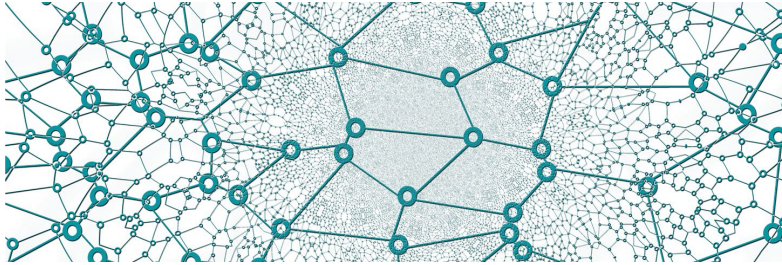


Understanding the Body's Safety Circuit



Deb Dana, LCSW

rhythmofregulation.com
polyvagal institute.org

Webinar 3: The Guiding Questions



The autonomic impact of trauma

Trauma sidetracks the development of autonomic regulation.

Traumatic experiences interrupt opportunities to exercise the neural circuitry of connection.

Trauma replaces patterns of connection with patterns of protection.

Adaptive survival responses replace social engagement.

Co-regulation is unavailable/dangerous.

Self-regulation is ineffective/inadequate.

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A flexible autonomic nervous system...

Reduced inflammation, control of immune response

Lower risk of stroke, heart disease, diabetes

Emotional regulation

Increased capacity for friendship and connection

Resilience

Compassion

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A rigidly responding system...

Impaired immune functioning, Inflammatory diseases

Digestive problems

Respiratory problems

Chronic fatigue

Depression

Anxiety

Social isolation/loneliness

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States & Stories



Listening to the Story of Three States

At any moment, we have three stories — one held in each state.

The story we hear and are held in, is from the state that is most active in our system.

Tuning in and hearing each of the three stories is a reminder that the state is where the story begins.

Listening to three stories uses the lens of the autonomic nervous system to expand perspective and enter into a moment of reflection.

Sharing your stories with someone else brings connection.

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The Listening Practice

- Take a small, everyday experience that doesn't affect your safety or have a big impact on your life
- Look through your two survival states
- End in ventral
- Reflect on what you learned

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Through the Lens of the Nervous System

What are the words that we use to describe clients?

What are the diagnoses we use?

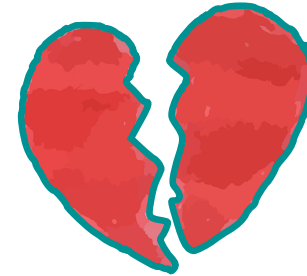
Move to thinking about clients as dysregulated and diagnoses as a form of autonomic dysregulation.

What is the nervous system trying to communicate?

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“Trauma is a chronic disruption of connectedness.”

(Stephen Porges)



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Connection

- A therapist's ability to be in ventral vagal regulation and offer that regulating energy to their clients is essential to the success of therapy.
- Connecting, tracking moments of disconnection, and returning to connection is the foundation of the therapeutic relationship.
- Bring these implicit autonomic experiences into explicit awareness to create a sense of safety.

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30% of the time...



Experiences of reciprocity, rupture and repair build pathways of connection and autonomic resilience.

Ruptures that are left un-repaired shape the system toward protection.

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Moments of Missing

The natural flow of rupture and repair

- unnoticed and not named
- noticed and named but unrepaired
- repaired in the moment
- returning to repair

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The Lessons of Rupture and Repair

transferred to other relationships

- specific categories
- generalized
- generational

person to person

global offer of safety and connection

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Just Like Me...

That person has a body, a mind, feelings, thoughts, has suffered and experienced joy, and wants to be healthy and feel loved, just like me.

Write phrases that recognize the natural ways we all regulate, move into survival responses, rest in a state of connection, and can be pulled into protection.

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Just Like Me...

Just like me, they experience times of connection and times of protection.

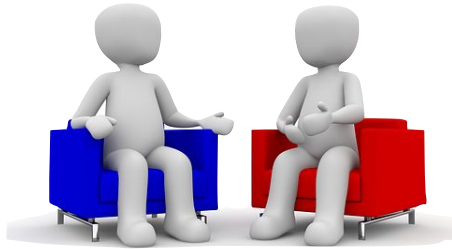
Just like me, they respond to cues of safety and cues of danger.

Just like me, they can disconnect and disappear.

Just like me, they can feel dangerous.

Just like me, they can be warm and welcoming.

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*Together, in this moment, in this place, doing this work,
where do our nervous systems want us to be?*

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The Guiding Questions

What state am I in?

What do I need to be anchored in ventral regulation?

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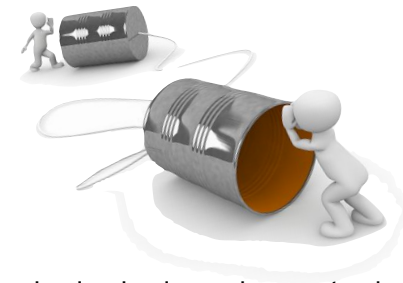
The Guiding Questions

Where is the other person?

What does their nervous system need in this moment?

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The Responsibility for Regulation

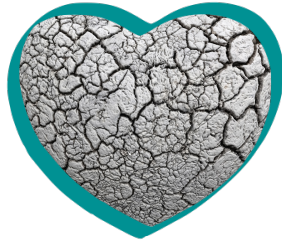


Autonomic communication is always happening between our “selves”, others, the environment, and spirit.

Our state impacts the world.

The call to action is to attend to the autonomic information we are sending out into the world.

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Benevolence

The active, ongoing, intentional use of ventral vagal
energy in service of healing...

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