

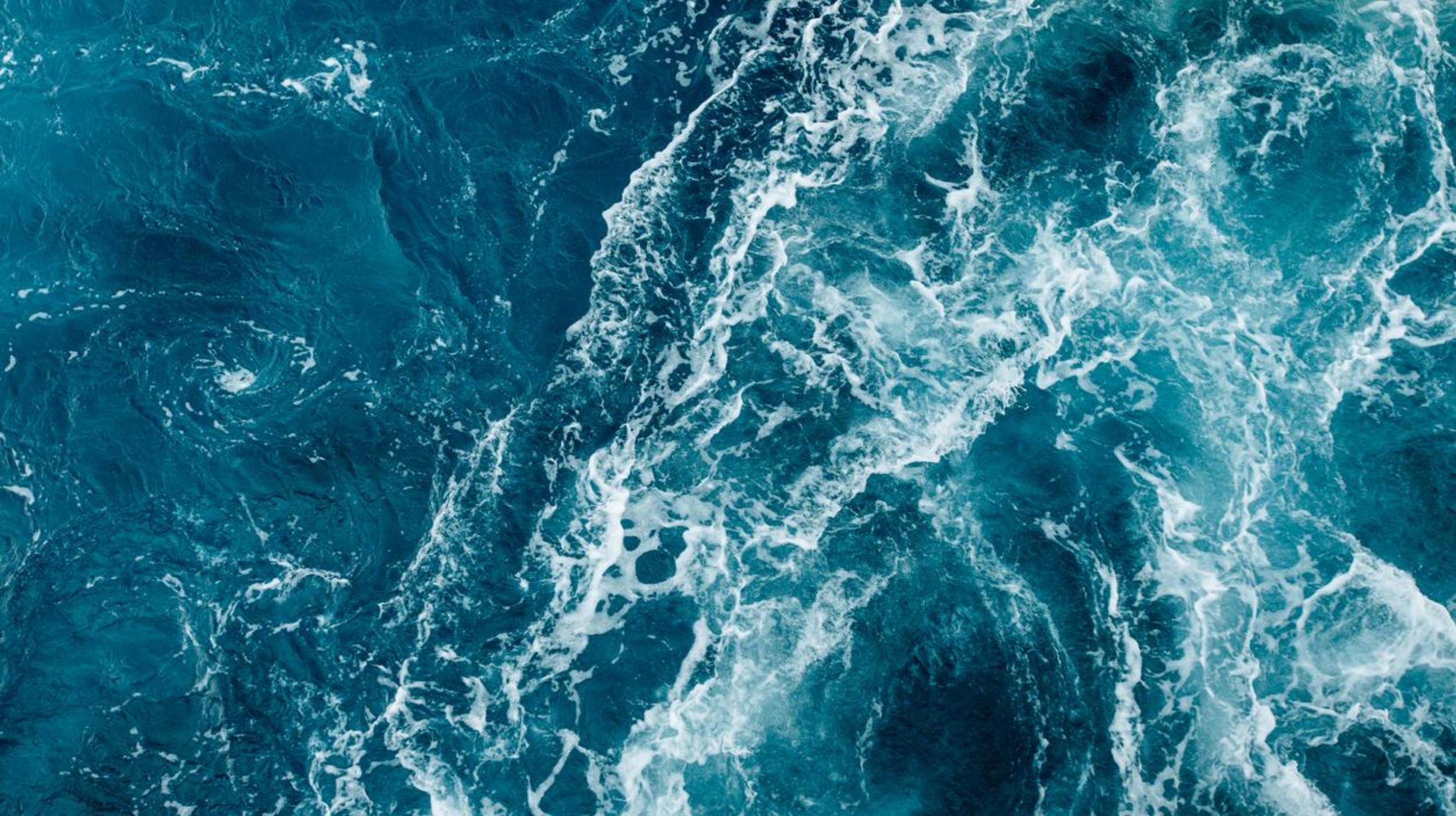
A vibrant underwater scene featuring a diverse coral reef. In the foreground, there are large, rounded brain corals and delicate, feathery soft corals in shades of pink and orange. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from the surface, creating shimmering patterns. Numerous small, colorful fish are scattered throughout the scene, swimming near the coral.

Diving Beneath Behaviors A Journey Through the Nervous System

- Dr. Lori Desautels
- Assistant Professor
- College of Education
- Butler University

For Books!





Behaviors

- A student's behavior isn't about me. They're not doing this to me. It's a symptom like a sneeze showing us a cold, a cut with a wound, or a scab showing us healing. This behavior is signaling that the nervous system is rough. Can we become curious? What is underneath this behavior? How may I serve you?





Behavior is
only a signal
and
symptom!

Behavior is only a
signal that our
nervous systems
are struggling!

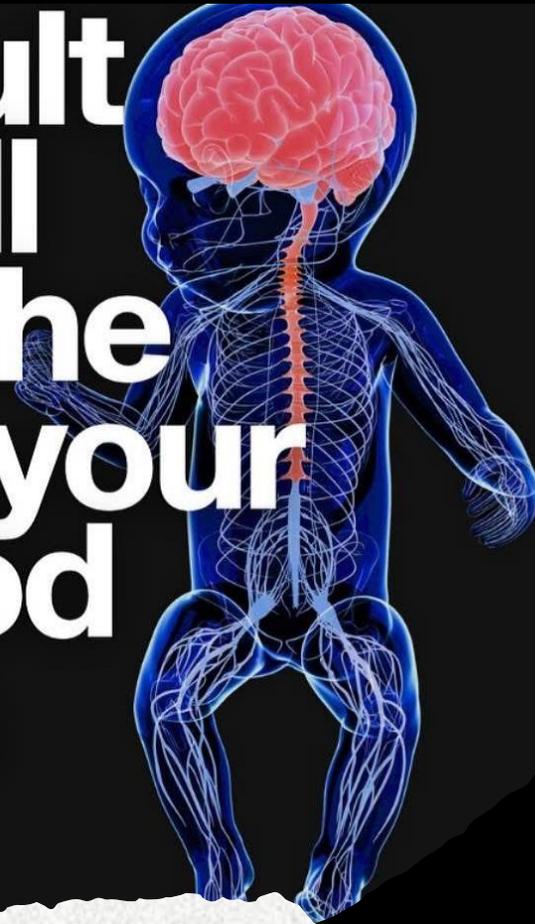


My Nervous System is the Intervention

- Maybe when we are activated by others, they might be pointing out our limiting beliefs about ourselves and the world that is being reflected back to me?
- Maybe when we are activated, this is our catalyst for growth & expression.
- Settled adults have settled students.
- We need to do our own work.



**Your adult
body still
carries the
story of your
childhood
nervous
system.**



**Awareness matters
most!**

**The state that we are in
impacts who we are in
the world and how we
perceive the world.**





Awareness Matters Why?

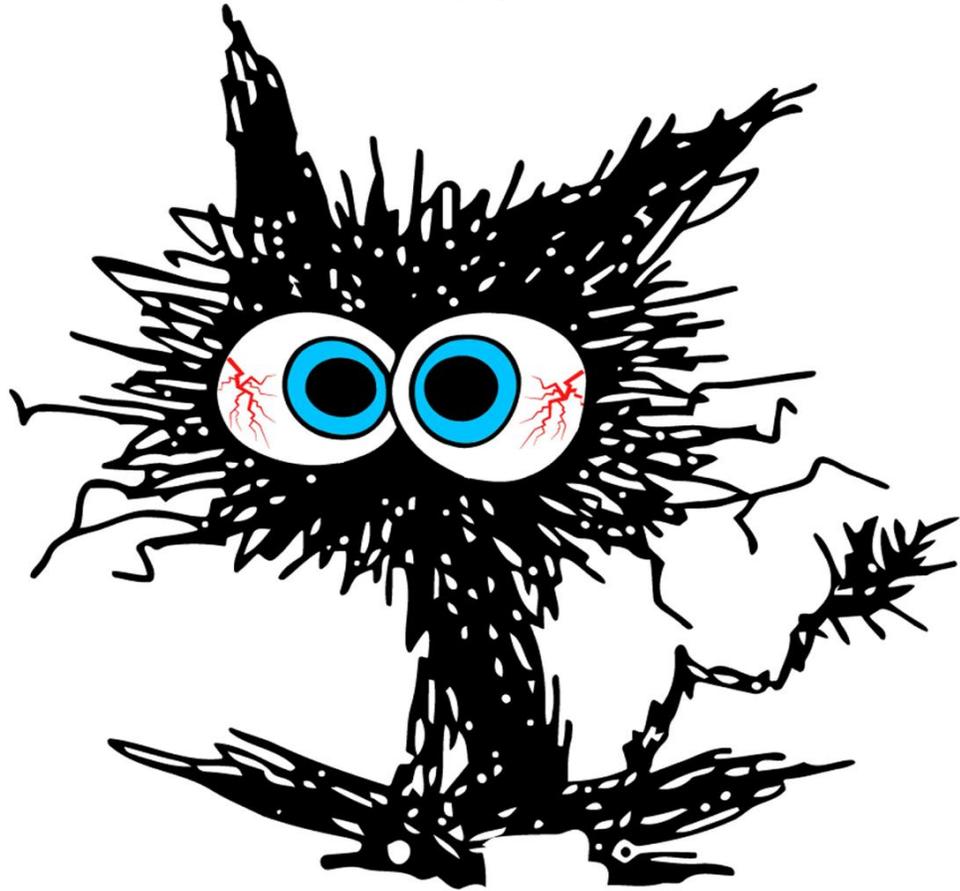
- Getting Out in Front of Staff Behaviors
- Our inner dialogue and imagination can be the workshop where we create our future moments and reality!
- When we become aware, the unknown and unpredictability are lessened.
- We can anticipate and be prepared by creating an intention and plan of action!
- Your body hears everything your mind says.

Touch Invites Presence

- Our skin is so tightly tied to emotion. When someone touches you, they are reaching right into your emotional brain. We come equipped with a neurobiological touch radar. (The Neuroception of touch.)
- We read touch more accurately than we do facial expressions, as connection is an essential ingredient for our nervous systems. - Amanda Blake

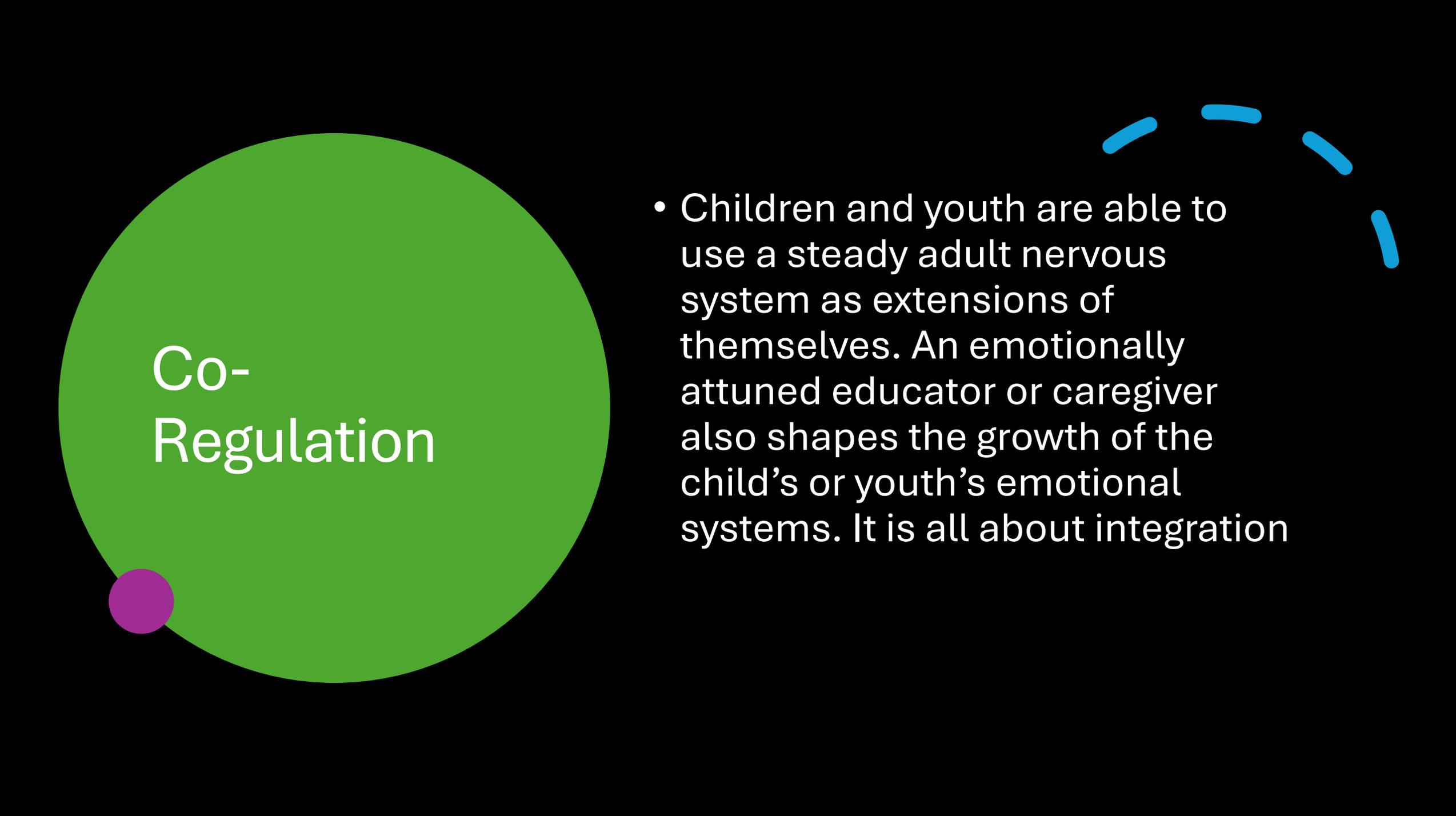


I'm Fine



Everything Is Fine

We broadcast
our physiological states
through our touch, faces
and through the
intonation of
our voices.



Co- Regulation

- Children and youth are able to use a steady adult nervous system as extensions of themselves. An emotionally attuned educator or caregiver also shapes the growth of the child's or youth's emotional systems. It is all about integration



Co-Regulation

What is this?

-
- Can we begin to think about co-regulation as a discipline resource and practice? What a difference this could create when OUR mindsets shift?



Educator Nervous System

Behavior management is about adults. Our brains and bodies hold the state of our nervous systems, and it takes a steady adult to settle a child or adolescent.

