

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

A framework for recognising workable and overwhelmed states

AT A GLANCE



The window is the range of arousal in which we can think, feel and connect with enough flexibility. Stress can move us above or below that range.

KEY IDEAS

WITHIN THE WINDOW

Present, connected, flexible and able to respond.

HYPERAROUSAL

Anxiety, panic, anger, racing thoughts or high tension.

HYPOAROUSAL

Numbness, exhaustion, disconnection or low energy.

A CHANGING RANGE

Sleep, safety, health, stress and support affect the window.

WHY IT MATTERS



The model supports earlier recognition of overwhelm and more compassionate choices for regulation and support.

PUTTING THE IDEA INTO PRACTICE

1

NOTICE

Identify body sensations, thoughts and urges.

2

MATCH THE TOOL

Settle high activation or gently mobilise low activation.

3

USE THE SENSES

Orient to the present environment.

4

SEEK CO-REGULATION

Connection can help widen workable capacity.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

1

Where am I right now?

2

What moved me outside my window?

3

What helps me return?

Use this resource as a starting point for reflection, not as a test or diagnosis.

Different experiences, cultures and circumstances may require different understandings.