



Comfort zone: these are things we can do routinely without any trouble, feeling relaxed.

Stretch zone (or brave zone): these are things just outside our comfort zone where we might feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or anxious but at a level we can cope with. If we keep doing stretch zone activities, our comfort zone gets bigger to include them. If we avoid stretch zone activities too much our comfort zone can shrink. It's never too late to stretch it out though!

Panic zone: this is where our rational brain stops functioning so well and we may go into fight/flight/freeze mode. If you can recognise this is happening early enough, you may be able to avoid this by using a tool or strategy or you may need help from someone near you such as someone giving you some space.

As you get to know yourself and your zones more, you will find tools and strategies that are helpful or not helpful. For example, you might have a "I have SM... can I write it down card" in your back pocket as a safety net when asking for something in a coffee shop, and with this the activity becomes stretch not panic. Or, you might get out your phone and do a quick HeadSpace activity to get yourself away from the panic zone. Remember, the panic zone cannot last forever and your body will naturally return to its "normal" state over a short period of time.

If you've ever used the zones of regulation, you might be wondering where the blue zone is... this is where you feel low energy and fatigued so you can't even get enough energy for your comfort zone. You might need a break, time to recharge, or some help from others.