

SOMATIC PRACTICE:

INCORPORATING THE BODY'S WISDOM
TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

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ABOUT ME

Personally:

- Mexican American
- San Diego native
- South bay cross border experience
- Multi-generational upbringing
 - Pleasure activist
 - Shame disruptor

Professionally:

- Early childhood mental health
 - Training and Facilitation
 - Trauma Trained
- System-level prevention work
- Somatic Experiencing practitioner

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LEARN

The different states of our nervous system

EXPLORE

The ways our bodies react to those states

IDENTIFY

Which situations may trigger activation

PRACTICE

Scanning our bodies for sensation, activation and regulation signals

GET CURIOUS

About ways to build awareness and shift our state

WHAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO

JUDGE
OURSELVES

FIX WHAT WE
NOTICE

WORRY ABOUT
WHAT IT MEANS

Can we give ourselves permission to be curious today?

WHY SOMATIC PRACTICE?



Trauma & HOPE Informed Care teach us to have compassion for others and to include their strengths in their story.



Reflective Practice gives us the space to explore how we feel about our work



Somatic Practice invites you to reflect on how your body is digesting those feelings and brings you into a **compassionate relationship with yourself where you can access your strengths.**

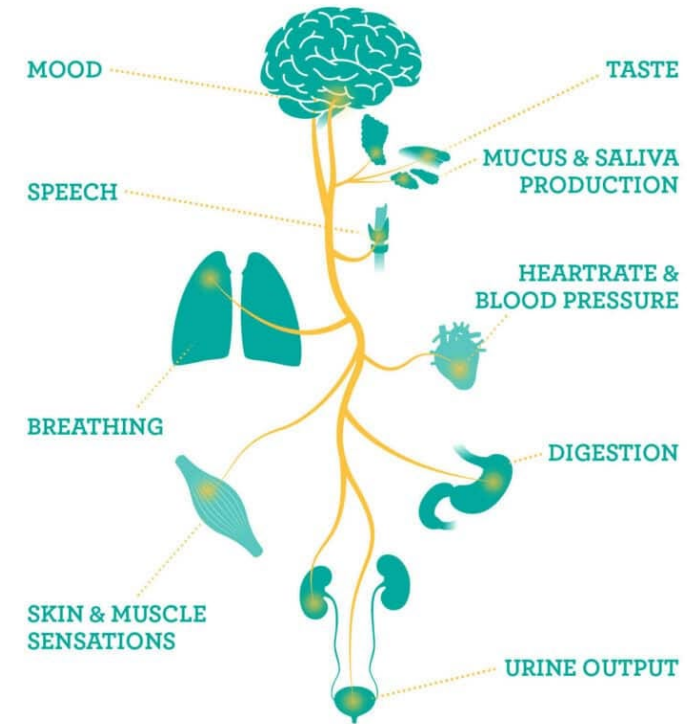
WHAT DOES SOMATIC MEAN?

SOMA = Body

Somatic Experiencing is an alternative therapy aimed at treating trauma and stress related disorders through "bottom-up" processing.

To treat stress and trauma we study the nervous system. More specifically the **Autonomic Nervous System**, which connects your brain to most of your internal organs through the Vagus Nerve. The ANS has **sympathetic** and **parasympathetic** channels which help us understand what "state" we are in.

What Does the Vagus Nerve Do?



AIM MD AMY MYERS MD®

"We live in a story that originates in our autonomic state, is sent through autonomic pathways from the body to the brain and is then translated by the brain into beliefs that guide our daily living. The mind narrates what the nervous system knows.

Story follows state."

Deb Dana, *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy*

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Story follows state. The nervous system state we find ourselves in directly influences the quality of connections that we have with others.



