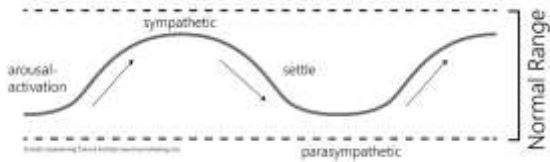


A Healthy Nervous System



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

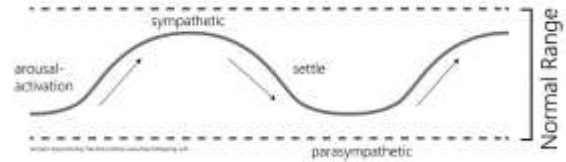
Sympathetic Nervous System

- 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

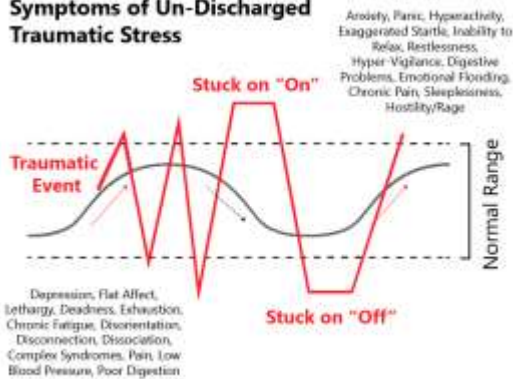
The Relaxation Response

- 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



Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress



Best Attempt to Regulate

- Cycles of numbing and intrusion, silence and reenactment
- Physical or mental dissociation
- Bottling up and venting, the flooding of hyperarousal
- Constriction and avoidance of triggers
- Feelings of inferiority lead to alienation and disconnection in relation to others, anxiety and depression
- Caretaking of others (external focus)
- Addictions, self medicating
- Self harm, disordered eating, compulsions
- Need to control
- Rigid cognition

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



- Mindfulness – bring into present
- Meditation – calm the chattering mind
- Healing involves experiencing counter-emotions, more positive and nurturing experiences
- Letting go, noticing, being with a feeling
- Resource the experience of equanimity



"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/interoception
- 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).



Compassionate Guidance



- Teach the breath
- Go slow
- Keep it simple
- Repetitive/rhythmic
- Embodiment rather than alignment
- States of consciousness rather than perfection of poses
- Be aware of potential triggers



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 once-broken 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

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