



# How to Find Your Window of Tolerance: A Step-by-Step Kit

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## Step 1: Understand What the Window of Tolerance Is

The Window of Tolerance (WOT) is your personal emotional zone where you feel present, safe, and in control.

Outside of it, you may go into:

- Hyperarousal (anxiety, anger, panic, racing thoughts)
- Hypoarousal (numbness, shutdown, depression, disconnection)

## Step 2: Reflect on Times You Felt “Just Right”

Think of a time when:

- You could think clearly and make decisions
- You felt present and grounded
- You could connect with others
- You weren't overwhelmed or numb

Write or say aloud:

“What does it feel like in my body when I'm in my window of tolerance?”

Example answers:

- “I can breathe easily.”
- “My shoulders are relaxed.”



# FELT SENSE

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## PSYCHOTHERAPY

- “I feel calm but alert.”

### **Step 3: Identify Signs of Hyperarousal (Overwhelm)**

Reflect on moments when you feel:

- Angry, irritable, or panicked
- Physically agitated (tight chest, racing heart)
- Like you’re in “fight or flight” mode

Ask:

“What do I notice in my body when I’m overwhelmed or overstimulated?”

Example signs:

- Clenching jaw
- Shallow breathing
- Racing thoughts
- Urge to lash out or escape

### **Step 4: Identify Signs of Hypoarousal (Shutdown)**

Reflect on times you:

- Zone out or go numb
- Feel exhausted or disconnected
- Freeze or feel hopeless



# FELT SENSE

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## PSYCHOTHERAPY

Ask:

“What do I notice in my body when I shut down emotionally?”

Example signs:

- Heavy limbs
- Can't speak or think clearly
- Emotionally flat or numb
- Desire to hide or disappear

## **Step 5: Map Your Own Window**

Draw 3 horizontal sections on a page:

1. Top: Hyperarousal
2. Middle: Window of Tolerance
3. Bottom: Hypoarousal

Fill in each zone with:

- Emotions you associate with each state
- Body sensations
- Common triggers
- What you tend to do (withdraw, snap, fawn, freeze, etc.)

**Step 6: Track Your Range Daily (you can do this in your phone, piece of paper or in a chart).**

**Step 7: Learn What Expands or Shrinks It**



# FELT SENSE

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## PSYCHOTHERAPY

Reflect:

- What helps me stay in my window? (e.g., sleep, boundaries, movement)
- What makes my window shrink? (e.g., overworking, criticism, past trauma)

You can grow your window over time by using real-time regulation skills and gradually building capacity for difficult emotions.



F E L T   S E N S E

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PSYCHOTHERAPY