



# Window of Tolerance

*Rethinking Support for Humans with Complex Neurotypes /Nervous System Disabilities*

## **Understanding the Window of Tolerance**

Individuals with complex neurotypes/nervous system disabilities have a unique threshold for tolerating demands and sensory input. Their window of tolerance can shut automatically due to perceived threats, lack of autonomy, or unmet needs.

## **Core Concepts**

Autonomic responses, such as flight, fight, freeze, or fawn, are not operant or intentional "behavior" but instinctual threat responses. Traditional behaviorist approaches can trigger these responses, exacerbating distress. Autonomy, safety, and acceptance are essential for rebuilding tolerance.

## **The Impact of Misunderstanding**

Misunderstanding the window of tolerance can lead to devastating consequences, including cumulative nervous system activation, autistic burnout, and loss of skills and functionality. This can result from well-intentioned but misguided support strategies.

## **Breaking Free from Behaviorism**

Alternative approaches prioritize well-being, autonomy, and nervous system regulation. This shift recognizes the importance of:

- Inclusive, trauma-sensitive practices
- Self-regulation and resilience
- Dignity and inherent worth

## **Reimagining Support Systems**

Key considerations for supportive environments include:

- Centering neurodivergent voices and perspectives
- Integrating trauma-sensitive and inclusive practices
- Prioritizing autonomy and self-determination

## **You Are Seen**

Fellow parents/caregivers, professionals, and advocates, your commitment to rehumanizing support is valued. Together, we can create a more supportive and accepting world for all humans.

For more resources, visit: [www.rehumanizationproject.org](http://www.rehumanizationproject.org) (add qr code)