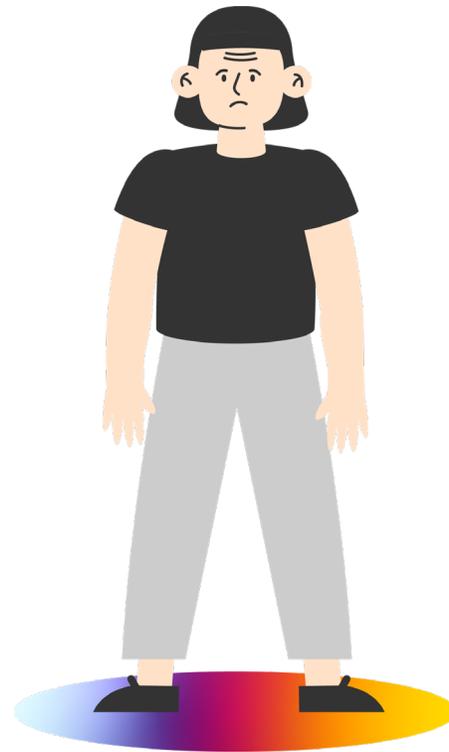


Autism Informed Approaches

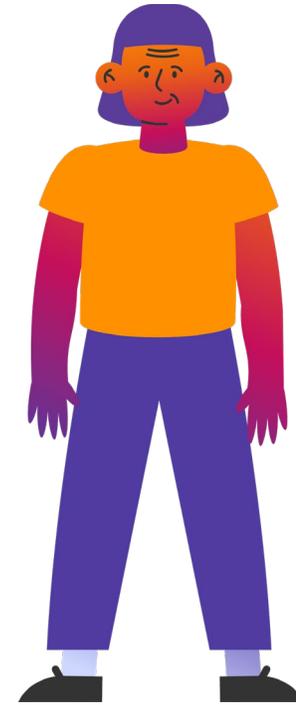
Language



This is a person **with** Autism



This is a person **on** the Autism Spectrum



This is an **Autistic person**

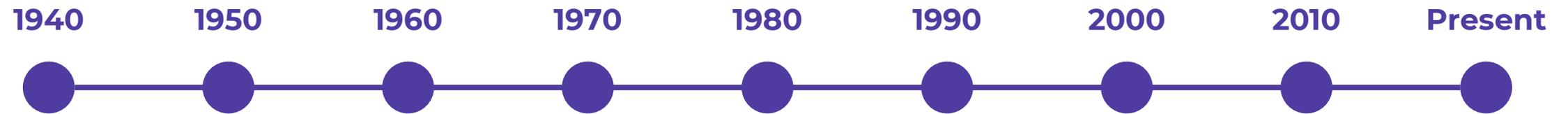
Autism and mental health

70 – 80% of autistic people experience mental health problems:

- Increased incidence of interpersonal trauma
- Longer Length of Stay
- Autistic people are up to 9x more likely to die by suicide.
- Up to 50% of Autistic people have self-harmed.

