

JULY NEWSLETTER



When You're Not Falling Apart... But You're Not Really Living Either



"How are you doing?"

"Oh, I'm good! How are you?"

It's an answer we have all given at one point or another, no matter if we are good or not, we say it without even thinking. We go to work, take care of our families, meet deadlines, answer emails, keep appointments, and check off our to-do lists. From the outside, everything appears to be functioning just as it should.

In This Issue:

When You're Not
Falling Apart...
But You're Not
Really Living
Either
PAGE 01

Announcements,
Updates,
This & That
PAGE 05

But beneath the surface, many people are carrying a quiet sense that something isn't quite right. You move through each day on autopilot, doing without living. This experience is more common than many people realize.

Our nervous systems are incredibly adaptive. When we experience prolonged periods of stress—whether from work, caregiving, financial pressures, relationship difficulties, or simply trying to keep up with the demands of everyday life—our brains naturally shift into "survival mode." In this state, our focus becomes getting through the day rather than fully experiencing it.

Your Window of Tolerance

Mental health professionals often use the term Window of Tolerance to describe the optimal zone of emotional arousal in which a person can function effectively, process daily stressors and think clearly without feeling overwhelmed or shutting down.

Chronic stress, however, can begin to narrow that window. When our window becomes smaller, even everyday challenges can feel overwhelming. Some people find themselves becoming anxious, irritable, constantly "on," or unable to slow their thoughts. Others experience the opposite—they feel emotionally numb, disconnected, exhausted, or as though they're simply going through the motions.



Neither response is bad, it just means your nervous system is working hard to protect you. This is an indicator to step-back, do selfcare, delegate tasks if you can, set boundaries when possible.

Everybody's window of tolerance is fluid, meaning it expands and shrinks in response to what we are experiencing in life. With supportive relationships, healthy coping strategies, intentional rest, therapy, and doing something you love —such as spending time in nature (if you haven't asked about nature based therapy now's a good time)—we can gradually widen that window again, allowing us to experience more calm, connection, resilience, and happiness.



The more we know about our window of tolerance the more attuned we can be to what keeps it wide and what makes it shrink. We can also acknowledge it as the adaptive response that it is. Our brains and bodies are designed to protect us and they are really good at their job. The challenge is that what helps us survive during periods of prolonged stress can eventually make it difficult to fully engage in life once those stressors have passed.

When stressors pop up or when the stress is prolonged you may find that you feel;

- Numb or disconnected
- Exhausted, even though you are ‘doing everything right’
- Little or no motivation to do things you once enjoyed
- Constantly busy but not fulfilled or like you didn’t get anything done
- Struggling to relax, even when you have time



When people experience these feelings they usually assume there is something wrong with them and they need to ‘fix’ themselves in some way. People also begin to compare themselves to others; this idea of being able to do it all is usually unrealistic. Our standards of what life ‘should’ look like has been greatly influenced by social media, popular media such as TV shows and movies as well as what people were able to accomplish in the past when family structures were typically very different than the modern family structure that is more popular (and necessary) in today’s society. If anything, the feelings listed above are indicators we have taken on too much and we need to re-evaluate what we are doing in our daily lives.

Step Back and Slow Down

There is no one miracle fix for this, healing takes time. It typically starts with slowing down enough to notice what you're experiencing and having the ability to take into consideration what you want and need.

This means checking in with yourself and asking 'what do I need right now?'. Listen to how your body and mind answers that question, it's usually a more simple need like a glass of water, a snack, spending time in the quiet. These are things that can be achieved relatively easily.



Once meeting your basic needs is mastered try taking it a step further. Ask yourself questions such as;

- why am I doing this?
- Do I like this?
- Does this drain me of energy?
- What does this bring to my life?
- Does this make me feel like myself?



Keep track of these answers and notice what brings you happiness, peace, frustration, or feelings of overwhelm. The answers to these questions will help guide you to what you value and what is non-negotiable. From here you will also learn what you can let go of because it's not a *need* or something that makes you happy. It is important to note that the goal isn't to eliminate stress altogether—that is impossible. The goal is to use this information as a way for you to create balance in your life so you can keep your window of tolerance wide open.

Getting Started

When life is busy and overwhelming most people don't know where to start. Here are some simple ways to help slow down and soften your daily life without too much of a change.

- Sleep with your phone in a different room
- Shake it out, dance, stretch, flap - whatever you need, just move your body
- Drink water and eat snacks throughout the day

- Change up your activities, move back and forth between doing something stressful and something pleasant
- Turn off background noise while doing something at home, focus solely on one task
- Breathe deeply, pushing your belly button out 5 times in a row
- Go outdoors without your phone - maybe even touch nature
- Spend time with friends or family that make you laugh or smile



If any part of this resonates with you, know that you're not alone. Many people spend months—or even years—functioning well on the outside while quietly carrying more than they can handle on the inside.

Sometimes healing doesn't begin with fixing what's "wrong." It begins with understanding yourself with a little more compassion.

Updates, This & That

Welcoming Miranda!

Miranda is our new receptionist! She is currently completing the Records and Information Management program at College of the North Atlantic. In her spare time, she likes playing pickleball, practicing makeup artistry, and spending time with family and friends. Make sure to say 'Hi' when booking your next appointment!

