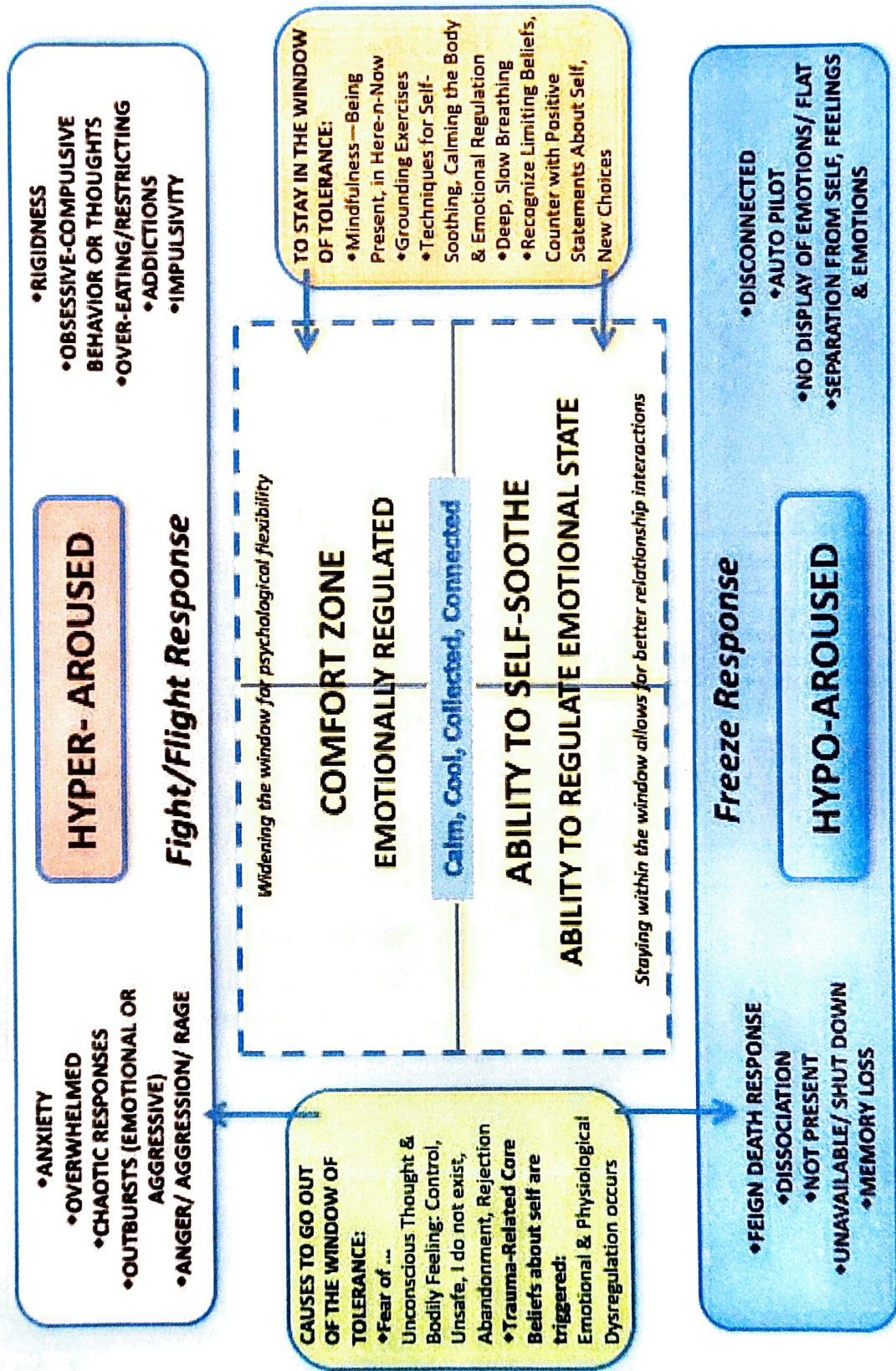
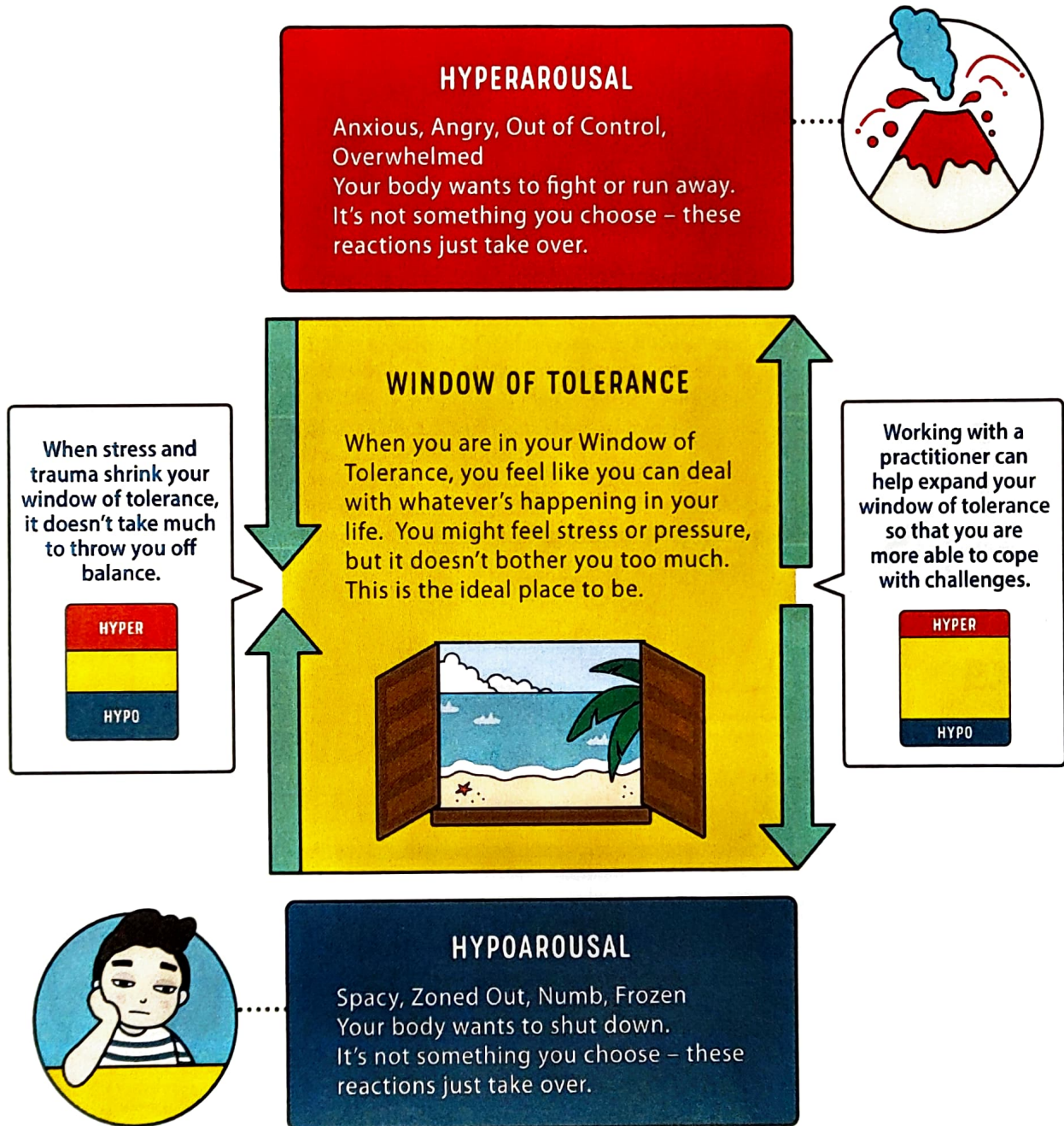