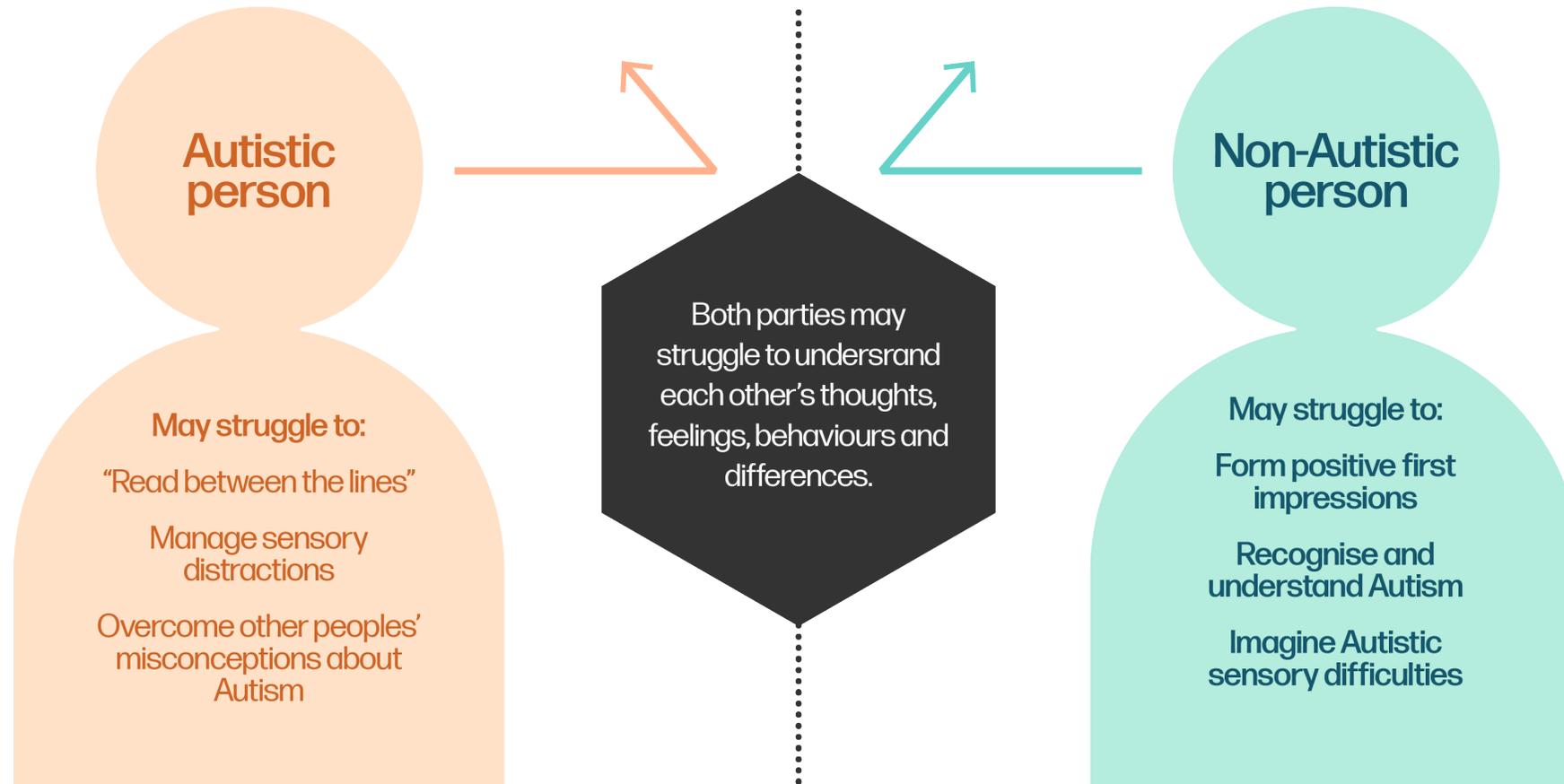


Timeline



Increased research has led to increased understanding. Now we know more, we can adjust our understanding, although the impact of previous, historical understandings remains.

The double empathy problem



What does Neurodiversity affirming mean?

Neurodiversity-affirming is a way of thinking about the diversity of differences in how people interact, think, learn, communicate and process information and the sensory environment. It's rooted in the neurodiversity paradigm and the idea that these differences are natural mind-body variations of the human experience and are therefore, not deficits that need to be fixed.

What is regulation?

Regulation is the ability to tolerate stressors and process, digest, and complete nervous system activation (fight/flight/fawn/freeze energies) without moving beyond our capacity and window of tolerance and into dysregulation.

What is the window of tolerance and capacity?

