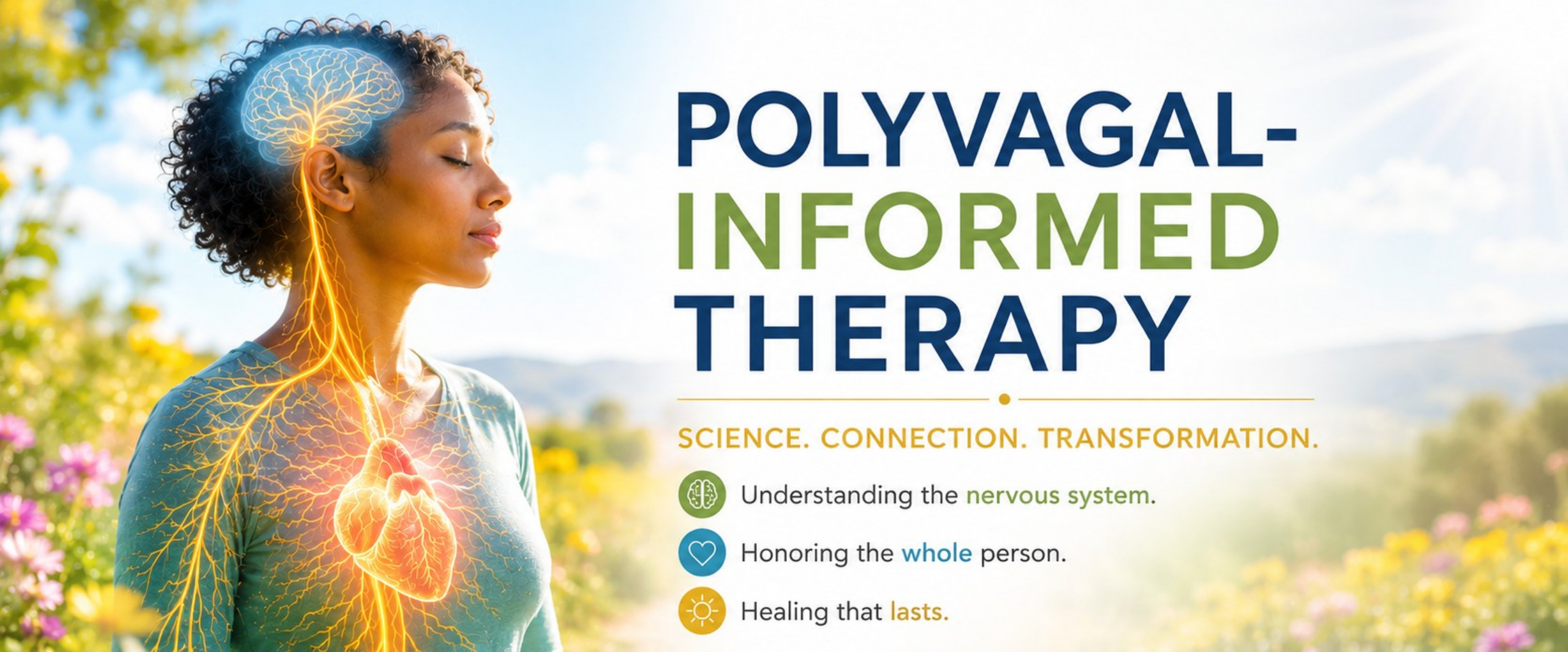




POLYVAGAL- INFORMED THERAPY

SCIENCE. CONNECTION. TRANSFORMATION.



Understanding the **nervous** system.



Honoring the **whole** person.



Healing that **lasts**.



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Bringing Neuroscience and Faith Together

Jeffrey E. Hansen, PhD

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

NeuroFaith® LLC



SCIENCE

Rooted in
Neuroscience



FAITH

Centered in
Christ



PURPOSE

Transformed
Lives & Communities

“The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” | **PHILIPPIANS 4:7**



POLYVAGAL- INFORMED THERAPY

Healing through
the language of
the nervous system



HEARTMATH® AND NEUROCARDIOLOGY

Reconnecting
with the heart
as an intelligent
center



INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS (IFS)

Mapping the inner
landscape of
parts and burdens



FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

Rediscovering our
inner connection
with God



The autonomic nervous system is our **personal surveillance system**.



In an effort to keep us out of danger, it is **always on guard**; asking the question, "Is this safe?" Its dedicated goal is to protect us by sensing safety and risk.



It achieves this by **listening moment by moment** to what is happening in and around our bodies and in the connections, we have to others (Dana, 2018).



This listening happens **far below awareness** and **far away from our conscious control**.



Dr. Porges, understanding that this is not awareness that comes with perception which is conscious, coined the term **neuroception** to describe the way our autonomic nervous system scans for cues of safety, danger, and life threat, without involving the thinking parts of our brain or the unconscious parts of the brain (Porges, 2017).