WINDOW OF TOLERANCE- TRAUMA/ANXIETY RELATED RESPONSES: Widening the Comfort Zone for Increased Flexibility



How Trauma Can Affect Your Window Of Tolerance



WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

The window of tolerance and different states that affect you



HYPERAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of increased responsiveness
- Feeling anxious, angry and out of control
- You may experience wanting to fight or run away



DYSREGULATION

- When you start to deviate outside your window of tolerance you start to feel agitated, anxious, or angry
- You do not feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet

SHRINK

your Window of Tolerance

Stress and trauma can cause your window of tolerance to shrink

Think of the window of tolerance as a river and you're floating down it. When the river narrows, it's fast and unsafe. When it widens, it slows down and you:

- are at a balanced and calm state of mind
- feel relaxed and in control
- are able to function most effectively
- are able to take on any challenge life throws at you

Meditation, listening to music, or engaging in hobbies can expand your window of tolerance

EXPAND
your Window of Tolerance

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



DYSREGULATION

- You start to feel overwhelmed, your body might start shutting down and you could lose track of time
- You don't feel comfortable but you are not out of control yet






HYPOAROUSAL

- Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness
- Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression
- You may experience your body shutting down or freeze

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Gaining a working understanding of the Window of Tolerance is the single most important thing that will help you effectively manage your stress and improve your relationships. Learning to recognize when you are outside your window of tolerance and utilizing resources to help your nervous system return to the green zone is a key component to your emotional health.