Building awareness around the ANS will improve the quality of connections



We can learn to manage our nervous system to yield better results in our lives

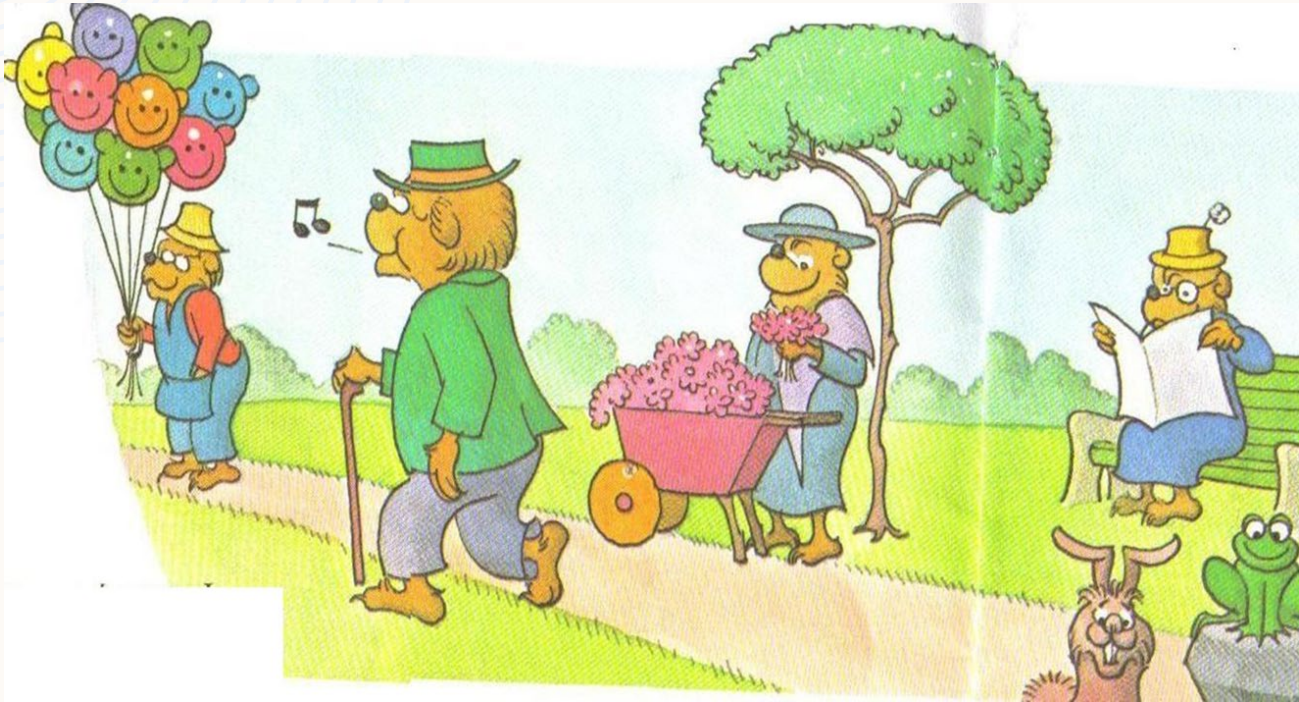
WHAT ABOUT SAFETY?

We can *influence* safety but we *can't guarantee* safety. Safety is largely cultivated *within* the individual.

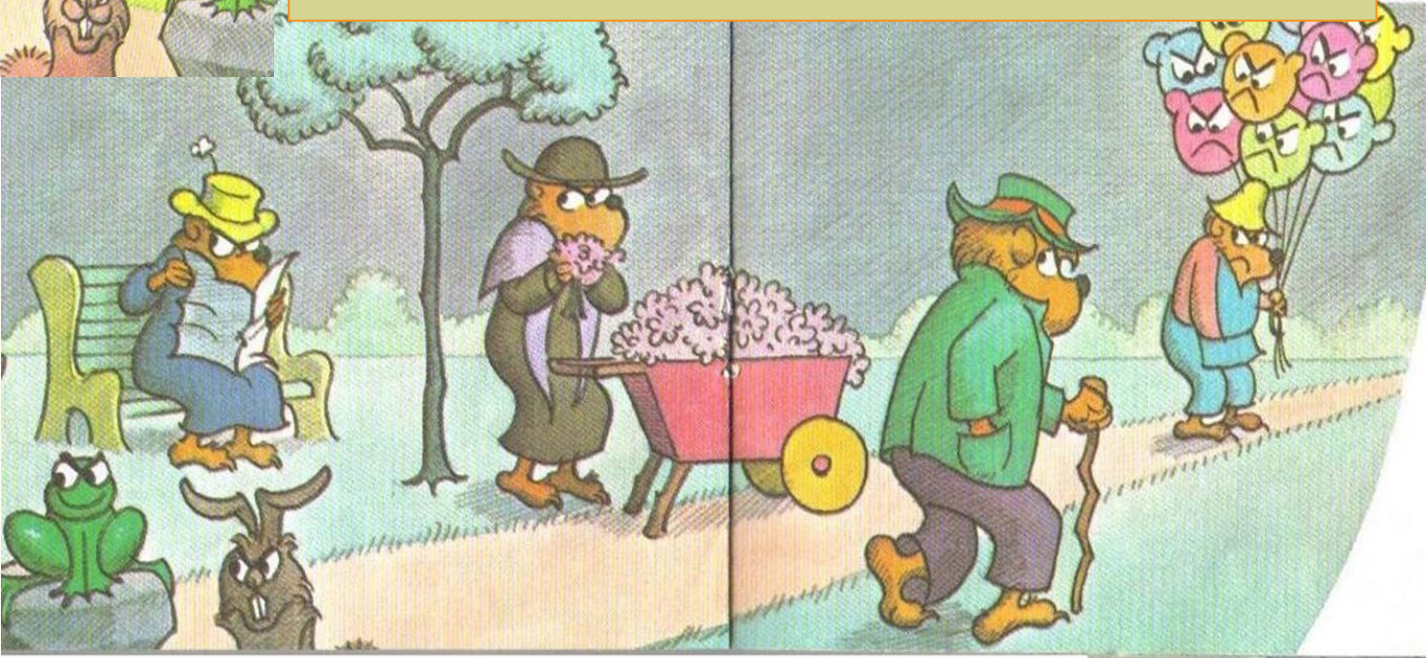
"Safety isn't about the environment, the person or the situation. It's about your body and mind's ability to assess and experience the situation as safe.