POLYVAGAL THEORY

The Autonomic Nervous System



*Listening for Safety.
Living in Connection. Healing Together.*



Dr. Stephen Porges

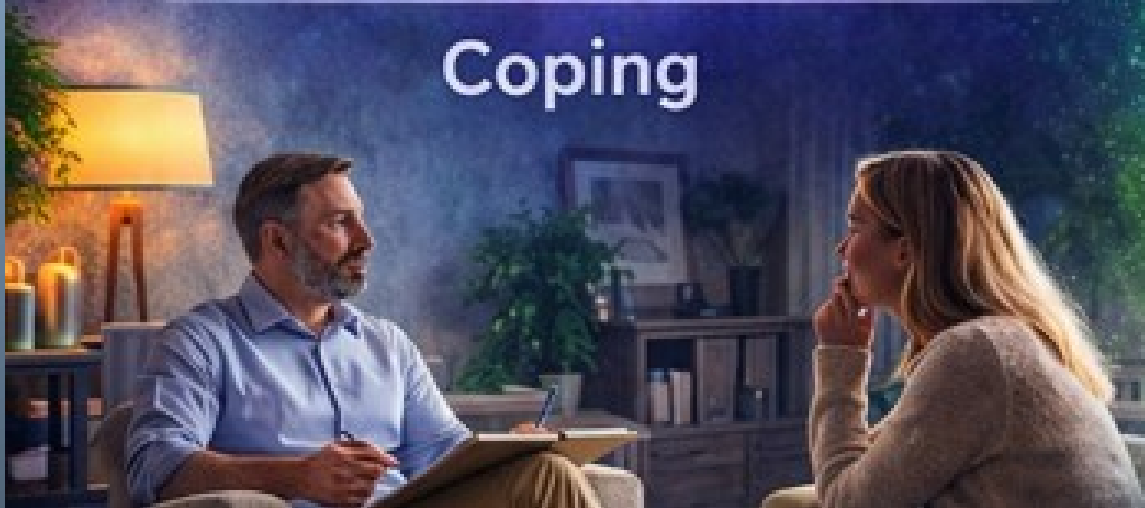
Distinguished University Scientist
Trauma Expert. Neuroscientist. Author.



INCREMENTAL THERAPIES

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

Coping



TRANSFORMATIONAL THERAPIES

- Polyvagal-Informed Therapy
- HeartMath® and Neurocardiology
 - Internal Family Systems
 - Faith and Spirituality

Deep Change



VS.

INCREMENTAL & TRANSFORMATIONAL THERAPIES

Although incremental therapies are very necessary and helpful,
it is transformational therapies that get you home.



The Default Mode Network needs to be updated
and only **transformational** therapies can achieve that.



INCREMENTAL THERAPIES



FOCUS: Gradual, step-by-step change.



APPROACH: Behavior modification and
symptom management.



EXAMPLES: CBT, DBT, Exposure Therapy.



GOAL: Improve specific symptoms
or behaviors.



PROCESS: Structured, often short-term.



HELPS YOU MANAGE THE CLIMB.

VS.



TRANSFORMATIONAL THERAPIES



FOCUS: Profound, holistic changes.



APPROACH: Deeper psychological
exploration.



EXAMPLES: Internal Family Systems (IFS),
EMDR, Polyvagal-Informed Therapy,
Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT)



GOAL: Transform personal beliefs
and self-concept.



PROCESS: Open-ended,
usually longer-term.



GETS YOU HOME.

POLYVAGAL THEORY

Understanding the Autonomic Nervous System

*"The nervous system is constantly  asking one question: **Am I safe?**"*

The **vagus nerve** is the main communication highway between your brain and your body.



1. SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Mobilization | Fight or Flight

When danger is detected, the sympathetic nervous system prepares the body for action. Heart rate increases, breathing accelerates, muscles tense, and attention narrows toward survival.



2. SYMPATHETIC ADRENAL MEDULLARY (SAM) SYSTEM

The Immediate Alarm System

The SAM system activates within milliseconds and releases adrenaline for a rapid burst of energy. It is designed for immediate response and typically settles quickly once safety returns.



3. HYPOTHALAMIC-PITUITARY-ADRENAL (HPA) AXIS

The Sustained Stress Response

When a threat persists, the HPA axis releases cortisol to support longer-term survival. Unlike the SAM system, this response develops more slowly and can remain active for extended periods.



Polyvagal Theory helps us understand how trauma affects the body and nervous system long before conscious awareness.



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Polyvagal Theory

SYMPATHETIC DIVISION

- 🍃 The sympathetic division **increases heart rate** and the force of heart contractions and widens (dilates) the airways to make breathing easier.
- 🍃 It causes the body to **release stored energy**.
- 🍃 **Muscular strength is increased**. This division also causes palms to sweat, pupils to dilate, and hair to stand on end.
- 🍃 It **slows body processes** that are less important in emergencies, such as **digestion and urination** (Merck Manual).
- 🍃 When we are in this physical state, we can feel emotions such as **fear and/or rage** and, if extremely activated, absolute terror (Rothschild, 2017).



WHAT IT DOES

Prepares the body for action in response to perceived danger.

This is your fight-or-flight response—designed to protect you and help you survive.



WHEN IT ACTIVATES

Triggered by the brain's threat detection system—consciously or unconsciously.

It can be helpful in true emergencies or harmful when overactivated.



THE GOAL

Short-term mobilization for survival.

When the threat is gone, the body should return to balance and rest in safety.



When the body feels safe, the need to fight disappears.

Safety is the foundation for healing, connection, and growth.



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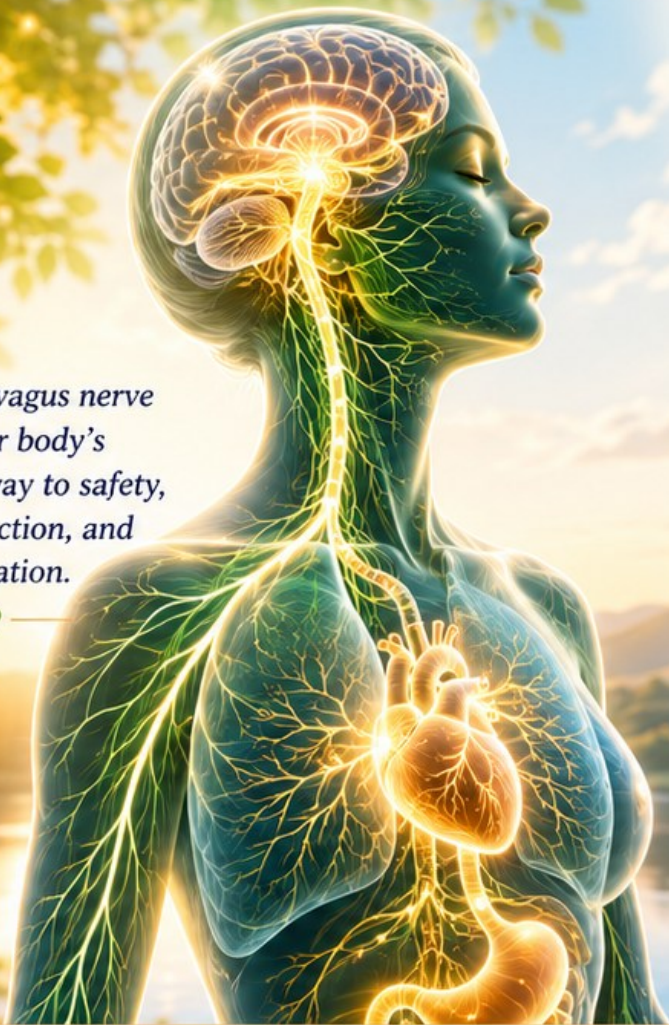
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“Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
Let not your hearts be troubled. — John 14:27

