

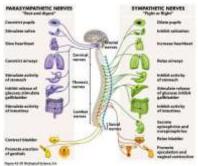
Yoga for Trauma Recovery

Facilitated by Hanna Gilan

Parasympathetic Nervous System

- It's remarkable but true: part of your nervous system exists to you feel peaceful and alright.
- You can trigger the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS) with resonant breath. This immediately lowers your sense of stress, brings health benefits like reducing blood pressure and strengthening the immune system, and lifts your mood.

The **vagus** is the most important nerve of the PNS. It is involved in relaxation, wellbeing and the healing response.

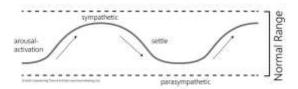


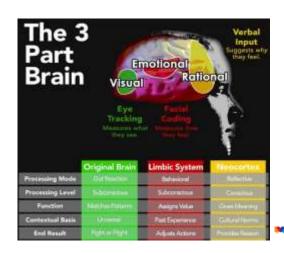
Resonant Breath

- Stimulates vagus nerve with the one effect of Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) we have control over – the breath.
- Balancing sympathetic and parasympathetic balances stimulation with relaxation.
- Supports innate ability of the body, nervous system, and allows emotions to restore.
- Strengthens ability to apply the brake rather than being sidelined by anxiety, distractedness, and stress.

Even though research into **resonant breathing** has only been going on since the 1990's, humans have known about resonant breathing instinctively. Hymns, chants, prayers, and certain types of poetry create speech patterns that stimulate the vagus nerve.

A Healthy Nervous System





The Brain

- When relaxed, grounded, and calm the brain is integrated.
 - Cognitive processing and mindfulness is possible and there is conscious choice.
- When triggered with stress or trauma:
 - Pre frontal cortex shuts down, survival brain takes over (fight, flight, freeze), and emotions intensify.
 People become impulsive, rigid, lack self awareness and reflection, and are unable to consider other points of view.

What is Trauma?

- Trauma is less about the event than what is left over as a result of an event or series of experiences.
 - Helpless and overwhelmed
 - Incomplete self-protective responses
 - Nervous system and affect/arousal dysregulation
 - Fragmentation of self
 - Core shame
- Trauma can involve lack of support or responsiveness of others following an overwhelming experience.

What is Trauma?

"Trauma is not in the event itself; rather, trauma resides in the nervous system."

Peter Levine, Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma

The Stress Response: Fight/Flight/Freeze

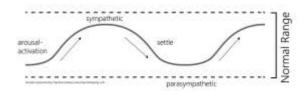
Sympathetic Nervous System

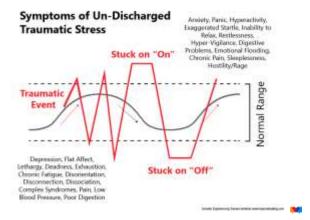
- Gears us up to deal with stress or threat
- Regulates arousal (alertness, excitement, physical/sexual arousal)
- Experience
 - · Increased heart rate
 - · Rapid or shallow breathing
 - · Blood diverted from digestion to extremities
 - Blood vessels constrict and drain blood from skin to prepare for injury (pale, cold, clammy)
 - Pupils dilated, eyes wide focused
 - Muscles tense

The Relaxation Response

- Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Helps us unwind, reorganize, and restore after stress or threat experience
 - · Muscles relax
 - Lowered heart rate and blood pressure
 - · Slowed deep breathing
 - · Warm skin color returns
 - Digestion (rest and digest)

A Healthy Nervous System Optimal Flow







Why Yoga?

- Trauma-sensitive mindfulness and yoga can provide some foundational tools to assist clients and students in their healing and recovery. (Bessel van der Kolk)
- Posture changes somatic patterns of muscles, tissues and nerves.
 - Provides internal, somatosensory feedback, proprioception, and interoception.
- Breath changes energy patterns.
 - Balances complimentary branches of the ANS.
- Attention changes thought patterning.
 - Involves letting go, watchful but not passive.

