



What is your body telling you?

We Can't Wait Conference 2021

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Collective Trauma

This pandemic has been just that and I wanted to normalize any feelings and reactions you might have experienced as a result.

Why is this relevant?

- The more you can identify, attend to and give language to how your body is communicating, the better and quicker you can self-regulate.
- The better you can self-regulate, the better you can co-regulate.



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WHAT TO EXPECT TODAY

As we go through our Mind, Body and Spirit we will be asking:

How are they affected?

Why is this important?

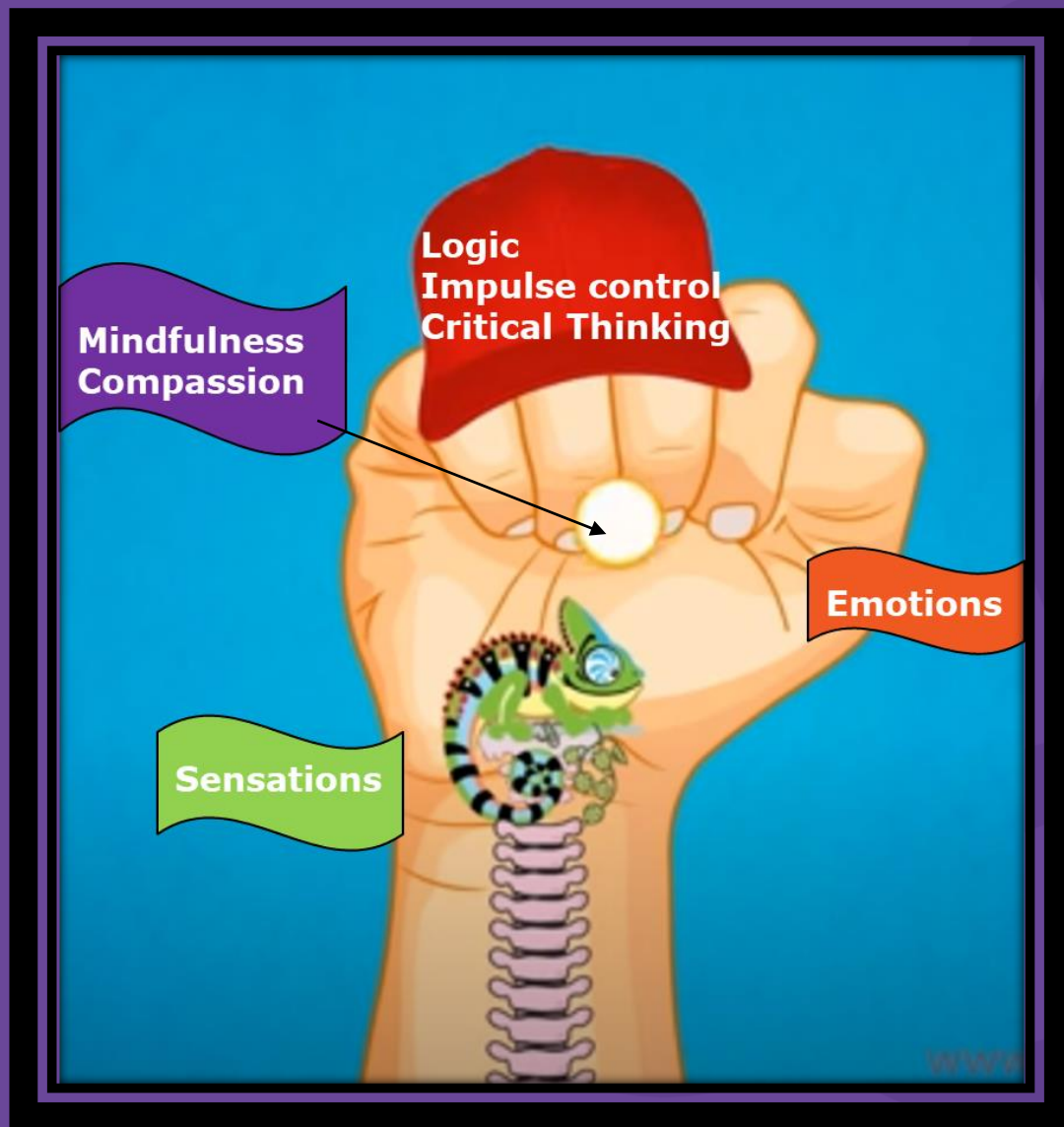
What do we need to reframe?