THE PARASYMPATHETIC DIVISION

The Body's Pathway to Safety, Restoration, and Healing

“The vagus nerve is your body's pathway to safety, connection, and restoration.”



RESTORES BALANCE

Slows heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and promotes digestion, recovery, and tissue repair.



THE VAGUS NERVE

The 10th cranial nerve and the primary communication pathway of the parasympathetic nervous system.



WHY IT MATTERS

The vagus nerve links the brain, heart, lungs, face, and digestive tract into one integrated system.



A TWO-WAY HIGHWAY

Approximately 80% of vagal fibers carry information from the body to the brain, while 20% carry signals from the brain to the body.



POLYVAGAL INSIGHT

Different branches of the vagus nerve support either safety and connection or shutdown and conservation.



BRAIN

Interprets safety and threat.



HEART

Regulates emotion and physiology.



BODY

Restores healing, growth, and connection.

When the nervous system feels safe, healing becomes possible.



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POLYVAGAL THEORY

Made Simple



AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM



SYMPATHETIC

Activated, anxiety, fear,
terror, anger



PARASYMPATHETIC

VENTRAL VAGAL



Connected, calm, safety

DORSAL VAGAL



Shut-down, depressed

“ When we understand the nervous system,
we can meet people with compassion and help them find safety.



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POLYVAGAL THEORY: *The Nervous System in Action*

The chart below, adapted from Dr. Rothschild, nicely demonstrates the shifting body sensations, physiological symptoms, and emotions as we move between autonomic states (Rothschild, 2017).

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: PRECISION REGULATION

** WHAT TO LOOK FOR **

	 LETHARGIC Parasympathetic (PNS I)	 CALM Parasympathetic (PNS II) Ventral Vagus	 ACTIVE / ALERT Sympathetic (SNS I) OPTIMAL ZONE	 FLIGHT / FIGHT Sympathetic (SNS II) DANGER ZONE BEGINS	 HYPER FREEZE Sympathetic (SNS III) THREAT TO LIFE	 HYPO FREEZE Parasympathetic (PNS III) Dorsal Vagus Collapse
 PRIMARY STATE	Apathy, Depression	Safe, Clear Thinking, Social Engagement	Alert, Ready to Act	React to Danger	Await Opportunity to Escape	Prepare for Death
 AROUSAL	Too Low	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme Overload	Excessive Overwhelm Induces Hypoarousal
 MUSCLES	Slack	Relaxed/toned	Toned	Tense	Rigid (deer in the headlights)	Flaccid
 RESPIRATION	Shallow	Easy, often into belly	Increasing rate	Fast, often in upper chest	Hyperventilation	Hypo-ventilation
 HEART RATE	Slow	Resting	Quicker or more forceful	Quick and/or forceful	Tachycardia (very fast)	Bradycardia (very slow)
 BLOOD PRESSURE	Likely low	Normal	On the rise	Elevated	Significantly high	Significantly low
 PUPILS, EYES, EYE LIDS	Pupils smaller, lids may be heavy	Pupils smaller, eyes moist, eye lids relaxed	Pupils widening, eyes less moist, eye lids toned	Pupils very dilated, eyes dry, eye lids tense/raised	Pupils very small or dilated, eyes very dry, lids very tense	Lids dropping, eyes closed or open and dark
 SKIN TONE	Variable	Rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Less rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Pale hue, despite skin color (blood flow to muscles)	May be pale and/or flushed	Noticeably pale
 HUMIDITY	Dry	Moist	Increased sweat	Increased sweat, may be cold	Cold sweat	Cold sweat
 HANDS & FEET (TEMPERATURE)	Variable	Warm	Less moist	Dry	Dry	Dry
 DIGESTION	Variable	Increase	Cool	Cold	Extremes of cold & hot	Cold
 EMOTION	Grief, sadness, shame, disgust	Calm, pleasure, love, sexual arousal, "good" grief possible	Anger, shame, disgust, anxiety, excitement, sexual climax possible	Rage, fear	Evacuate bowel & bladder Terror, may be dissociation	Stopped May be too dissociated to feel anything
 EMOTIONS WITH SELF & OTHERS	Withdrawn	Should be accessible	Should be accessible	Limited	Not likely	Inaccessible
 FRONTAL CORTEX	May or may not be accessible	Likely	Likely	May or may not be accessible	Likely inaccessible	Inaccessible
 INTEGRATION	Not likely	Should be accessible	Should be accessible	Not likely	Impossible	Impossible
 RECOMMENDED INTERVENTION	Activate, Gently Increase Energy	Continue Therapy Direction	Continue Therapy Direction	Put on Brakes	Slam on Brakes	Medical Emergency CALL 911



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BRIDGING SCIENCE AND SPIRIT TO TRANSFORM LIVES

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FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

Regulate the Nervous System.
Access the Self.
Restore Connection.



Adapted from "The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation" by Deb Dana, LCSW, and Stephen J. Rothschild, PhD (Norton, 2017).

