

Sample email evaluation for an adult

"It was great to have you in the arena and so lovely to see Dante connect with you by the end of it :)

This is the scientific match up of what we were talking about, so I just had to send it to you! I print out many polyvagal handouts for people as its quite amazing. They explain what we have been doing with HHH for many years now and make sense of the techniques!

The Window of Tolerance is when blood is in the front cortex of the brain (See Handy Brain illustration attached)

Engaging the vagus nerve in deep jelly belly breathing helps achieve this state with daily practice. Catching as many reactions as you can and consciously breathing out fully and relaxing body language and belly will help form new neural pathways of response versus react.

The Fight or Flight example explains the tiny emotional shifts shown in facial expression. Thats part of my job! I watch for the slightest shift which could trigger the brain to start producing the wrong chemicals and also hinder the doors of communication. Conditioned responses you were not conscious of are now conscious!

The tiny tense jut of your jaw and shoulders at times will start a physiological process you don't want! Being conscious of Soft eyes and soft jaw while retraining your reaction with the jelly belly breathing and relaxed body language will help so much!

Thought you may like to see my NZ team's video below as the techniques are even helping those with foetal alcohol syndrome. The rather scruffy man talking is actually head of Start Taranaki, a hugely successful offender program and so respected by the Judges that are part of HHH NZ Board of Trustees!

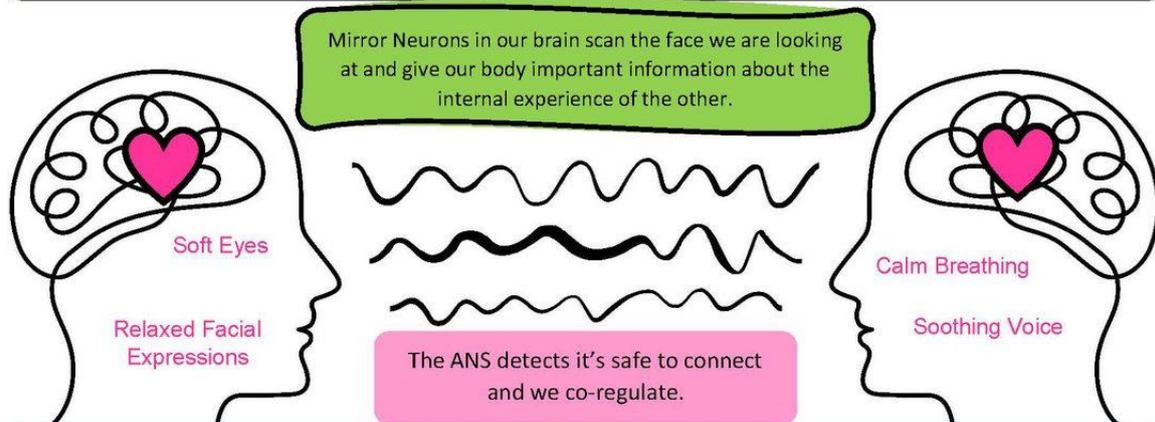
Looking forward to seeing you again, especially channelling Clint Eastwood body language with a relaxed " Whatever " vibe LOL :)

Here is the YouTube link to our video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX7z4BGmLCY>

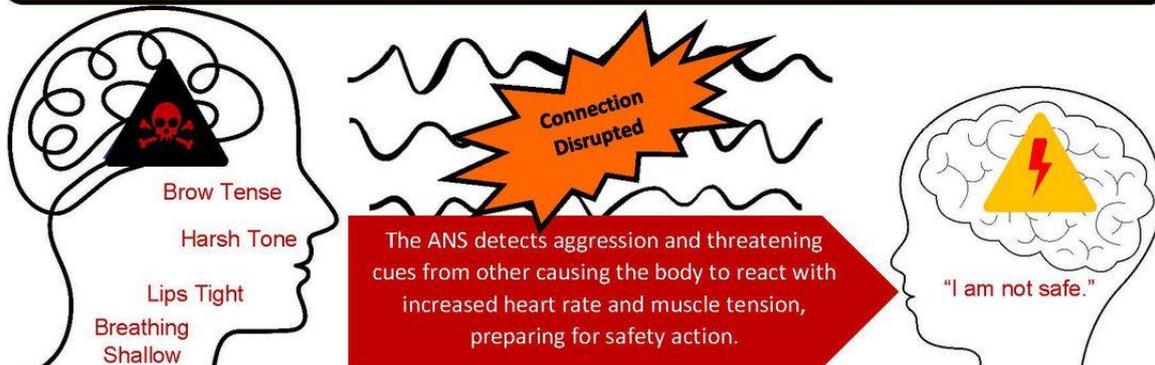
Neuroception- Detection (of Safety or Danger) Without Awareness

Stephen Porges coined the term **neuroception** to describe how our autonomic nervous system (ANS) **unconsciously** sends and searches for cues of safety or danger in others. Working below our level of awareness, the ANS **constantly listens to messages from our body**.



Tiny emotional shifts can be detected such as a change in the tension of one's brow, the wrinkles around the eye, lip movements and even the angle of the neck. Our bodies will adjust based on what we detect. When we receive safety signals indicating 'this person is safe' we relax.