It happens inside of you as a result of orienting toward non-threat."

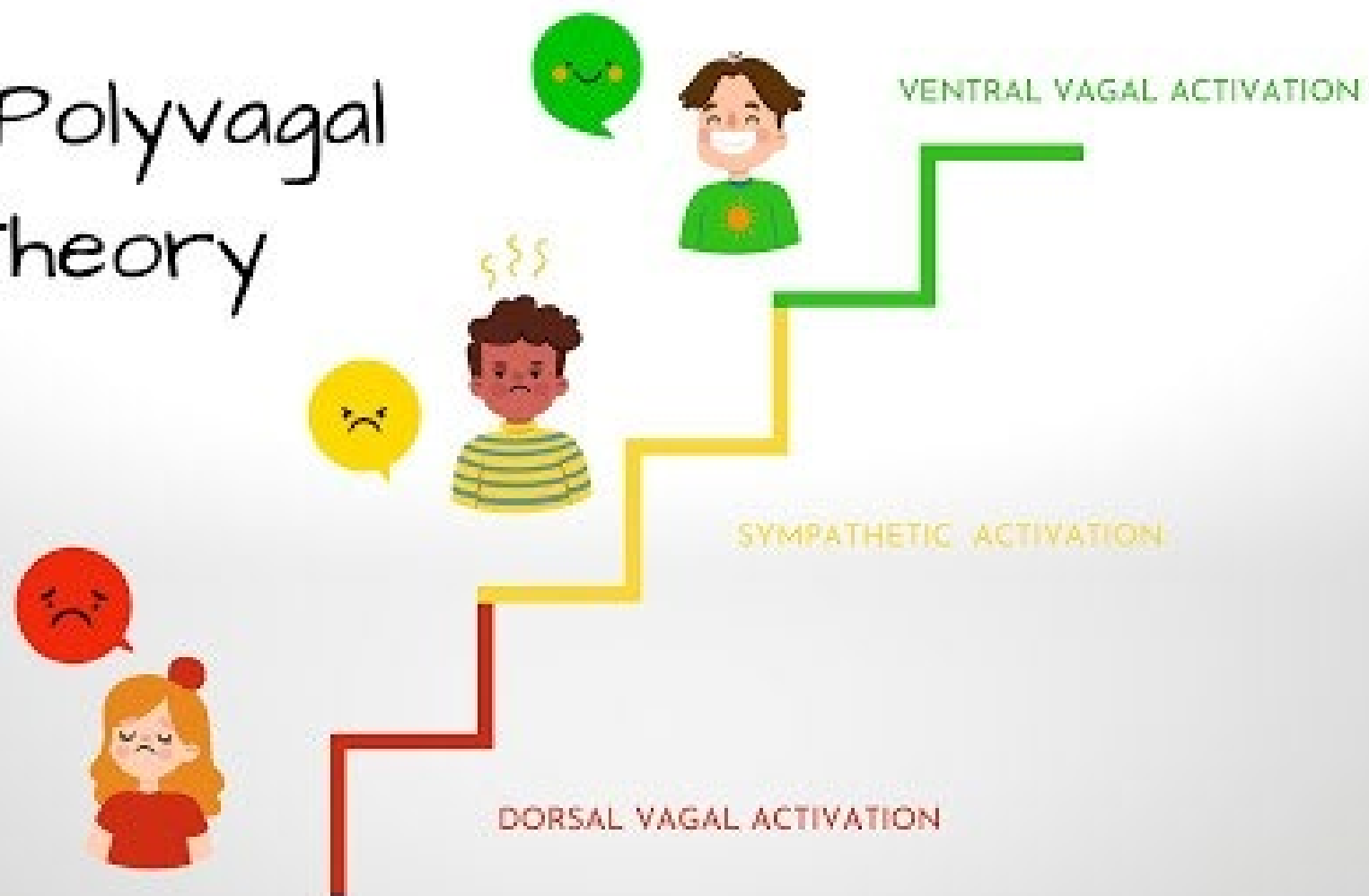
-Luis Mojica *Holistic Life Navigation*



**TRAUMA IMPACTS
THE WAY WE SEE
THE WORLD**

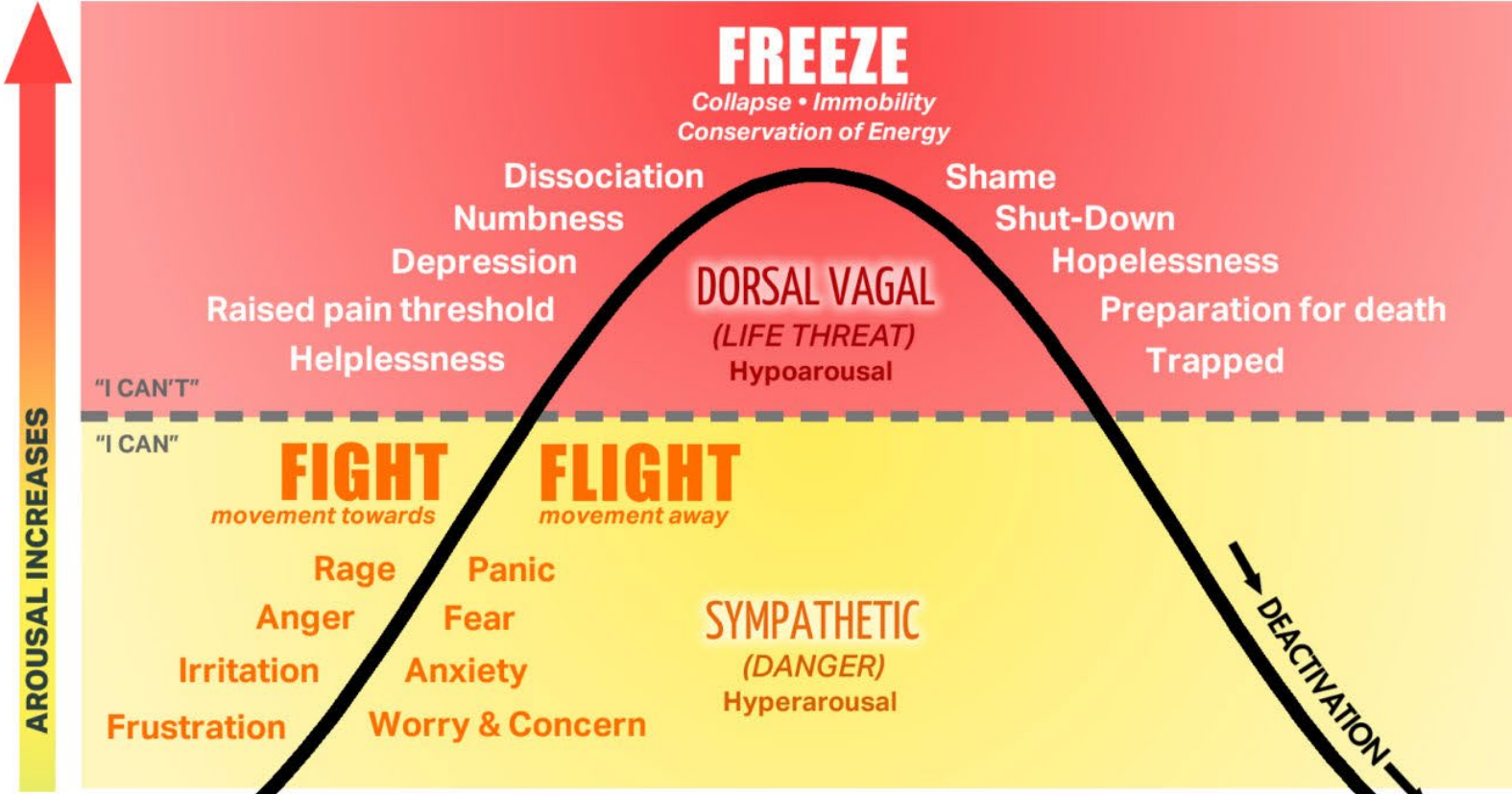


The Polyvagal Theory



POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold
Conservation of metabolic resources

Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation
Relational Ability • Immune Response

The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:



PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

Decreases

Defensive Responses

VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.

