

WORKSHEET

When the Brain Is Overwhelmed: Understanding Dysregulation

Purpose:

This worksheet helps normalize nervous system dysregulation and supports awareness of how the brain responds to stress, trauma, depletion, or overload. It is educational and not a substitute for therapy or medical care.

How My Nervous System Tends to Respond

When stress increases, I most often notice:

- Anxiety, panic, racing thoughts
- Irritability or emotional intensity
- Shutting down or feeling numb
- Brain fog or zoning out
- Extreme fatigue or sleepiness
- Switching between states

These responses are protective, not personal failures.

What Happens in My Brain During

Dysregulation

When my nervous system is overwhelmed:

- My limbic system (emotions/survival) takes charge
- My thinking brain struggles to stay online
- Logic alone doesn't calm me
- I'm trying to survive, not connect, experience or learn

Regulation Changes What's Possible

When my nervous system feels more regulated:

- I can think more clearly
- Emotions feel manageable
- Sensory input feels tolerable
- I can pause instead of react
- Connection becomes possible

One sign that regulation is improving for me is:

Reflection

One thing my nervous system may need more of right now is:

- Rest
- Regulation practices
- Support
- Nourishment
- Safety
- Time

Dysregulation is not a character flaw. It is a nervous system doing its best to protect you.

Educational use only.