Co-Regulation

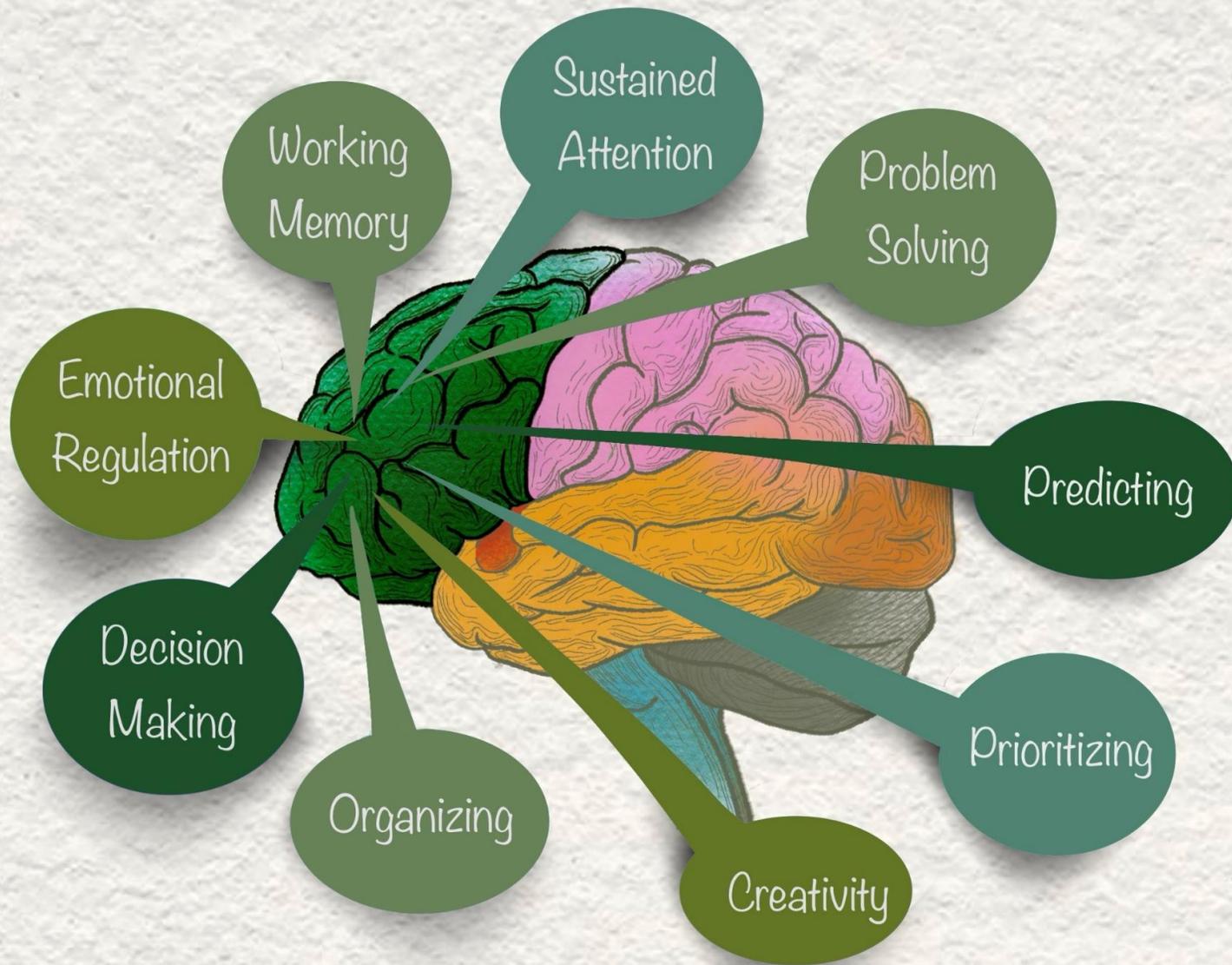
Co-regulation is our biological priority. Co-regulation is at the heart of discipline protocols. When we share a safe, emotionally available sanctuary of space and a trusting presence, students can borrow from our calm in moments of dysregulation. Co-regulation is often nonverbal.

Touch Points

Touch points are micro-moments of connection that often occur through our facial expressions, tone, greetings, noticings, validation, and deeply listening as we follow the student's agenda.

Language of the Nervous System

When we understand that negative behaviors are only signals addressing the dysregulation of the nervous system, we begin to feel empowered and relieved. The way we feel, think, and behave is a nervous system response. As we teach our staff and students about their neuroanatomy, we learn together.

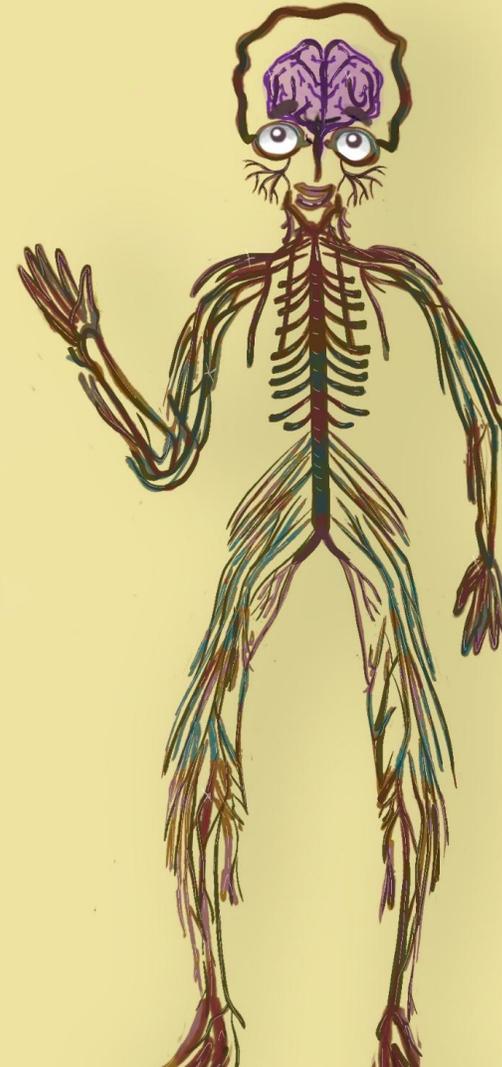


All learning, discipline, and attention is about getting to the Cortex!

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS!)

ANS

- There is growing scientific consensus that an effective body/ brain connection is also integral to executive functions.
- High interoceptive awareness has been found to correlate with mental and physical well-being.



Sensations

Collapsed

Freeing

Wavy

Trapped

Satisfied

Blah

Shivery

Mushy

Tender

Soggy

Rapid

Fuzzy

Light

Torn

Icy

Empty

Blinding

Melty

Heavy

Goopy

Full

Rough

Throbbing

Still

Open

Buzzing

Queasy

Burning



Smooth

Fluffy

Knotted

Achy

Electric

Tense

Frazzled

Cool

Cold

Thick

Fast

Teary

Peaceful

Dizzy

Numb

Coarse

Tight

Dull

Hungry

Hot

Hollow

Glittery

Bright

Frigid

Stuffy

Stiff

Itchy

Twitching

Lava

Airy

Bloated

Broken

Pounding

Undone

Bare

Bubbly

Boiling

Flat

Wonky

Warm

Roiled

Steady

Sore

Hesitant

Fluttery

Screeching

Slow

Prickly

Clammy

Wobbly

Sharp

Flash

Discombobulated

Scattered

“

THE CHILD WHO IS NOT
EMBRACED BY THE VILLAGE
WILL BURN IT DOWN TO
FEEL ITS' WARMTH.

”

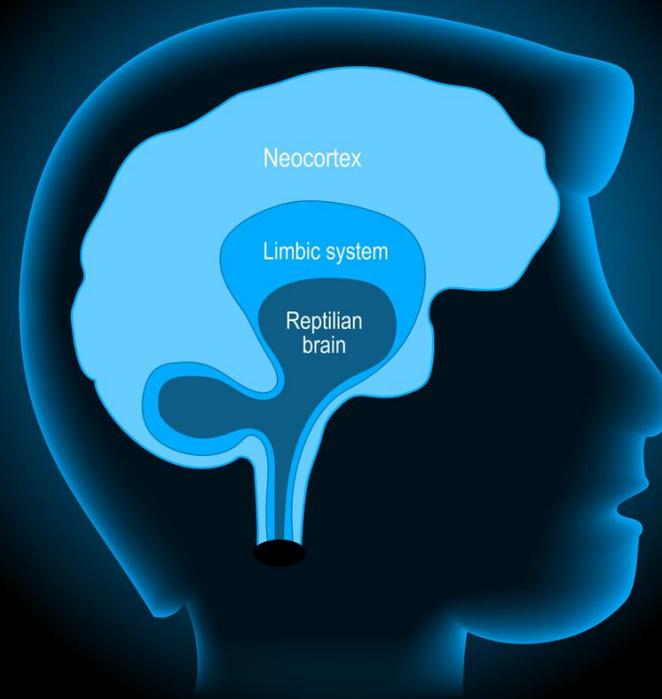
Developing Brain

Brainstem- Ancient, Regulatory functions (sweat , shiver, heart rate, digestion, etc.) releasing hormones, survival and safety – Regulation

Limbic System- Love, Fear, Emotional part of the brain, Anxiety- develops early and quickly –Relational

Cortex- Newest part, we share this region with primates and apes, and it holds our executive functions. – Reasoning

Evolution of the human brain



Tight control of thoughts, emotions, and actions

The nervous system prioritizes survival, then emotion, then cognition. In that order!

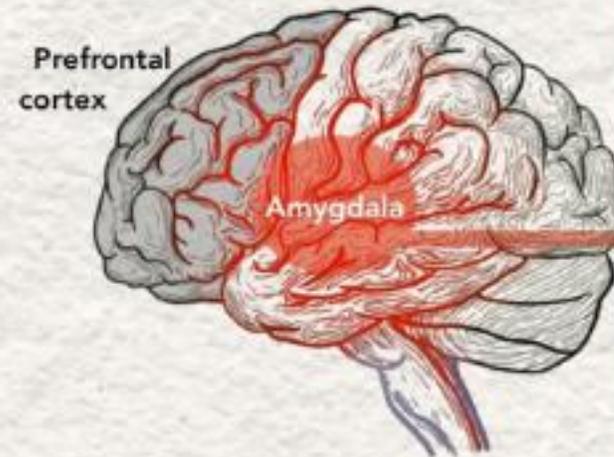
Weak control of thoughts, emotions, and actions

Unstressed



Access to executive functions, emotional regulation, decision making, attention, creativity, prediction, and working memory

Stressed

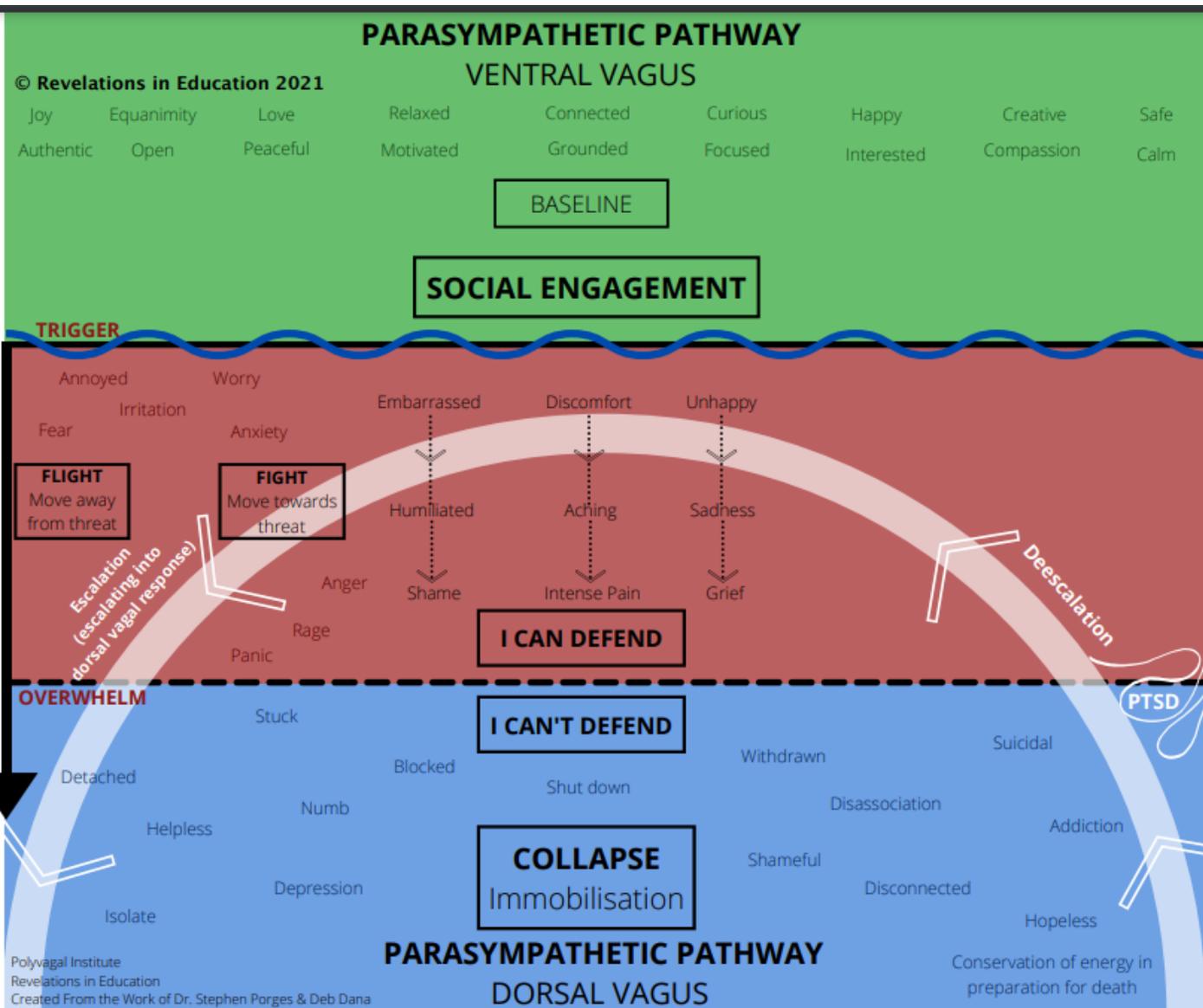


Survival / stress response state, prioritizing safety over executive functions

SYMPATHETIC PATHWAY

FLIGHT AND FIGHT Arousal

COLLAPSE



Polyvagal Institute
 Revelations in Education
 Created From the Work of Dr. Stephen Porges & Deb Dana

