

Talking ND

HEPS - Cass Humphrey

25.10.23



What we'll
touch on
today...

Making the invisible, visible

The Diversity of Brains
HEPS Peer Awareness program

2024- parent sessions/ trainings,
afterschool sessions for our young
people, lunch time activities for our ND
students

Be curious, not judgmental... Ted Lasso



Neurodiversity



BEAUTY
in
DIVERSITY

ALL BRAINS, ALL BODIES,
ALL HUMANS.





Making the invisible, visible...

If our goal is to make all people truly feel like they belong, so that they are authentically visible, what do we need to do..?

- Language
- Inclusive visual representation
- Be curious – ask questions of the young people/ their family and others with lived experience



HEPS amazing things in place to support our young people

Consistent programs across the school

- Play is the way - ***developing social and emotional intelligence***
- Interoception – developing strategies to co and self regulate
- consistent literacy and numeracy programs
- consistent language

**** Passionate educators who genuinely care ****

A hand is shown holding a lit sparkler, with bright sparks radiating from the tip. The background is dark with numerous out-of-focus, colorful bokeh lights in shades of orange, blue, and white. The overall mood is celebratory and bright.

HEPS young people are good with
the 'how'

-
How do we continue to empower our students..?

Through a Peer Awareness Program →

-develop understanding of the diversity of the human brain (inc specific information on neurodiversity – inc. Autism, ADHD, FAS, mental health etc etc)

-develop understanding of the diversity of people

-develop understanding of the human brain (nervous system, neural pathways etc)

-gain insight into the Window of Tolerance

-increase understanding of individual needs & preferences (sensory, regulation etc)

-increase understanding of the catastrophe scale

-increase positive disability vocabulary (neurodiversity, neurodivergent, neurotypical, neuro-affirming, ablism)

The Diversity of Brains- *a program to increase our young people's understanding of neurodiversity*

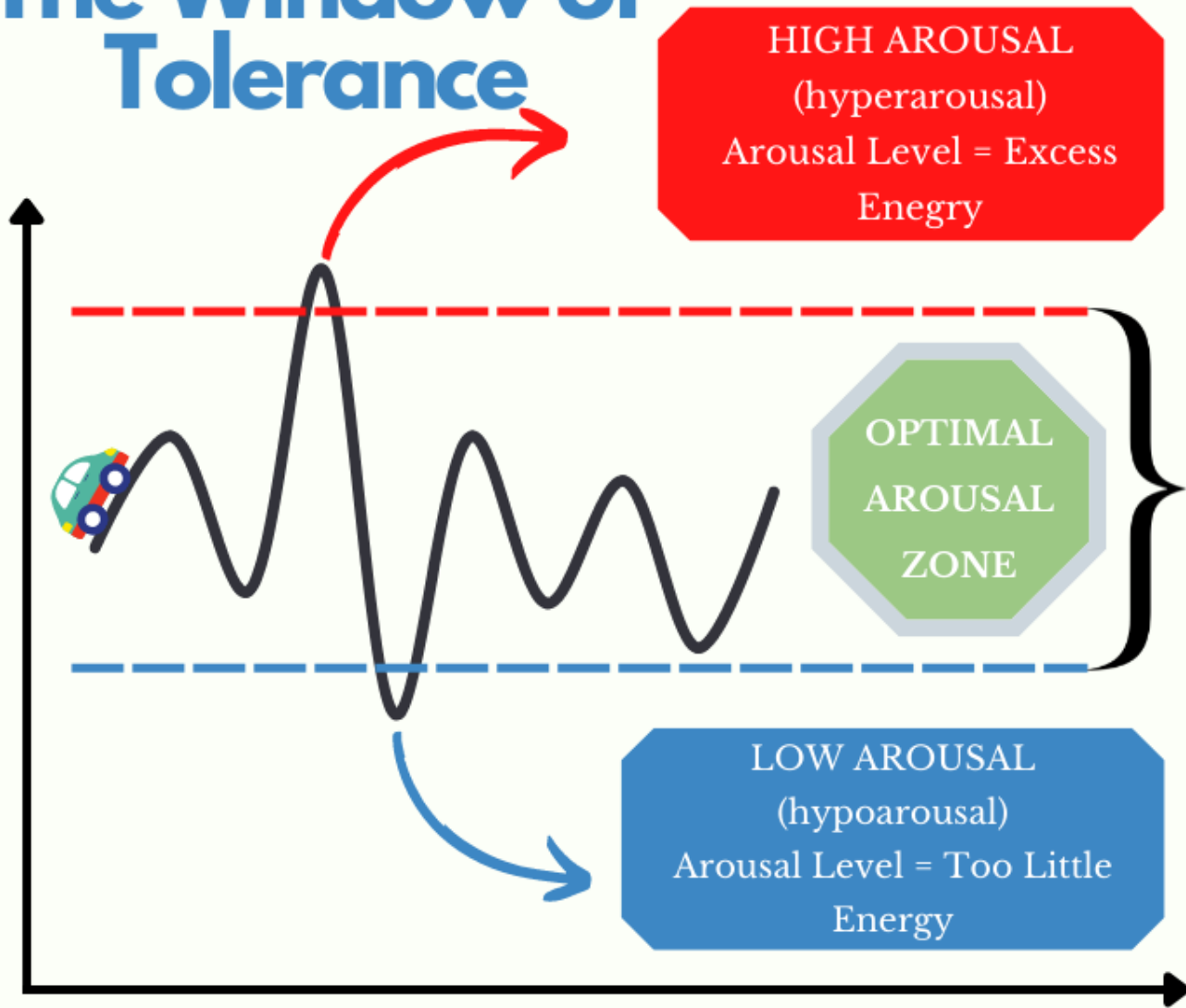
Topics:

- Neurodiversity
- Emotions (gaining understanding that different people show emotions in different ways - NOT just NT)
- Diversity of Brains – Autism, ADHD, dyslexia --> Neurodiversity
- Sensory Preferences & Needs
- Window of Tolerance
- Social Communication – in double empathy problem, love languages
- Brain functions/ cognition (ie. Exec functioning, processing etc)

How:

- ND story books
- art activities
- clips
- lived experience clips, interviews etc

The Window of Tolerance



Learning happens when people are in the Optimal Arousal Zone

When the arousal level is too HIGH or too LOW, dysregulation occurs.
*At this time our goal is to increase (upregulate) or decrease (down regulate) arousal to promote regulation (optimal arousal).



Intense Anger
Overwhelmed
Feeling Threatened
Out of Control
Sleeplessness

Hyperarousal

“Fight or Flight”

Increased Heart Rate
Reactive Outbursts
Digestive Problems
Poor Concentration
Can't Relax
Hypervigilant

Panic
Chaos
Addictions
Highly Anxious
Rage

Start to Feel Irritable

Anxious

Dysregulation

Agitated

Feel Uncomfortable

Window of Tolerance



When we are in the Window of Tolerance life feels comfortable. Our body is in an optimal state, and we can access both reason and emotion. We are calm but not tired. We are aware and alert but not anxious. We engage with our environment well.

Working with a therapist can help you **EXPAND** your Window of Tolerance so that you are less easily 'triggered' and have improved abilities to cope, soothe and self-regulate when challenged.



