Your Emotional Regulation Toolkit



connections in mind

The Polyvagal Ladder

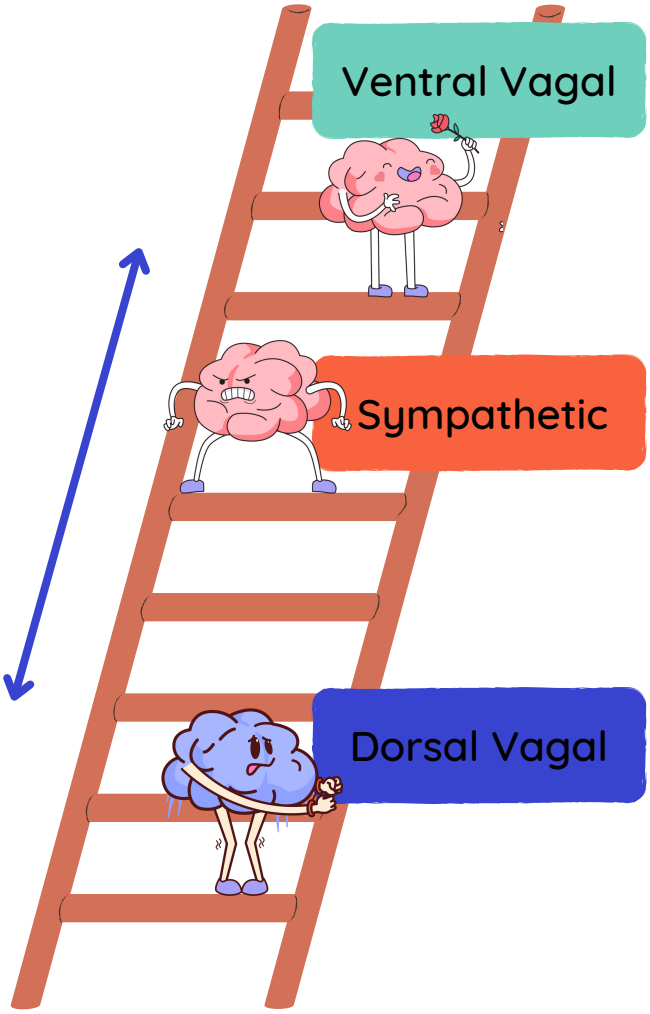


Here at CiM, we have all been enthused about psychologist & neuroscientist Stephen W. Porges' Polyvagal Theory (PVT).



Stephen W. Porges

The PVT explains the relationship between our social behaviour and our autonomic nervous system (ANS). Porges suggests we have three states based on our neuroception:



- we feel safe
- calm, grounded
- connected with people

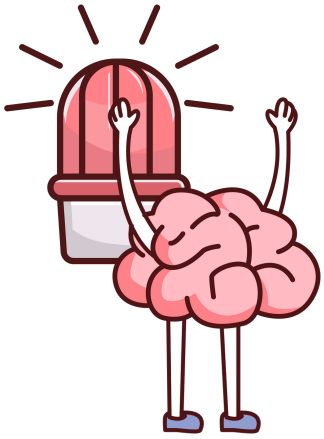
- 'fight or flight'
- irritable
- mobilised

- 'freeze'
- shut down
- immobalised
- numb and spaced out

Where are you on the ladder?
Take a look at this toolbox to find ways to assist you!

Understanding Neuroception

Imagine you're walking in the park on a sunny day and enjoying the singing birds. As you continue walking, you suddenly notice a dog barking loudly and running towards you.





In this situation, your neuroception kicks in, triggering a sense of danger and activates your fight-or-flight response.

It happens automatically and helps keep you safe even before your conscious mind fully processes the situation.





Sometimes, our neuroception can be inaccurate, and we feel unsafe and anxious even with no threats present. When this happens, it can impact our executive functioning skills.

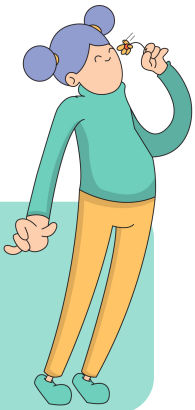
Emotional Regulation Titbits

Because neuroception is a subconscious, bodily emotional response of your polyvagal nerve, effective ways to manage your polyvagal responses is through bodily exercises.

