

## Hypo-arousal

If a person in **hyper-arousal** goes too far along the arousal continuum, they may become so overwhelmed that they move into a state of hypo-arousal, characterised by withdrawal, disconnection and, ultimately, immobilisation and shut-down. It is important to remember that these types of response are not within the individual's control and are motivated by their experience of fear and a lack of safety. Hypo-arousal is a physiologically induced freeze response and is often referred to as “the escape when there is no escape” (Shore, 2014). When an individual is in a state of hypo-arousal, their withdrawn, disconnected presentation may be described using such terms as “oppositional”, “defiant”, “demand avoidant”, “non-compliant”, “stubborn” or “resistant”. When the individual's **presentation or way of being** is construed in this way, it may anger, frustrate or mystify the people around them, with the result that the individual may experience increased isolation and fear, pushing them even further away from their Just Right State. It is important, therefore, to recognise a hypo-arousal presentation for what it is, namely a refuge of last resort in the face of alarm, fear or terror, a physiological state that seeks a compassionate response based on the principle of **co-regulation**.

*Schore A, (2014). Early interpersonal neurobiological assessment of attachment and autistic spectrum disorders. Frontiers in Psychology 5 (A1049): p7*

