

# Window of Tolerance Worksheet

**Your nervous system is amazing! It is designed to keep you safe and ensure your survival. Sometimes your responses can become over or under reactive and you may need help/tools to regulate back into your window of tolerance.**

*Hyperarousal occurs when you are above your window of tolerance. These are those moments when you notice: anxiety, panic, or constant worry; irritability or anger; feeling on edge or jumpy; racing thoughts; difficulty concentrating or sleeping; a sense of urgency or pressure. This is when your system responds with fight or flight.*

## Fight Response

*What helps:*

- Movement—walking, stretching, shaking out.
- Strong sensory input—cold water on hands, firm pressure.
- Clear boundaries—“I need a pause”.
- Exhaling longer than you inhale.
- Validation before problem-solving.

## Flight Response

*What helps:*

- Gentle grounding—feet on the floor, noticing the room.
- Rhythmic movement—walking, rocking, slow pacing.
- Predictability—routines, simple plans.
- Slowing the breath without forcing calm.
- Reducing stimulation when possible.

## Freeze Response

*What helps:*

- Small, gentle movements—wiggling toes, opening hands.
- Warmth—tea, blanket, warm shower.
- Soft sensory input—music, texture, gentle light.
- Being with someone safe.
- Time—without pressure to “snap out of it”.

## Fawn Response

*What helps:*

- Practicing noticing your own needs.
- Pausing before saying yes.
- Safe relationships where saying no is allowed.
- Grounding into your body before responding.
- Compassion for how this pattern developed.

*Hypoarousal occurs when you are below your window of tolerance. These are those moments when you notice: numbness or emptiness; disconnection or dissociation; low energy or collapse; feeling shut down or “blank”; difficulty thinking, speaking, or making decisions; wanting to withdraw or disappear. This is when your system responds with freeze or fawn.*