

EXERCISE 5: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EMOTIONAL COMFORT ZONE

Focus into your body. For most people this works best with their eyes closed. Do this, if you can. Then focus on the space between your eyes and from this turn your attention inwards into your body. If you don't feel safe closing your eyes or can't because of a physical injury or disability, adjust this exercise to suit your particular circumstances and needs. You could keep them slightly open and, if you can, gaze downwards, selecting a neutral point on the floor. Try to become aware of the point between your eyes and, from there, focus your attention inwards. Use the following guidelines (you could pre-record them) to help you focus:

- Notice what you are feeling inside your body right now. Does your body feel:
 - Calm and at ease
 - Agitated and on edge
 - Numb or shut-down
- Now identify whether these feelings fall inside your emotional comfort zone or outside it. If outside, note if they are part of a hyper- or hypoarousal response.
- Once you have identified the state of your body right now, notice where you can sense these

particular feelings in your body. What sensations do you notice? Do you feel these all over your body or only in certain parts? Describe to yourself where you can feel them and make a mental note of this in your inner mind.

- Next try and determine how strong these feelings are for you right now. Give yourself an internal rating score for the particular state you are in right now. You can use the scale below. It ranges from 0 to 10 for both the hyper- and the hypoarousal response.

Rating Scale:

10--Hyperarousal--0 | **Window-of-tolerance** | 0--Hypoarousal--10
10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-0 | **Emotional Comfort Zone** | 0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

For Hyperarousal
mark 10 – 0 here

**no mark here –
observe how it feels**

For Hypoarousal
mark 0 – 10 here

- If you are in your emotional comfort zone you don't have to give yourself a score, but you could notice how your window of tolerance feels right now. Does it feel wide and expansive or rather narrow and confined? You could note internally how close you feel to the boundaries on either side of it right now.
- Now allow yourself again to notice what it feels like in your body when your nervous system is in the state you have just identified. At this

stage, just notice what it feels like. This is part of observing yourself. Do not judge this feeling or try to change it at this stage. Just note, understand and accept what it feels like, even if it does not feel very comfortable.

- When you are ready, open your eyes very slowly, and take some time to ensure that you are safely back in the here-and-now time. Remember the mental rating score you took internally and note this down now on the rating scale with today's date. Record your observations in your journal.