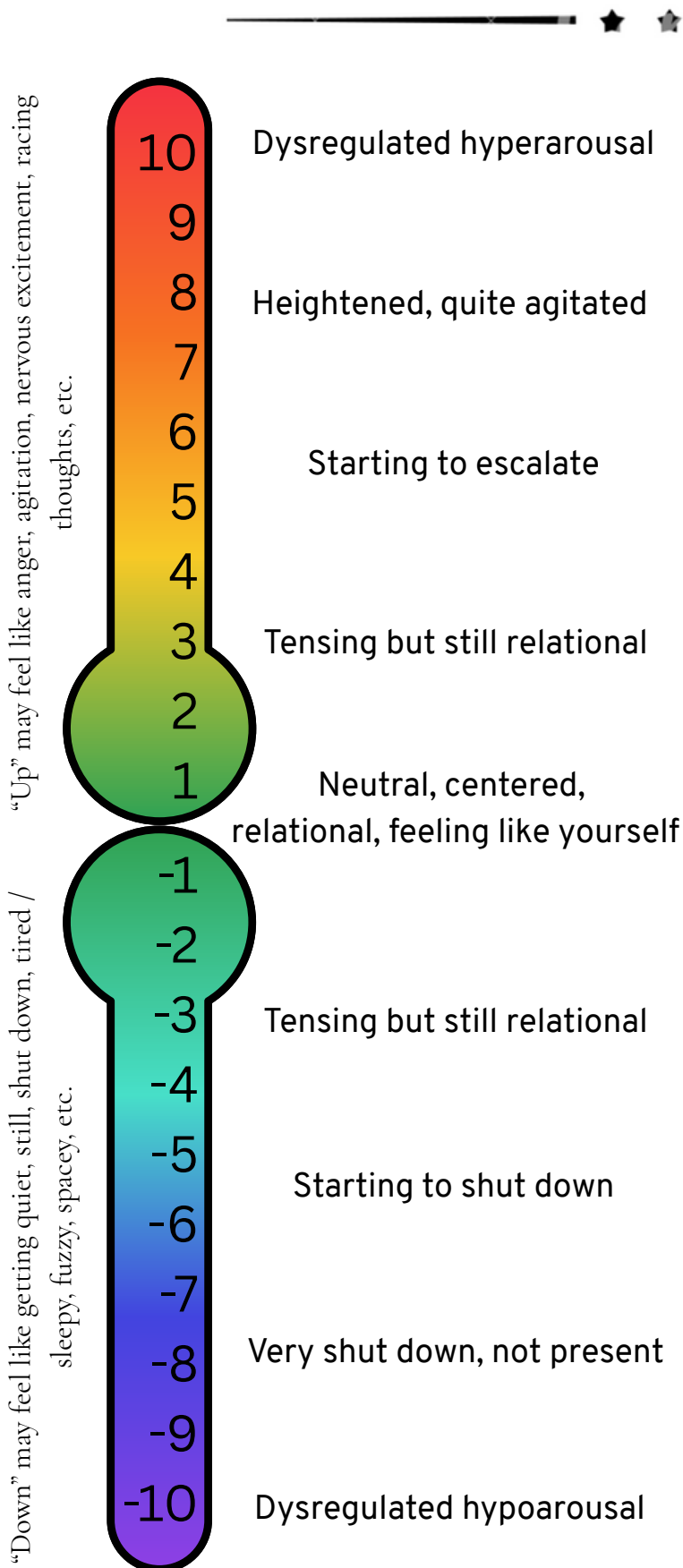


Self-Awareness Thermometer

Sensations and Behaviors of Nervous System and Body Activation



Our nervous systems can be imagined as a dual-sided thermometer, and we can go "up" or "down" in temperature. When we are acting like ourselves and showing up the way we want to in a relationship, we are usually in our "green zone". When we have stressful conversations and difficult emotions, our bodies often react by either by elevating "up" into the yellow / orange / red zones (fight or flight modes - this can feel like anxiety, anger, agitation, excitement), OR shutting "down" into the light blue / dark blue / purple zones (freeze mode, or sometimes a fawn response - this can feel like getting quiet, still, shut down, tired, fuzzy, spacey).

In conflict or under stress, which direction do you usually go?