What do we do?



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MIND



TYPES OF STRESS

Good/Positive

- Brief increases in heart rate and hormone stress levels

Acceptable/Tolerable

- Serious, temporary stress responses buffered by internal and external supports

Toxic/Chronic

- Prolonged activation of stress response system in the absence of responsive relationships and coping capacity



CHRONIC STRESS AND THE BRAIN

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Stress = Cortisol =

- Readies you for action.
- Increases activity in the Fear Center.
- Decreases your ability to learn and regulate.
- Brain shrinks & produces fewer cells.
- Long Term- creates hypervigilance & re-enactment.

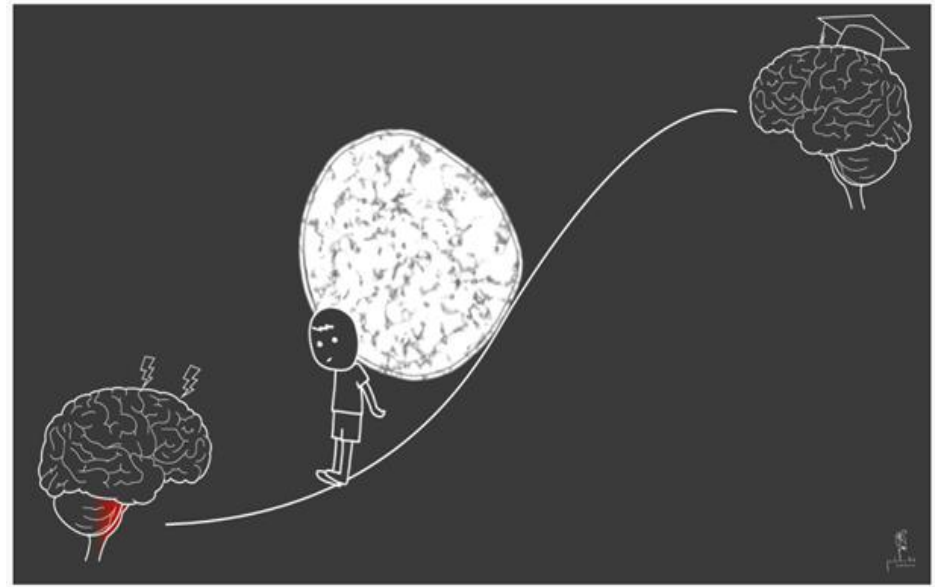


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WHAT DO WE NEED TO REFRAME?

Our brain is wired to:

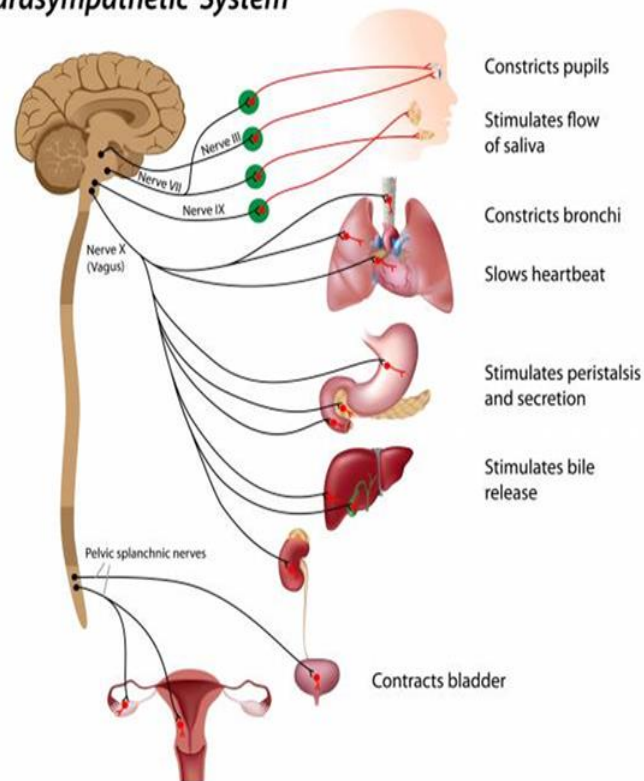
- Do what comes **easiest**.
- See what is **negative/wrong**.
- **React** to epigenetic markers.



