

THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Why some moments feel manageable and others feel too much.

Stronger people. Kinder systems. A brighter tomorrow.

People Heal in Connection

1 What is the window of tolerance?

The window of tolerance is the range where you can think, feel, and cope with life more effectively. It's the zone where your nervous system feels safe enough to handle everyday challenges, feel your emotions, connect with others, and respond (rather than react).

Everyone's window looks a little different, and it can change from moment to moment.

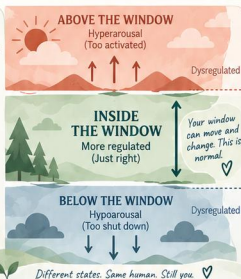
Not too much.
 Not too little.
 Just enough to be you.

Your nervous system is always doing its best to keep you safe.

2 Inside the window

When you're in your window, you might notice:

- Feeling present and grounded
- Able to feel emotions without being overwhelmed
- Flexible thinking and more options
- Connected to yourself and others
- Able to learn, focus and solve problems
- A greater sense of calm, clarity and choice



3 Above the window

When you're above your window (hyperarousal), you might notice:

- Anxiety, panic or intense worry
- Anger, irritability or frustration
- Restlessness and racing thoughts
- Feeling overwhelmed or on edge
- Overreacting to small things
- Difficulty sleeping

What helps?

- Breathing (slow, deep breaths)
- Grounding (use your senses)
- Slowing down
- Less stimulation

4 Below the window

When you're below your window (hypoarousal), you might notice:

- Numbness or feeling disconnected
- Fatigue, heaviness or low energy
- Blanking out or trouble concentrating
- Hopelessness or feeling "empty"
- Difficulty starting or speaking
- Wanting to withdraw or isolate

What helps?

- Movement (even a little)
- Warmth (blanket, drink, sun)
- Sensory input (sound, touch, smell, nature)
- One small task
- Gentle connection (with someone safe)

Small steps can help you come back.

The goal is not to feel calm all the time.
 The goal is to return with more support and less shame.

5 Why it matters

Trauma, chronic stress, and ongoing life challenges can narrow the window of tolerance, making it easier to become overwhelmed or shut down. This is a normal survival response — your nervous system is doing its best to protect you.

With support, safety, and consistent care, the window can widen over time. This means more capacity for life's ups and downs, greater resilience, and more moments where you can feel, connect, learn, and grow.

Healing creates more room for life.

What widens the window?

- Supportive connection (safe people)
- Consistent sleep
- Nutrition (a nourished body)
- Movement (in ways that feel good)
- Pacing (rest and recovery)
- Boundaries (say yes to what helps)
- Therapy (a safe space to process)
- Self-compassion (be kind to yourself)
- Practice (small, consistent steps)