UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

TOO HIGH

HYPERAROUSAL: fight/flight

- > Wary or guarded
- > Tense and mobilized, ready to fight or to run
- > Agitated: heart rate increases and blood pressure rises, respiration rate increases
- > **Overwhelmed:** emotions, sensations, or stimuli feel intense
- Confused and fragmented: stress hormones impair the ability to reason or to assess the meaning of words, feelings, or events

OPTIMAL AROUSAL

alert, energized, curious, engaged, receptive

HYPOAROUSAL: freeze/shut down

- Foggy ("fog" rolls in)
- Sleepy (sudden heavy sleepiness that has a drugged quality)
- > **Confused, "stupid"** (hard to concentrate, to recall words, or to comprehend others' words)
- > Distant (feels like you are withdrawing far into yourself or out of your body)
- Weak or paralyzed
- > Numb