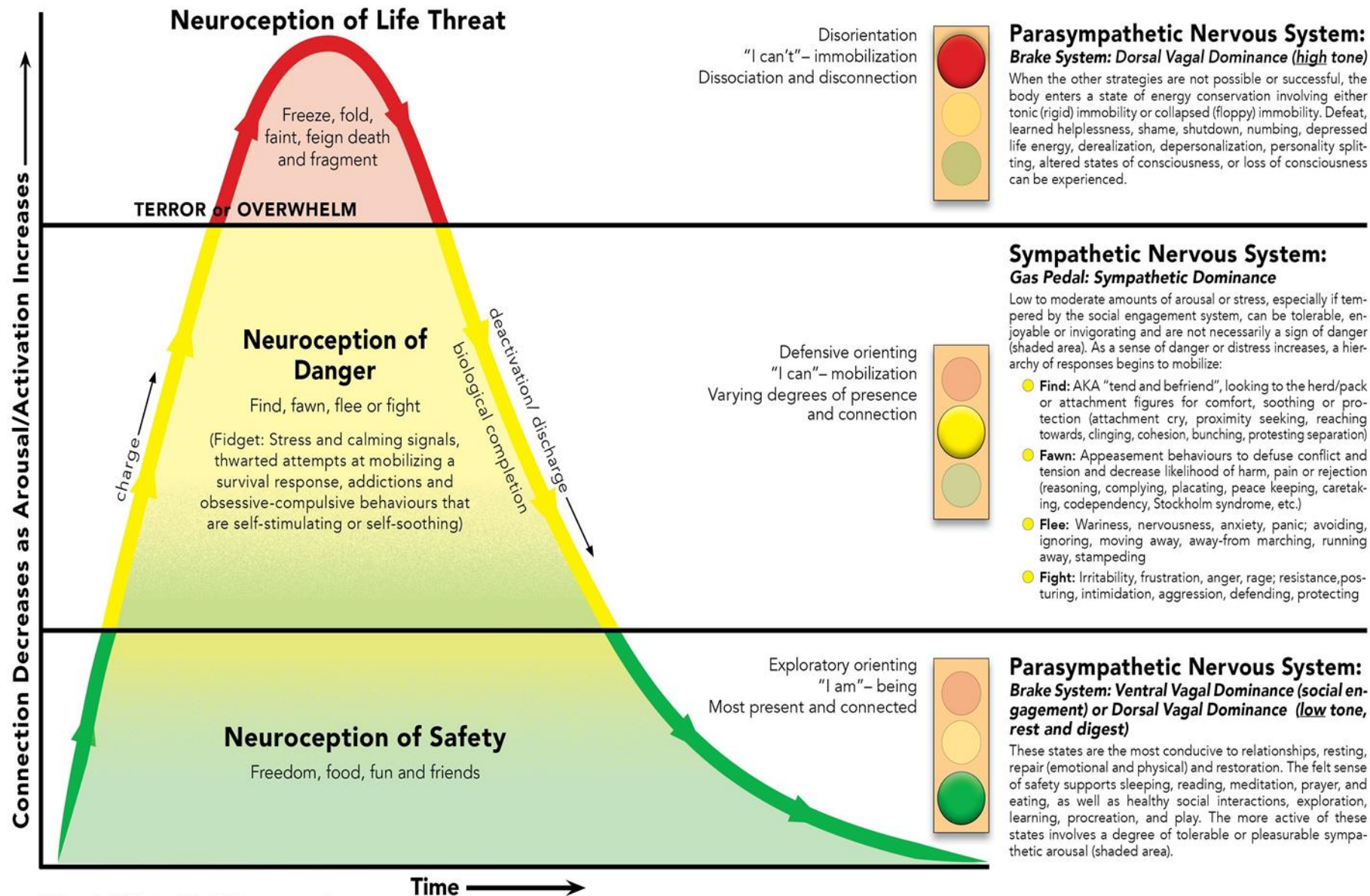
THE VAGUS NERVE

- Connects the brain stem to the body.
- Main parasympathetic nerve in the body.
- Sends info from the gut to the brain.
- Reduces inflammation by sending anti-inflammatory signals to the body.
- Regulates mood and the organs it's connected to.

Parasympathetic System



WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR?



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Adapted from Porges (2011, 2017), Levine (1997, 2010), Walker (2013), Hoskinson Consulting (n.d.), Draaisma (2018), Rees (2018), Schauer & Elbert (2010), Koslowska et al. (2015), and Payne & Crane-Godreau (2015).

