

Step 1 – Locate Your Nervous System Response

State	Relational Signs	Behavioural Signs	Mood Signs
Hyper-arousal(Fight/Flight, Over-activation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snapping or defensive in conversations • Difficulty listening or staying present • Hypervigilance in relationships (constantly scanning for rejection/criticism) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restlessness, pacing, fidgeting • Rapid speech, interrupting • Trouble sleeping, constant busyness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability, frustration, rage • Anxiety, panic, dread • Feeling emotionally flooded
Regulated State (Optimal Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and present in relationships • Able to listen and respond with curiosity • Attuned to self and others • Ability to tolerate range of emotions such as joy, ease as well as grief and pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible thinking and problem solving • Steady energy, balanced activity and access to rest • Able to pause and reflect before acting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm but engaged • Curious, grounded, emotionally balanced • Resilient in the face of stress
Hypo-arousal (Freeze/Shutdown, Under-activation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from others • Emotional numbness in connection • Difficulty sustaining intimacy or conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning out, spacing out, dissociation • Slowed responses • Low motivation, struggle with basic tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat affect, numbness • Hopelessness, apathy • Heaviness, depressive symptoms

Step 2 – Recommended Resourcing for Each State. *The levels show a ladder of intensity for regulating your nervous system.*

State	Somatic Cues	Ladder of Helpful Practices	Activism as Resource
Hyper-arousal(Fight/Flight, Over-activation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow, rapid breathing • Tense jaw, clenched fists, tight shoulders • Racing heart, sweating • Feeling “amped up,” restless, explosive energy 	Level 3 – Release energy: Discharge excess through HIIT, sprinting, punching a pillow. Level 2 – Creative discharge: Rhythmic/sensory outlets (dancing, shaking, flowing yoga, drumming). Level 1 – Settling/co-regulation: Tactile/relational activities (gardening, cooking, clay work, safe touch, breathing with another).	Channel intensity into structured action: Protests, marches, or direct action can provide a collective container for excess energy. Grounding activism: Writing letters, organizing events, or creating art for movements helps transform agitation into purposeful energy.
Regulated State(Optimal Zone, Window of Tolerance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady, full breathing • Relaxed but alert posture • Warmth in body, steady heart rate • Present and connected 	Level 3 – Build capacity: Take on challenges (creative risks, leadership roles, higher-intensity workouts). Level 2 – Sustain balance: Mindful routines (yoga, journaling, nature walks, music, reading). Level 1 – Nourish safety: Gentle rituals (tea, soft breath awareness, cozy rest, presence with others).	Engage with sustainable activism: Community care, mentoring, coalition building. Relational activism: Hosting circles, mutual aid, or behind-the-scenes organizing that maintains long-term resilience.
Hypo-arousal(Freeze/Shutdown, Under-activation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slowed breath • Heavy limbs, slumped posture • Cold hands/feet • Flat or “far away” facial expression • Feeling disconnected, numb 	Level 3 – Minimal effort: Small movements (stretching fingers, toes, standing up, short gentle walks, sipping warm or cold drink). Level 2 – Relational activation: Co-regulation (talking with a friend, eye contact, petting an animal, humming, exploring texture of trees). Level 1 – Energizing activation: Direct stimulation (energizing breathwork, brisk walk/jog, upbeat dancing, cold water splash).	Rekindle connection through activism: Low-effort roles like signing petitions, making eye contact with another human, donating time/money. More activating roles: Storytelling, sharing lived experience, or volunteering with supportive teams help move from disconnection into meaningful action.