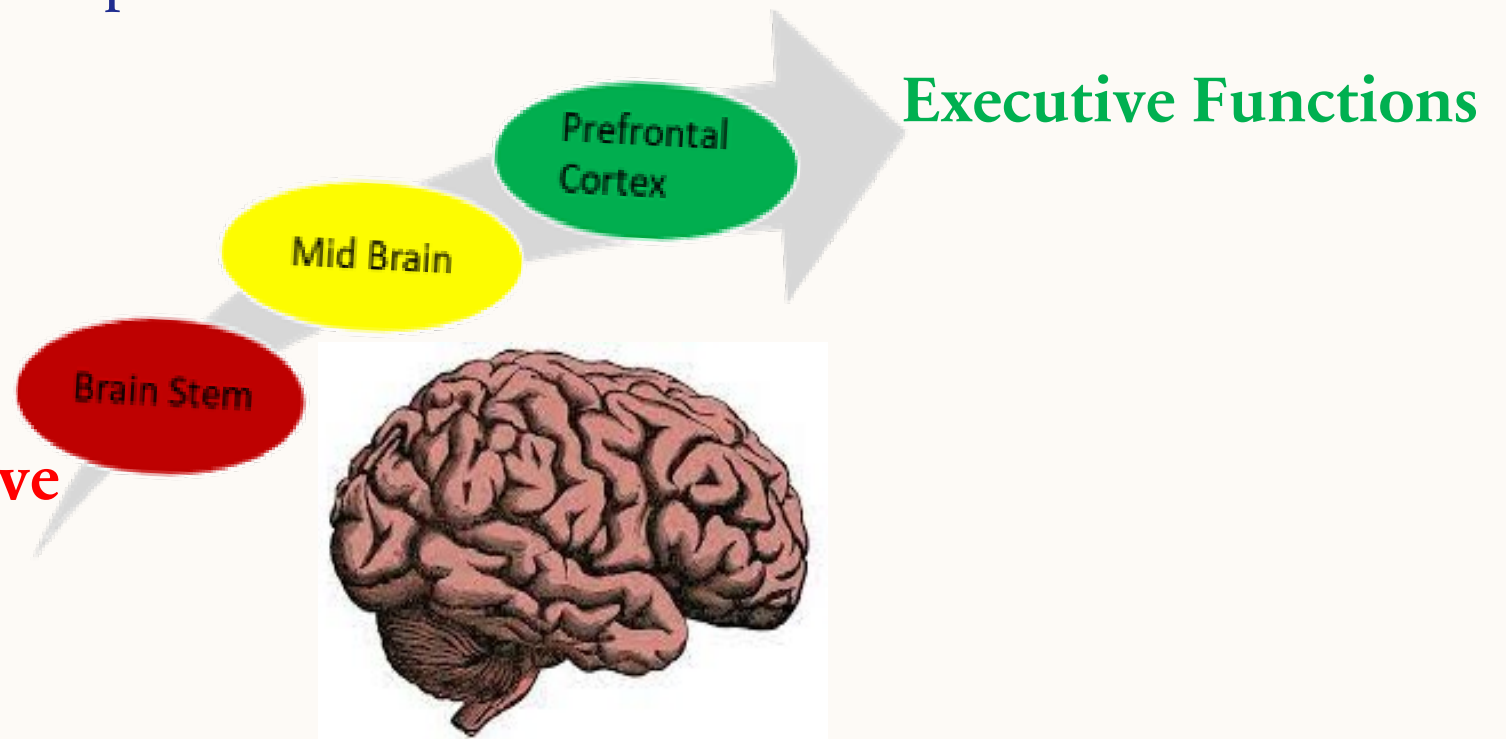
When VVC is dominant, SNS and DVC are in transient blends which promote healthy physiological functioning.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO OUR BRAIN AND ENVIRONMENT?

Brain structure parallels our Autonomic Nervous System. Our brains grow and operate/fire from the bottom up.

Emotions and Sensations

Basic functions to stay alive





**PAUSE
TO
ABSORB**

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DAY

As you go through each point of your day, ask "did that move me closer to activation or regulation?", sort it into either column.

ACTIVATING

REGULATING



How can we build awareness
around how we show up, so that we
can engage in more quality
connections?

