

Window of Tolerance



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*When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's
our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.*

-L.R. Knost

Plan for Today



- Window of Tolerance
- Ways to increase window of tolerance
- Relating to the end of the year
- Relating to next year



Window of Tolerance



- A child's window of stress tolerance is defined by his ability to withstand pressure and fear without becoming dysregulated.
- When a child has a large window he has the ability to function well in life and at school. The executive functions for this child remain in tact.
 - ✦ Executive functions – i.e. Self-control, focus, planning, organization, flexibility, etc.
- Think about it in the brain.
 - ✦ Within the window of tolerance, where are we in the brain?

Window of Tolerance



- When in the window of tolerance, child is operating using the neocortex.
- As a reminder...
 - ✦ Neocortex – outer and largest part of the brain
 - involved in higher functions (spatial reasoning, conscious thought, self-awareness, imagination, logic, planning, reasoning, language, abstract thought)
 - involved in executive control, delayed gratification, and long term planning; center for foresight, hindsight, and insight
 - morals and ethics
 - decision making judgements between right and wrong
 - not fully developed until around 25

Window of Tolerance

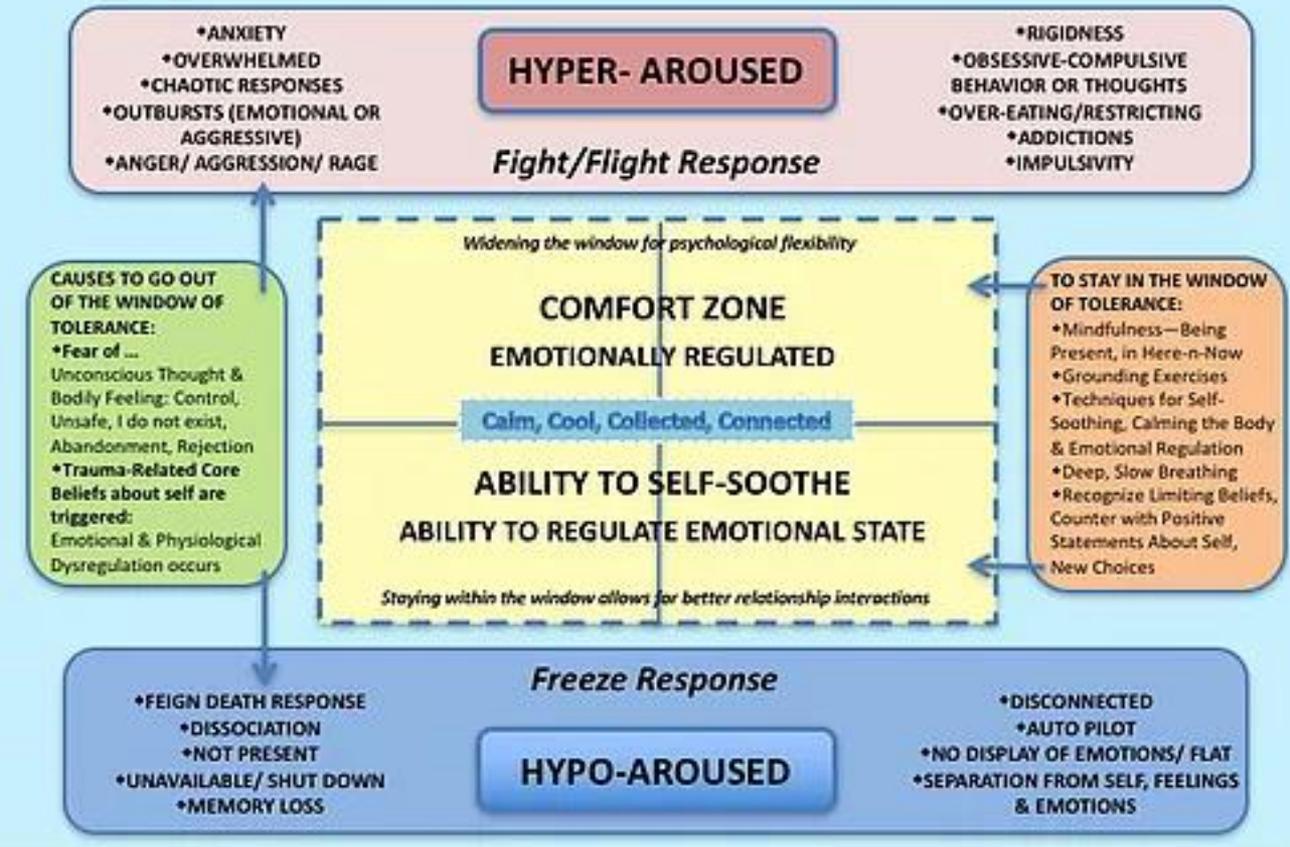


- ▶ When not in the window of tolerance, child is operating in the limbic or reptilian brain, also known as the “downstairs brain”.
- As a reminder...
 - ✦ **Limbic brain – emotional center of the brain**
 - pleasure seeking part of the brain; concerned with self-preservation, fear, and protective responses
 - emotions relating to attachment relationships reside here - life happens here in next 15 seconds
 - ✦ **Reptilian brain – most primitive and oldest part of brain**
 - vital life functions (heart rate, digestion, body temp, balance, breathing, stress response, etc.)
 - concerned primarily with survival
 - rigid, resistant to change, obsessive
 - never sleeps, ready to respond at all times of day and night - life in next 5 seconds

Window of Tolerance

Marie S. Dezelle, PhD © 2013

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE- TRAUMA/ANXIETY RELATED RESPONSES: Widening the Comfort Zone for Increased Flexibility



Window of Tolerance



- **Think about our own window of tolerance:**
 - What things keep us within that window of tolerance?
 - What things push us outside of our window of tolerance?
 - How has our window grown?
 - What makes our window shrink?
 - Different sizes in different situations?
 - Different sizes around different people?
 - What can we do to grow our own window of tolerance?

Increasing Window of Tolerance



- Positive experiences have the ability to create new neuropathways to develop new connections to be formed and thus increase the window of tolerance and ability to manage stress through connections.
- Predictable, consistent, calm, nurturing response
- Co-regulation as means to learning self-regulation
- Regulated adult
- Attunement to child
- Ideas for interventions to use in the classroom

Increasing Window of Tolerance

- Interventions to use in the classroom
 - Music
 - Relaxation strategies
 - Mindfulness – body awareness
 - Movement
 - Rhythm
 - Mandalas/expressive arts
 - Reflecting and validating feelings
 - Environmental adaptations
 - Save consequences for when back in window of tolerance



Window of Tolerance



- Talking with a kid earlier this week, I complimented his ability to regulate emotions when given news that was frustrating. His response, “But Ms. S. is always really nice to me and helps me when I need it.”
- What does this say about his window of tolerance?



End of Year



- What is window of tolerance for kids and teachers at the end of the year? How are things different right now?
- How can we support one another to stay within our window of tolerance amidst the uncertainty of COVID-19?



Next Year



- Ideas to start the year with window of tolerance in mind...
 - Ask kids what happens when they are dysregulated...
 - Ask kids what helps them feel better when dysregulated...
 - Utilize classroom and relationship adaptations to grow window of tolerance from the beginning of the year
 - Come to school with your own plan for regulating your emotions and remaining within your window of tolerance

And to leave you with this...



- https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion

"It's the little conversations
that build the relationships
and make an impact
on each student."

- Robert John Meehan -