

WHEN YOUR BRAIN FEELS OVERWHELMED EVEN WHEN NOTHING IS WRONG

This worksheet is designed to help you gently explore signs of nervous system overload and identify simple ways to support regulation. There are no right or wrong answers. Move through this at your own pace.

1. What Does Overwhelm Look Like for You?

Check in with your body and mind. Which of the following have you noticed recently? Circle or mark what fits.

- Racing thoughts or difficulty slowing down
- Feeling tense, on edge, or easily irritated
- Fatigue or feeling emotionally flat
- Trouble sleeping or restless sleep
- Difficulty concentrating or brain fog
- Wanting to withdraw or avoid people
- Feeling overwhelmed even by small tasks

2. Hyper or Hypo? Noticing Your Current State

At different times, the nervous system can feel overly activated or shut down. Which state feels closer to how you have been lately?

Overactivated: anxious, restless, tense, unable to relax, always thinking about what is next.

Underactivated: numb, low motivation, disconnected, heavy, foggy, or checked out.

What do you notice about your current state?

3. Identifying Your Stress Load

Many stressors are small and ongoing rather than obvious or dramatic. Write down anything that has been quietly draining your energy.

4. Signals of Safety That Help You Settle

These are simple cues that tell your nervous system it can soften. Notice which ones feel most accessible to you.

- Slow breathing with a longer exhale
- Feeling feet on the floor or body in a chair
- Looking around and noticing where you are
- Warmth, sunlight, or gentle movement
- Connection with a safe person or pet
- Quiet time without screens

Which one could you try today, even for one or two minutes?

5. One Small Practice for This Week

Rather than changing everything at once, choose one small, consistent practice that supports regulation.

My small practice:

When I will practice it:

Reminder: Feeling overwhelmed does not mean you are failing. It often means your nervous system has been working hard for a long time.

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

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

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

EXPAND your 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