BODY

BRAIN

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

CARDIOVASCULAR

higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

JOINTS AND MUSCLES

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

IMMUNE SYSTEM

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time

SKIN

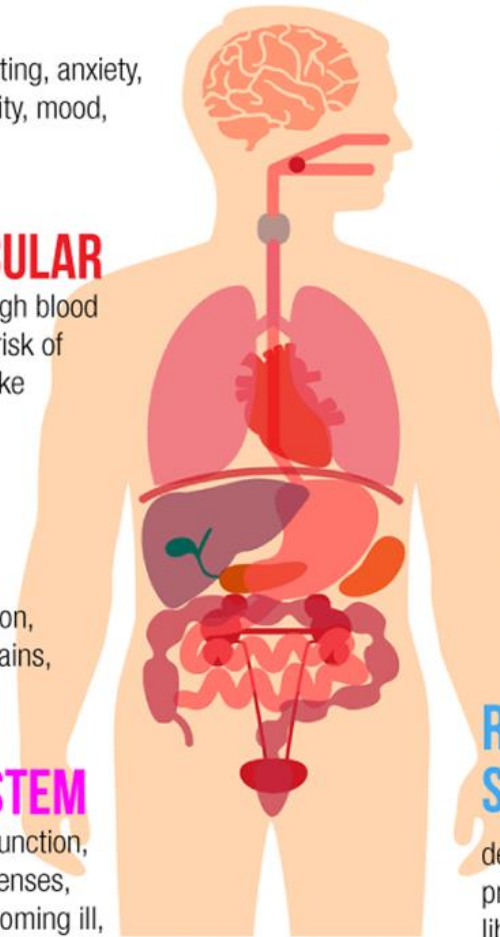
hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

GUT

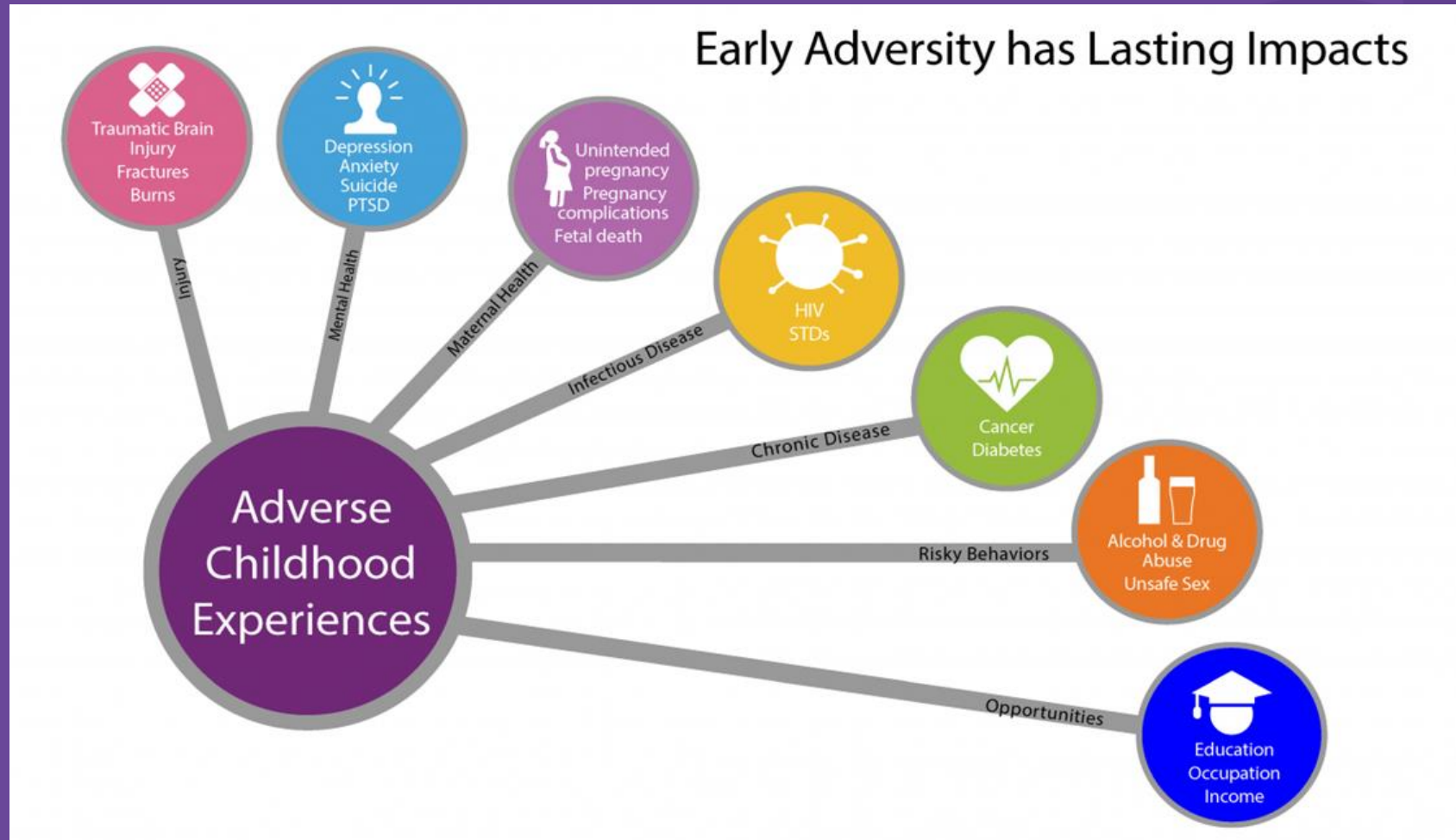
nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms



