

Steps to manage anxiety, stress,  
sadness and frustrations.

# CALMING CHAOS.

**INWARD OUT PSYCHOLOGY**

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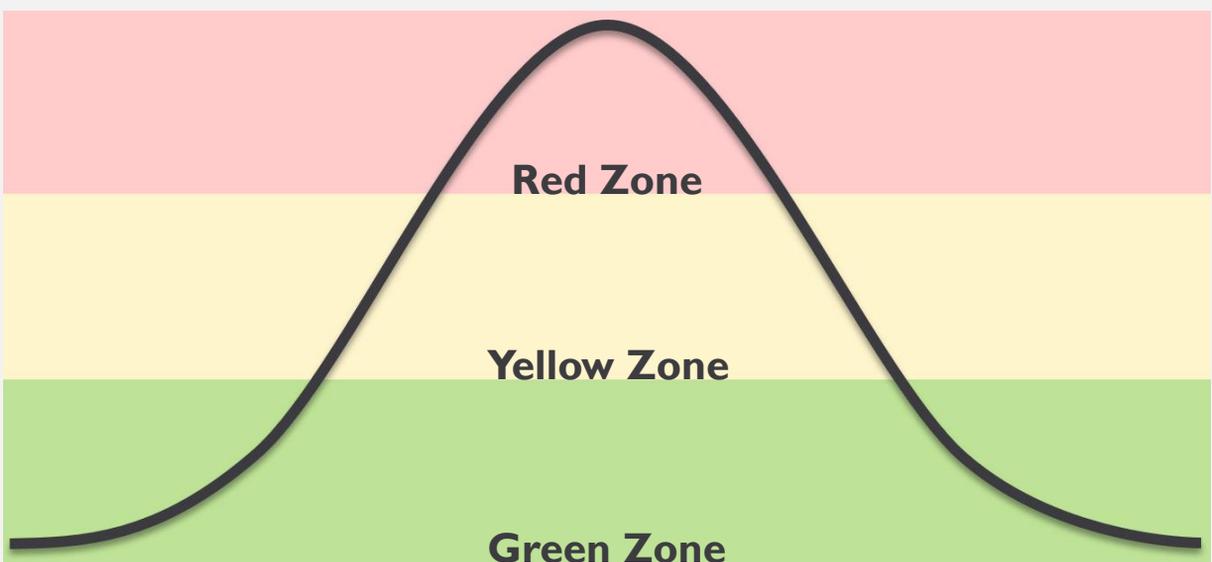
# Step One:

## / Recognise when you are out of balance.

When we are calm and alert, in the green zone, we can access the thinking parts of our brain that helps us plan, problem solve and make decisions.

When our brain is triggered into high alert by anger, anxiety, frustrations or fear, we can head into the red zone. We focus on our needs for safety or survival – *fighting* (or becoming defensive), *fleeing* (avoiding), or *freezing* (physically or mentally). We may notice rapid breathing and increased heart rate. In the red zone, the reactive brain is working perfectly but the thinking brain is much less active.

**/ When you become more aware of your experience you can use tools to get back into the green zone and achieve better balance within yourself.**



# Step Two:

## / Strengthen tools that help calm the mind and body.

One of the most helpful things to do when you are faced with overwhelm and chaos is to accept that at these moments of emotional flooding, working things out using words or logic are not the most effective tools. Instead, you can use these opportunities to practice the strategies that are helpful so you can widen your capacity to handle stress, sadness or frustrations without it triggering the red zone.

**/ Notice the reactions that have been helpful and unhelpful when you are in the red zone.**

<b>/ Helpful tools</b>	<b>Unhelpful tools</b>
<b>1. Tune into the senses</b> Play your favourite music, notice things around you	
<b>2. Move the body to regain balance</b> Dance, yoga, exercise	
<b>3. Breathe</b> Inhale deeply through your nose for 4 seconds and out for 4 seconds	
<b>4. Name the emotion</b> Call it out loud to tame the intensity of the feeling	
<b>5. Connect</b> Spend time with people who support and understand you	

# Step Three:

## / Reflect on the experience.

When we are in the green zone, we can harness our capacities to be flexible and stable. You can argue with ideas that are not helpful, healthy or true and make better decisions. You don't have to believe all your thoughts and can challenge them to strengthen the logical part of the brain.

To see what is going on in the inside, Dan Siegel and Tina Bryson created the acronym 'SIFT' to help us remember how we can pay attention to the information inside ourselves and bring it into awareness.

**/ Ask yourself the following questions when you are feeling overwhelmed or chaotic.**

### **/ SENSATIONS**

*What am I sensing right now in my body? Is there tension in my muscles?*

### **/ IMAGES**

*What images come to mind? Are there images of a time in your life or hopes for the future?*

### **/ FEELINGS**

*What name would I use to describe this feeling?*

### **/ THOUGHTS**

*What thoughts emerge?*



**Typically, if you work through each of these steps, you will develop more awareness of your internal world and find the inner strength to calm chaos.**

Also, you experience more ease in the present so that you can de-escalate sooner.

While this may feel like a timely exercise to begin with, it becomes easier with practice.

**/ Keep these in your pocket to use when you need it. These can be powerful ways to help bring the brain back into balance when under stress.**

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