TRAUMA AND STRESS ACTIVATE THE HYPOTHALAMIC-PITUITARY-ADRENAL AXIS (HPA)

DEFINITION: The HPA axis is a complex set of interactions among the:



1. Hypothalamus



2. Pituitary Gland



3. Adrenal Glands

IT REGULATES:



1. Stress Responses



2. Mood



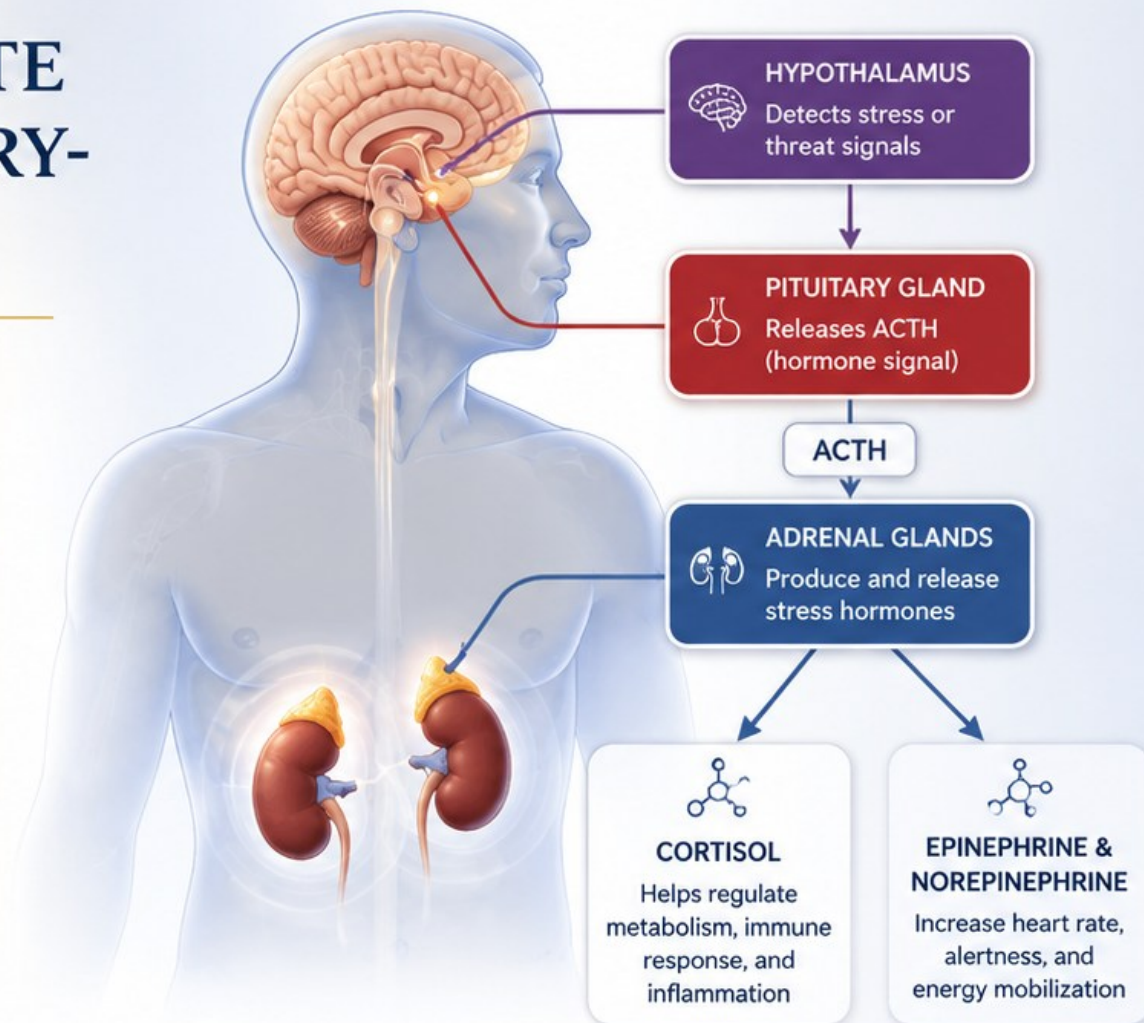
3. Digestion



4. The Immune System



5. Energy Storage and Expenditure and More



*When stress is chronic, the HPA axis stays on high alert.
Healing happens when the body learns it's safe again.*



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WHAT IS CORTISOL?

The Body's Natural Stress Regulator



DEFINITION: Cortisol is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands, which are located on top of each kidney.



FUNCTION: It plays a crucial role in the body's stress response, helping to regulate metabolism, reduce inflammation, and assist with memory formulation.



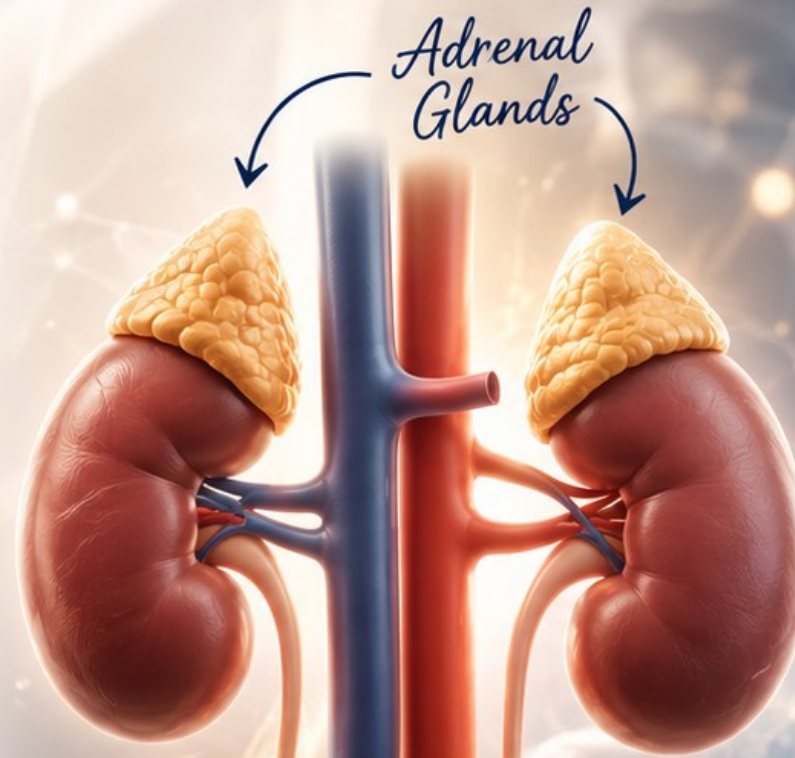
STRESS RESPONSE: Often called the “stress hormone,” cortisol levels increase in response to stress, helping the body manage and adapt to stressful situations.



