

THE POLYVAGAL THEORY AND YOU



We all have days when we feel disconnected and unable to think clearly, and that's OK.



Understanding our
mental, emotional, and
physical responses to
stress can help us
better manage life's
challenges.

Beginning before birth, life experiences help shape how you feel, think and connect with yourself and the world around you.





We all want to be our true selves and to
feel at home in our mind and body.

Your autonomic nervous system
is your internal command center,
working toward its primary goal:
to keep you alive.



Your brain is constantly taking in
and processing information from
inside your body, your environment,
and your relationships with others.



Through all your senses...



Your brain actively processes
information, much of which you may
not consciously notice.



Your autonomic nervous system interprets sensory information as cues of safety, danger and life threat.

This is called *neuroception*.



Your nervous system determines
"I am safe."



And your brain and body respond.
Feeling safe may look and feel like:

VENTRAL VAGAL PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Your Safety Response: Calms you down,
preparing you to rest, think and restore.

- Heartbeat slows and blood pressure decreases
- Breath is full and rhythmic
- Pupils of eyes shrink
- Digestive system helps to process and absorb nutrients
- Increased blood flow to the brain and organs
- Hormones signal to lift your mood, helping you relax
- Conserves your energy
- Sleep is restorative
- Supports immune system

Or, your nervous system determines
"I am in danger."



And your brain and body respond.
Feeling in danger may look and feel like:

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Your Stress Response: Your body prepares to fight or take flight from (escape) danger

- Heart beats faster and blood pressure increases
- Breath is fast and shallow
- Pupils dilate as the eyes scan your environment for cues of danger
- Gut becomes inactive, which limits digestion
- Blood flow increases to the arms and legs
- Cortisol signals body to mobilize to meet the threat, which can make you feel anxious
- Expend your energy
- Sleep is poor quality
- Immune system is challenged

If your nervous system determines
"My life is threatened..."



Your brain and body may respond by shutting down. This may look and feel like:

DORSAL VAGUS PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Your Life Threat Response: Your body shuts down to survive

- Heartbeat slows and blood pressure decreases
- Breath is slow and irregular
- Pupils of eyes shrink
- Digestive system is compromised
- Blood flows to the brain and organs
- Hormones function is impaired, which can make you feel depressed
- You feel fatigued
- Sleep quality is poor
- Immune system is challenged

While your nervous system works hard to keep you safe, it is influenced by past experiences. Your nervous system may assess and determine there is danger, even if it is not physically present.





The Safe and Sound Protocol can help restore your familiarity with safety. It is an invitation to repattern your nervous system.

With enhanced nervous system regulation, you can experience more resilience and the ability to feel better, think better and connect better.





Your nervous system is designed
to protect you.

The Safe and Sound Protocol can help
other therapies be more successful and
allow you to engage in the world with a
sense of safety.

To learn more about the Polyvagal Theory
and Unyte-iLs programs, visit
integratedlistening.com.