<p>Sympathetic System is Activated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Feeling OverwhelmedCan't Think ClearlyRigid Or Chaotic ThinkingAnxious / PanicEmotional ReactivityStress Patterns EmergeNo New Learning Can Take Place	<p>Hyper-Arousal Red Zone Too Much Arousal</p> 
<p>Yellow Zone (mild symptoms from list above)</p>	
<p>Parasympathetic System is Activated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience a Full Range of Emotions But with a Sense of Control and OptionsState of Mind is Calm, Alert, Flexible, AdaptableAble to Self Regulate and Connect with OthersNew Learning Can Take Place	<p>Window of Tolerance Green Zone Optimal Level of Functioning</p> 
<p>Yellow Zone (mild symptoms from list below)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Poor Contact with OthersIsolation / Withdrawal from OthersNumbing of EmotionsLimited Awareness of SensationHard Time Tracking ConversationNo New Learning Can Take Place	<p>Hypo-Arousal Blue Zone Too Little Arousal</p> 

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE AWARENESS WORKSHEET

Identify, recognize the symptoms you experience and build awareness



For **HYPERAROUSAL**, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- *Abnormal state of increased responsiveness*
- *Feeling anxious, angry and out of control*
- *You may experience wanting to fight or run away*

HYPERAROUSAL

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Anxiety | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Addictions |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Impulsivity | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Over-Eating |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Intense Reactions | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Obsessive Thoughts/Behaviour |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Lack of Emotional Safety | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Emotional Outbursts |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Hyper-Vigilance | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Chaotic Responses |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Intrusive Imagery | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Defensiveness |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Tension | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Racing Thoughts |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Shaking | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Anger/Rage |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Rigidity | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Physical and Emotional Aggression |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- | <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- | <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- |



For **HYPOAROUSAL**, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- *Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness*
- *Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression*
- *You may experience your body shutting down or freeze*

HYPOAROUSAL

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | The feeling of being disconnected | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Decreased Reactions |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | No Display of Emotions | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Shame/Embarrassment |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Auto-Pilot Responses | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Depression |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Memory Loss | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Difficulty Engaging Coping Resource |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Feign Death Response | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Low Levels of Energy |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Numbness | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Can't Defend Oneself |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Disabled Cognitive Processing | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Shutdown |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | Reduced Physical Movement | <input type="radio"/> ___ | Can't Say No |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- | <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- |
| <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- | <input type="radio"/> ___ | ----- |

5



Grounding Techniques



Take a moment to
notice five things
around you



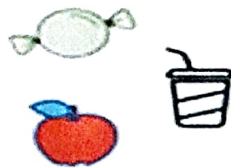
Take a moment
to touch four things
around you



Take a moment to
notice three things you
can hear



Take a moment
to notice two things
you can smell



Take a moment
to acknowledge one
thing you can taste

Stress scenarios

Scenario 1:

Jane is a working parent. She has a long commute and a job that often stretches beyond the boundaries of an eight-hour day. By the time she gets home at night, she is exhausted, and the dependent needs of others overwhelm her before she goes to bed.

Jane often falls into bed soon after the kids go to sleep so that she can be up at 5:00 am. Lately, she has been experiencing physical symptoms that show the stress of her lifestyle is getting to her.

What would you say or do?

Scenario 2:

John is in his twenties and has just moved to the city to take a new job. He doesn't know anyone in town except for a couple of people at work. Loneliness is getting to him, but he's not the type of person who does well on the singles bar scene. So, John has been spending his evenings alone in his apartment, reading or watching TV.

He is getting more and more depressed.

What would you say or do?

Scenario 3:

Because of his job, Jim is away from home several times each month. Jim has noticed that on the first night he's home again after an absence, he and his wife often argue in hurtful ways with one another. Jim is dreading coming home after a trip.

What would you say or do?

Scenario 4:

Gary has two children in high school. They are basically good kids and helpful around the house, but recently the older one has been neglecting chores and mercilessly bugging the younger one. Last night there were complaints about dinner, an argument about whose turn for dishes and slamming doors when Gary mentioned homework.

Gary feels wound up and ready to snap if he observes one more act of rebellion.

What would you say or do?

Crisis Intervention Scenarios:

❖ (Take control)

24 year old Lisa just entered the lobby, she has been crying, her eyes are red, and she doesn't make eye contact with you. She says she is mad at the world, and her parents are stupid/crazy/don't listen and her boyfriend who just broke up with her is just as stupid (using profanity freely).

What do you do or say?

❖ Assess: Evaluate on the spot: quick, accurate, and comprehensive enough to give a total picture)

Jennifer, a 32 year old mom just walked in and said, "I should just end it all because I lost my job today and my husband just left me. I've got three little babies, my mom is dying of cancer and I don't know what to do. We are 3 months behind on our rent. I've got nowhere to go, so I may as well end it. My kids would be better off....."

What do you do or say?

- ❖ (Assess: Avoid judgements, preachments, put downs)
John, a middle-aged man comes in and tells you he feels lost and strange.
What do you do or say?

John also said “I can’t find my way to cope after my wife’s death.
What do you do or say?”

- ❖ (Disposition: Heightened stress closes down options and leads to “tunnel vision”. Explore options, thinking creatively; solving problems; mobilize personal resources)
Susan comes into the lobby crying, cussing, and looks mad and says: “I feel so trapped and would like another drink”. As you get closer to her you smell alcohol on her breath and cigarette smoke on her clothes. She has a right black eye and swollen right cheek.
What do you do or say?

- ❖ (Refer and follow-up)
What would you do for Susan in the above scenario?



Attachment and Trauma Treatment
Centre for Children (ATTC)



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