

Window of Tolerance

The Window of Tolerance is referred to as the 'optimal zone' of arousal in which a person is able to function most effectively and emotions can be processed in a healthy way. Broadening this window allows individuals to navigate experiences more flexibly and effectively.

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hyperarousal

FLIGHT / FIGHT RESPONSE



Hyperarousal is where an individual experiences overwhelming emotions or stress responses.

Looks & Feels like: Pounding heart, scattered or racing thoughts, butterflies, the urge to run, leave, fight, restlessness, panicking, sweating and difficulty relaxing. We might feel on the attack and ready to defend.



Excessive activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the amygdala, resulting in increased stress hormone release and exaggerated emotional responses.

window of tolerance

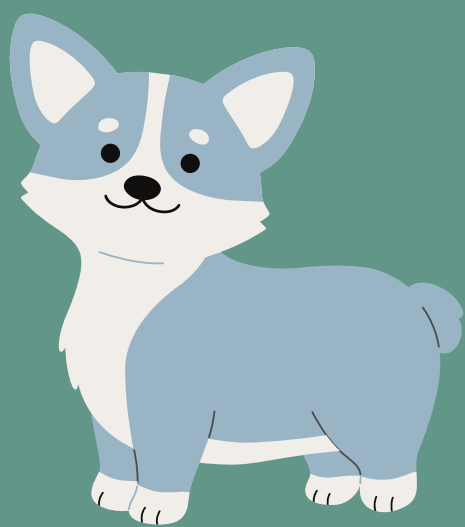
REST & DIGEST

The 'window of tolerance' is an individual's emotional comfort zone where they can handle various experiences without being overly affected by stress or pressure.

Looks & Feels like: Calm, flexible, focused, present, engaged, connected, safe.

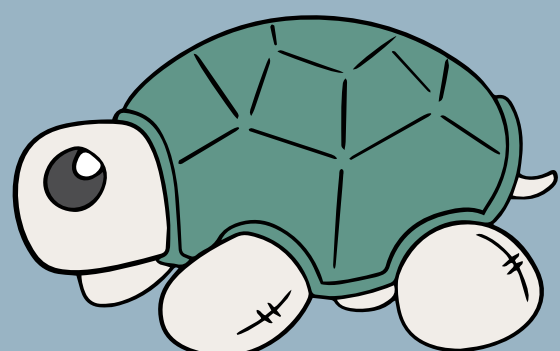


Balanced brain activity in the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala, along with moderate sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system activation.



hypoarousal

FAWN, FREEZE, FLOP



Hypoarousal is where an individual experiences reduced arousal.

Looks & Feels like: Disengagement, numbness, and dissociation from emotions and external stimuli, accompanied by lowered physiological responses like heart rate and respiration. We are more shutdown, withdrawn, and may isolate.



Reduced brain activity in alertness and emotional regulation areas like the prefrontal cortex, coupled with heightened parasympathetic nervous system activity.

Window of Tolerance

There are many things that shrink our window of tolerance throughout our lives. The good news is that we can also work to expand our window of tolerance. When we're feeling hyper-aroused or hypo-aroused, there are specific activities that we can practice. These activities can help to soothe our nervous system, returning it to its regulated state.

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hyperarousal

FLIGHT / FIGHT RESPONSE

Activities to help when you're feeling hyper-aroused. In these moments, you need calming and soothing.

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Drinking from a straw
- Throwing a ball at a blank wall
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Using a weighted blanket
- Stomping or shaking
- Listening to soft/calm music
- STOP skill
- 5-4-3-2-1 activity
- Comforting food (warm tea, hot cocoa)

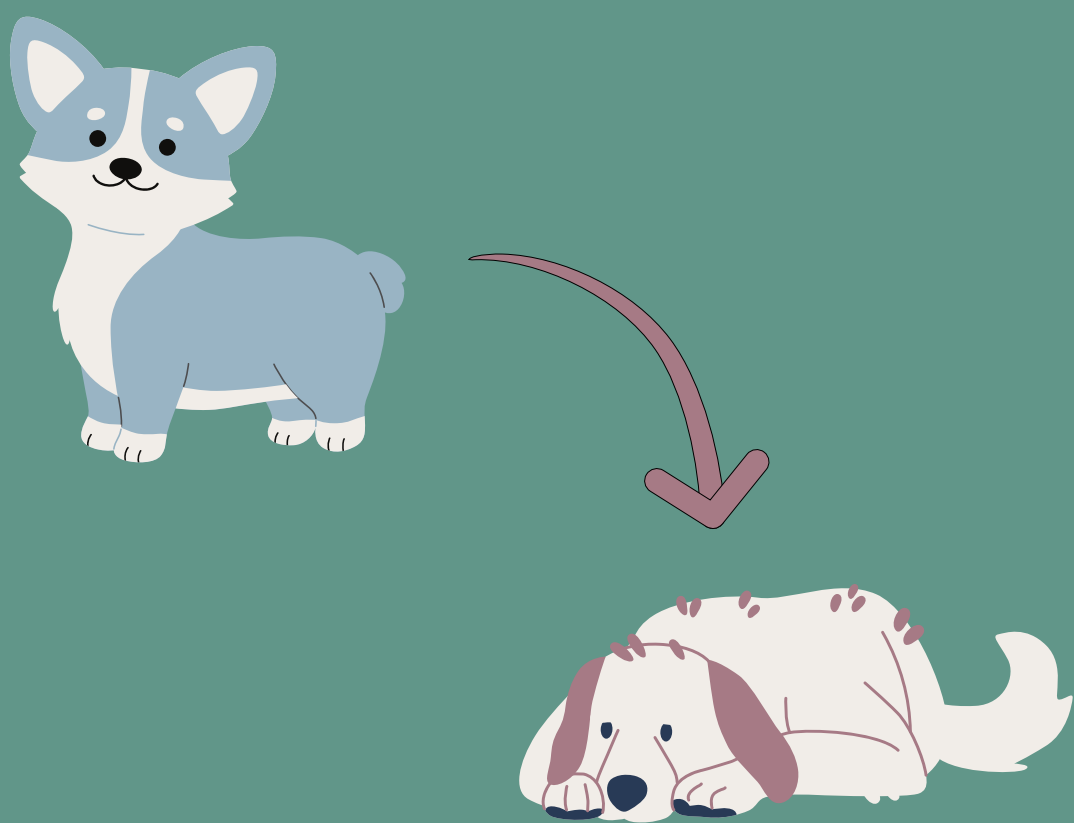


window of tolerance

REST & DIGEST

Many things shrink our window of tolerance, including...

- Stress
- Trauma
- Anxiety
- Rejection
- Abandonment
- Lack of comfort or soothing
- Constant yelling/aggression



hypoarousal

FAWN, FREEZE, FLOP

Activities to help when you're feeling hypo-aroused. In these moments, you need invigorating.

- Smelling essential oils
- Chewing crunchy food
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Rocking in a rocking chair
- Finger painting
- Water play with a straw (blowing through the straw)
- Dancing to music
- 5-4-3-2-1 activity
- Listening to fun, uplifting music

