



Nervous System Regulation

GET TO KNOW YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

MELANIE SCHROEDER

B.A. IN ENGLISH STUDIES AND DESIGN EDUCATION
PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTITIONER

(LICENSED UNDER THE GERMAN HEILPRAKTIKERGESETZ)

Hi there! A few words about me to start with:



I'm Melanie, and in my online practice I support people as a psychological counsellor, with a focus on

ADHD coaching, nervous system regulation, and a mindfulness approach that connects body and emotions.

I support neurodivergent adults and anyone seeking more inner balance. As a neurodivergent person myself, I understand both the challenges and the unique strengths that come with a differently wired nervous system.

With the **Nervous System Tracker package**, I've created materials designed to help you better understand yourself.

The tracker supports you in recognizing where you are right now, what you need, and how to move toward greater clarity, balance, and focus.

Through its visual approach, the tracker helps you turn **self-awareness into action.**



MELANIE SCHROEDER
HEILPRAKTIKERIN FÜR PSYCHOTHERAPIE

TERMS OF USE

Regulating the Nervous System



By purchasing, downloading, or using this digital product, you agree to comply with and be bound by the following Terms of Use. Please read them carefully before proceeding.

1. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & PERMITTED USE

This digital product, including but not limited to all text, images, graphics, worksheets, and resources, is the exclusive intellectual property of Melanie Schroeder ("Individual").

DO'S:

- Use this digital product for your own personal or professional development.
- Apply the strategies and concepts within your own business or practice.
- Print one copy for your personal use.

DON'TS:

- Reproduce, distribute, or share this digital product, in whole or in part, without prior written consent.
- Resell, sublicense, or use this digital product for commercial purposes (e.g., selling as part of a course, workshop, or membership)

2. DISCLAIMER

This digital product is intended for informational and educational purposes only. **It does not constitute medical or therapeutic advice.** While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Melanie Schroeder makes no guarantees regarding the outcomes of applying the strategies outlined in this digital product.

By using this resource, you acknowledge that results may vary depending on individual effort, experience, and circumstances. The Individual is not responsible for any results or outcomes that may occur through the use of this product.

Melanie Schroeder drew inspiration from various professionals and sources in creating these materials and has listed them transparently. If you believe that someone should be additionally acknowledged or mentioned, please reach out and updates will be made accordingly.

If you have any questions about these Terms of Use, feel free to contact Melanie Schroeder at info@schroedermelanie.com



NERVOUS SYSTEM - REGULATION

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

- describes the range within which our nervous system is able to deal with stress and strong emotions
- within this window, we are emotionally balanced and adaptable
- our sympathetic nervous system (which puts us into activity) and the parasympathetic nervous system (which provides recovery) work in balance
- even in difficult situations we remain calm, present, and capable of acting

People with a large window of tolerance can cope with stress better without their system becoming overwhelmed. When the demands become too great, we leave this balance: then it can either lead to **hyperarousal**: we feel wound up, stressed, anxious or to **hypoarousal**: we shut down internally, withdraw, or feel paralyzed.

YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE LIKE THIS:

Mental symptoms

- concentrated, attentive, focused
- emotional balance
- relaxation
- stable energy level



Behavior

- social connectedness, in contact with body & environment
- curious, capable of learning
- present and attentive



Physical symptoms

- steady pulse
- regular breathing
- heart rate stable
- normal digestion
- body feels overall aligned



NERVOUS SYSTEM – DYSREGULATION

UNDERAROUSAL (FREEZE / “FAWN”)

Strategy of the body to cope with severe stress: all processes slow down and the body enters a state of underarousal (hypoarousal).

In this state, the nervous system reduces its activity in order to protect us from sensory overload.

For many people with ADHD or autism, sensory overstimulation can trigger a protective reaction, causing them to leave their window of tolerance and enter this state.

YOU RECOGNIZE UNDERAROUSAL LIKE THIS:

Mental symptoms

- difficulty concentrating
- emotional numbness / lack of feeling
- sense of disconnection or dissociation
- tiredness and exhaustion
- lack of energy



Behavior

- social withdrawal
- increased use of digital media
- craving for certain substances



Physical symptoms

- irregular pulse
- shallow or irregular breathing
- digestive problems
- overreactions or underreactions of the immune system
- sensitivity to cold



NERVOUS SYSTEM – DYSREGULATION

OVERAROUSAL (FIGHT/FLIGHT)

When we enter a state of heightened arousal, our sympathetic nervous system becomes particularly active (hyperarousal).

Our body then prepares to respond to a threat by either fighting or fleeing. In this phase, we are especially alert and full of energy, but often also feel stressed, restless, or irritable.

The body is indeed ready to perform, but if this activation lasts too long or occurs in inappropriate situations, it can exhaust us or cause problems in social situations.

YOU RECOGNIZE HYPERAROUSAL LIKE THIS:

Mental symptoms

- feelings of panic
- fear or worry
- nervousness
- irritability, feeling of stress
- anger or rage
- frustration



Behavior

- impulsive behavior
- high inner tension
- aggressive behavior
- restlessness



Physical symptoms

- accelerated heartbeat
- rapid, shallow breathing
- elevated blood pressure
- high stress hormone levels (e.g., cortisol, adrenaline)
- muscle tension



MODERN LIFESTYLE & YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

In today's world, a state of continuous overarousal (hyperarousal) is hardly avoidable. While our ancestors were only placed in a state of alert for short periods (for example, when encountering predators), we are now often exposed to ongoing stressors.

These include chronic work stress, financial worries, or constant performance pressure. **However, our body is not designed to remain in alarm mode over long periods of time.**

Ongoing stressors ensure that our fight-or-flight system often stays active even when there is no acute danger. As a result, the body can become stuck in a permanently tense state, without a natural release or relaxation taking place.

IS YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE WIDE OR NARROW?

The concept of the window of tolerance, developed by Daniel J. Siegel, describes the range in which we feel safe, balanced, and capable of taking action. In this state, the nervous system responds flexibly and remains well regulated.

We are able to think clearly, feel connected, and act intentionally. Within this window, we experience the flow of well-being and can respond to internal and external stimuli without being overwhelmed (hyperarousal) or shutting down and withdrawing (hypoarousal).





When we learn to recognize our individual boundaries, we can return to this state (the “green zone”) again and again. This creates a sense of safety, clarity, and connection.

The ability to return to one’s own window of tolerance is fundamental for emotional regulation and psychological stability. In the best case, your window of tolerance is wide enough that you can process everyday stress without immediately losing balance.

Short-term goal: find inner balance → return to the “green zone / your window of tolerance”

Long-term goal: build resilience → expand the “green zone / your window of tolerance”

Both goals help you return to balance more quickly after difficult situations and to cope with challenges more effectively.

For those who grew up in an environment with a lot of stress or recurring burdensome experiences, the nervous system was often permanently put into a state of alert in order to protect itself. These protective mechanisms from childhood can, in adulthood, lead to the nervous system quickly losing balance even with minor challenges.

Neurodivergent people, e.g. with ADHD, autism, or AuDHD, often have a more sensitive nervous system. Reasons for this include differences in neural processing of stimuli, sensory sensitivities, and frequent experiences of exclusion or overwhelm.



SPACE FOR NOTES

1. What are, for you, typical thoughts / feelings / body postures that you associate with the different zones (green /red /blue)?
2. How do you recognize that you are within your window of tolerance or outside of it?
3. What helps you to return to the green zone (from the blue or red zone, respectively)?

Let's stay in touch



www.schroedermelanie.com



@_melanieschroeder_