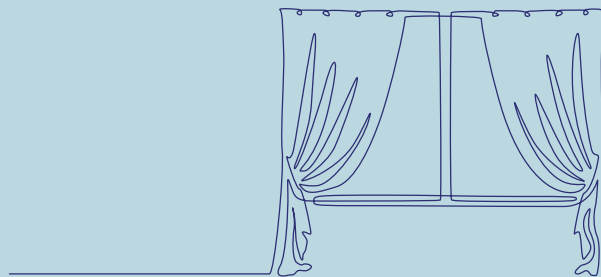


# Window of tolerance



## What is the window of tolerance?

Your window of tolerance is the zone where your emotions feel manageable. When you're inside your window, you can think, feel and react without getting overwhelmed or shutting down.

**It's the space where you can:**

Focus and learn

Handle stress

Talk about feelings

Use coping skills

Make decisions you don't regret later

Everyone's window is different—and it can change depending on sleep, stress and what's going on in your life. What happens outside the window? When stress gets too big, your body pushes you outside your window.

### ABOVE THE WINDOW:

emotions feel too intense (*anxious, angry, panicked*)

### BELOW THE WINDOW:

emotions feel too low or numb (*shut down, disconnected*)

Being outside your window doesn't mean you're doing something wrong. It means your nervous system is overwhelmed and needs support.

## Why the window matters

When you're inside your window, coping skills actually work. When you're outside your window, your body is in survival mode—and thinking clearly is harder.

**Learning to notice your window helps you:**

Catch stress earlier

Understand your reactions

Choose skills that help

Be kinder to yourself

## Hyperarousal (Too "activated")

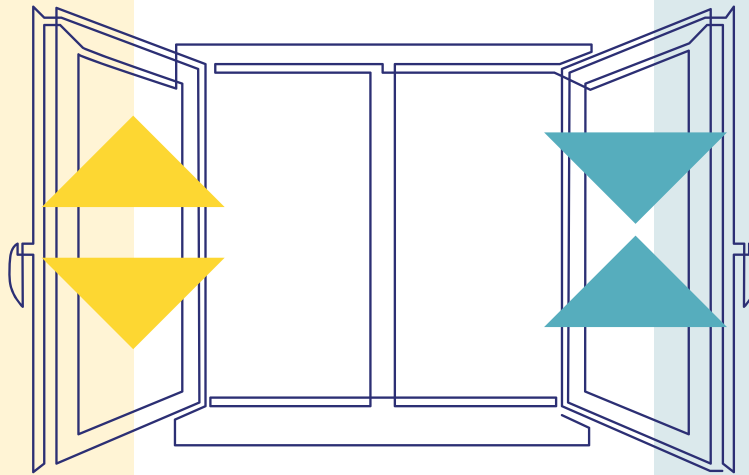
Hyperarousal is when your body and brain are in high alert mode. Everything feels intense, fast and overwhelming, as if your emotions are amplified.

When you're hyperaroused, your nervous system thinks something is wrong and is getting you ready to fight or run, even if there's no real danger.

### Things that can expand our window:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating regularly
- Drinking water
- Breathing slowly
- Grounding
- Feeling understood by someone
- Having a trusted adult
- Being able to say what you're feeling
- Releasing emotions effectively: writing, drawing, crying

### Window of tolerance



### Things that can close our window:

- Lack of sleep
- Skipping meals/not eating enough
- Ongoing stress
- Big or sudden life changes
- Feeling unsafe or unseen
- Unprocessed emotions
- Trauma or past stress
- Being overstimulated
- Self criticism and shame
- Not having support

## Hypoarousal (Too "shut down")

Hypoarousal is when your body and brain go into low energy mode. Everything feels slowed down, heavy or numb—like your emotions are turned way down or switched off.

When you're hypoaroused, your nervous system is trying to protect you by shutting down because things feel too much.

### What it can feel like:

Feeling numb, empty or disconnected

Low energy or exhaustion

Feeling spaced out or "not really here"

Trouble caring or reacting

Feeling frozen or stuck

**Reminder:** When my emotions feel too big or too empty, my body is trying to protect me—not punish me.

# My window of tolerance

When I'm inside my window, I usually feel...

When I'm outside my window, I notice...

## Things that close my window

What makes it harder for you to stay calm and grounded?

## Things that expand my window

What helps you feel safe, calm and in control again?

## My "go-to" strategies

List three things you can do when you notice you're slipping out of your window:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Reflection

What's one thing that helps you notice when you're leaving your window?

Who can you reach out to when you need help getting back inside your window?