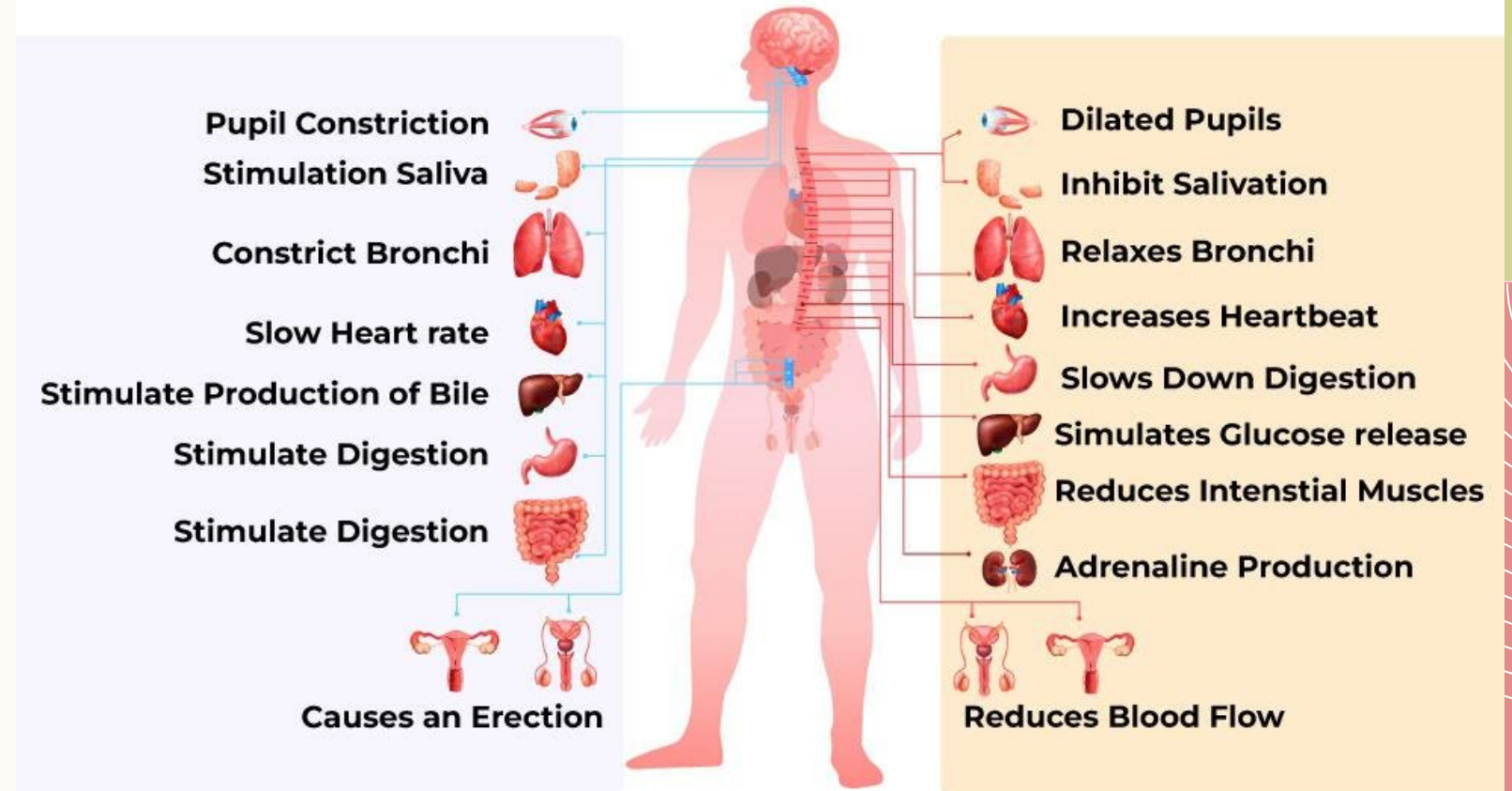


**HOW DO I
KNOW
WHICH
STATE I'M
IN?**

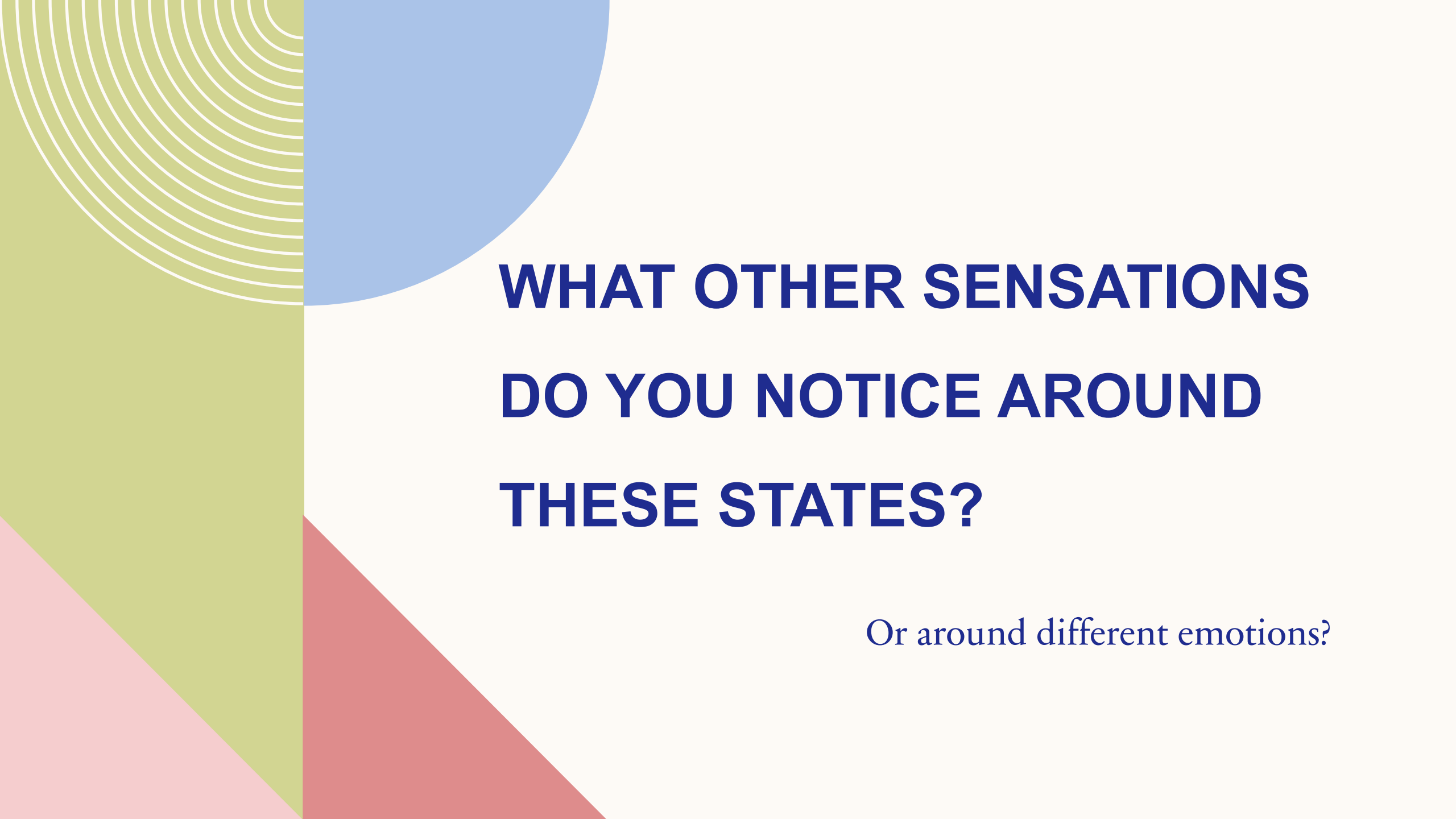
Autonomic Nervous System

PARASYMPATHETIC

SYMPATHETIC



Physiological signs and sensations

The background features a vertical line on the left side. To the left of this line, there are concentric white circles on a light green background. To the right of the line, there are three colored triangular shapes: a light blue one at the top, a light pink one at the bottom left, and a light red one at the bottom right.

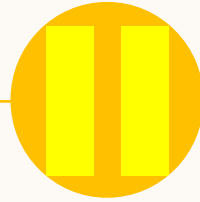
**WHAT OTHER SENSATIONS
DO YOU NOTICE AROUND
