Window of Tolerance Check In

Notice your patterns and choose a manageable next step

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Use this during a manageable moment. You can type into the fields or print it. Skip any prompt; there is no score. You do not need to revisit a traumatic memory.

A simple guide to the model

Wound up Higher activation	Tense, anxious, irritable, or overwhelmed.
Present enough Within your window	Able to feel emotions and consider choices.
Flat or withdrawn Lower activation	Numb, distant, or less able to engage.

Experiences can overlap. These descriptions are prompts, not diagnoses.

1 Notice your current experience

- ☐ Wound up or overwhelmed
- ☐ Present enough to engage
- ☐ Flat or disconnected
- ☐ Mixed or unsure

My early signs in thoughts, feelings, or actions

What was happening just before I noticed this

What feels difficult right now

Examples: listening, making a decision, answering a message, or staying present. You can describe the situation without focusing on sensations in your body.

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Choose what would help

One small response and a plan for support

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First check whether you are safe enough to pause. If the situation is unsafe, prioritize getting to safety and finding support. Stop an exercise if it makes you feel worse.

2 Choose one manageable response

If you feel wound up, consider reducing noise or pausing a task. If you feel disconnected, try noticing an ordinary object or a familiar sound. You can ask someone supportive to stay with you. Breathing is optional; keep it gentle if you choose it.

- ☐ Reduce noise or demands
- ☐ Pause a task or conversation
- ☐ Try a few easy breaths
- ☐ Notice my surroundings
- ☐ Ask for supportive company
- ☐ Choose another response

The one thing I will try

3 Check the effect

- ☐ More manageable
- ☐ Less manageable
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Not sure yet

What I noticed and what I might change

4 Decide when to ask for support

A person or professional resource I can contact

A sign that I need more support

Seek professional help for repeated disconnection or distress that disrupts daily life. General education, not a diagnostic tool. Keep your completed copy private.

Sources: NHS Ready to Relate | NHS inform | VA coping guidance

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