REGULATION: It follows a daily rhythm—highest in the morning to help you wake up, and gradually decreasing throughout the day.



EFFECTS OF IMBALANCE: Chronic high cortisol levels can lead to various health issues, such as weight gain, high blood pressure, disrupted sleep, and a weakened immune system.



CORTISOL



MANAGES
STRESS



REGULATES
METABOLISM



SUPPORTS
FOCUS & ENERGY



*Cortisol is essential for survival—but balance is key.
When stress is managed, the body can heal, restore, and thrive.*



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IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE CORTISOL ON THE BRAIN



IMPAIRED COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE: High cortisol can disrupt memory formation, concentration, and decision-making processes.



REDUCED NEUROGENESIS: Prolonged exposure to elevated cortisol levels can inhibit the growth of new neurons, particularly in the hippocampus, which is critical for learning and memory.



NEURONAL DAMAGE: Excessive cortisol can lead to neuronal loss in the brain, which may contribute to cognitive decline over time.



MOOD DISORDERS: High cortisol levels are associated with an increased risk of mood disorders such as depression and anxiety.



ALTERED BRAIN FUNCTION: It can affect the function of various neurotransmitters and receptors within the brain, altering mood and behavior.



INCREASED BRAIN INFLAMMATION: Cortisol can promote inflammation within the brain, which is linked to various neurological conditions.



HORMONAL IMBALANCE: Chronic high levels of cortisol can disrupt other hormone levels, further affecting brain health and emotional stability.



*The brain thrives in balance.
Stress without relief leads to
damage. Regulation brings healing.*



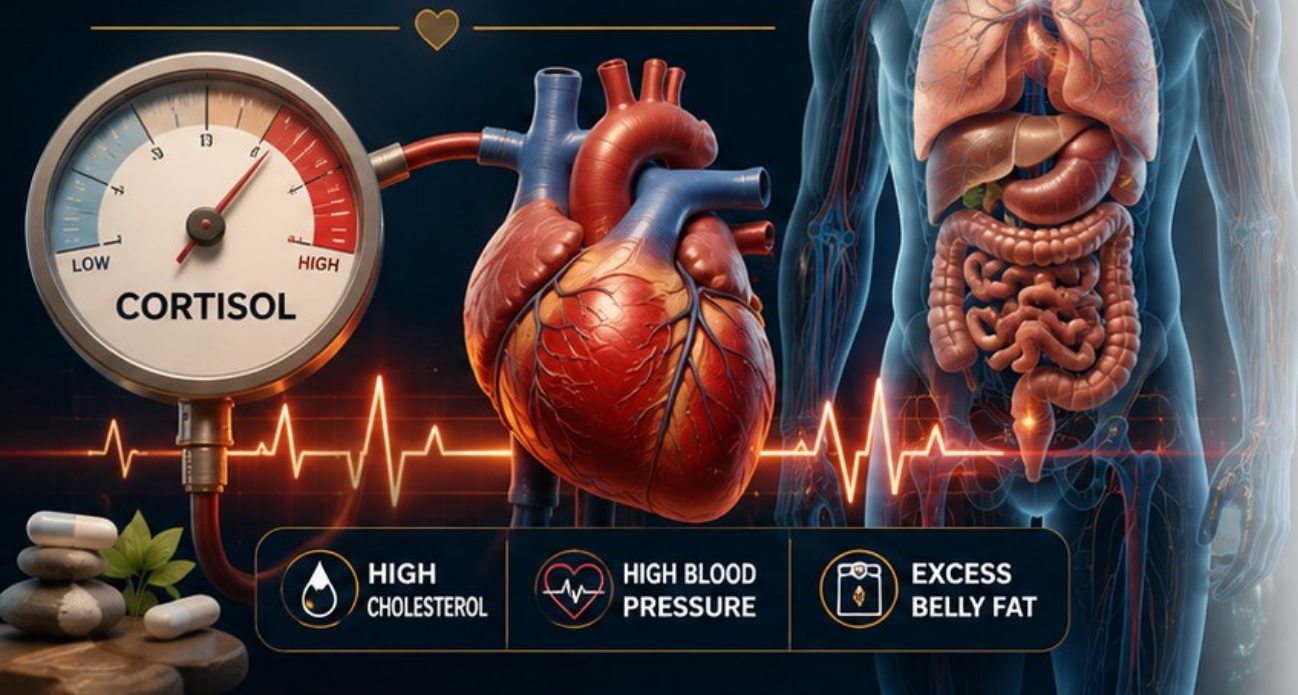
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EXCESSIVE CORTISOL LEVELS CAN HAVE WIDESPREAD IMPACTS ON THE **BODY**



WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEM:

High cortisol suppresses the immune response, making the body more susceptible to infections.



INCREASED BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS:

Cortisol enhances glucose production, which can lead to elevated blood sugar levels and increased risk of type 2 diabetes.



WEIGHT GAIN: Elevated cortisol can lead to fat deposition, particularly around the abdomen, and can increase appetite.



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: Cortisol can constrict blood vessels, leading to increased blood pressure.



MUSCLE WEAKNESS: Chronic high cortisol levels can result in muscle breakdown and weakness.



BONE DENSITY REDUCTION: It can interfere with bone-building, leading to decreased bone density and increased risk of osteoporosis.



DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS: Cortisol can affect the gastrointestinal system, potentially causing stomach ulcers and other digestive issues.



*Managing stress isn't just good for your mind—
it's essential for your body, your health, and your future.*



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The Therapeutic Journey

— ♥ —
*Polyvagal-Informed Treatment
for Healing and Regulation*
— ♥ —

*“Healing doesn’t mean the
damage never existed;
it means the damage no longer
controls your life.”*

— Akshay Dubey



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HEALING INVOLVES HEALING THE BODY, MIND AND WOUNDS OF THE SOUL.

AS SUCH, TREATMENT MUST BE
MULTIDIMENSIONAL



NEUROSCIENCE

Healing the brain and
nervous system



EMOTIONAL HEALING

Processing emotions and
restoring inner balance



SPIRITUAL HEALING

Renewing the soul and
restoring meaning



RELATIONAL HEALING

Restoring connection,
trust and belonging



PHYSICAL HEALING

Supporting the body's
natural ability to heal



SOCIAL HEALING

Addressing environment,
stressors and systems



“ True healing considers the **whole** person—
biologically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. ”



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to heal hearts and **transform** lives. ❤️

The Story River

HOW THE NERVOUS SYSTEM CREATES OUR REALITY

We do not create our story first.

*Our story emerges
from our nervous system.*

*Change the state,
and the story
often changes too.*



1. NEUROCEPTION

*Will my nervous system
detects outside of
my awareness.*



2. PERCEPTION

*Bringing neuroception
to awareness.*



3. STATE

*What my body
is sensing.*



4. FEELINGS

*What I experience
emotionally.*



5. BEHAVIOR

*What I end
up doing.*



6. STORY

*The new meaning
that emerges from
this process.*

POLYVAGAL INSIGHT



*The story is not
the beginning.*

*The state
is the bridge.*

*Change the nervous
system,
and the story
often changes too.*

*The river begins
with neuroception,
but it ends with the
story we tell ourselves.*



NeuroFaith®

| Jeffrey E. Hansen, PhD

| Founder & Director

| NeuroFaith® LLC



The Four R's of Polyvagal-Informed Therapy

A roadmap for healing, connection, and lasting change.

Recognize the autonomic state

Tune in to what your body is telling you. Awareness is the first step toward regulation and choice.



Respect the adaptive survival response

Your nervous system protected you for a reason. Honoring its wisdom creates the foundation for healing.



Regulate or co-regulate in a ventral vagal state

Safety in connection calms the nervous system and opens the door to growth, resilience, and change.



Re-story

When your state changes, your story can change. You are not what happened to you—your new story can set you free.



From awareness to safety, from safety to connection, from connection to a new story.



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“Peace I leave with you;
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Let not your hearts be troubled.

— John 14:27



Respect the Adaptive Survival Response



The nervous system is not broken. It is protective.



Survival Responses Are Automatic

- Not chosen
- Not weakness
- Not character flaws



The Nervous System Prioritizes Survival

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze
- Collapse
- Submission



Symptoms Often Reflect Yesterday's Protection

- What looks dysfunctional today may once have been lifesaving



Healing Begins With Understanding

- Replace shame with compassion
- Replace judgment with curiosity
- Honor the wisdom of the nervous system

“

You did not do anything wrong.

Your body responded exactly as it was designed to respond. ”



POLYVAGAL STATES AT A GLANCE

Understanding the Nervous System's Adaptive Continuum



DIMENSION	 LETHARGIC	 CALM	 ACTIVE/ALERT	 FIGHT/FLIGHT	 HYPER FREEZE	 HYPO FREEZE
 PRIMARY EXPERIENCE	Shutdown, Depression	Safety, Socially engaged	Ready to act	React to danger	Overloaded	Collapse, Numb
 BODY RESPONSE	Low energy, slowed body	Relaxed, steady rhythm	Energized, focused	High arousal, tense body	Rigid, panicked	Flaccid, shutdown
 EMOTIONAL TONE	Numb, sad, withdrawn	Clear, connected at peace	Interested, engaged curious	Fear, anger, urgency	Terror, frozen in fear	Empty, detached, despair
 THERAPEUTIC FOCUS	Gently activate energy	Maintain connection	Channel energy	Ground, create safety	Contain, stabilize	Emergency support

The goal of therapy is not to stay in one state,
but to expand your window of tolerance and return to safety.



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Let not your hearts be troubled." — **John 14:27**

Regulate TOGETHER

Co-Regulation in a Ventral Vagal State



Co-regulation is the **mutual regulation** of physiological states between individuals.



Connection is a **biological imperative**. Our nervous system longs for connection.



It occurs first between parent and infant, and extends to **many relationships**.



Co-regulation restores **safety**, **steadies** the body, and builds **resilience**.



When we **connect**, our bodies **calm**, our hearts **open**, and **healing** can happen.

We are
wired to
Connect.

“We cannot live for ourselves, a thousand fibers **connect us**.”

— Herman Melville



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KIND EYES

The Neurobiology of Safety and Connection



The eyes are among the brain's fastest detectors of safety.

Through what Stephen Porges calls *neuroception*, we unconsciously scan another person's eyes and facial expression, asking:

“*Am I safe with you?*”

A soft, kind gaze helps activate the **ventral vagal system**, quiets defensive responses, and supports **emotional regulation**.

Before a single word is spoken, kind eyes can communicate:



SAFETY



PRESENCE



ACCEPTANCE



WORTH

“ People rarely remember every word we say,
but they often remember how *safe* they felt in our presence. ”



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MELODIOUS VOICE

The Neurobiology of Safety and Connection



A melodious voice is more than pleasant sound; it is a biological signal of safety.

Within Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, the nervous system is exquisitely attuned to **prosody**, the rhythm, tone, and musicality of the human voice.



Through **neuroception**, a warm, expressive voice cues the **ventral vagal system**, calming the body, softening defensive states, and **inviting connection**.