LONG TERM EFFECTS OF STRESS



HOW STRESS CAN MAKE YOU SICK



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IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Stress = Cortisol =

- Increases hypertension, chances of stroke, heart attack and digestive issues.
- Increases appetite specifically for energy dense foods.
- Produces unhealthy fat deposits (cytokines) that release hormones.
- Dampen immune cells.
- Shortens telomeres which cause premature brain cell death.



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WHAT DO WE NEED TO REFRAME?

Our body:

- Has done what it has needed to survive.
- Is always trying to heal me and keep me well.
- Has wisdom it wants to communicate to me.



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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Issues in our Tissues

- Implicit memories

Learn to identify the distinct voices

- The brain and the body don't speak to you in the same way.
- The language of the body is sensations.

Responsive Relationships

The path to healing. The better we care for ourselves, the more we can be present for others.



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WHY IS SENSATION IMPORTANT?

- It's the language of the reptilian brain (instinct).
- It slows down the nervous system.
- It broadens the awareness of the body experience.
- It's not emotion.



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Developing A Language For Sensations

Vibration	Size/Position	Temperature	Pain
Shaking Twitching Trembling Quick/Slow etc.	Small Medium Large Up/Down/ Center etc.	Cold Hot Warm Neutral etc.	Sharp Intense Pounding Dull etc.
Breathing	Weight	Density	Heart
Rapid Deep Shallow Light etc.	Heavy Firm Light Gentle etc.	Rough Smooth Thick Thin etc.	Fast Slow Rhythmic Flutters etc.

"Every feeling, thought and belief has a corresponding sensation."

WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR?

- Discomfort – it's an alert.
- Where are the sensations located in my body? Are they tied to emotions?
- Story follows state.
- How do I relate to my body? As a relative or a resource?



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SPIRIT



WHEN YOU FEEL...

Where do your emotions show up in your body?

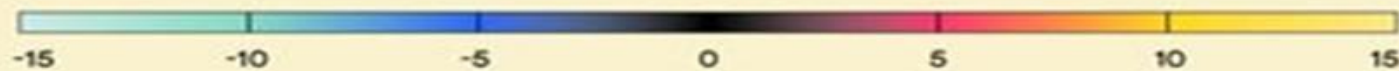


MAPPING EMOTIONS IN THE BODY



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WHEN WE FEEL EMOTIONS, WHERE DO THEY HAPPEN?



HAPPINESS:
throughout the
entire body



ANGER:
upper half of the
body and the arms;
also some activation
in the legs and feet



FEAR:
upper half of the
body, excluding
the arms; also
some activation
in the feet