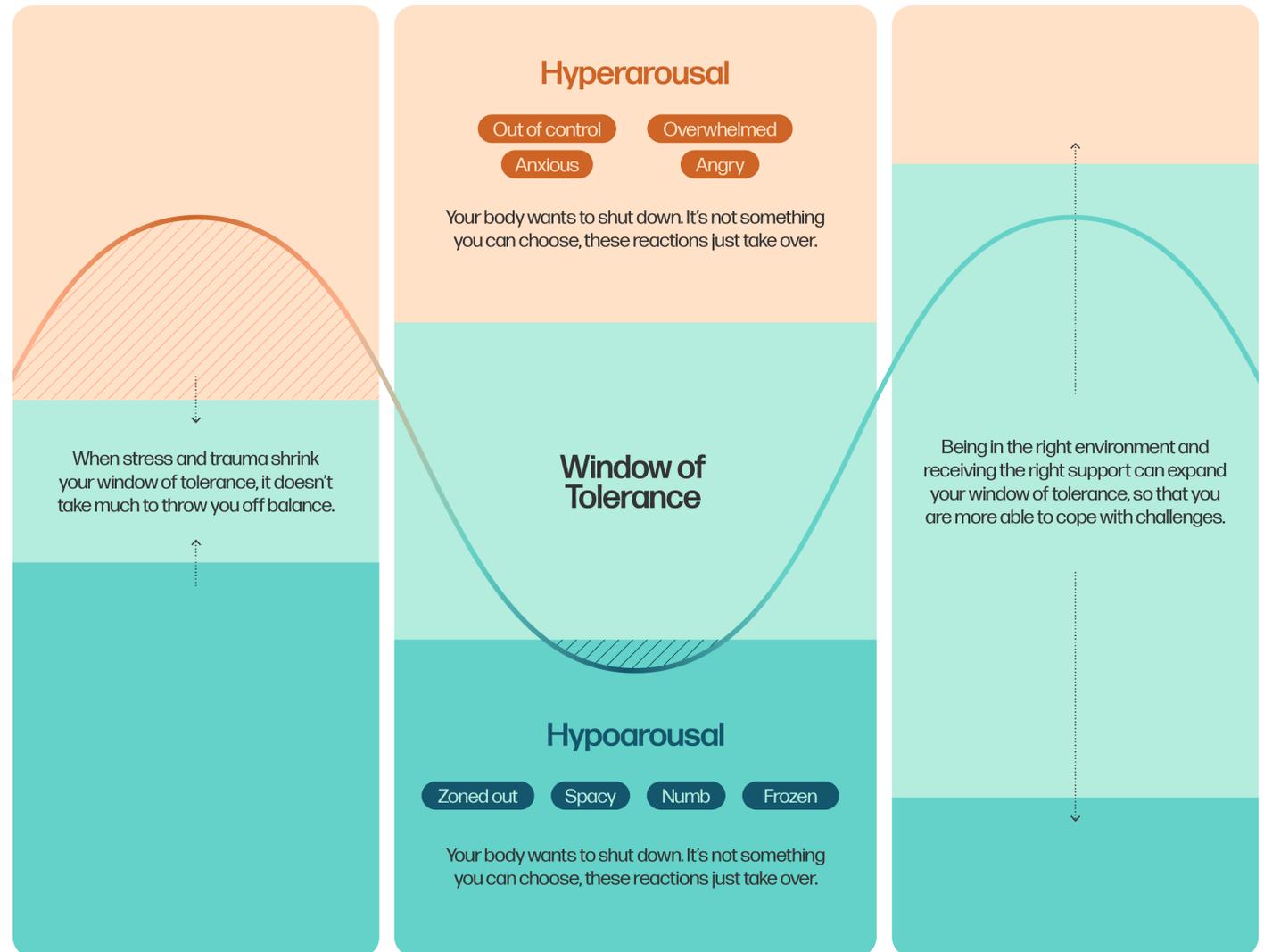
(Dr Dan Siegel)

Zone of resilience: able to deal with day-to-day living, stressors and function.

The window of regulation in which NS arousal can be processed.