Our ANS is shaped in early relationships and continues to be influenced by life experiences. So, what happens when our ANS has been shaped in an unsafe environment (e.g., neglect or abuse in childhood or prolonged exposure to domestic violence) or where consistent and safe connection to another is not available?



Our ANS will choose safety and survival over connection. If connection with others is consistently overridden by the 'fight or flight' state or 'freeze/collapse' state and co-regulation with a safe other is not available, then our ANS will learn to habitually remain in a state of safety seeking.

Protection Over Connection

Stuck in 'fight or flight'. More likely to perceive hostility in others when it is not there.



Disconnection Over Connection

Stuck in 'freeze' or collapse. May be so numb that danger cues are missed.





Intense Anger
Overwhelmed
Feeling Threatened
Out of Control
Sleeplessness

Hyperarousal

"Fight or Flight"

Increased Heart Rate
Reactive Outbursts
Digestive Problems
Poor Concentration
Can't Relax
Hypervigilant

Panic
Chaos
Addictions
Highly Anxious
Rage

Start to Feel Irritable

Anxious

Dysregulation

Agitated

Feel Uncomfortable

Window of Tolerance



When we are in the Window of Tolerance life feels comfortable. Our body is in an optimal state, and we can access both reason and emotion. We are calm but not tired. We are aware and alert but not anxious. We engage with our environment well.

Working with a therapist can help you **EXPAND** your Window of Tolerance so that you are less easily 'triggered' and have improved abilities to cope, soothe and self-regulate when challenged.



Grounded
Present
Relaxed
Connected
Social
Regulated

Flexible
Caring
Good Sleep
Able to Soothe
Feel Safe

Creative
Curious
Flexible
Calm

Able to Learn
Creative
Good Digestion
Open

Start Shutting Down

Feel uncomfortable

Dysregulation

Lose Track of Time

Poor Concentration

Depressed
Numb
Poor Digestion
Disconnected

Shut Down
Dissociated
Detached
No Energy

"Freeze"

Hypoarousal

Rigid
Flat
Unavailable



Worksheet- Bringing Awareness

(Start with freeze state and move your way up to social engagement.)

Social Engagement: Ventral Vagal "I feel connected and safe."



Think of a time when you were in this autonomic state.

What happens in your body?

What do you notice?

Warm, hot, cold, light, heavy,
moving, still, hollow, empty,
sharp, tense, tingling, pressure,
close to the skin etc.

What do you do?

How do you feel?

What do you think?

How do you sleep?

Are there changes with your appetite?

Do you use alcohol or other substances?

Fight or Flight: Sympathetic Nervous System "I'm in danger. I need to run or fight back!"



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Are there changes with your appetite?

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Freeze/Collapse: Dorsal Vagal "I can't cope. I'm collapsed and shut down."



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Three Survival Responses (Drive to Survive)

The ANS is responsible for activating and regulating three physiological states. The state which is enacted depends on the level of **perceived safety**. When we detect threat, we instinctively turn to the first level, social engagement. If the danger remains or we are unable to seek comfort and safety from those around us, we move to the next level, flight or fight and prepare to mobilise. If ineffective, the final survival state is freeze or collapse.

Step 1: Social Engagement (Parasympathetic Nervous System and Ventral Vagal on)



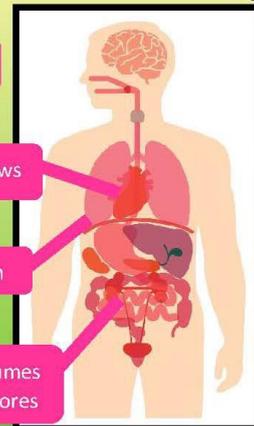
- We connect to others, ourselves, and the world around us.
- We engage with others, seeking support and comfort.
- We acknowledge our distress and consider options.
- We regulate (self-regulate and co-regulate).
- We restore and heal.

Feel calm

Heart rate slows

Breaths deepen

Digestion resumes and body restores



Step 2: Fight or Flight (Sympathetic Nervous System overrides)

- We mobilise to survive.
- We fight the threat or run away from it.
- We are alarmed, anxious and hypervigilant to danger cues.

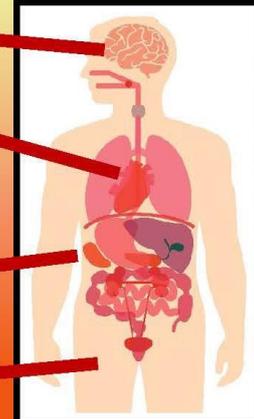


Cognition shuts down (frontal lobes)

Heart rate increases

Adrenaline and cortisol released

Blood pools into the main muscle groups to mobilise body



Step 3: Freeze or Collapse (Dorsal Vagal System takes over)

- Shut down and disconnect from self, others, and the world.
- Immobilise to save energy.
- Feel numb, lost, abandoned and invisible.



Zone out and dissociate

Heart rate drops

Shallow breathing

Digestive problems – gut stops working or empties

