ADULTS & TEENS | EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

The Window of Tolerance

WHAT THIS IS

The window of tolerance is the zone where you can feel your emotions and think clearly. Stress and trauma can push you out of it, in either direction.

HOW TO USE IT

1. Find where you are right now.
2. Note signs of being above or below the window.
3. Choose a tool to return.

EXAMPLE

"I'm above my window: racing heart, snapping. A long exhale and a walk helped."

TOO MUCH: hyper-arousal

fight / flight, panic, anger, racing thoughts



THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

calm, present, able to think and feel at the same time

TOO LITTLE: hypo-arousal

freeze, numb, shut down, spaced out, exhausted

Too much

Tools that calm down

- Long exhale
- Cool water
- Slow walking

In the window

Tools that keep you here

- Routines
- Connection
- Rest
- Mindfulness

Too little

Tools that gently activate

- Stretching
- Music
- Talking to someone
- Cold or sensory cues

Signs I am above my window

Signs I am below my window

Go at your own pace. Skip anything that feels like too much, and stop any time. Trauma education and self-help materials are not a substitute for individualized trauma-informed care.