It is not simply what is said, but how it is carried—the rise and fall, the gentleness, the life in the voice, that tells the nervous system:



**YOU ARE
SAFE**



**YOU ARE
HEARD**



**YOU ARE
NOT ALONE**



“ Our nervous system doesn't just listen to words—
it listens to the **music** of your voice. **”**



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SMILING MOUTH AND EYES



The Neurobiology of Safety and Connection



Smiling with both the mouth and the eyes is a powerful signal of authenticity and safety to the nervous system.

Through Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, **neuroception** is constantly scanning for **congruence**, asking whether what is expressed is real or masked.



A smile that reaches the eyes, what is often called a **genuine** or **Duchenne smile**, communicates coherence between internal state and outward expression, which calms the amygdala, engages the **ventral vagal system**, and fosters **trust**.



**Mouth smiles
but eyes do not?**

The nervous system senses **mismatch** and may remain guarded.



**Mouth and eyes smile,
both align?**

The message is clear
and deeply regulating:
you are safe here.



**“ Authenticity is felt before it is analyzed.
When your smile reaches your eyes, it speaks *safety* to the soul.**



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UNEXPECTED
PROXIMITY = THREAT
TO THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

RESPECTING PERSONAL SPACE

The Neurobiology of Safety and Trust



Respecting personal space is a powerful signal of safety.

Within Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, the nervous system continuously evaluates proximity through **neuroception**.

Unexpected forward movement can be interpreted as **intrusion** rather than connection, especially in many Western cultural contexts.

This can activate sympathetic arousal, shifting the individual toward **fight or flight**, or at times a **freeze** response.

Respecting space and allowing closeness to emerge gradually helps the nervous system remain **regulated** and **open**, rather than defensive.

WHEN PERSONAL SPACE IS RESPECTED:

- ✓ The ventral vagal system remains engaged
- ✓ Defensive responses are less likely to activate
- ✓ Trust develops naturally
- ✓ Connection emerges without pressure

LEANING IN TOO QUICKLY



- ⚠ Intrusion
- ⚠ Guardedness
- ⚠ Sympathetic Activation

ALLOWING SPACE



- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Regulation
- ✓ Trust

“ Connection grows best when it is invited, not imposed.
The nervous system relaxes when closeness is allowed to emerge naturally.”



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*Breathe
slowly.*



*Live
fully.*



*Regulate
naturally.*



TRY THIS: 5 IN – 7 OUT



5

SECONDS

INHALE
GENTLY



7

SECONDS

EXHALE
SLOWLY



♥ Longer exhale, greater calm.

SLOW AND LOW BREATHING

The Neurobiology of Safety and Regulation



Breathing and heart rhythm are deeply tied to the experience of safety in the nervous system.

Within Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, slow, rhythmic breathing activates the **ventral vagal system** and engages what Porges describes as the **vagal brake**—a rapid inhibitory pathway that can reduce heart rate by **10 to 20 beats per minute** within moments, signaling the body that it is safe to settle.

As the breath steadies, heart rhythms begin to synchronize into a **coherent pattern**, a process described in neurocardiology and supported by practices like HeartMath Institute.

This coordinated shift **quiets the amygdala**, dampens defensive activation, and brings the system into a grounded, regulated state.



ACTIVATES THE
VENTRAL VAGAL
SYSTEM



ENGAGES
THE VAGAL
BRAKE



LOWERS HEART
RATE BY 10-20 BPM
IN MOMENTS



PROMOTES HEART
RHYTHM COHERENCE



QUIETS DEFENSIVE
SYSTEMS AND
SUPPORTS REGULATION

“ Your breath is a **bridge** between your body's protection and your heart's capacity for connection. ”



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Re-Story

THE OLD STORY

- ✗ I am broken
- ✗ I should have done something different
- ✗ My reactions mean I am weak
- ✗ My trauma defines me

Healing begins when we **change the story** we tell ourselves about our pain.

“

What protected me then **does not** have to **define me now.**

”

THE NEW STORY

- ✓ My nervous system protected me
- ✓ My responses were adaptive
- ✓ I survived what was difficult
- ✓ My story is still being written



THE GOAL IS **NOT** TO ERASE THE PAST.
*The goal is to understand it, honor it,
and move forward with hope.*

*“ Be transformed by
the renewing of your mind.”*

ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)



THE ULTIMATE CORRECTIVE EXPERIENCE

From Trauma and False Narratives to Truth, Identity, and Belonging



PSYCHOLOGY RE-NARRATES EVIDENCE

We examine the past with compassion and integrate what happened—releasing shame, blame, and survival stories that no longer serve us.



FAITH ANCHORS IDENTITY IN TRUTH



You are **BELOVED**

Unconditionally loved by God—always.



You are **ADOPTED**

Chosen into God's family. You belong.



You are **CHOSEN**

Called with purpose for His good plan.



You are **KNOWN**

Deeply known and never forgotten.



You are **VALUED**

Your worth is inherent, not based on performance.

Apart from Performance. Rooted in Grace.



TRANSFORMATION OCCURS WHEN
LIVED EXPERIENCE + SPIRITUAL TRUTH ALIGN

The nervous system finds safety. The heart finds hope. The mind is renewed.



A NEW **STORY** EMERGES.
A NEW **IDENTITY** IS SECURED. A NEW **FUTURE** IS POSSIBLE.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

— 2 Corinthians 5:17



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Bringing Neuroscience and Faith Together

Jeffrey E. Hansen, PhD
FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

— Romans 12:2



Trauma Shapes the Story. Healing Changes the Story.



LITTLE “t” TRAUMA Developmental Trauma

The small, repeated experiences of disconnection, shame, neglect, or inconsistency that shape how we see ourselves and the world.

Our experiences become stories about who we are.
Those stories get embedded in the brain—
until we heal.



BIG “T” TRAUMA Shock Trauma

Overwhelming, high-intensity events that overwhelm our system and can disrupt our sense of safety, identity, and connection.