THESE STATES?**

Or around different emotions?

WHICH SITUATIONS AT WORK HAVE YOU FEELING...



Happy
Excited



Avoidant
Helpless
Anxious
Annoyed



Frustrated
Angry
Hopeless
Defeated

MAPPING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Name your states

- What do you want to call your **Ventral Vagal**, **Sympathetic** and **Dorsal Vagal** states?

Identify your triggers and glimmers

- Triggers – things that cause you to feel stress and activates your **Sympathetic** state
- Glimmers – things that cause you to drop into your **Ventral Vagal** state

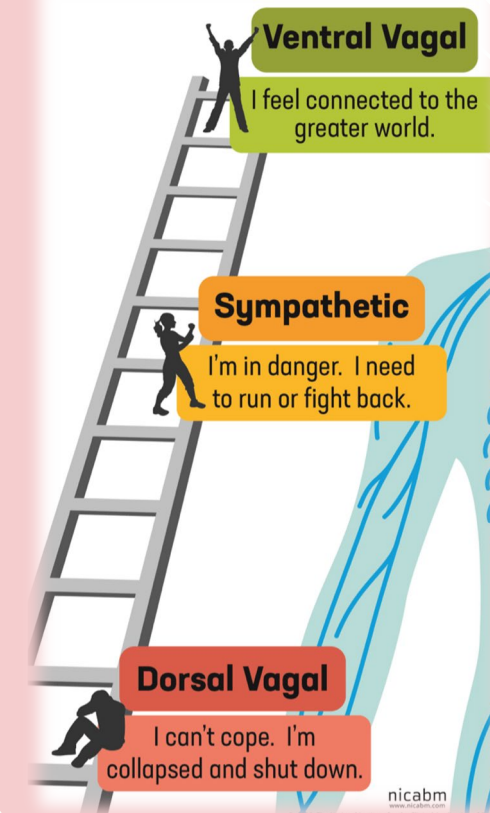
WHAT NOW?