- PARASYMPATHETIC PATHWAY Ventral Vagus Nerve**
- Increases:**
- Digestion - intestinal mobility
 - Resistance to infection
 - Rest & recuperation
 - Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)
 - Immune Response
 - Oxytocin (neuropeptide involved in social bonds that allow immobility without fear)
- Decreases:**
- Defensive responses
-
- SYMPATHETIC PATHWAY**
- Increases:**
- Blood pressure, Heart rate
 - Fuel availability, Adrenaline
 - Respiration - oxygen circulation to vital organs & muscles for mobility
 - Blood clotting, Pupil size
- Decreases:**
- Fuel storage & insulin activity
 - Digestion and Salivation
 - Sexual responses, Immune response
-
- PARASYMPATHETIC PATHWAY Dorsal Vagus Nerve**
- Increases:**
- Fuel Storage and insulin activity
 - Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold
- Decreases:**
- Heart rate, Blood pressure, Temperature
 - Muscle tone, Facial expression, Eye contact, Intonation, Awareness of the human voice, Social behaviors
 - Immune response

The Student Polyvagal Chart

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



easy curious creative
drip playful loose focus empathetic dazzled
fire flexible strong grounded steady
connected safe

FIGHT FLIGHT



annoyed nervous
irritated anxious frustrated fearful
angry extra panicked worried
gruff twisted furious

SHUT DOWN



tiny rubbery tired sad
stringy folded shame stuck disconnected helpless
loose trapped depressed wounded



Feeling Safe and
Feeling Connected

MY INNER EAR MUSCLE STAPEDIUS MUSCLE! THIS IS AS TRUE FOR US AS IT IS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- "Children who come from dangerous and toxic environments, often have delayed language and this can be the result of how our hearing changes when our nervous systems are in a threat and protect response. In a survival response, we do not hear the endings of words because the ear muscles are expanding and protecting us and so our ability to hear clear conversation, redirection, consequences, and the endings of words etc. is limited as we respond to the beginning of words and tones of voice!"
- Dr. Stephen Porges



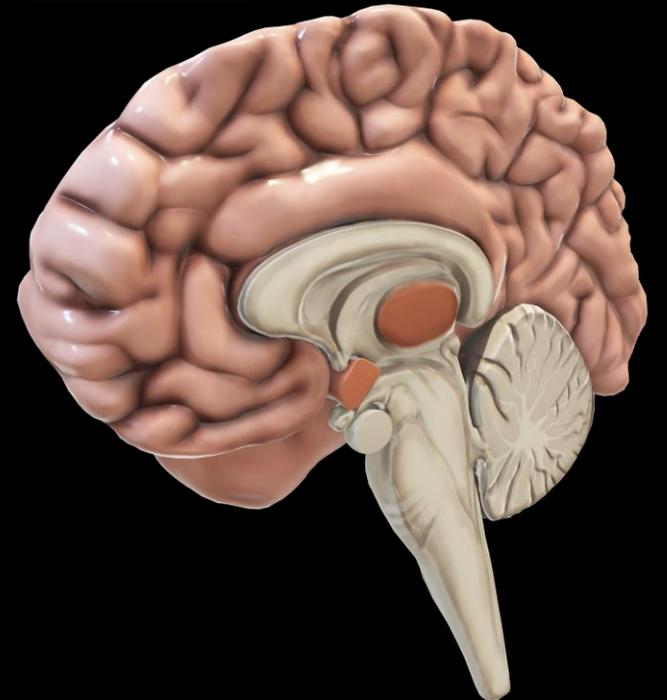


The Social and Emotional Organ
is the Body

This is the neuroeducation of
the nervous system.
Both adult and youth shape
one another's experience.

What is Trauma? (It is what happens inside of us.)

- Sensory Information is coming in too much, too fast, too soon, or too late, too little and too long!
- Our physiology is in a state of threat.
- Trauma breaks apart coherent experiences!
- There is a disconnection, a fracture of experiences
- Our experiences are fragmented.





THE FIVE STEPS OF THE BODY'S TRAUMA RESPONSE

Let's celebrate that our nervous systems know how to survive.

Fight/Flight

1. The Startle:

You're startled. Thing that startle us: sounds, smells, pieces of clothing, postures, gestures. You may hear thunder outside, a dog growling, yelling, a door slam, a storm approaching. These may or may not be triggers.

2. The Stress:

When the startle is not eased, we take action, which becomes the stress. It may be posturing, fighting, shouting, whispering, clinging. At this point, stress is tolerable, it's not trauma. It can turn toxic / chronic.

Fight/Flight & Shut Down (Tonic Immobility)

3. The Wall:

An inner experience of being trapped and powerless. It's the moment where our movement is thwarted. A wall can also be negative self-belief or any situation that makes you feel powerless.

4. The Freeze:

Transition step between the wall & shut down. Our insides are racing, but we're stuck or scared stiff. We can't live here, so this response leads to shut down unless we have coregulation, anchors, and practices that we can use in the moment. Practice these on good days, so you can access them on days that you go into tonic immobility.

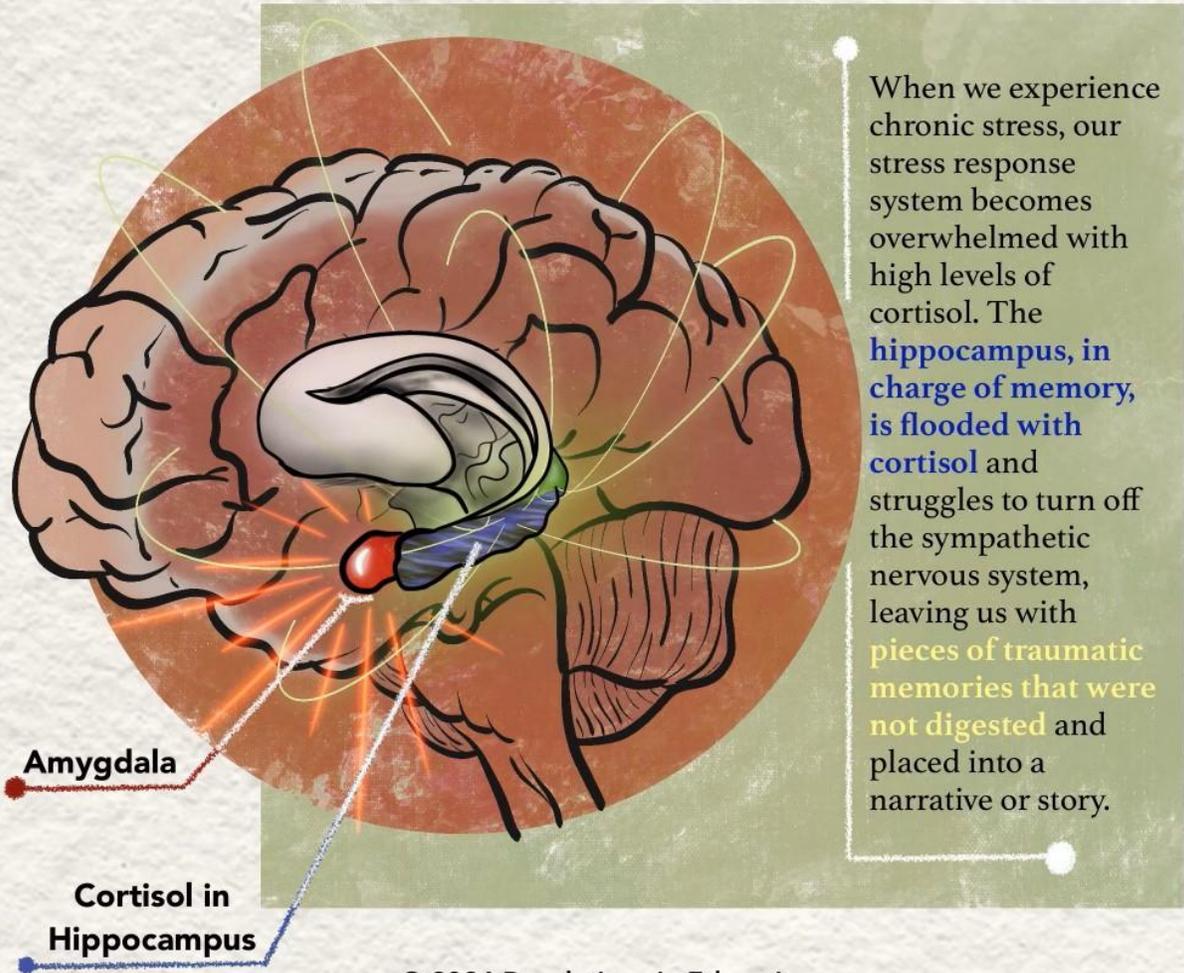
Dorsal Shut Down

5. The Shut Down:

Inner state of disconnect & numbing. Our body is saying, "Don't die, but stay barely alive. The experience feels overwhelming and unbearable. Our bodies operate on ancient wisdom. Our bodies protect us and know what to do in a trauma response. Three mechanisms are at play.

- Dissociation: the wisdom of distance
- Immobilization: the wisdom of stillness
- Energy conservation: the wisdom of powering down.

Why do I feel I can't remember things after my trauma?



Fragmented Implicit Memories!

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Fragmented memories dysregulate the nervous system.

WHAT ARE THEY?

E.g. Intrusive
images, big
emotions, and
physical reactions

They are held in the
body creating tension,
tightness, tears, or
contraction.

Fragments
lack a
story and
context.

It feels like
a rush of
sensation,
and not a
memory.

Sensory fragments
can be smells,
sounds, tastes, and
images.

Fragmented
memories are
unique to each
person.

Fragmented
memories need to
have a voice.

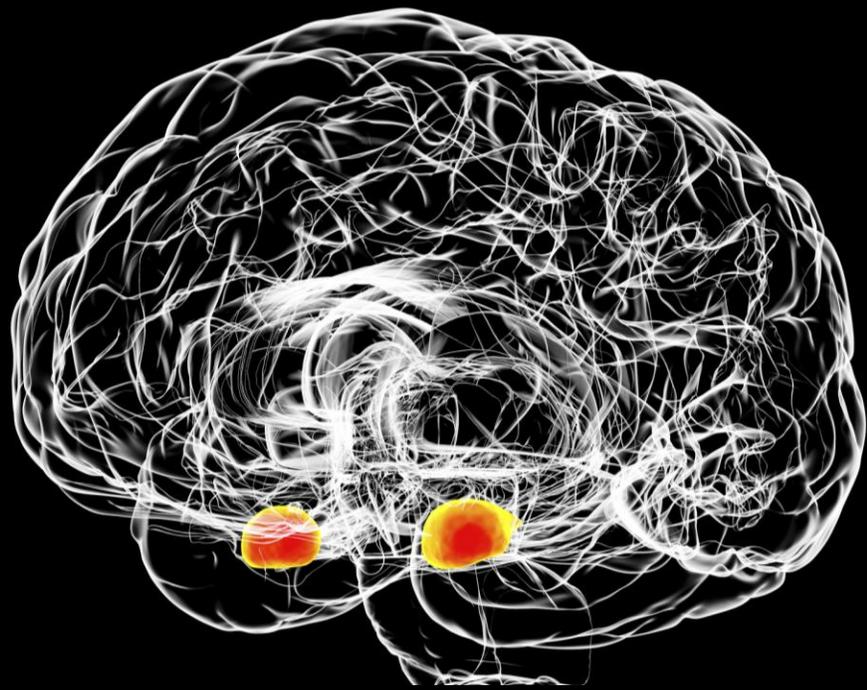
Fragmented
memories can be felt
in the body.



Trauma Logic

- It is logical to not trust adults at school if every adult in your developing years has mistreated or neglected your biological needs.
- It is logical to run from a space where you hear a loud noise or smells that are similar to the time of the traumatic event.
- It is logical to yell, fight and defend yourself if your perceived survival is at stake.
- It is logical to appease adults and say what you think they want to hear in hopes you will be left alone.
- It is logical to numb yourself if your perceived anxiety is overwhelming!





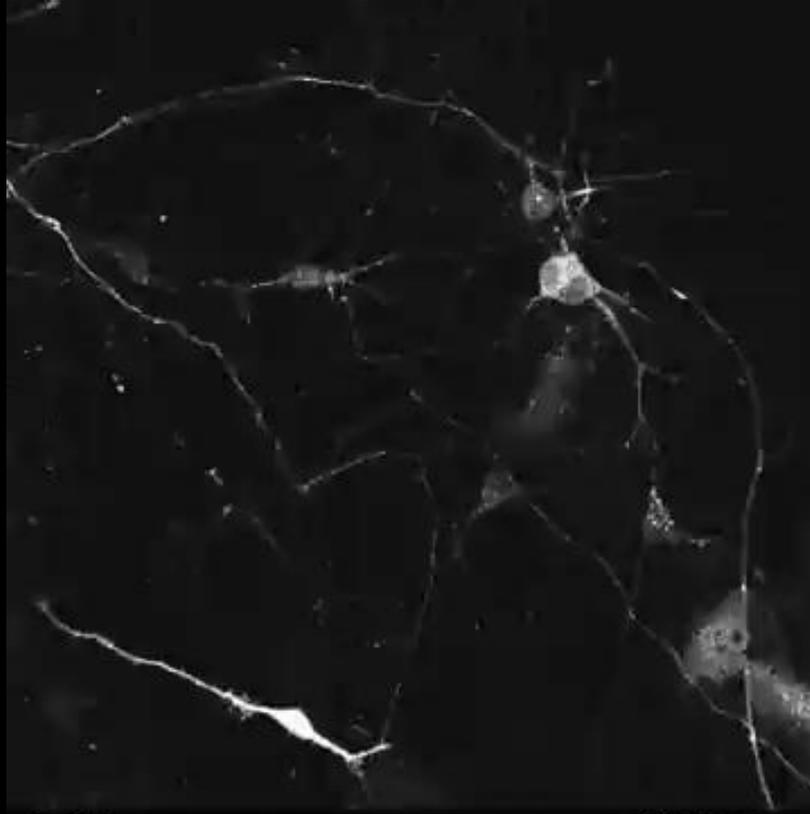
The Amygdala
Part of the Limbic System
Processes all emotions





Neuroplasticity is a physical work out!