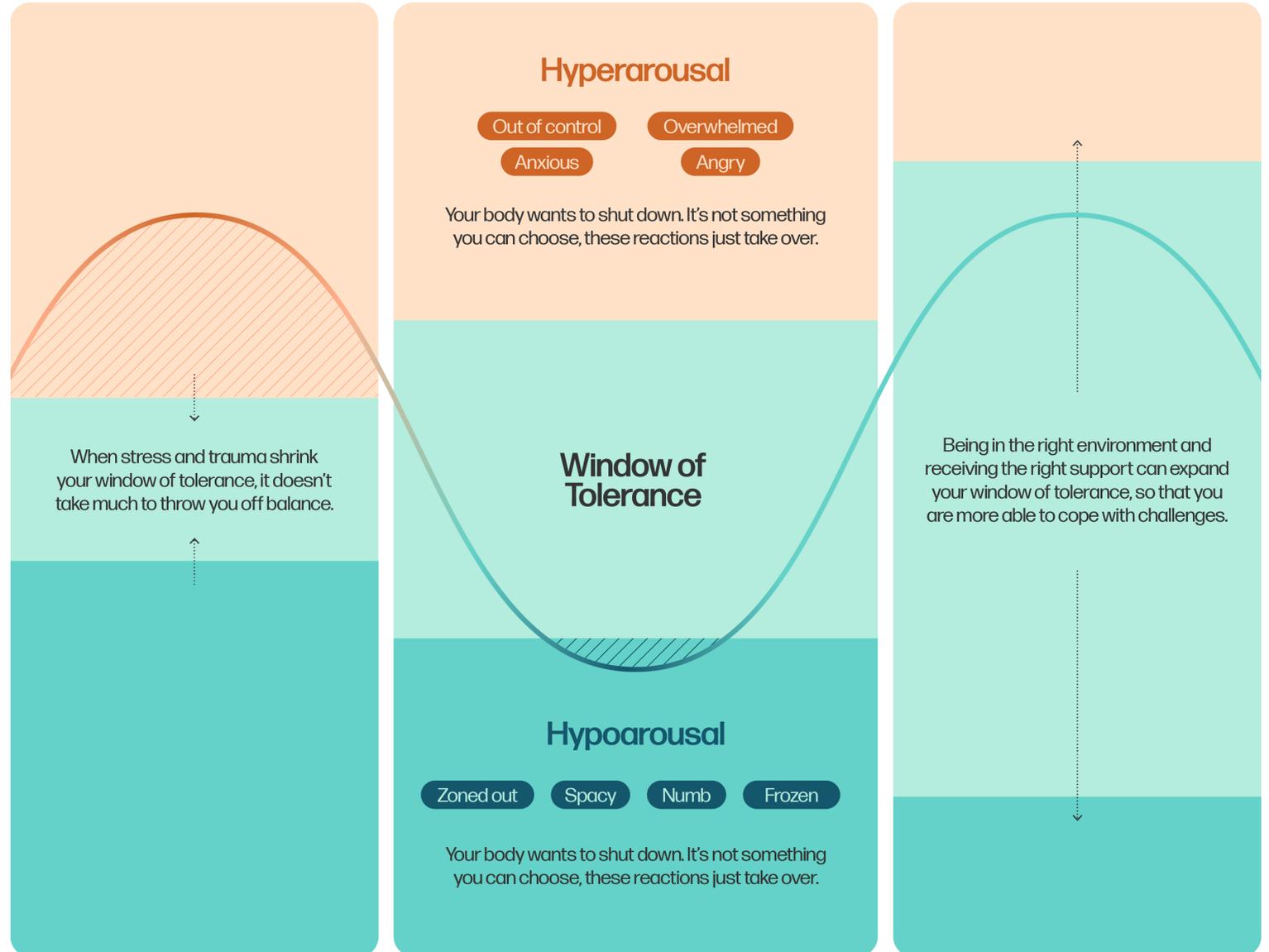
Neurodivergence, trauma and chronic stress impact on window size.