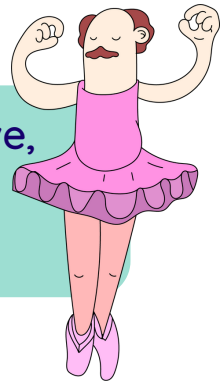
Use our examples below & give your polyvagal nerve the stimulation it may be craving to get back to its ventral vagal state!



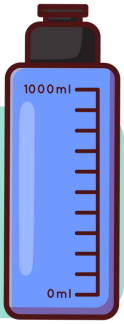
Getting enough restful sleep



Deep, slow breathing

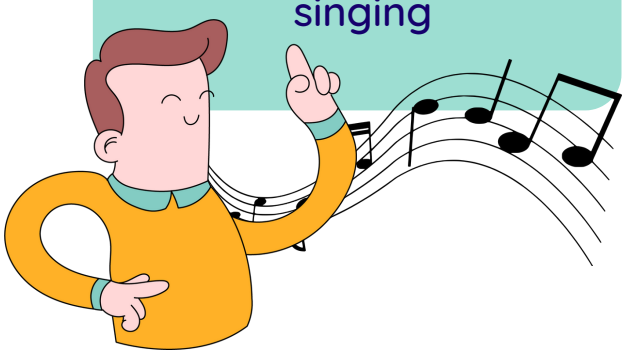


Do something active, like swimming or dancing

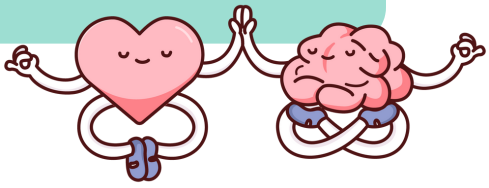


Gargle some water

Listening to music and singing



Yoga, Pilates, & mindful meditation



Benefits of Dance and Movement Therapy (DMT)

Getting your body moving to music is a fun way to stimulate your polyvagal nerve and connect the mind and body. DMT is a way we can express and release our emotional energy through movement. Here are some ways DMT is useful:

boosts endorphins, our feel-good hormones, in the brain

improves body awareness and sensory integration



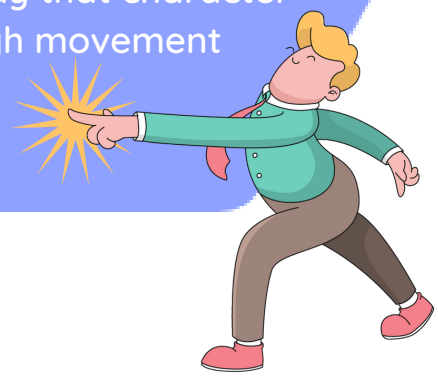
enhances emotional regulation and memory

increases self-esteem and creativity

Try Out These Simple DMT Exercises

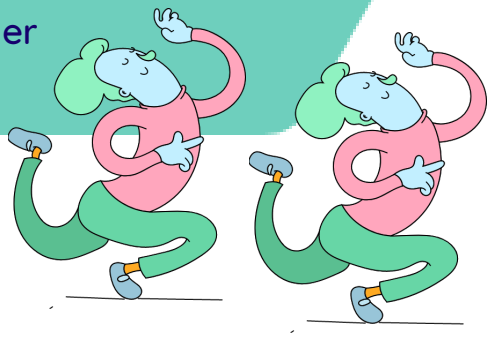
Embody a Character

- Choose a character from a book, movie, or play.
- Embody that character through movement



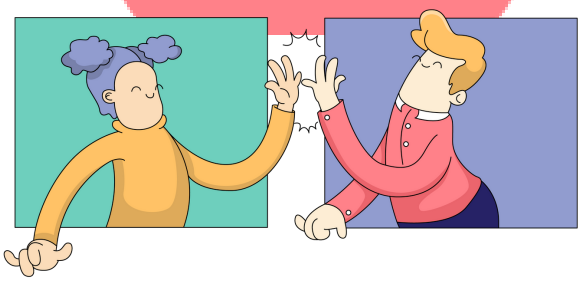
Walk in Pairs

- Partner up and walk side by side while listening to music
- Partners must try synchronise their steps with the music and each other



Movement Mirroring

- Partners face one another and take turns to mirror their movements.
- Try create a sense of connection and flow of movement