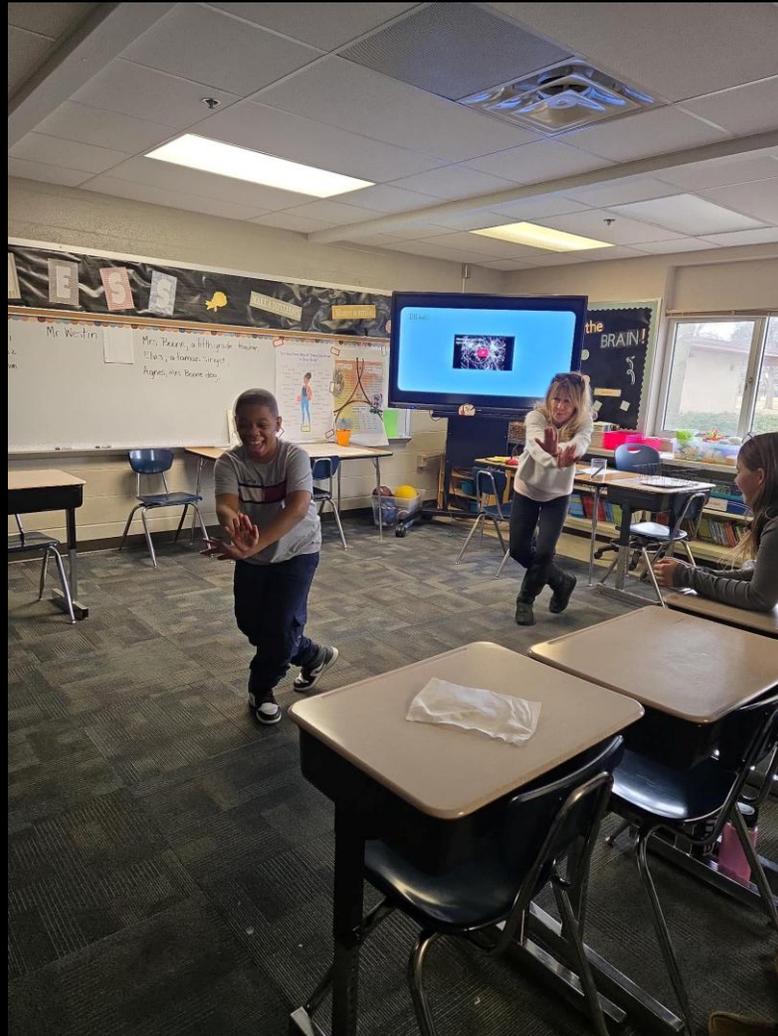
- Contraction of muscles- produces proteins that make us resilient to stress and protect us from depression.
- We hold a pharmacy in our bodies!
- Dr. Kelli McGonigal calls these “hope molecules.”
- Walking, dancing, lifting weights, dancing, swimming, hiking and all physical activity contract muscles!



5 DIV

0 Hours





FREE TO BE YOU

LOVE

IDEAS

STRONG IS BEAUTIFUL

Today I am living

WHERE LIFE FOREVER SPARKLES

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT CORTEX

FIGHT FLIGHT MIDBRAIN

pain

GRUMPY

SHUT DOWN BRAIN STEM

Nonfiction

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM (ANS) STATES
Grades K-4TH

STEADY: "I've got this!"	STRUGGLING: "Something isn't right..."	OVERWHELMED: "I can't handle this!"
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	FIGHT / FLIGHT	SHUTDOWN / IMMOBILIZED
Safe Brave Grounded Grateful Full Curious Smooth Sparkly	Stretched Friendly Calm Bubbly Peaceful Flowing Relaxed Playful	Upset Frustrated Achy Tired Tense Angry Tingling Stressed Grumpy Nervous Bored Afraid Cranky Hungry Hot
Golden Happy Bright Loved Fluffy Joyful	Grumpy Irritated Twitching Annoyed Unhappy Throbbing Embarrassed	Tuned Out Depressed Hopeless Empty Heavy Numb Small Quiet Panic Tired Achy Hurt Lost Sad Icy

Tracking

Morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused, connected, safe, happy, creative, social, open, calm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8:15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annoyed, angry, frustrated, worried, unhappy, embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8:30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overwhelmed, depressed, shut down, stuck, disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write about your feelings.	tired and Happy 😴		Happy 😊			
Midday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused, connected, safe, happy, creative, social, open, calm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10:30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annoyed, angry, frustrated, worried, unhappy, embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11:30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overwhelmed, depressed, shut down, stuck, disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write about your feelings.	Happy 😊		Jumpy Hungry			
Midday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused, connected, safe, happy, creative, social, open, calm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1:30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annoyed, angry, frustrated, worried, unhappy, embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overwhelmed, depressed, shut down, stuck, disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write about your feelings.	Hot and Happy 🌀					
Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused, connected, safe, happy, creative, social, open, calm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annoyed, angry, frustrated, worried, unhappy, embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overwhelmed, depressed, shut down, stuck, disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Polyvagal Check-in Chart



This is Discipline



ANS is Your Autonomic Nervous System



SEROTONIN



OXYTOCIN



DOPAMINE



ADRENALINE



CORTISOL

REVELATIONS IN EDUCATION

**FOCUSED
ATTENTION PRACTICES**
FOR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

FOR ENERGIZING AND STEADYING



BY DR. LORI DESAUTELS
REVELATIONS IN EDUCATION 2024

[S]

1. NOSTRIL BREATHING

With your thumb, close your left nostril and breathe in through your right for four seconds. Hold for four seconds and place your first finger on your right nostril and breathe out for 6 seconds. Now breathe in for four counts in your left nostril, hold for four and then breathe out for six counts in your right nostril. Repeat alternating nostrils three times and notice the sensations in your brain and body.
(Closing our eyes is always an option!)



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[S]

2. SO WHAT?

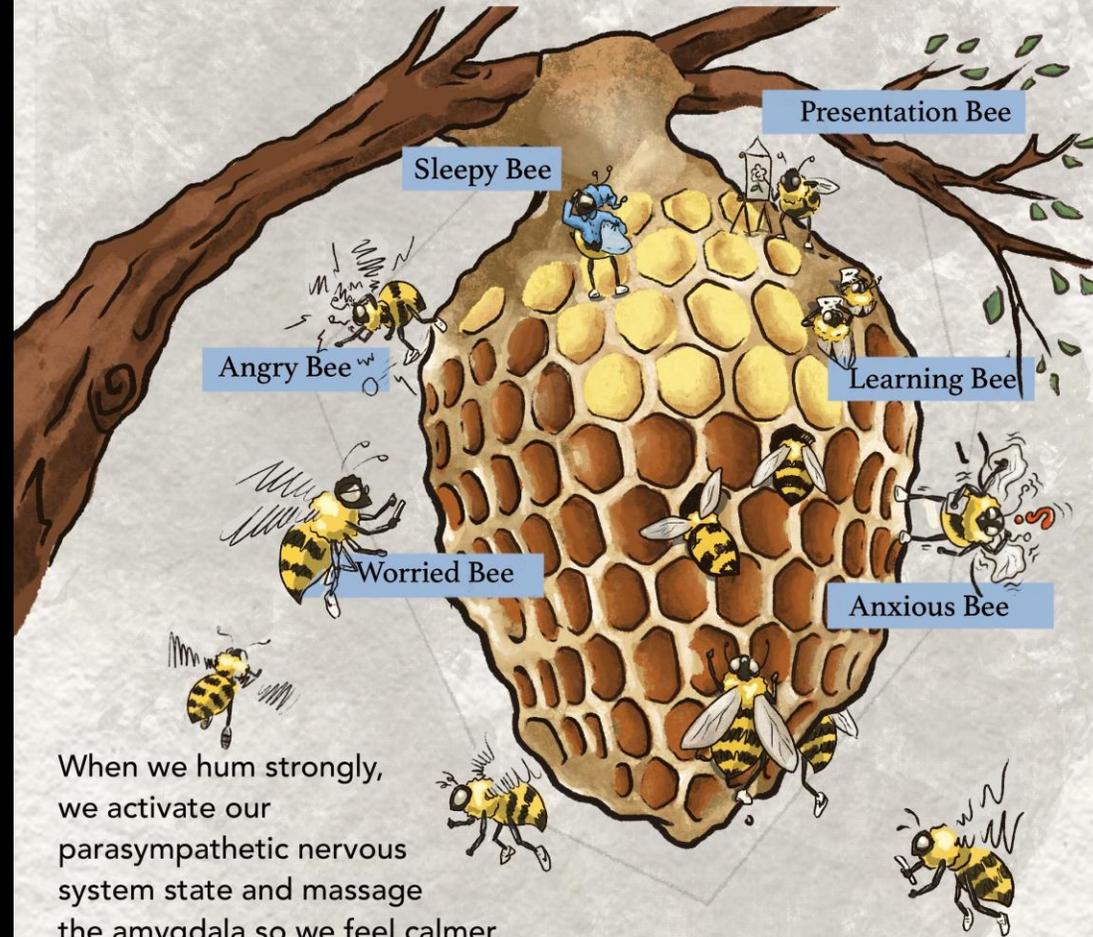
When we are feeling mildly irritated or anxious, this FoAP can help calm us and reframe the experience that is bothersome. As we breathe in, we say (in our heads) "so" and as we breathe out for a longer exhale, we say to ourselves, "what." We do this a few times, imagining if this worry or frustration will matter a week from now, a month from now, or a year from now. This is a great one to do with smaller worries or irritations.
(Closing our eyes is always an option.)



FoAP (The 4 Ingredients)

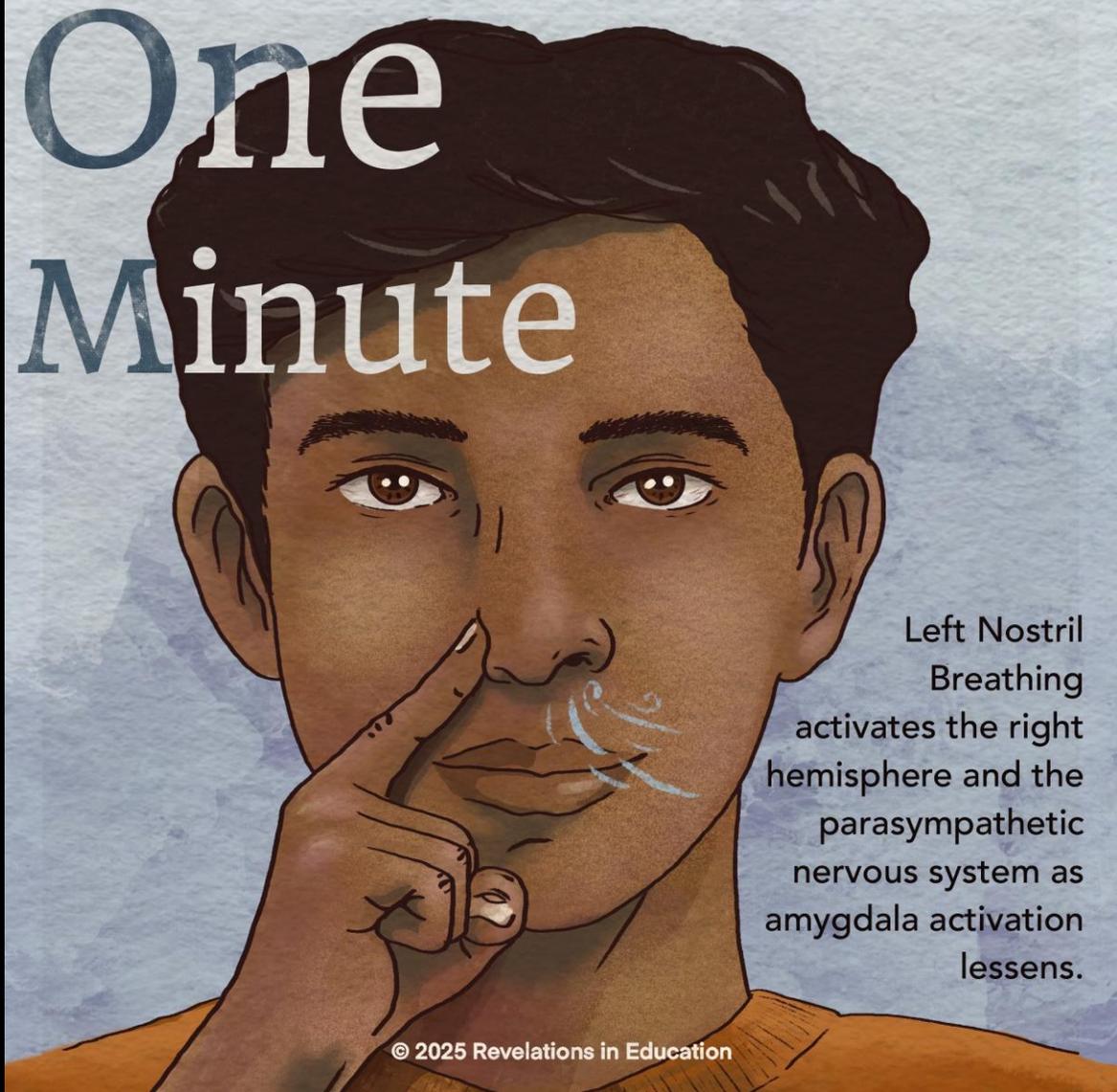
- We explain the why!
- These are always a choice.
- We ask our students and staff for feedback.
- We gradually build on the length of time!

Buzzing Like a Bee



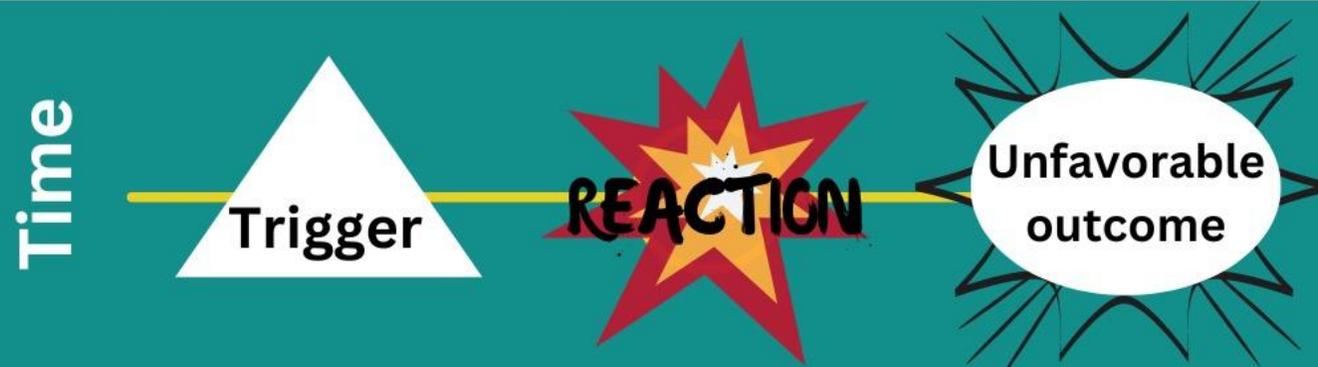
When we hum strongly,
we activate our
parasympathetic nervous
system state and massage
the amygdala so we feel calmer.