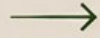
*Different
in intensity,
similar in
impact.*

HOW TRAUMA CREATES A FALSE NARRATIVE



EXPERIENCE

We have an experience that overwhelms our nervous system.



INTERPRETATION

The brain tries to make sense of it to keep us safe.



FALSE NARRATIVE

A story forms:
“I’m not enough.”
“It’s my fault.”
“I’m not safe.”



EMBEDDED IN THE DMN

The Default Mode Network stores and replays this story automatically.



LIFE IMPACT

We live from the story—reacting, relating, and repeating it.

THE DEFAULT MODE NETWORK (DMN)

A network of brain regions that activate when the mind is not focused on the present moment.

It runs the subroutine of “me” stories, often without our awareness.

Trauma imprints distort these stories. Healing can rewire them.



HOW POLYVAGAL-INFORMED THERAPY HELPS



UNDERSTAND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Identify autonomic states (activation or shutdown) that are stuck.



RESTORE SAFETY IN THE BODY

Regulate the nervous system through connection, co-regulation, and practices.



ACCESS AND UPDATE THE DMN

New experiences of safety and truth create new neural pathways.



CREATE A NEW TRUE STORY

A new narrative of worth, safety, and belonging emerges and stabilizes.



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In Conclusion



Polyvagal-Informed Therapy
gives us the language to **understand**
our bodies, the wisdom to **heal**,
and the tools to **live fully**.

From survival to safety.
From disconnection to belonging.
From old stories to new beginnings.

This is the hope of healing.



A REGULATED NERVOUS SYSTEM.
A CONNECTED HEART. A PURPOSEFUL LIFE.

You were made for more.

“

*And the peace of God,
which surpasses
all understanding,
will guard your
hearts and your
minds in
Christ Jesus.*



PHILIPPIANS 4:7



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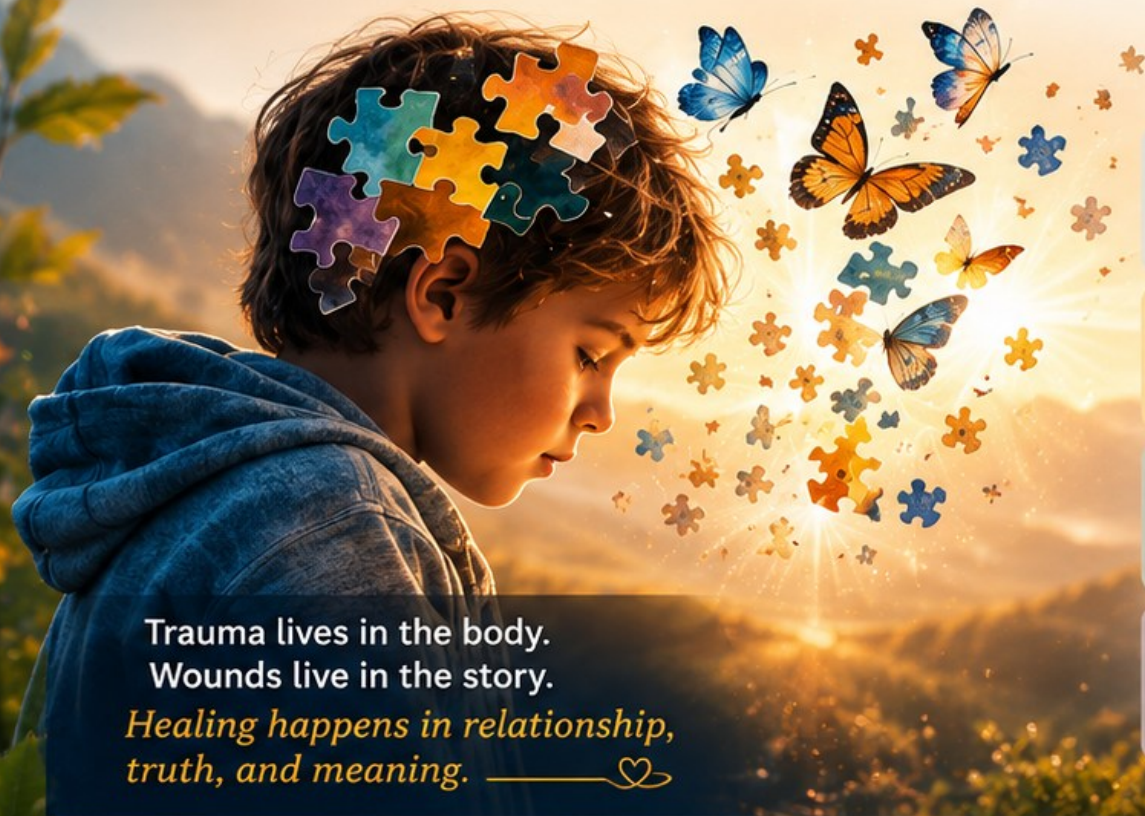


Healing is possible.
Transformation is real.
You are not alone. You are not broken. You are becoming.



Restoring Identity. Rewriting the Story.

— Healed the core developmental wounds. Giving rise to a new story. —



Trauma lives in the body.
Wounds live in the story.

*Healing happens in relationship,
truth, and meaning.* —

THE CORE DEVELOPMENTAL WOUNDS

that shape our default mode network and identity.



I DO NOT
HAVE **VALUE**



I AM
DEEPLY VALUED

I am created with worth
that does not change.



I DO NOT
MATTER



I MATTER

I belong, and my life
makes a difference.



I AM NOT
LOVABLE



I AM
DEEPLY LOVED

I am known, accepted,
and held in love.



I MUST
PERFORM TO
MATTER



I AM ENOUGH

My worth is not based on
my performance.



Restoring through the wisdom of the nervous system
and the hope of the spiritual dimension.
A new story emerges. A new identity is formed.



*“Be transformed by the renewing
of your mind.” — Romans 12:2*



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Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
Let not your hearts be troubled.

— John 14:27