

Zones of Arousal - The Window of Tolerance

HYPERAROUSAL ZONE

SYMPATHETIC “FIGHT OR
FLIGHT” RESPONSE

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Tension, Shaking
- Emotional reactivity
- Defensiveness
- Racing thoughts
- Intrusive images
- Emotional overwhelm
- Feeling unsafe
- Obsessive or Cynical thoughts
- Hypervigilance
- Impulsivity
- Anger/Rage

OPTIMAL AROUSAL ZONE

VENTRAL VAGAL “WINDOW OF
TOLERANCE”

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Feel and think simultaneously
- Experience empathy
- Feelings are tolerable
- Present moment awareness
- Open and curious
- Awareness of and can set boundaries
- Reactions adapt to the circumstances
- Feel safe

HYPOAROUSAL ZONE

“IMMOBILIZATION” RESPONSE

SIGNS YOU ARE HERE:

- Absence of sensation
- No energy/Shut Down
- Passive
- “Not there”
- Can’t defend oneself
- Can’t think or say no
- Numbing of emotions
- Disconnected
- Ashamed
- Flat Affect