One Minute

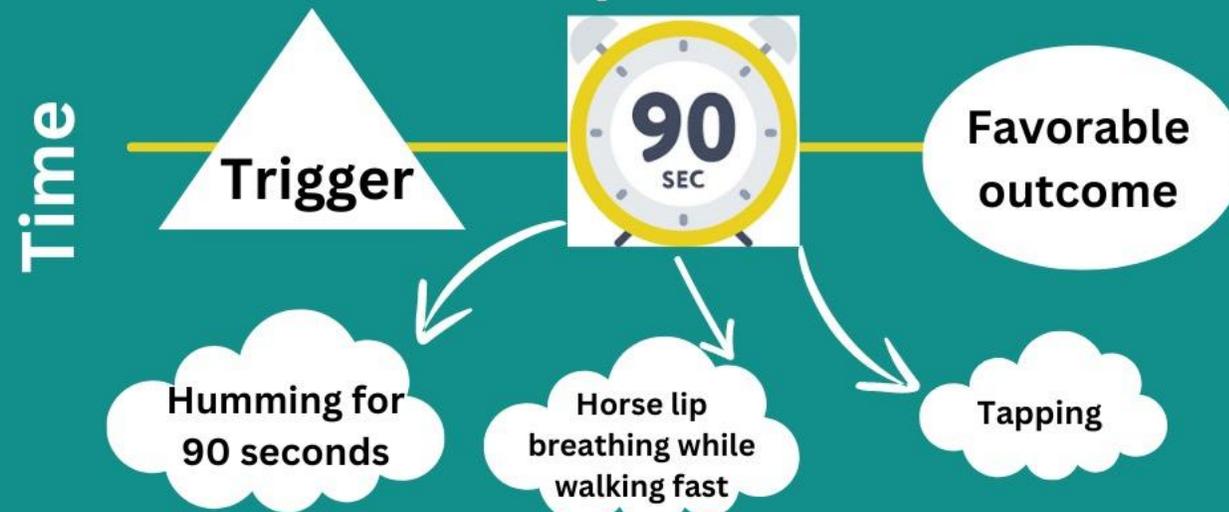
An illustration of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing an orange shirt. He is shown from the chest up, with his right hand raised to his face, using his index and middle fingers to pinch his left nostril. He has a neutral expression and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a light blue, textured surface.

Left Nostril
Breathing
activates the right
hemisphere and the
parasympathetic
nervous system as
amygdala activation
lessens.

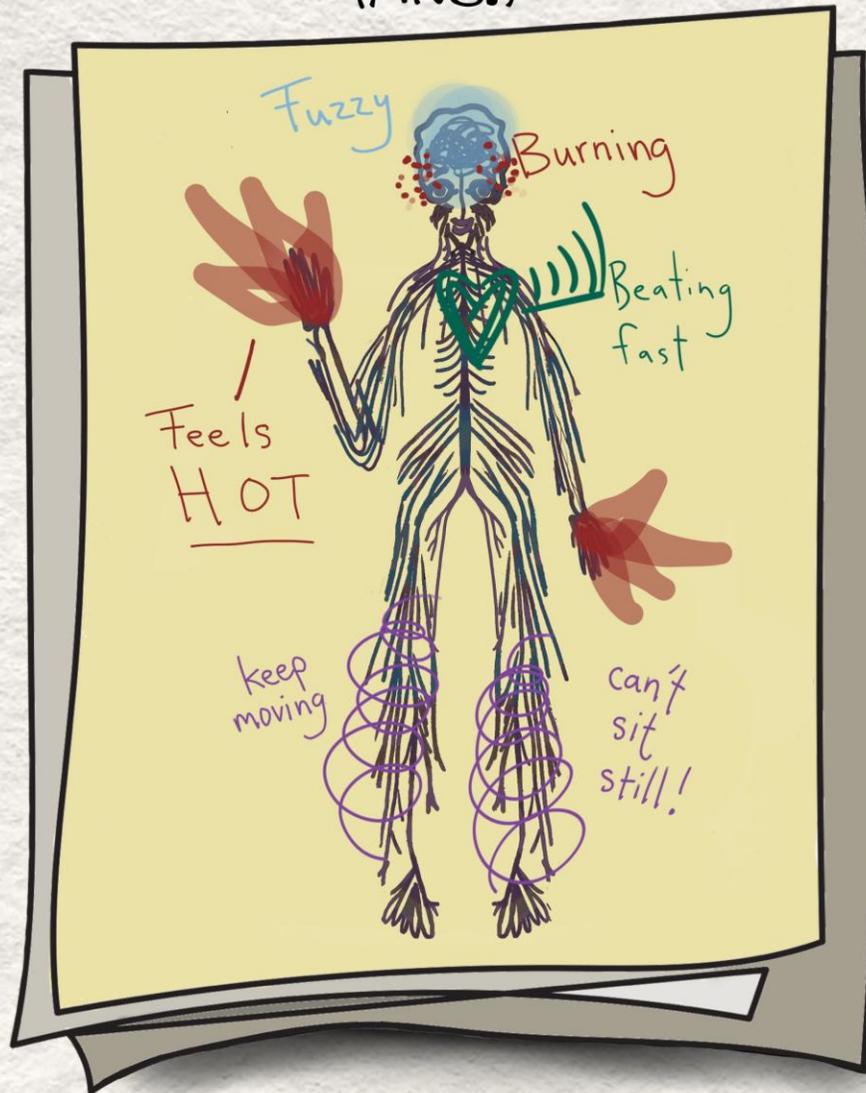
90 Second Pause



The difference between a reaction and a response



Autonomic Nervous System (ANS!)



CERTIFICATE IN APPLIED EDUCATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE



APPLY NOW TO START IN JUNE

2026

Online Master of Education in Trauma Responsive Teaching and Leadership

LEAD WITH INSIGHT. RESPOND WITH IMPACT.

In Butler University's online MEd in Trauma Responsive Teaching and Leadership program, you will prepare for career advancement by studying leadership principles, trauma-informed instruction, nervous system development, and more. This program features a curriculum developed in collaboration with industry partners such as the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). Additionally, alumni from Butler's Applied Educational Neuroscience Certificate program can apply credits to save time and money.

A PRACTICAL CURRICULUM. BUILT TO OPEN DOORS

Coursework in the online MEd in Trauma Responsive Teaching and Leadership program is focused on educational neuroscience, exploring how trauma and adversity can impact the developing nervous system and affect behavior. Throughout your 20-month program, you will complete five asynchronous courses, four courses with optional synchronous meetings, and one elective in a modality of your choosing.

WHAT SETS US APART

Real-World Application

Flexible practicum in your current setting plus an applied capstone.

COURSEWORK

The trauma response training you need to grow in your current position or open doors to new opportunities.

FACULTY

Led by experienced professionals across education, mental health, and social services.

AFFORDABILITY

Quality education at an affordable cost. Apply up to 9 transfer credits.

REQUIRED COURSES

- ED 455** Research, Strategies and Principles of Education Neuroscience – 3 CREDITS
- ED 456** Informed Trauma and Brain Instruction / Social and Emotional Learning – 3 CREDITS
- ED 457** Trauma & the Brain Integrated into Educational/Behavioral Practices & School Leadership Practicum – 3 CREDITS
- ED 510** Principles of Trauma-Responsive Leadership – 3 CREDITS
- ED 513** Trauma-Responsive School Discipline – 3 CREDITS
- ED 610** Seminar in TRTL: Adult Nervous System Health/Wellbeing – 3 CREDITS
- ED 611** TRTL Seminar: Youth Nervous System Health/Wellbeing – 3 CREDITS
- ED 673** Research in Human Services – 3 CREDITS
- ED 682** Capstone in TRTL – 3 CREDITS
- Elective** General Elective – 3 CREDITS

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Connect With Me

- To understand our neurobiology is to know the secret of life!
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- Desautels_phd – twitter
- Instagram – [lori.Desautels](#)
- Linked In- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lori-desautels-a5b65016/>
- "Who are YOU?" said the Caterpillar.
- This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation.
- Alice replied, rather shyly,
- "I-I hardly know, sir, just at present - at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."
- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

When adults become aware of their nervous systems, they can recognize their emotional triggers or activators, sense the dysregulation in their bodies and brains, and respond accordingly. This allows adults to lean into curiosity when encountering a dysregulated child, empowering them to respond with compassion and connection over control, escalation, and compliance.

Body and Brain Brilliance, a neuro-educational manual for social and emotional development embracing all ages, as well as educator nervous systems, will address the science and the language of our nervous systems as educators and students learn together.

"Body and Brain Brilliance' is a deeply insightful resource that shows us how to honor the space between adult and child in a way that offers connection, healing, and growth. It raises the voices of all young people by bringing science and compassion to the way we understand behavior and respond. This beautifully written book is brimming with essential wisdom and practical strategies that open the way to respectfully and tenderly support all young people. Thank you for writing this. It's truly fabulous."

-KAREN YOUNG, Psychologist

"Accessible, practical, and transformative, Body and Brain Brilliance guides educators and administrators to provide the regulated, positive repeated experiences students need to thrive. By showing how to keep our own nervous systems in mind, shift our own states, and then co-regulating with our students, Desautels provides a roadmap for how to effectively hold our students' nervous systems in mind, even in the most challenging moments, where students are most vulnerable."

-TINA PAYNE BRYSON, LCSW, Ph.D., New York Times Bestselling
Co-author of *The Whole-Brain Child* & *No-Drama Discipline*

"I've had the honor of reviewing early chapters, and it is packed full of activities to soothe our nervous systems and co-regulate with children. Add Body and Brain Brilliance to your summer reading list to prepare for back-to-school!"

-BETH TYSON, Childhood Trauma Consultant



You can find *Dr. Desautels'* videos,
latest research, and resources at
www.revelationsineducation.com



Body and Brain Brilliance

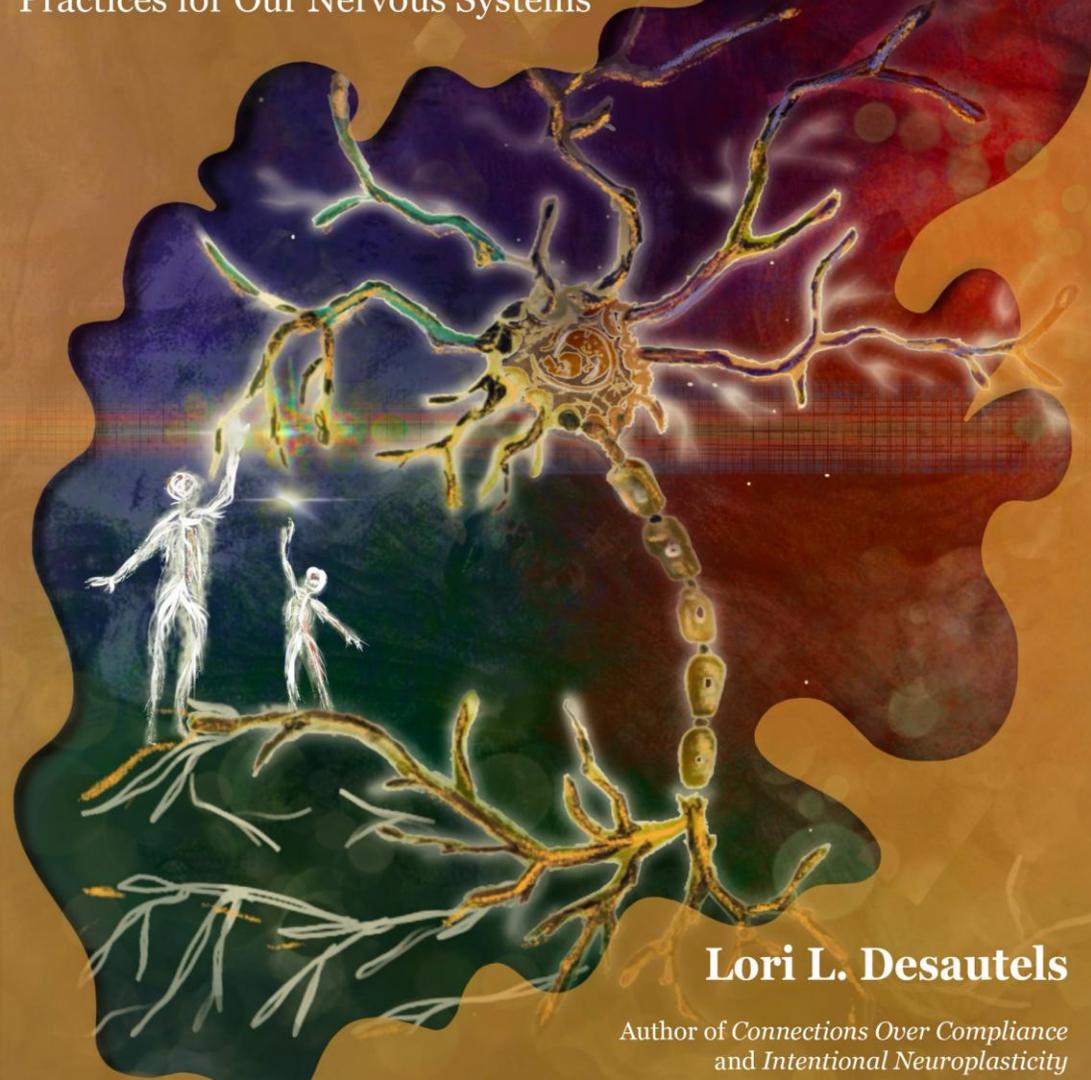
Desautels

Body and Brain Brilliance

A Manual to Cultivate Awareness and Practices for Our Nervous Systems

"If educators put this lens-shift into practice, it would revolutionize the kinds of experiences kids and teachers have every day."

-Tina Payne Bryson,
LCSW, Ph.D., New York
Times Bestselling co-author



Lori L. Desautels

Author of *Connections Over Compliance*
and *Intentional Neuroplasticity*

Educator fatigue and burnout are at an all-time high. Students are carrying their mental and emotional exhaustion into the classroom.

Intentional Neuroplasticity explores the plasticity of the brain and nervous system, while learning how adversity and trauma impact a student's developing nervous system to affect behaviors—which ultimately changes the way educators approach discipline and engagement.

When we empower and relieve our nervous systems with the language of science and deepened understanding of why we sense, feel, and behave the ways we do, we are preparing for a lifetime of possibility through the knowledge of brain and body architecture and plasticity.

"This book will undoubtedly transform the way in which you view the emotional state of our children in a school environment. The practical strategies provided—for how to support the emotional well-being of children—are unparalleled. Dr. Desautels beautifully distills our current understanding of neurobiology and provides teachers with the tools necessary to more compassionately engage with their students."

—Christine M. Crawford, MD, MPH, Associate Medical Director, Research, Support and Education, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

"Dr. Desautels captures the essential elements of Interpersonal Neurobiology and its application in the classroom and beyond. Very much recommended!"

—Lou Cozolino, Ph.D., Author of *The Social Neuroscience of Education and Attachment-Based Teaching*

"Dr. Desautel has interpreted vital learnings from decades of research into the neurobiology of trauma, into friendly, engaging messages and by sharing an abundance of creative resources and ideas that are so relevant and so needed in classrooms today!"

—Dr. Judith Howard, Associate Professor in Trauma-Aware Education, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

"Every chapter connected how we as educators can utilize science to ensure that our students experience safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, which are the keys to successful classrooms and schools."