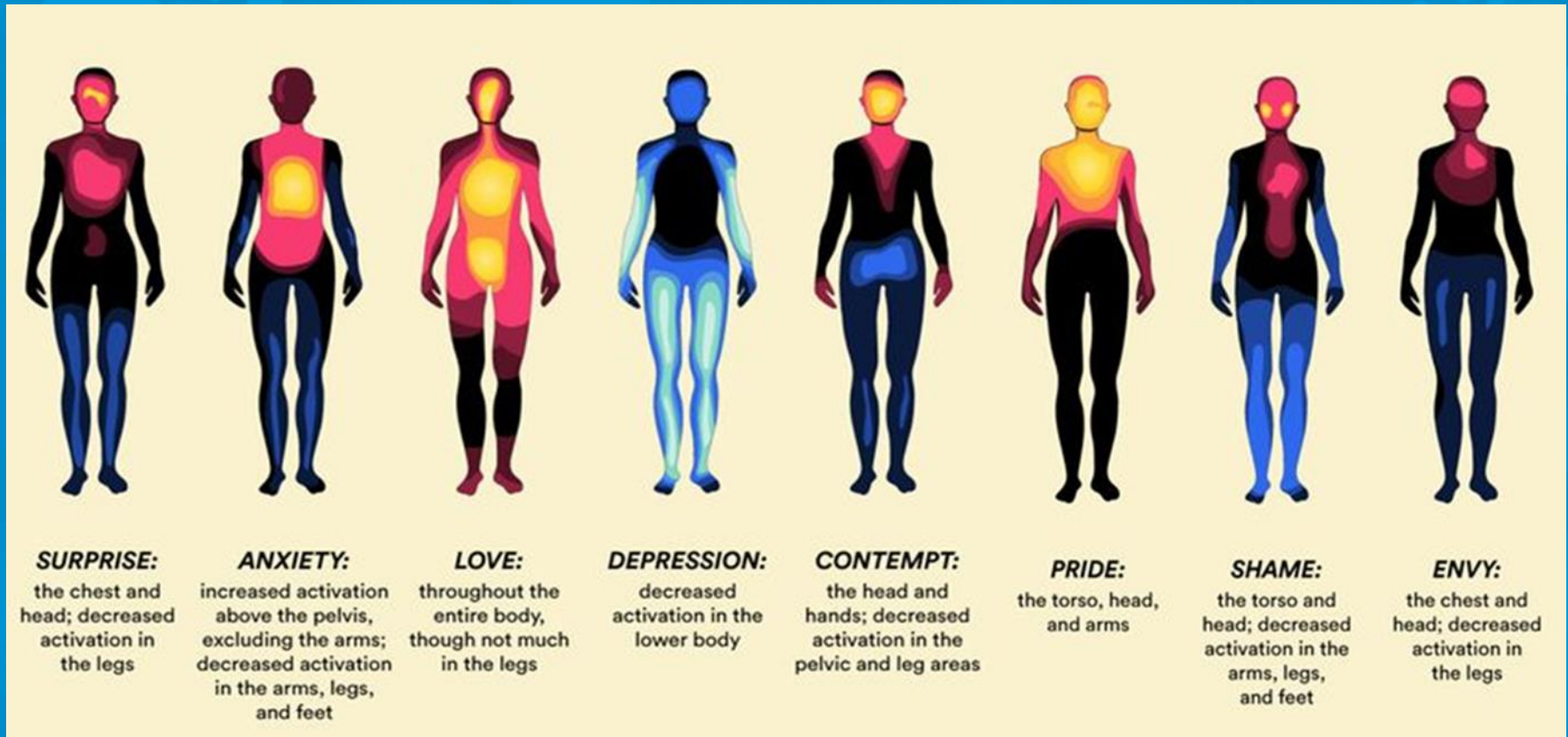


DISGUST:
upper half of the
body and the arms



SADNESS:
the chest and
head; decreased
activation in
the arms, legs,
and feet

MAPPING EMOTIONS IN THE BODY



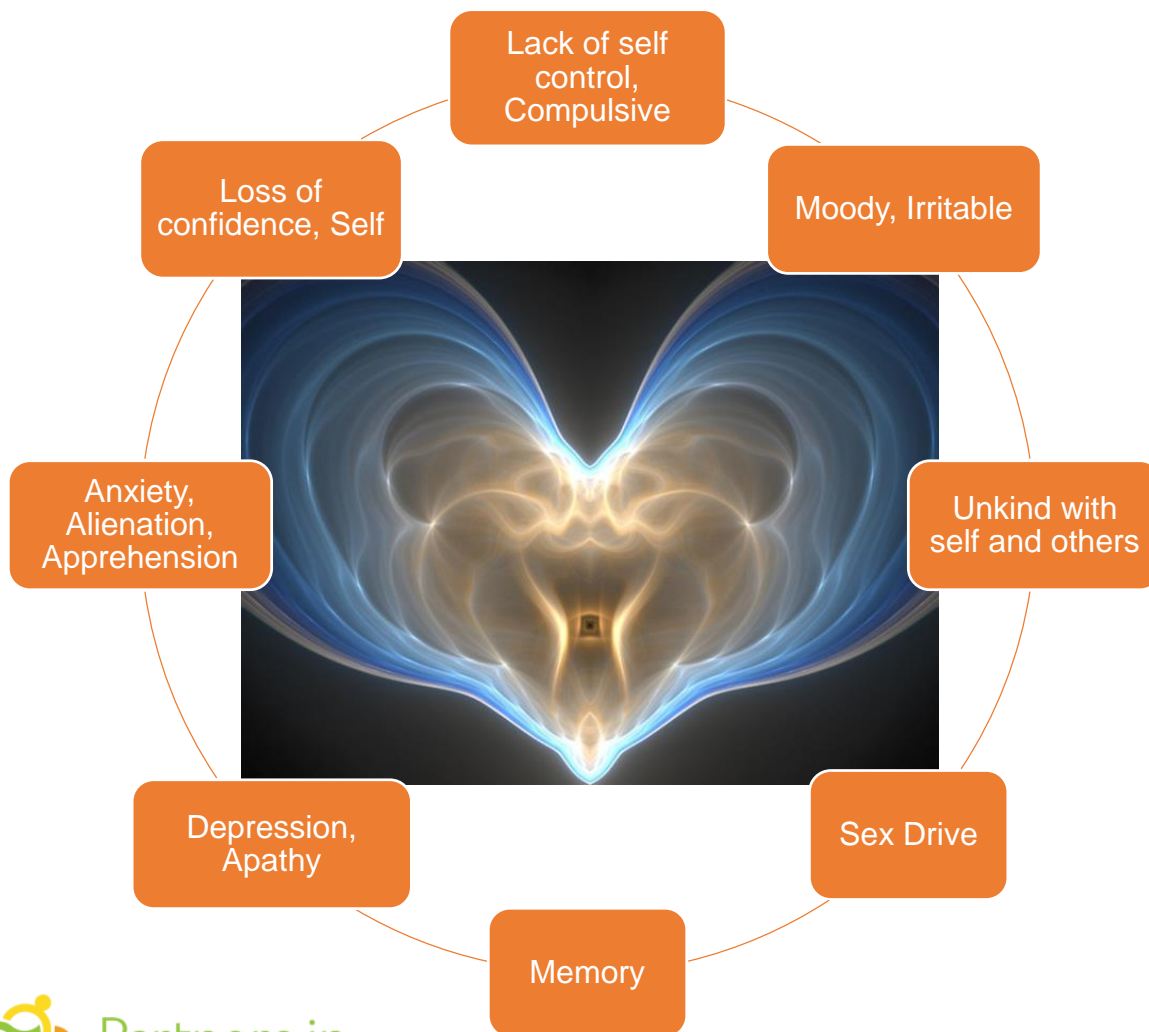
HOW DO EMOTIONS LIVE IN THE BODY?

- “Understanding the concept of physical feelings and where they live may help you feel more in tune with your body.”
- “The thing about emotions is that you have to experience them. **You cannot think your way out of an emotion.**”
- Ignoring, blocking or burying your emotions may contribute to more illnesses.
- When your mind-body connection is weak, it’s easier to neglect your emotional and/or physical health.



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STRESS AND THE SPIRIT



WHAT DO WE NEED TO REFRAME?

- It's SAFER not to feel (parasympathetic/freeze state)
- Depression & disassociation are PROTECTIVE

However, that does not mean that we are meant to stay there



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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Fear and shame wreak havoc

On each part of our self but it also paralyzes and breeds quickly.

Presence over doing

The disconnection has made us aware of our need to connect to self, others and something bigger than ourselves.

Responsive Relationships

The path to healing. The one you have with yourself is the most important.

The bonus: The better we care for ourselves, the more we can be present for others.



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WHAT DO WE DO?

In the moment:

Pause and care for yourself

- Sensory engagement
- Practice Gratitude
- Mindfulness exercise (come back to your body)
- Meditation
- Exercise
- Reading

In a moment of calm:

Be mindful of your input.

What are we...

- Favoring in our coping behaviors?
- Watching/listening to?
- Hearing/saying about ourselves?
- Doing to build capacity?



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When we teach children to shift energy in their body rather than avoid it, they learn the fundamentals of emotional regulation. A lesson most of us never received as children yet a crucial lesson of life.

Thank you



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