Grounded
Present
Relaxed
Connected
Social
Regulated

Flexible
Caring
Good Sleep
Able to Soothe
Feel Safe

Creative
Curious
Flexible
Calm

Able to Learn
Creative
Good Digestion
Open

Start Shutting Down

Feel uncomfortable

Dysregulation

Lose Track of Time

Poor Concentration

Depressed
Numb
Poor Digestion
Disconnected

Shut Down
Dissociated
Detached
No Energy

“Freeze”

Hypoarousal

Rigid
Flat
Unavailable



Neuroaffirming Self-Regulation and the Window of Tolerance

Name: _____ Date: _____

HYPER-AROUSAL (fight/flight) looks like:

To stay out of HYPER & HYPO-AROUSAL:



To stay in the Window of Tolerance:

HYPO-AROUSAL (freeze/fawn) looks like:

Based on the work by DEZELIC & ASSOCIATES, 2017
Kate Donohue Dynamic Parenting 2023

Neuroaffirming Self-Regulation and the Window of Tolerance

- Anxiety
- Outbursts
- Overwhelmed
- Anger / Aggression / Rage
- Unpredictable Responses
- Absconding / Running / Avoidance

HYPER-AROUSAL
Fight / Flight Response

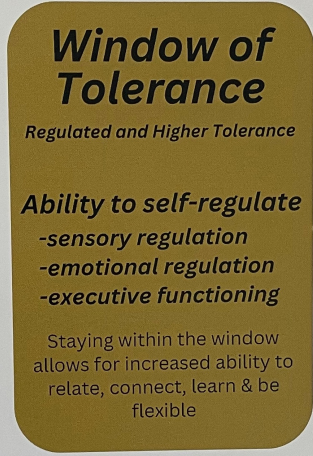
- Rigidity
- Addictions
- Impulsivity
- Obsessive-compulsive behaviour or thoughts
- Over-eating / Restricting

To stay out of HYPER & HYPO-AROUSAL

Avoid or reduce triggers and address unmet needs to reduce HYPER and HYPO-AROUSAL

Each person's triggers are individual and can vary over time

Common triggers include stress, trauma, health issues and sensory, social and/or cognitive overload



To stay in the Window of Tolerance

Ensure all basic human needs and neurodivergent needs are met

Glimmers are 'micro-moments' in the day that bring joy & are self-soothing

Glimmers help to stay out of HYPER & HYPO-AROUSAL as they're cues for our nervous system that we're safe

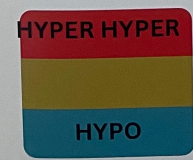
- Dissociation
- Not Present
- Memory Loss
- Freeze Response
- Unavailable / Shut Down

HYPO-AROUSAL
Freeze / Fawn Response

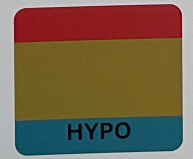
- Disconnected
- People Pleasing / Masking
- No Display of Emotions / Flat
- Separation from Self, Feelings & Emotions

Based on the work by DEZELIC & ASSOCIATES, 2017

It's a dynamic process as the Window of Tolerance can also widen or narrow



Not getting basic human needs and neurodivergent needs met *narrows* the Window of Tolerance



Working with a neuroaffirming practitioner and investing in 'Do More' strategies *broadens* the Window of Tolerance

Based on the work by DEZELIC & ASSOCIATES, 2017
Kate Donohue Dynamic Parenting 2023

Empowering our young people to understand what what helps them staying in the Window of Tolerance...



- Diversity of brains
- Individual triggers
- Individual sensory diet
- Environmental factors

AIM:

Empowering our young people so they can:

- Advocate for themselves
- How to stay in the Window of Tolerance:
 - Understand their own sensory needs and how to accommodate them
 - Individual triggers
 - co and self regulation strategies which work for them
 - Understand others
 - Be positive, contributing members of community
 - *Be curious...*
 - Feel like they belong and can be their authentic self

2024 → planning...



- Ideas for parent sessions
- After school sessions
(through NDIS providers, but held onsite)



Interesting Resources

Student Wellbeing Hub – Autism resources for families (great info on schooling, ND, legislation and supports etc) ****HEPS was used for this resource****

<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/autism>

SIES- Statewide Inclusive Education Services (formerly SERU)- parent forums + borrowing library

Questions...