—Mathew Portell, Founder of the Trauma Informed Educators Network

Lori Desautels, Ph.D., is a teacher, not a neuroscientist—she knows that the translations and applications from the affective, developmental, social, and relational neuroscience research are critical to educational practitioners now more than ever. No one could have been prepared for the emotional and social losses, challenging behaviors, and dysregulation that are impacting the well-being of our students during the past few years—our collective nervous systems feel the tension and unrest. *Intentional Neuroplasticity: Moving Our Nervous Systems and Education System Toward Post-Traumatic Growth* can provide educators cutting-edge information, practices, tools, and exercises to regulate and empower themselves and their students for resiliency and success! Visit revelationsineducation.com.



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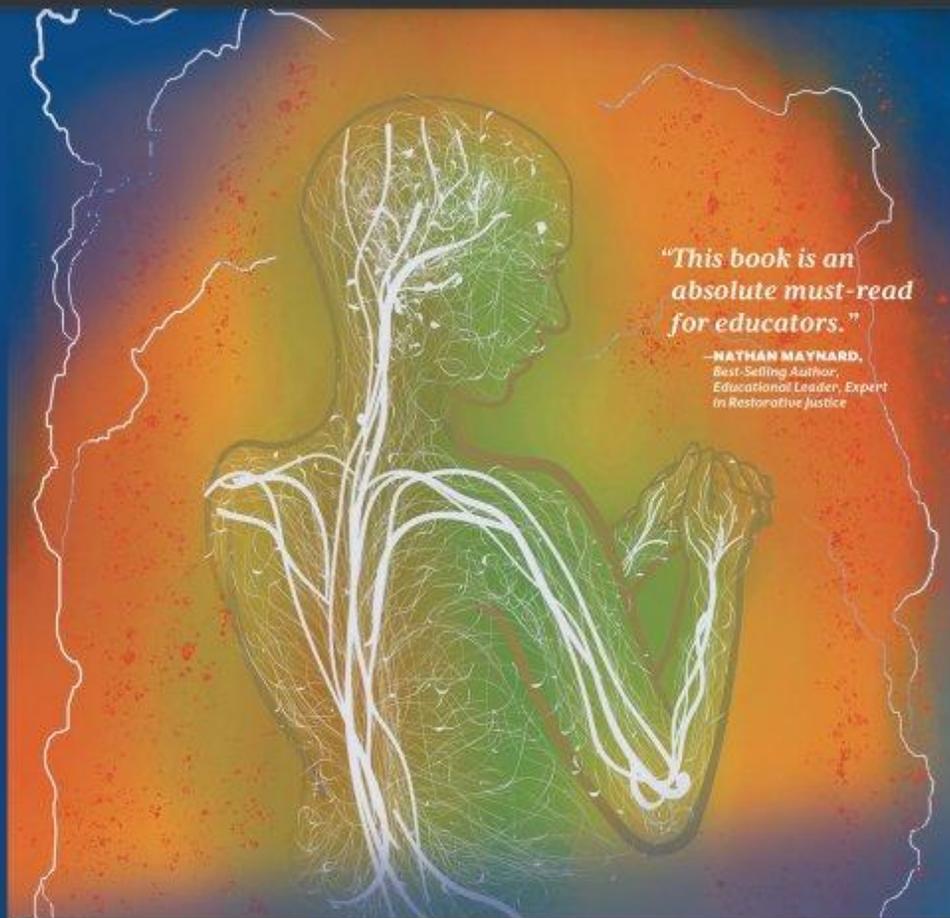


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EDUCATION \$28.00

Intentional Neuroplasticity

Desautels



"This book is an absolute must-read for educators."

—NATHAN MAYNARD,
Best-Selling Author,
Educational Leader, Expert
in Restorative Justice

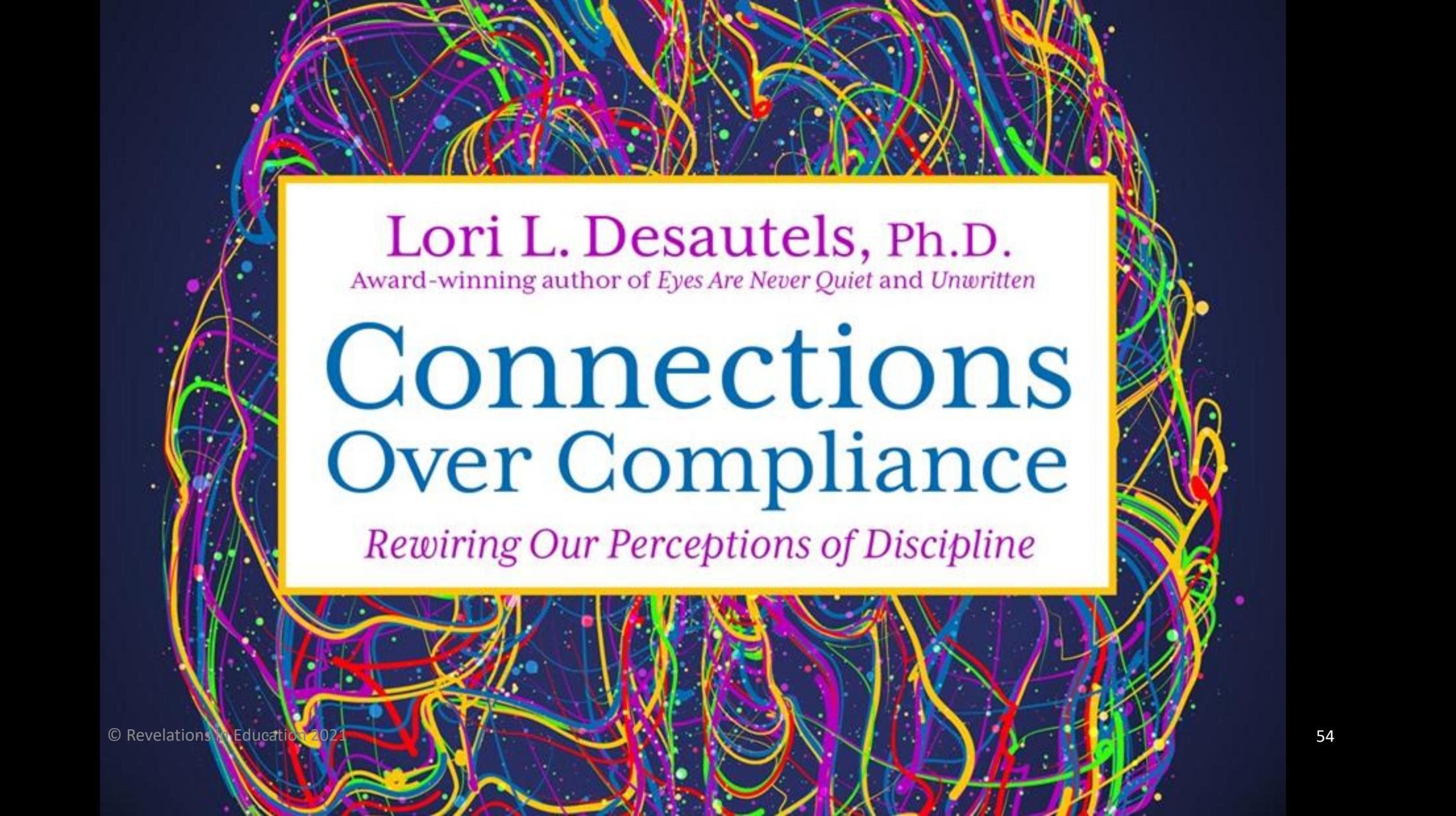
Lori L. Desautels, Ph.D.

AUTHOR OF *Unwritten*, *Eyes Are Never Quiet* and *Connections Over Compliance*

Intentional Neuroplasticity

Moving Our **NERVOUS SYSTEMS**
and **EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**
Toward **POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH**





Lori L. Desautels, Ph.D.

Award-winning author of *Eyes Are Never Quiet* and *Unwritten*

Connections Over Compliance

Rewiring Our Perceptions of Discipline

“A beautifully written, informative, sensitive, and powerful book on the hugely important, widespread, and complex area of trauma, adversity, and resilience. Not to be missed.”

DR. KAREN TREISMAN

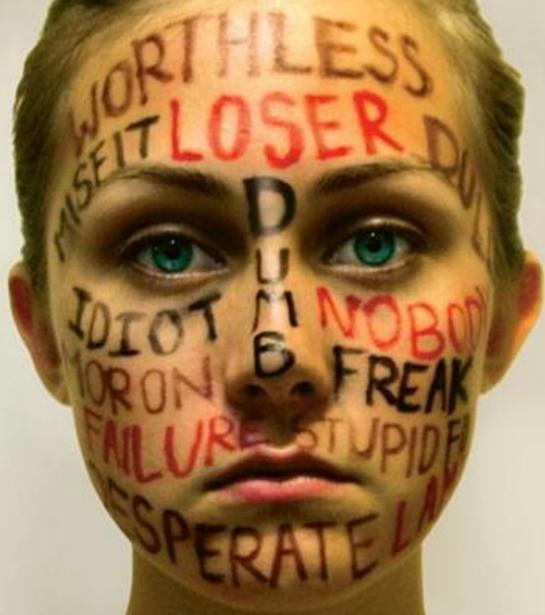
EYES ARE NEVER QUIET

Listening Beneath the Behaviors of Our Most Troubled Students



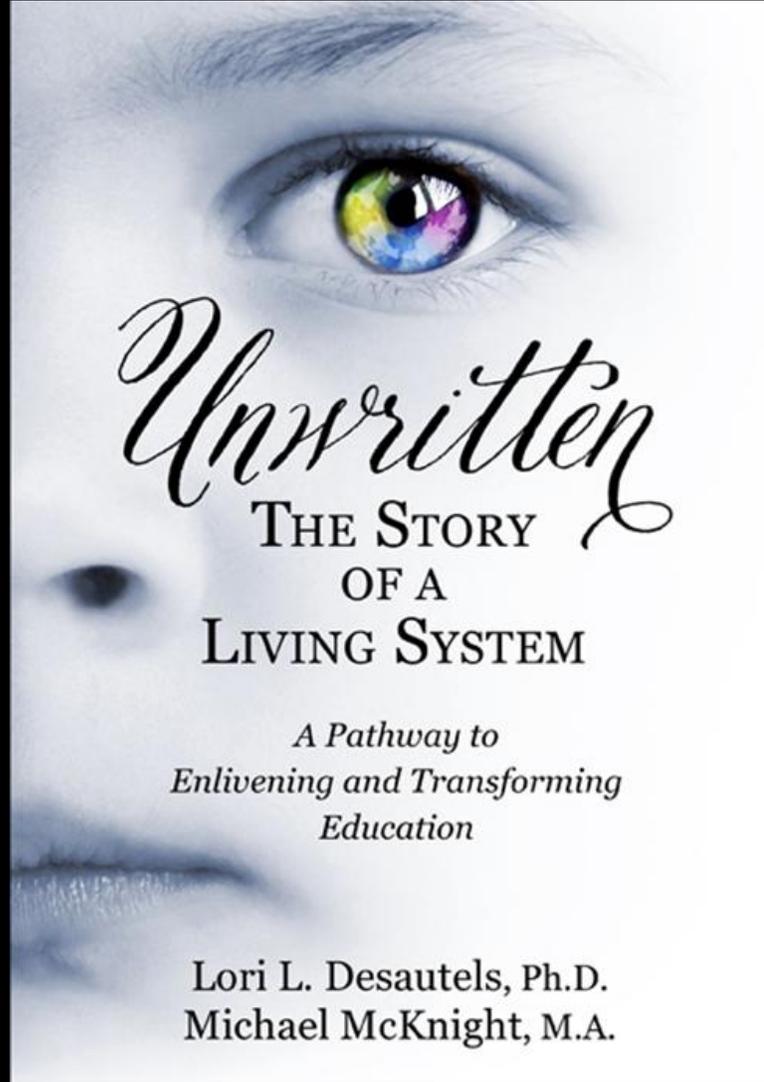
Lori L. Desautels, Ph.D.
Michael McKnight, M.A.

HOW MAY I
SERVE YOU?



Revelations in Education

LORI L. DESAUTELS, PH.D.



Unwritten

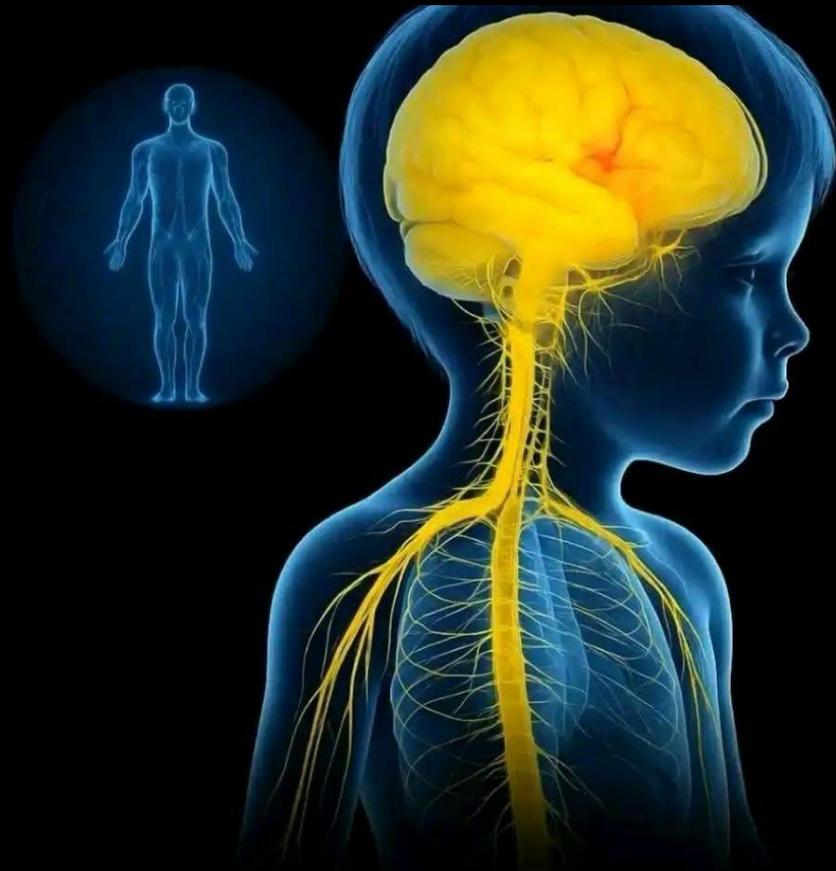
THE STORY
OF A
LIVING SYSTEM

*A Pathway to
Enlivening and Transforming
Education*

Lori L. Desautels, Ph.D.
Michael McKnight, M.A.

Thank you!