Why Yoga?

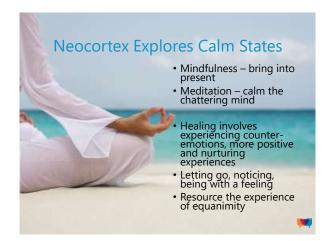
- The goal is to explore from stable body and calmer mind
- · Safe emotional outlet
- Curiosity, tracking, embodiment, being with sensations and feelings
- Feeling of control
- Social support membership of group
- Sense of hope



Neurosequential Regulation



- Breath-led is rhythmic
- Calms/integrates reptilian brain
- Attunement with the group
- Calms/integrates mammalian brain
- Integration of triune brain
- Neocortex explores calm and relaxed state



"You don't need to get your leg behind your head...





...you need a stronger relaxation response."

Resonant Breath

- Stimulates the vagus nerve/vagal tone.
- Calms the body's fight and flight response while increasing relaxation.
- This balance in the nervous system is key to managing the damaging effects of overstimulation, stress, and trauma.

Grounding, Breath, Somatic **Awareness**

- "Our sense of ourselves is anchored in vital connection to our bodies."
- Conscious breath exercises
- Soothes reptilian brain
- Directs awareness inward pratyahara/interoreception
- · Increased sense of self
- Focuses awareness
- · Reduces mental chatter
- Grounding/feel ones body



Supported/Optimal Flow

- Lead by breath/rhythmic
- Focus on breathing moment to moment Connects student to the moment, present
 - · Connects student to the internal locus, centered
- · Simple movements and transitions
- · Attunement with the group
- Regulates Mammalian brain
- · Supported, calming, centering
- "Brightening the mind" Here you deliberately activate an internal sense of energizing and enlivening your mind. Helps you feel alert, relaxed, and exploratory (hopefully applied to the focus of your attention).

Grounded, Centered, & Curious

- Simply noticing what you feel fosters emotional regulation.
- Yoga restores arc of experience challenges/ discomfort rise to a peak then falls away.
- Builds the ability to approach ones body with curiosity rather than fear.

| Precing | Prec

Stimulating Vagus Nerve Conscious Relaxation

"This gives you more control over your inner landscape." (Rick Hanson)

- · Breathing belly vs chest
- · Make exhale longer
- Stretch the neck muscles releases pressure on the vagus nerve
- Mindfulness of the body/body scan
- · Positive emotions
- Yawning
- Meditation

Why Trauma-Informed?

- Survivors may feel unsafe in their bodies.
- They may feel unsafe in relation to others.
- Emotions and thinking feel out of control.
- To let down one's guard might feel both unsafe and unnatural.

5 Principles of Trauma Informed Care

Safety Essential to calm amygdala
Choice Empowering rather than rescue
Collaboration Power-with not power-over
Empowerment Count on self and you

Task clarity, consistency, and interpersonal boundaries

Safety, Choice, Empowerment

- Trauma involves power and control dynamics clients were at the mercy of something or someone faster and more powerful than them.
- Recall that trauma often involves a thwarted selfprotective response (Levine, 1997; 2010).
- Self-Compassion
 - Stimulating the vagus nerve promotes compassion.
 - To extend gentleness towards oneself ("It's not what's wrong with me, it's what's happened to me").
 - To offer oneself the nurturing one may not have received earlier in development (internal locus of control self-soothing).
 - · To soften shame.

Roger D. Fallot Phd & Maxine Harris, Ph.D

Trustworthiness





Resilience

- In the real world things fall apart, with resilience, our experiences foster the opportunity to courageously and creatively rebuild.
- We utilize our experience to put things back together - they may look different but hopefully better.

Kintsugi



Philosophy not of replacement, but of awe, reverence, and restoration. The gold-filled cracks of a oncebroken item are a testament to its history. The process usually results in something more beautiful than the original.

Resilience

It's not possible to know what is possible because of that we are free

References

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