Therapeutic engagement happens within the window of tolerance.

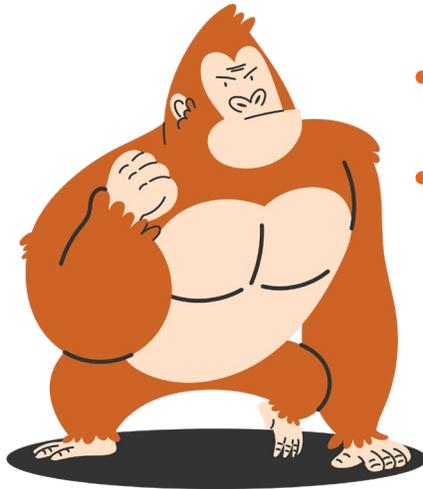


What is dysregulation?

- When the nervous system is out of capacity and beyond the window of tolerance.
- When stressors can't be processed.
- When emotions and sensations can't be contained.
- Increased likelihood of shutdown or meltdown.



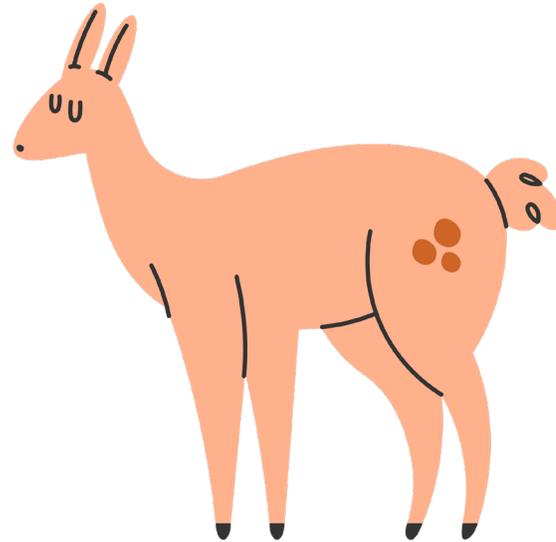
How we perceive, label, and respond to survival responses



- Aggressive
- Violent



- Absconding
- Restless

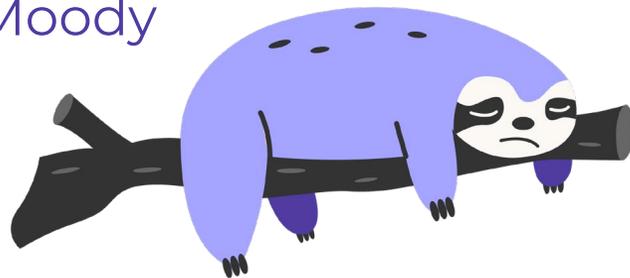


- manipulative
- fine



- Sulking
- Difficult

- Attention seeking
- Moody



Limbic resonance and co-regulation

“In this state, we become a potentially safe landing strip for them. When we are able to offer this safe haven, the possibility of the other person moving toward a similar felt sense of safety awakens the healing space between us through resonance.”

Bonnie Badenoch, *The Heart of Trauma: Healing the Embodied Brain in the Context of Relationships*

Why is understanding regulation and co-regulation so important?

Having a well-regulated autonomic nervous system, with capacity and flow, is crucial for staff well-being and sustainability, and the quality-of-service provision provided.

Well-regulated leadership supports regulated staff who can co-regulate with those they work with.

What effect does it have?

In the context of services, it is essential for:

- **reducing risk**
- **thought, emotional and sensation tolerance**
- **therapeutic engagement**
- **staff recruitment and retention**

What are autism & trauma-informed approaches?

- Consider and accommodate sensory, social, processing and perceptual differences.
- Understand, identify signs and recognise the impact of trauma, stress, and nervous system activation on everyone.
- Actively seek to not re-traumatise or generate more trauma for anyone.
- Actively advocate that everyone works on self-regulation and co-regulation.



Thank you for listening