

**Mindfulness and Emotional Regulation in Personality and Dissociative Disorders**

**Presented by:**  
**Robert Cox, LPC, NCC**

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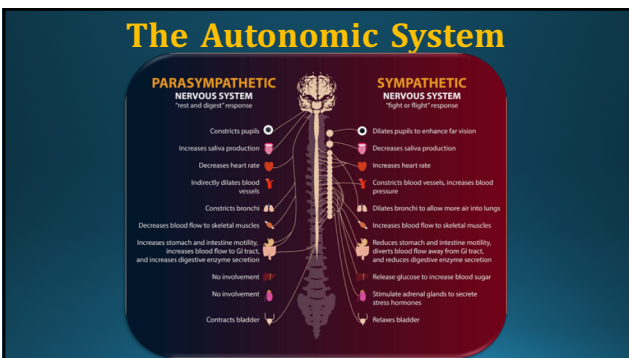
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### Early Brain Development

- Right Hemisphere (RH) develops first with deep connections into the body.
- RH is responsible for emotional regulation, creativity and some language
- LH does not begin development until age 2
- Language begins so if trauma was preverbal this ability to express those fear emotions or root of anxiety is stunted.
- Right, Left Development
- Deeper, non-cognitive therapy to get at RH damage

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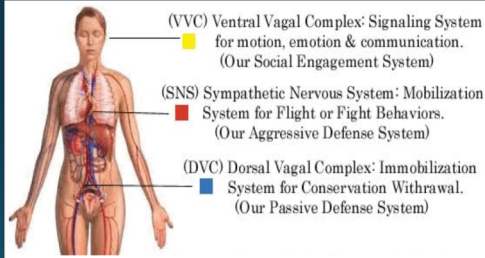
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## Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges




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## About Trauma

- Traumatic Instances Vs. Long Term Trauma
  - ✓ "Big T" vs. "Little T" traumas
  - ✓ The drip, drip, drip effect
  - ✓ The emotional slot machine
- Constant hypervigilance develops
- Lack of trust in attachment becomes fixed
- Peter Levine's work "Waking the Tiger"
- Documentary "Paper Tigers"

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## Autonomic Regulation



- Attunement in the supportive environment
- ANS alignment
- Winnicott's "Good Enough" Parenting
- Secure Attachments
- Insecure Attachments
- RAD

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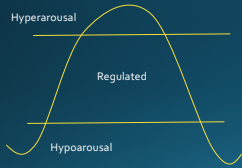
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### The Effect of Insecure Bonding On the ANS



- Attunement and Affect Regulation
- Hyperarousal of ANS
  - Manic states
  - High Anxiety
  - Sensory Sensitivity
- Hypoarousal of ANS
  - Non-responsive
  - Severe depression
  - Lack of sensitivity/body awareness

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### Questions?




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### Dissociation: Being Erased



Artwork by Jeni Reynolds

- Dissociation is the attempt to remove oneself from painful existence
- Often survivors come to see themselves as objects without worth
- Dissociation can be a form of erasing self
- Separation of mind and body connection
- Devaluation of self and worth

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### Identifying Signs of Dissociation

- Stemming Behaviors - physical
- Eye Lock (Brainspotting)
- Glazed appearance
- Catatonia
- Change of personality structures
  - ✓ Vocal changes
  - ✓ Age regression
- Emotional dysregulation (sudden anger, etc)

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### Pain Avoidance, Dissociation & Clinical Disorders

- Substance Use Disorders – Chemical numbing
- Process Addictions – emotional numbing
- Dissociative Disorders
  - ✓ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0ln9PLQ71Q>
  - ✓ PNES
  - ✓ DID

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### Personality Disorders

- Cluster A: Schizoid and Paranoid Types
  - Hypervigilance
  - Hyporeactive ANS
  - Disorganized and fearful thought patterns
- Cluster B: Borderline, Histrionic, Narcissistic and Anti-Social
  - Hyper and Hypo reactivity – may confuse with BiPolar
  - Narcissist and Anti-Social often under responsive
- Cluster C: Anxious, Fearful – OCD
  - Hyperreactive ANS constant, high levels
  - Control is a way of minimizing risk and reducing anxiety

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## Questions?



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## What is Mindfulness?

1. Begins with watching the breath – Basic Grounding
  - Getting in touch with our body states
  - Learning the early signs of stress and anxiety in the body
2. Learning to ground ourselves
3. Non-Judgemental Observation
  - Detached attention
  - Control of Emotions and Thoughts
4. How does it differ from meditation?

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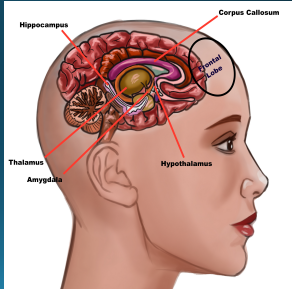
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## Mindfulness and the Brain

- The mind body connection
- Increase in neural pathways
- Strengthening connections
- Improving the pruning process
- Increase in Executive Function
- Increase in Oxytocin
- Decrease in Cortisol



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### Use of Mindfulness in Emotional Regulation

- The point of mindfulness is not to control my thoughts and emotions, but to stop allowing them to control me.
- Becoming the observer of my thoughts and emotions—moving away from attachment.
- Conversations with a monkey. Why are you here? What can you teach me?



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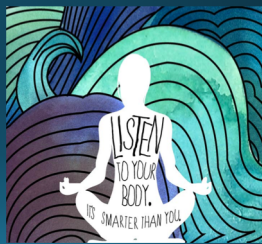
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### Body Awareness Through Mindfulness

- Leaving the dissociative state through grounding.
- Being aware of early triggers
- Fascia involvement
- Being aware of the “gut”
- Honoring our sense and senses



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This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

### The Guest House -- Rumi




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## The Importance of Practice

- Becoming aware of the body
- Becoming alert to triggers as they arise
- Making it second nature
- Practice at meal time



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## Questions?



Your Logo

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## Mindfulness Vs. Dissociation

- Staying connected
- Dissociation is removing myself from the discomfort
- Mindfulness is staying present with it, inviting it in, looking at it
- Being aware of the body experiences and building tolerance

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### Mindfulness and Controlling Dissociation

- Use grounding at first sign
  - ✓ The case of PNES
- Identifying the body sense
  - ✓ Sexual violence
  - ✓ Shape, color, size, etc
- Breathing through the tension
- The therapists role as mindful practitioner

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### Bromberg and Schore

- We are broken in connection and we heal in connection
- Therapist as healing connection
- Para to para connection and leading by example
- Being the mindful therapist
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f19fxZRTjdU>
- Bromberg's expansion of the emotional window
- Mindful breathing and attention becomes key in this place

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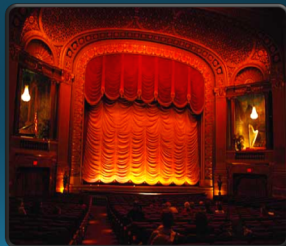
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### Processing Trauma Specific Visualizations

- Ogden talks about the difference between processing and reliving trauma
- Retaining the memories in the body and somatic processing
- Separating from the process in the theater
- Boxing it up for later
- Honoring the Child



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## Questions?



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## Being A Grounded Space

- Ethical practice means knowing what you teach
- Free online 8 week training - <https://palousemindfulness.com/>
- Gains from your own practice:
  - Going deeper (interoception)
  - Self-Care
  - Opening to your client
  - Knowing your broken spaces limits countertransference



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