Understanding your physical sensations and behaviors at each "temperature" is an important step towards building positive conflict skills. Start by noticing the somatic (body-based) cues that alert you that you are no longer able to show up well in your relationship. Once you realize that you're either escalating or shutting down, you can express the need to take a short break, and then you can go do things that help you move closer to the "green zone". When you feel more like yourself (and more able to treat your partner the way you'd hope to be treated), you can more confidently re-approach the conversation.

Do you get “hot” or escalate up?

List your personal sensations and behaviors (how you feel and what you do) at each temperature

A vertical thermometer graphic with a color gradient from green at the bottom to red at the top. The numbers 1 through 10 are printed vertically along the left side of the thermometer. To the right of the thermometer, there are ten horizontal lines, each corresponding to a number, for writing notes.

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

Do you get “cold” or shut down?

List your personal sensations and behaviors (how you feel and what you do) at each temperature

A vertical thermometer graphic with a circular bulb at the top. The bulb and the upper part of the stem are green, transitioning to blue and then purple towards the bottom. The thermometer is marked with numbers from -1 to -10. To the right of the thermometer, there are ten horizontal lines, each corresponding to a temperature level, for writing notes.

-1

-2

-3

-4

-5

-6

-7

-8

-9

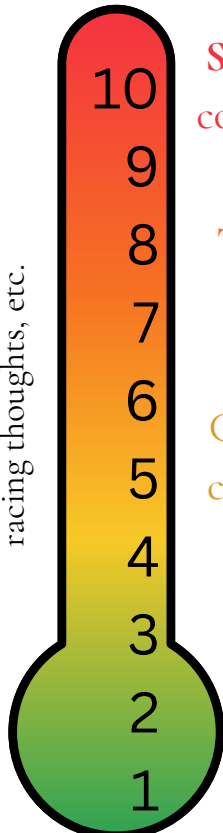
-10

Self-Awareness Thermometer

Want to get back to green(ish)? Ideas to try:



“Up” may feel like anger, agitation, nervous excitement,
racing thoughts, etc.



STOP. Exit the interaction safely and take a 30-minute break. Splash very cold water on your face &/or do vigorous exercise to get your heart rate up. Then, work through the “orange” and “yellow” options.

Take a 10- to 30-minute break. Get your body moving, speedwalk around the block or do some stairs, then focus on slowing down your breathing with longer exhales.

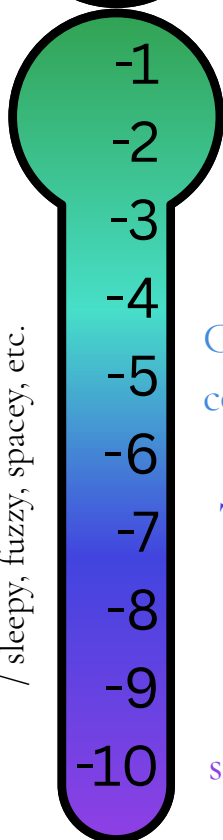
Change how you're sitting or walk around the room; ask to take a pause (a couple minutes) and step outside for some fresh air; focus on slowing your breaths (especially long exhales).

Have a sip of water; take a big exhale; look around the room and see something; roll your neck and shoulders out; use fidget toys.

You're already feeling relational and showing up well!

Keep using your communication skills and empathy, and stay self-aware to track your nervous system responses.

“Down” may feel like getting quiet, still, shut down, tired
/ sleepy, fuzzy, spacey, etc.



Have a sip of water; take a big inhale; look around the room and see something; roll your neck and shoulders out; use fidget toys.

Change how you're sitting or walk around the room; ask to take a pause (a couple minutes) and step outside for some fresh air; focus on moving your body and rolling your joints (wrists, ankles, neck).

Take a 10- to 30-minute break. Options: get your body moving gradually, do some stretching, pat yourself down (waking up your skin receptors wakes up your nervous system); take deep, strong inhales.

STOP the conversation and take a 30-minute break. Focus your eyes on something. Start moving your joints gradually. When you can look around and move a bit, work your way up through the “blue” options.

Self-Awareness Thermometer

Your Personal Roadmap Back to Yourself: Make it Your Own



If I notice I am feeling and acting...

Yellow (3 to 5)

OR

Light Blue (-3 to -5)

What are my physical sensations and behaviors that tell me I need to slow down the conversation?

When we slow it down, what will I do to help myself re-center?

Orange / Red (6 & higher)

OR

Dark Blue / Purple (-6 & lower)

What are my physical sensations and behaviors that tell me I need to pause the conversation and take a break?

When we take a break, what will I do to help myself re-regulate and feel more like myself?