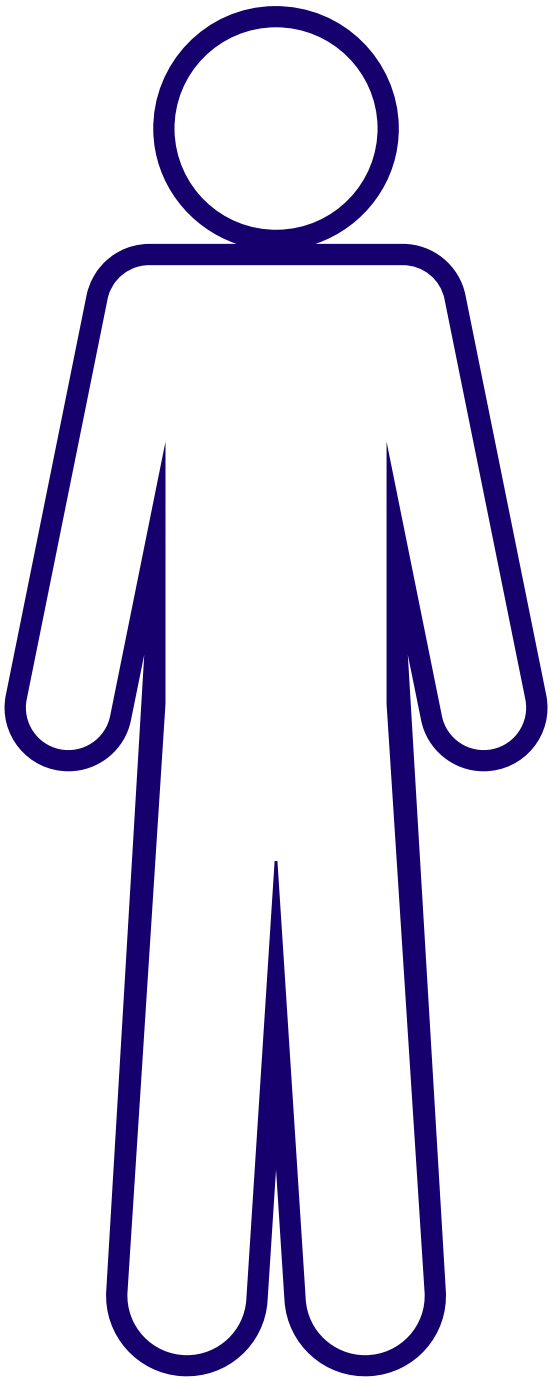
Group Circle Dance

- Form a circle and begin dancing together to the beat of a song
- After a few minutes, ask the group to synchronise their movements



Where do I feel?

On the figure below, use colours to show where in your body you are feeling your emotions right now. Colour in the boxes to show which emotion each colour represents.



- ☐ happy
- ☐ angry
- ☐ sad
- ☐ scared
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Let your emotions rain

R recognise

A accept

I investigate

N nurture



what emotion am I feeling?

why am I feeling this way?

what will help me in this moment?

statement of acceptance

My Emotional Regulation Plan*

*Make sure to put your plan somewhere you see everyday to help keep you on track!

1. How high up on the Polyvagal Ladder am I feeling today?



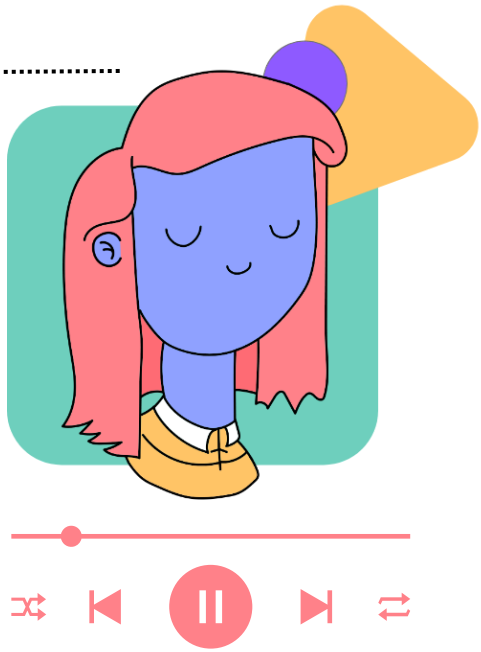
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2. What is the emotional regulation titbit I am going to use to feel safer?

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3. What character am I going to choose to embody?

.....



4. What music am I going to play to move to?:

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