Under the Influence of Our Nervous System



Study shows your **adult body**
carries the story of **your**
childhood nervous system

Stress is Contagious

- **Stress is 'contagious' and 'shows on our skin'**
- Dr Tara Swart says stress is contagious as it can leak from one person's sweat and affect others. She explains that this contagious stress could cause others to experience heightened levels of stress, impacting their overall mental and physical health.
- She warns it is important to be aware of our own stress levels and acknowledge the potential influence it can have on those in our vicinity. When asked by Steven Bartlett if stress is contagious, she replied: "Yes."
- She added: "Cortisol is the main stress hormone and it will leak out of our sweat." She said it will 'leak out' several centimeters around us, and "go into the skin of everybody else and it's going to impact them."



Emotions Are Contagious

- *Kids in stress create in adults their feelings and, if not trained, the adults will mirror their behavior.*
- *(Long & Fecser, 2000)*





Behavior Management Centers on the Adult Nervous System

Adults

STEADY:

"I've got this!"



Prefrontal Cortex

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Interested	Curious
Grounded	Sparkly
Motivated	Golden
Centered	Steady
Peaceful	Glittery
Flavorful	Bubbly
Satisfied	Playful
Focused	Smooth
Stretchy	Happy
Relaxed	Loved
Flowing	Bright
	Joyful
	Fluffy
	Open
	Calm
	Safe
	Full

STRUGGLING:

"Something isn't right..."



Amygdala

FIGHT / FLIGHT



Hungry	Cranky	
Embarrassed	Coarse	
Frustrated	Frazzled	
Throbbing	Restless	
Distracted	Nervous	
Pounding	Grumpy	
Twitching	Blinding	
Bothered	Burning	
Unhappy	Tingling	
Stressed	Irritated	
Chippy	Annoyed	
Angry	Hot	Tense
Stuffy	Fast	Bored
Tired	Achy	Upset
Uncomfortable	Afraid	

OVERWHELMED:

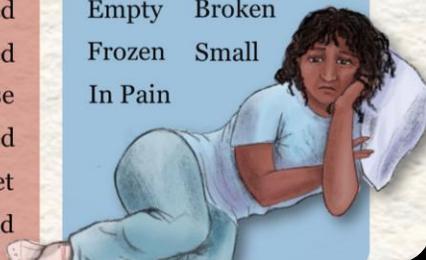
"I can't handle this."



Brainstem

SHUTDOWN / INMOBILIZED

Disconnected	Quiet	
Disappointed	Panic	
Untethered	Bloated	
Depressed	Distant	
Shutdown	Trapped	
Tuned Out	Hopeless	
Slouched	Collapsed	
Burnout	Helpless	
Sleepy	Lost	Heavy
Closed	Dull	Afraid
Offline	Achy	Tired
Hollow	Icy	Lonely
Numb	Hurt	Sad
Empty	Broken	
Frozen	Small	
In Pain		

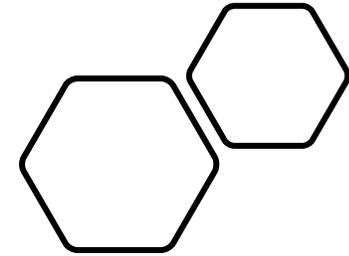


Professor William Morse of the University of Michigan shared this with teachers in training: “The day you forget that under some life circumstances, you could have ended up like your most troubled student is the day you should quit. You will have lost your ability to respond with empathy.”

Lori L Desautels

Connections Over Compliance: Rewiring Our Perceptions of Discipline

#kindlequotes



An illustration of a woman's face in profile, looking down. Her right hand is raised to her eyes, with fingers spread, as if covering them. The area behind her hand and the space between her hand and her face is filled with a collage of various scenes, including a person in a white lab coat working in a laboratory, a person in a blue uniform working in a kitchen, and other abstract, colorful scenes. The background is a light, hazy landscape with mountains.

Body and Brain Brilliance,

What's
under the
hood ?

... Coming
next year!



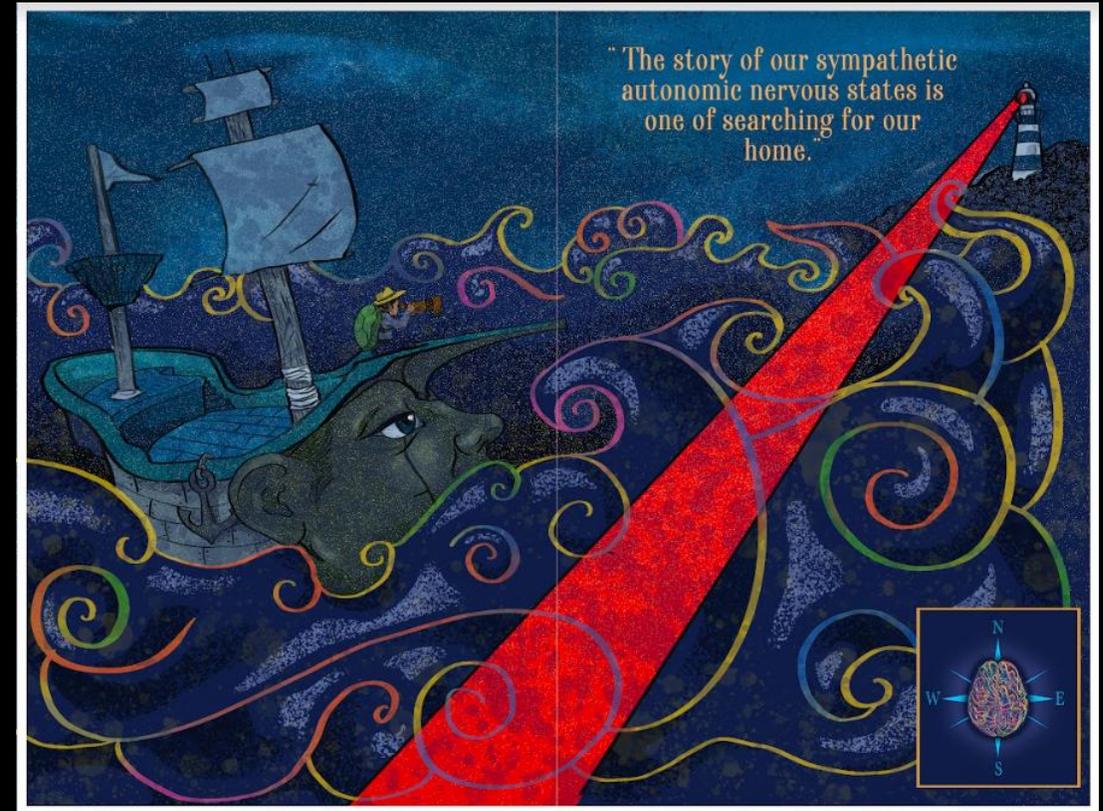
The Things We Carry

- Energy levels
- Values
- Emotional Triggers
- Biases
- Beliefs
- Strengths
- Culture
- Passions and Interests



Survival Drive!

- Most of us are dancing with the survival drive and it is powerful and geared to keep our physical organism alive- ensuring our safety.
- It is slow to change and not interested in flexibility or changing! Therefore, we develop distortions of our survival drives.



Social Engagement

- I am
- Others Are....
- The world is....





Fight/ Flight

- I am
- Others are....
- The world is....



Shut Down / Immobilized

- I am....
- Others are....
- The world is....

Checking In With Each of Our States

What candy are you in each of the autonomic states?



What snack are you in
each of the autonomic
states?



What Songs or lyrics
represent each of your st



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WE ARE THE EDUCATORS.
WE GO FIRST.
MTSS BEGINS BY SUPPORTING US.



Society is only
as healthy as
its caregivers

Children + youth
are only as
healthy as their
caregivers

Schools are only as
socially,
emotionally, and
cognitively healthy
as their staff



Students are only as socially, emotionally and cognitively healthy
as their **teachers, administrators** and those **staff** who serve them.

-Dr. Lori Desautels



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AEN-ALIGNED MTSS FOR EDUCATORS

TIER 1 Whole Staff Therapeutic Touch Points

On going professional development, book studies, seminars. Addressing challenges within our school procedures. Gathering and discussing input from staff surveys, reflections, feedback, and much more.

 **Validation is a critical practice where change originates from being seen and heard.**

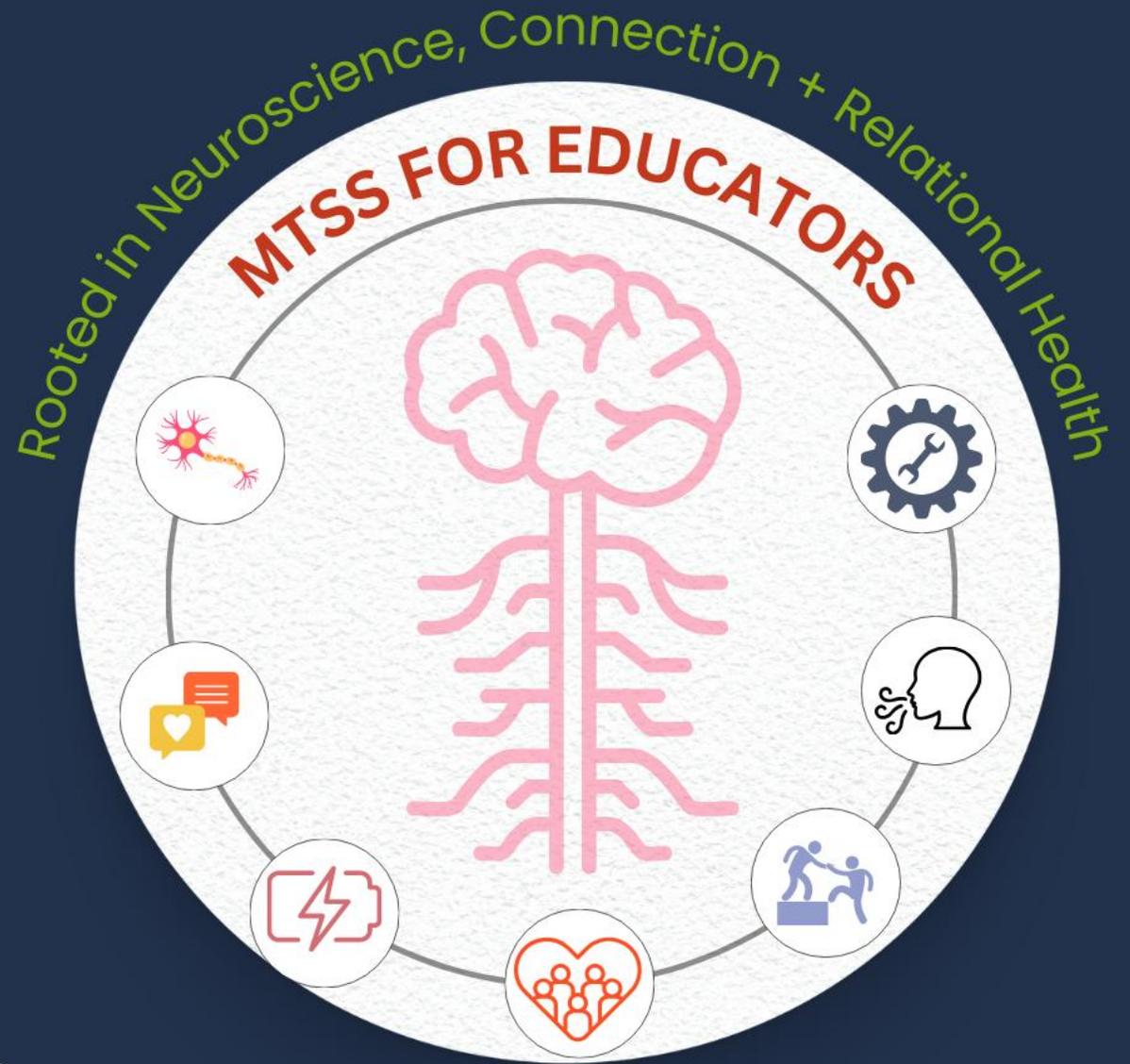
TIER 2 Small Group Therapeutic Touch Points

Intentionally created small groups based on need and desire. These can be PLC's, Teams meetings, and Resiliency Teams. The purpose is to address challenges, resistance, emotional health of colleagues. This team works with administrators, builds upon one another's successes, validations, and interests.

 **Validation is a critical practice where change originates from being seen and heard.**

TIER 3 Supports Individual Staff

Supports those staff members who are exhausting all resources while pouring every ounce of energy into their classrooms with not much left for themselves or students. E.g., high performing staff and educators who are experiencing fatigue and are burning out quickly. It is a **touch point** for seasoned and new educators. It is a touch point for resistant staff so that they feel seen and heard. It is centered in the social and emotional health of all adults who are serving our children and youth.



"It's all about the collective adult nervous system."
- Dr. Lori Desautels

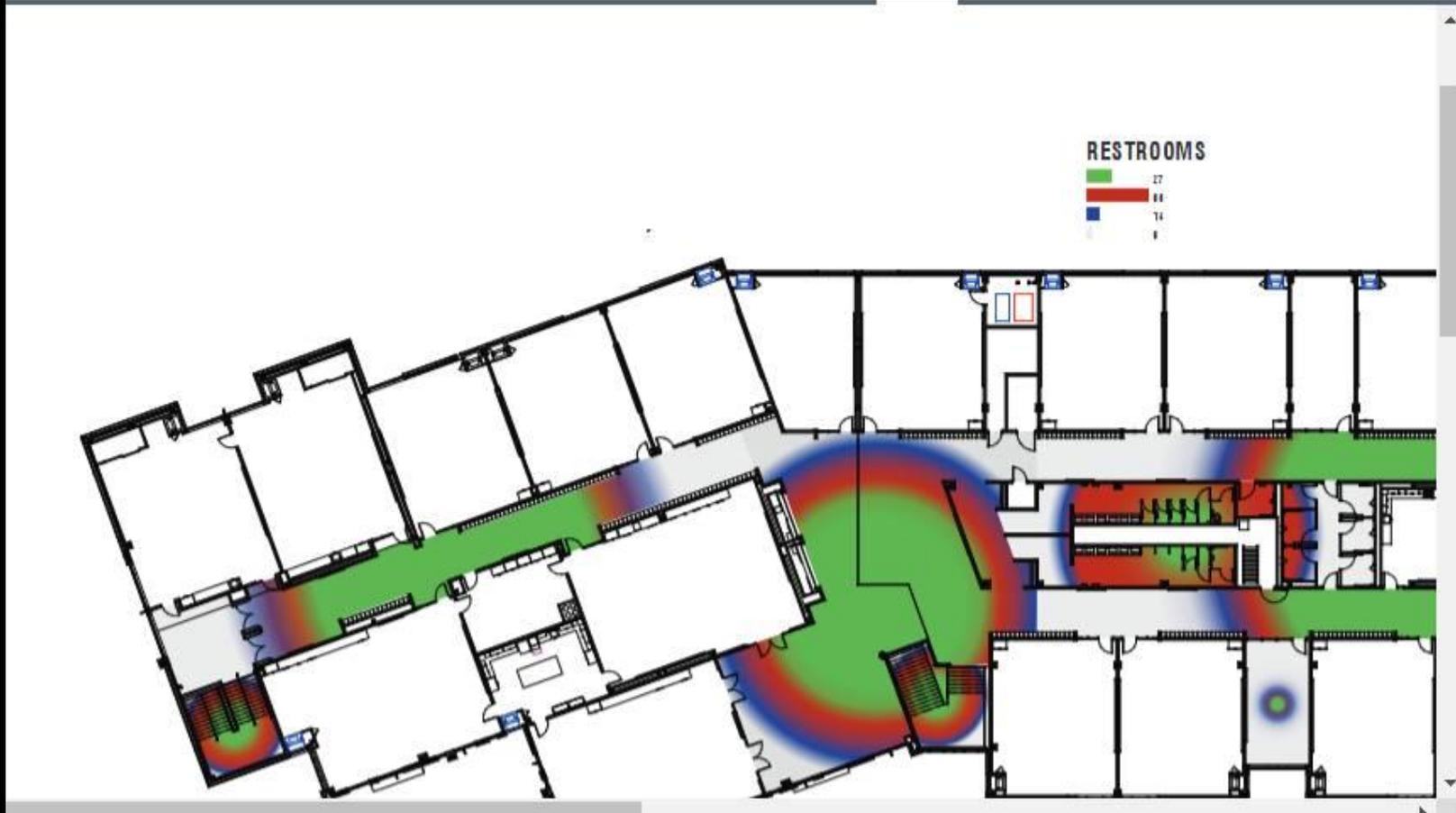




Educator Nervous System State

- What is my ACE score?
- Am I Neurodivergent?
- How does my implicit bias impact my ability to provide co-regulation that is steady, helping our students access the cortex!
- @ Mindful-Leaders.org

What are the spaces signaling in your schools?