Nurture a relationship with your body

Keep mapping out how you climb up and down the ladder throughout your day

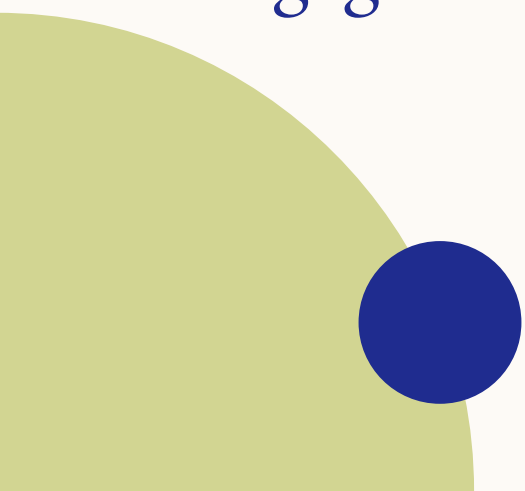
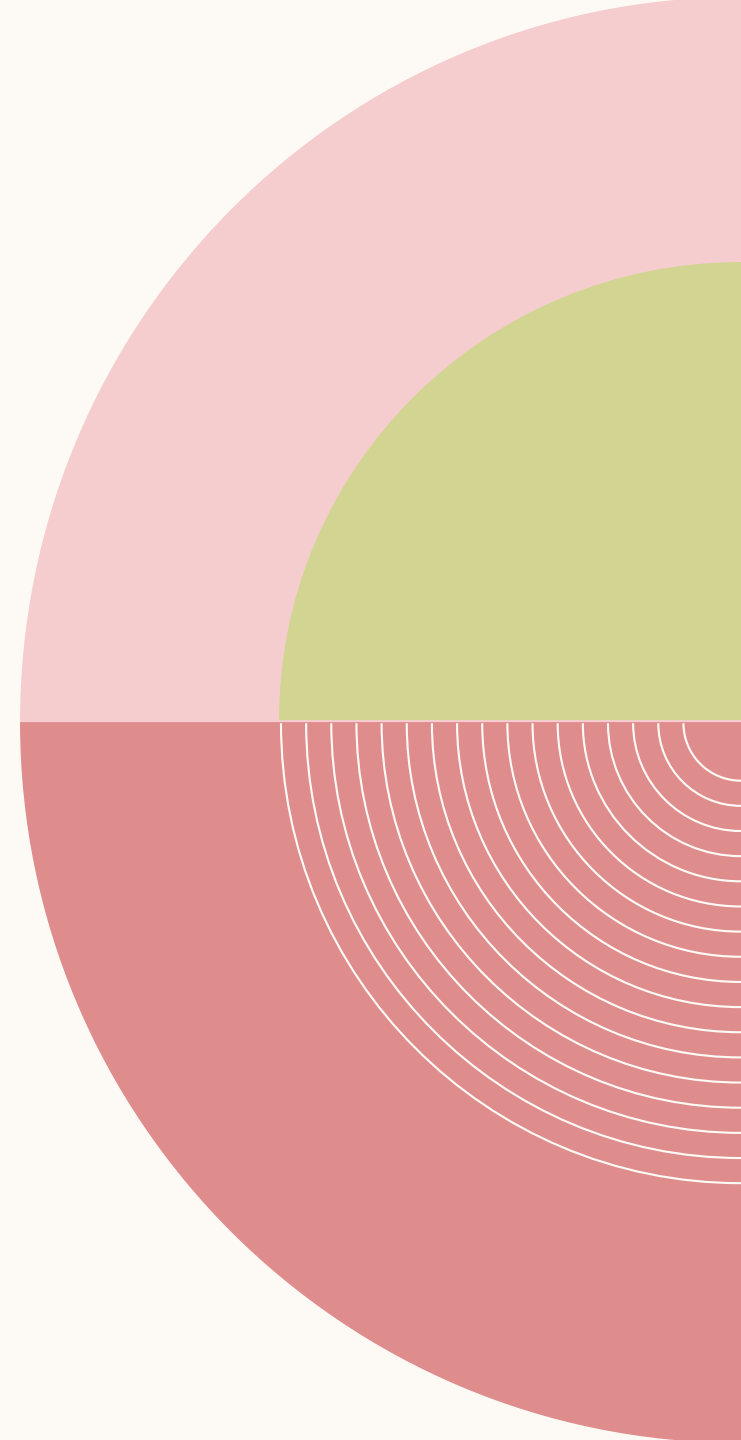
Be mindful of what you consume and how it influences your nervous system states

Start asking each other "What are you noticing? What is coming up for you? (*Assuming you've asked permission)



SOMATIC PRACTICE

Is an invitation for you to reflect on how your body is digesting your feelings about your work and into a compassionate relationship with yourself where you can access your strengths and improve your engagement with others.



THANK YOU

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