

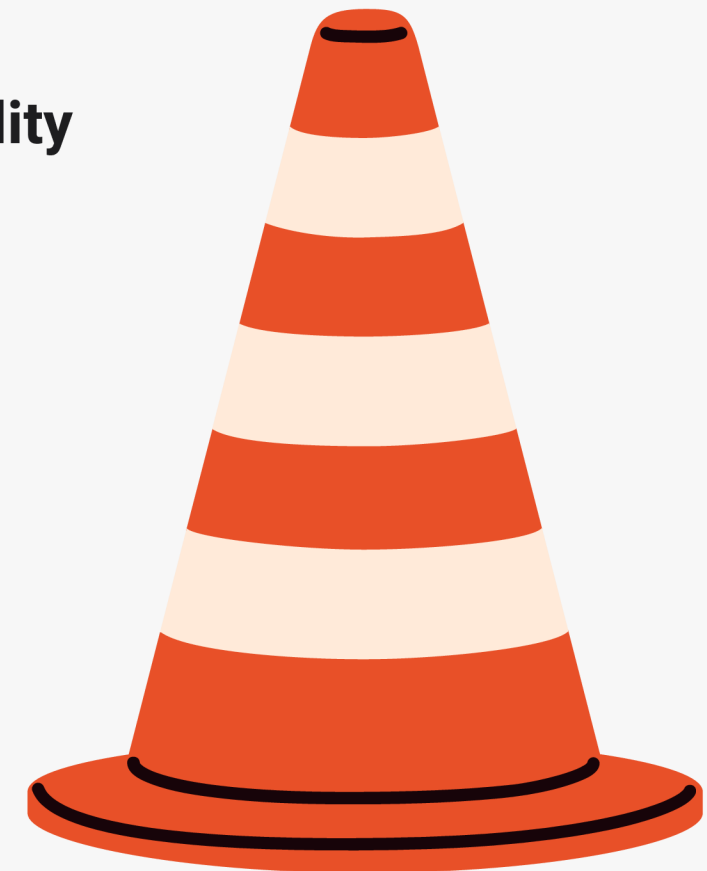
The Pain Awareness ZonesTM

A Neurodivergent Spiral of LifeTM Tool --Layer 1: Safety & Believability

is for adults with Autism, ADHD, and Complex Trauma
(and those who love them) who want earlier and
gentler access to nervous system regulation.

by Barbara (Blaze) Lazarony, MA, LMFT

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Understanding Your Pain Awareness Zones™

Support your nervous system—before pain escalates.

Your nervous system moves through different pain and stress states each day, from quiet signals to increased load, from overwhelm to recovery.

The Pain Awareness Zones™ help you notice where you are and what your body is asking for in each state.

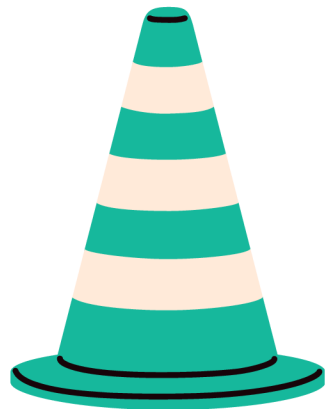
When you learn to name pain before it peaks, you can respond earlier, with care, not self-criticism.

Use this tool as a gentle check-in whenever something feels “off,” or as a short reflection to help you stay oriented to your body’s signals.

You don’t need to use every part of this tool. Even noticing one Zone—or one early signal—is enough. Early awareness is support.



The Pain Awareness ZonesTM

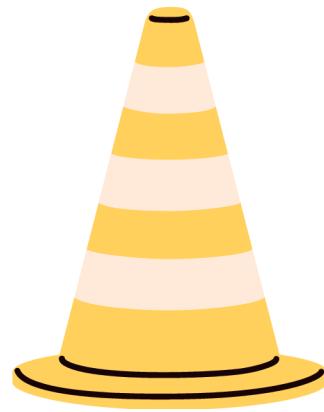


Green Zone — Settled

- Pain signals are minimal or quiet
- Your body feels relatively steady
- You may not need to do anything

Permission:

You are allowed to simply notice this state without preparing for the next one.

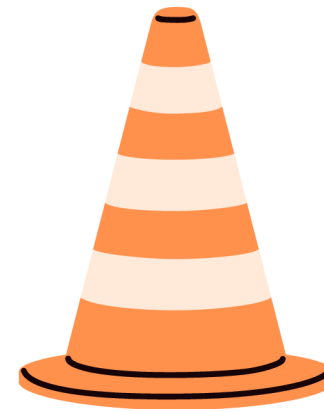


Yellow Zone — Early Signals

- Something feels “off”
- Subtle discomfort, fatigue, or tension
- Easy to ignore or push through

Permission:

You are allowed to respond here.
You do not need to wait.

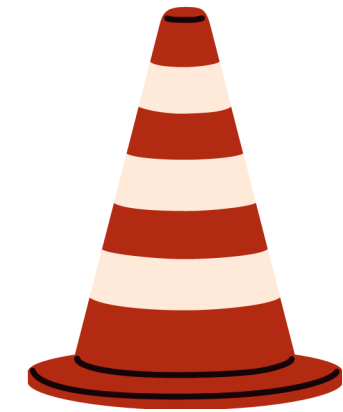


Orange Zone — Increasing Load

- Pain or distress is harder to dismiss
- Your capacity is shrinking
- Concentration, patience, or regulation takes more effort

Permission:

This is not failure.
Your nervous system is asking for support.



Red Zone — High Distress

- Pain feels overwhelming or consuming
- Shutdown, panic, or urges to escape may appear
- You may need help from others

Permission:

You deserve care now.
Needing support does not mean you waited too long.

Important Orientation Note:

The Zones are not a hierarchy
You may move between Zones in any order
Being in a higher-intensity Zone does not mean you did something wrong
Earlier awareness reduces escalation, but late care still counts

The Pain That Had Nowhere to Go

Listening sooner reduces harm



For some neurodivergent people, unrecognized or dismissed pain can turn inward over time. This does not mean anything is wrong with you. It often means your nervous system learned there was no other way to be heard.

Listening earlier reduces risk.

Support helps before crisis.

If you are feeling unsafe or at risk, please reach out to local emergency services or a crisis line in your country, in the US the number is 988.

You are allowed to take yourself seriously in every Zone.

References



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About Barbara (Blaze) Lazarony



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Barbara (Blaze) Lazarony, MA, LMFT, is a neurodivergent therapist and guide who supports neurodivergent adults and couples in understanding themselves—and each other—without shame or pressure to change. Her work is grounded in the integrated reality of her own neurodivergent nervous system: misattunement, care, fatigue, and the steady desire to be met as you are.

After decades of clinical practice and lived integration, Blaze shaped the Neurodivergent Spiral of Life™ to provide language and structure for experiences that are often unnamed or misunderstood. Through her work, writing, and on her Love on the Autism Spectrum podcast, she offers clinical clarity with compassionate pacing, supporting people to slow down, feel safer in their bodies, and build relationships that fit their real nervous systems with steadiness, consent, and earned authority over time.