Building Resilient Adults:

Do the adults feel heard, safe, and seen?

Teacher Environment Survey

	SAFE AND CONNECTED	SOMEWHAT SAFE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT UNSAFE	UNSAFE AND DISCONNECTED
 Hallways to Classes	<input type="radio"/>				
 Cafeteria	<input type="radio"/>				
 Teacher Workroom	<input type="radio"/>				
 Administrator Offices	<input type="radio"/>				
 Resource Room	<input type="radio"/>				
 My Classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
 Parking Lot	<input type="radio"/>				

What areas in our school help you feel safe and connected and why?

Plan Template

What spaces feel the most dys-regulating to adults and students?

What spaces feel the safest?

What are the differences between these spaces?
 people?
 windows?
 aesthetics/lighting?
 smells?
 structure?
 noises?
 other?

How would the ideal space look and feel if there were no limiting factors?

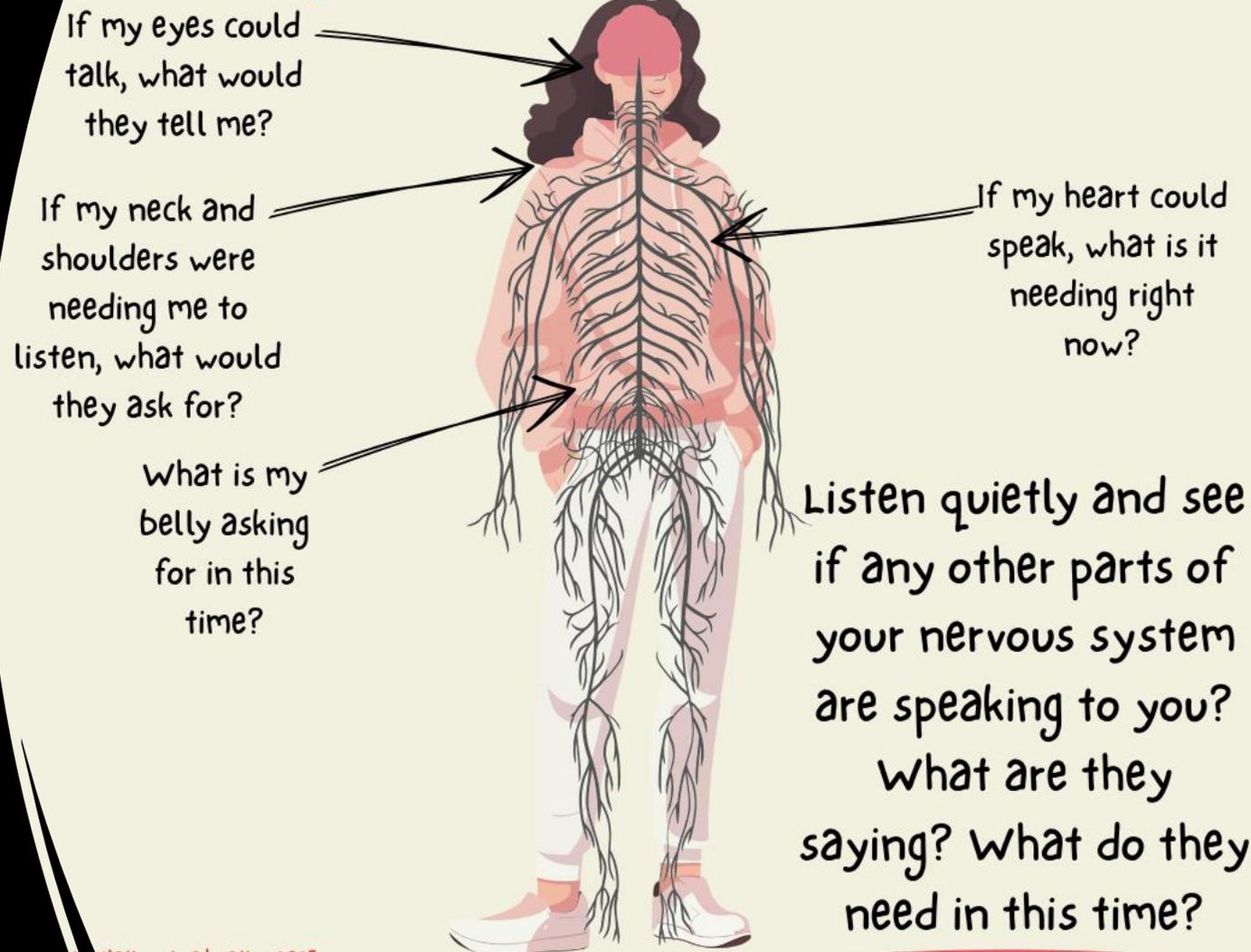
What steps can you take within your locus of control to make this space a reality in your school/classroom? When we resource these areas, we intentionally create spaces that bring ease and steadiness to our nervous systems.

Now think about your students. Can we bring focus groups of students from a variety of grade levels and departments to co-create a plan of action alongside teachers to make your school or classroom feel physically, emotionally, and relationally safe?

Time -In

- "Time In"- Dan Siegel
- Interpersonal Neurobiology sees awareness as the gateway to change by how it affords the opportunity to channel energy and information flowing in more integrative ways Time In is a term signifying the practice of reflecting inwardly on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts. Time in practices include those that develop mindful awareness and neural integration.

Conversations with My Nervous System

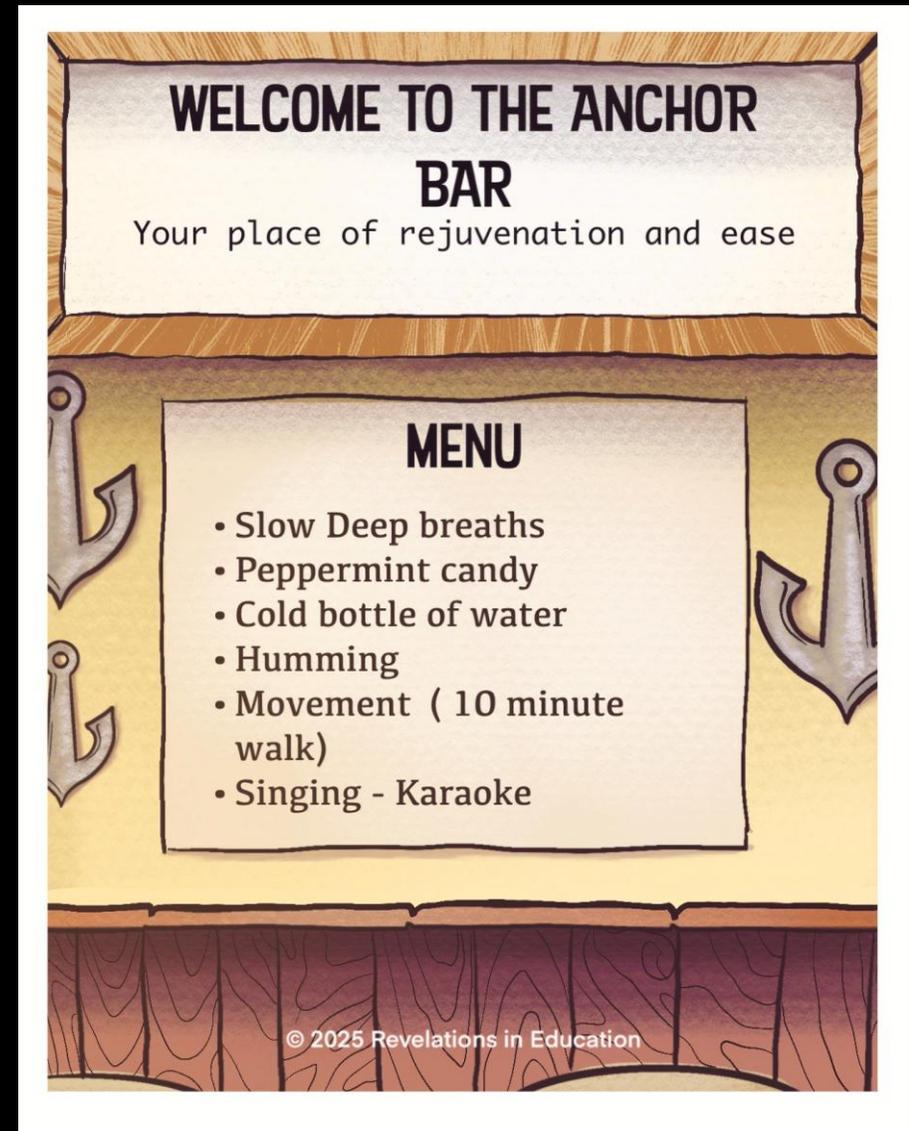
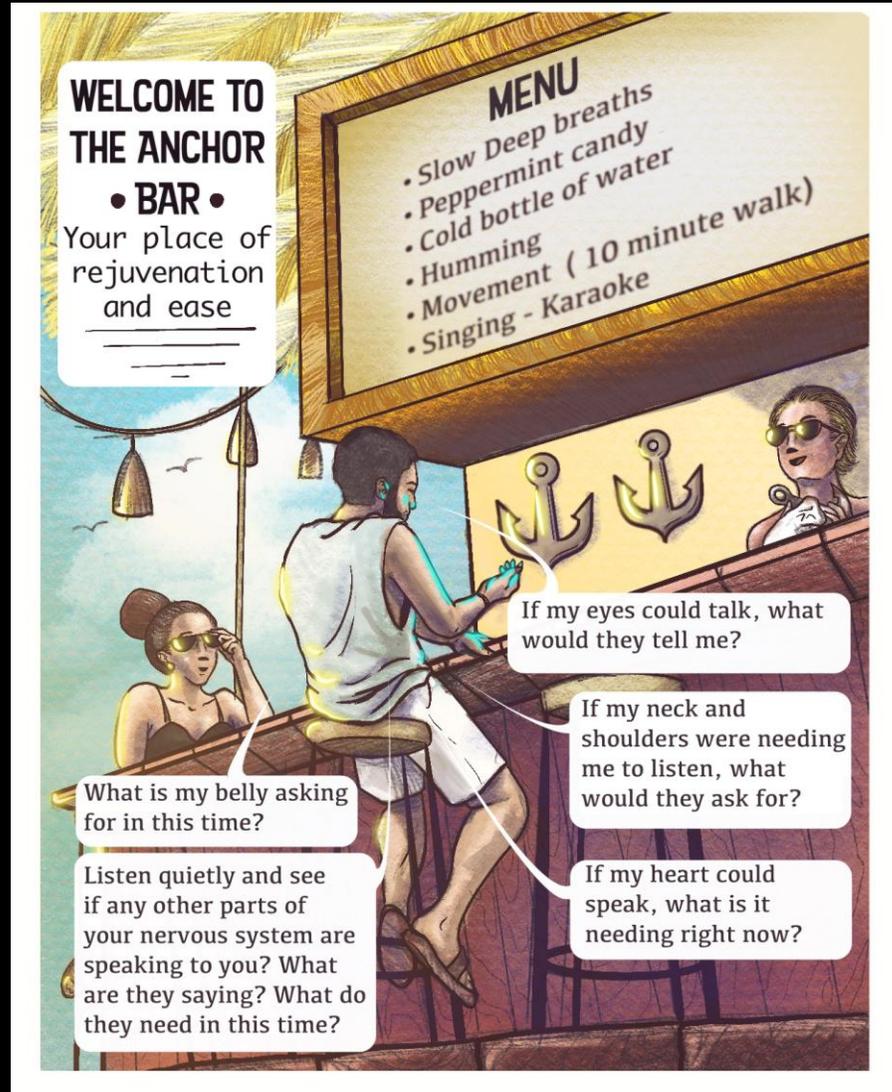


Anchors (Raise Our Window of Tolerance)

- What people anchor you?
 - Protective Figures-If there is danger, they help us feel protected. Examples might be caregivers, stuffed animals, teachers, parents, siblings, friends, therapists, or nature.
 - Wisdom Figures- Inner being, spiritual figures, authors, nature, poets, what else?
 - Nurturing Figures- ourselves, children, family, friends, spiritual, nature, animals, therapists, ancestors, heroes, what else?
- What places anchor you?
- What times, days of the week, or months and seasons anchor you?
- What things/ practices, experiences, conditions or objects or even a texture that anchors you?



Anchor Bar



Miserly Brain – Rooted in Our Evolution as a Species

- The brain is like a homebody, as it is set in its ways constantly blocking new stimuli and filtering out most of our experiences.
- It often resists new experiences that might force it to alter its complex circuitry.



Why Do We Experience Fear?

- The brain is designed to be very conscientious about its energy use, as it can be an energy guzzler!
- Fear is the brain's way of guarding against the novelty of experiencing new ways of being, habits, experiences and as it protects our old circuitry that may not serve us today as it did in the past! Our Lower brain regions are so difficult to change!
- This is why visualization is so important!

