

TOLERANCE LIMITS VS. COMFORT ZONES VS. SURVIVAL MODE

This is the most important thing you need to understand about anyone who has ASD!

If you understand the difference between these 3 states, then you can observe behavior more accurately and time your interventions very effectively, thus preventing most misbehaviors and intervening with less effort when misbehaviors do occur. Learn to recognize your loved one's unique behavioral patterns & changes that indicate each state.

SURVIVAL MODE common behaviors (one or more may occur)	TOLERANCE LIMITS <i>early warning signs:</i> common behaviors that indicate the person is close to going into SURVIVAL MODE (one or more may occur)	COMFORT ZONE common behaviors (one or more may occur)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tantrums • meltdowns • hitting, biting, spitting, kicking • screaming or yelling • demanding • threats or other aggressive comments or actions • namecalling, profanity or other offensive comments • running away • hiding • throwing /knocking over objects or furniture • intense self-stimulation • self-abuse such as head banging, hitting self in head, biting self, throwing self on floor, etc. • crawling under furniture • pulling shirt over own head • running or climbing frantically • stripping clothes off or abruptly removing shoes • refusal to cooperate or do task • repeated or continuous noncompliance • shutting down or zoning out • staring off with no response • panic reactions • absent, ineffective, rigid or offensive communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperative & compliant, but may not comply immediately or without verbal protests, but still cooperates • if compliance occurs only after a delay, some mild resistance or hesitation, or verbal protests, recognize the person is very close to the edge of his tolerance limits & can very easily & quickly be pushed into survival mode • arguing or talking back • ignoring the request or task demands the first 1-3 times presented • trying to talk you out of the request or task demand • increased self-stimulation • increased abruptness of movement or talking • increased physical tension that may look like more rigid posturing or movement, slightly raised shoulders or tensed jaw & facial muscles • pupils dilate in well lit setting • seeks out more sensory input • tries to avoid some sensations • changing the topic to a familiar or preferred topic • intense scripting • communication may become less effective/appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliant & cooperative unless being prompted out of comfort zone • communicates using effective communication supports that are familiar & comfortable • may be prompt dependent • may ignore social or communication attempts by others • may repeatedly or continuously attempt to remain in comfort zone • may resist outside efforts to prompt to move into tolerance state • slow to moderately paced self-stimulation or repetitive movement that has no goal directed purpose • focused on accessing sensory input from one or more preferred sources • focused on accessing one or more specific, limited, high preference activities • affect is happy or content • increased tolerance for brief, limited interruption or background noise & talking