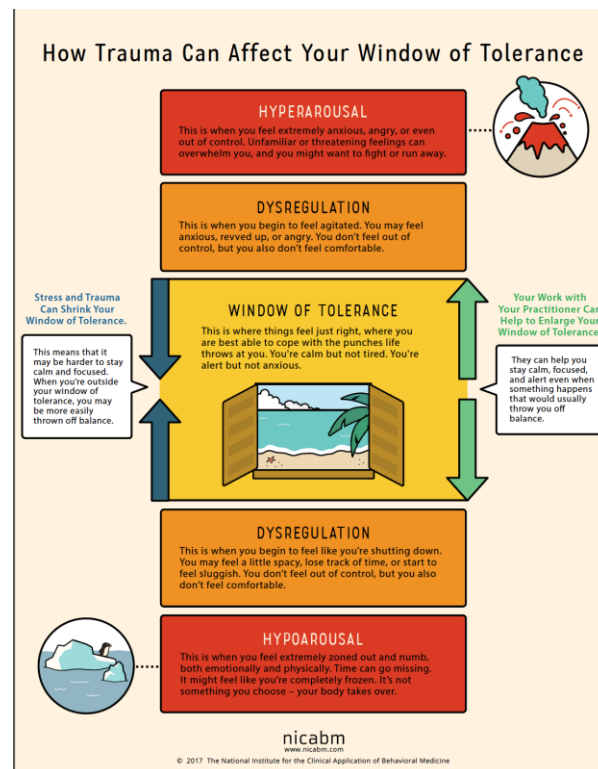


Supporting students with regulation

Sometimes, students who appear dysregulated may have the capacity to self-regulate, but frequently they will need some adult support with this.

The *Window of Tolerance* is a helpful way to illustrate the difference between being regulated (and ready to learn) and being dysregulated (and in no state to learn). When we are in our window of tolerance, we are in a state of balance and not having distracting physiological reactions to stimuli. A student outside their window of tolerance might be in, or moving toward, a state of hyperarousal or hypoarousal, and will require adult support to move back into a state in which they are ready to learn.

Here is a helpful illustration from the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioural Medicine (they have a number of free resources).



If you are trying to support a student (or anyone) to re-enter their window of tolerance, it is vital that you are also regulated; otherwise, the best thing you can do is to source help from someone else.

Ways to facilitate a return to regulation:

- Breathing – notice breathing and have the child try to mirror your regulated breathing (using bubbles or pinwheels can promote deep breathing)
- Ask questions that will engage the pre-frontal cortex (encourage the child to count, notice colours, or notice other things around them)
- Use essential oils, leaves or flowers to engage the sense of smell
- Have the child hold something with texture and encourage them to notice it
- Get a drink – sometimes an extra cold drink is helpful

- Have something to eat
- Play calming music and invite the student to listen
- Do some familiar yoga poses
- Push against something that provides resistance
- Use therabands or resistance bands to engage big muscles
- Have a run around the oval
- Read a story together
- Carry a heavy thing, such as a weighted blanket
- Do some drawing or colouring in
- Play with kinetic sand
- Run hands under water
- Tense and release muscles
- Hug a cushion

Children might have their own suggestions about what helps them calm down. In some cases you will have to weather quite a storm before the child is willing to attempt to return to a regulated state. Ideally, we are supporting children to understand what is happening to them and what helps them to regulate so that they are able to self-regulate before they get to a state of hypoarousal or hyperarousal.