

Why Do We Press Harder on the Remote Control When We Know the Batteries Are Dead?

MN Cares Workshop

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Why yes, I'm a bit stressed.
Why do you ask?

Objectives

- Understand the psychobiology of stress and trauma that contribute to some of the puzzling behaviors and feelings that can dominate us
- Develop a shared understanding and language of stress and trauma
- Provide guiding principles and practical tools to support wellness at work



Is anyone here the same person you were when you first started your career in healthcare?

Context



I AM
NOT A
THREAT



PIM
AR
H
SO



Garner



Taylor



Rice



Castile



Floyd

Take a Slow Deep Breath





LAUGHING TRAM MAN

RITUALS...



Pain



Be Aware
That...

Physical and emotional pain use the same
pathways in our brain

And...

There is no known objective
measure of pain

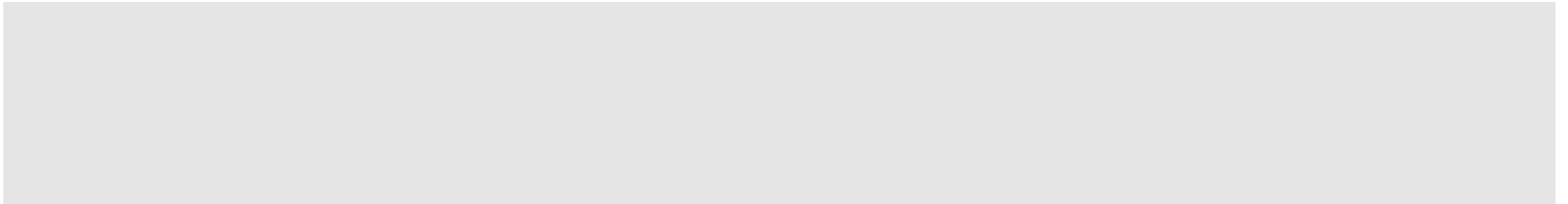
Pain: Acute vs Chronic

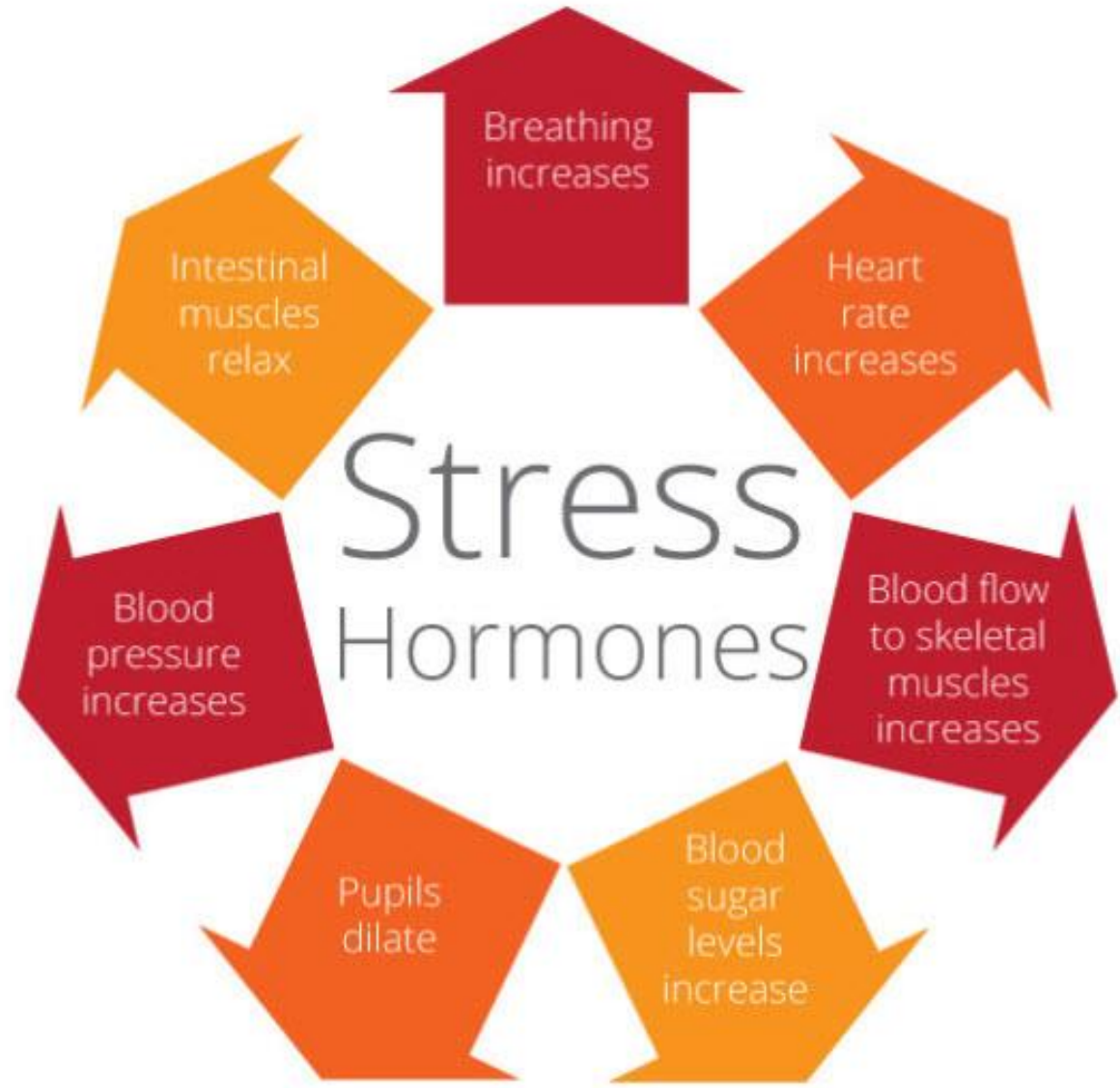
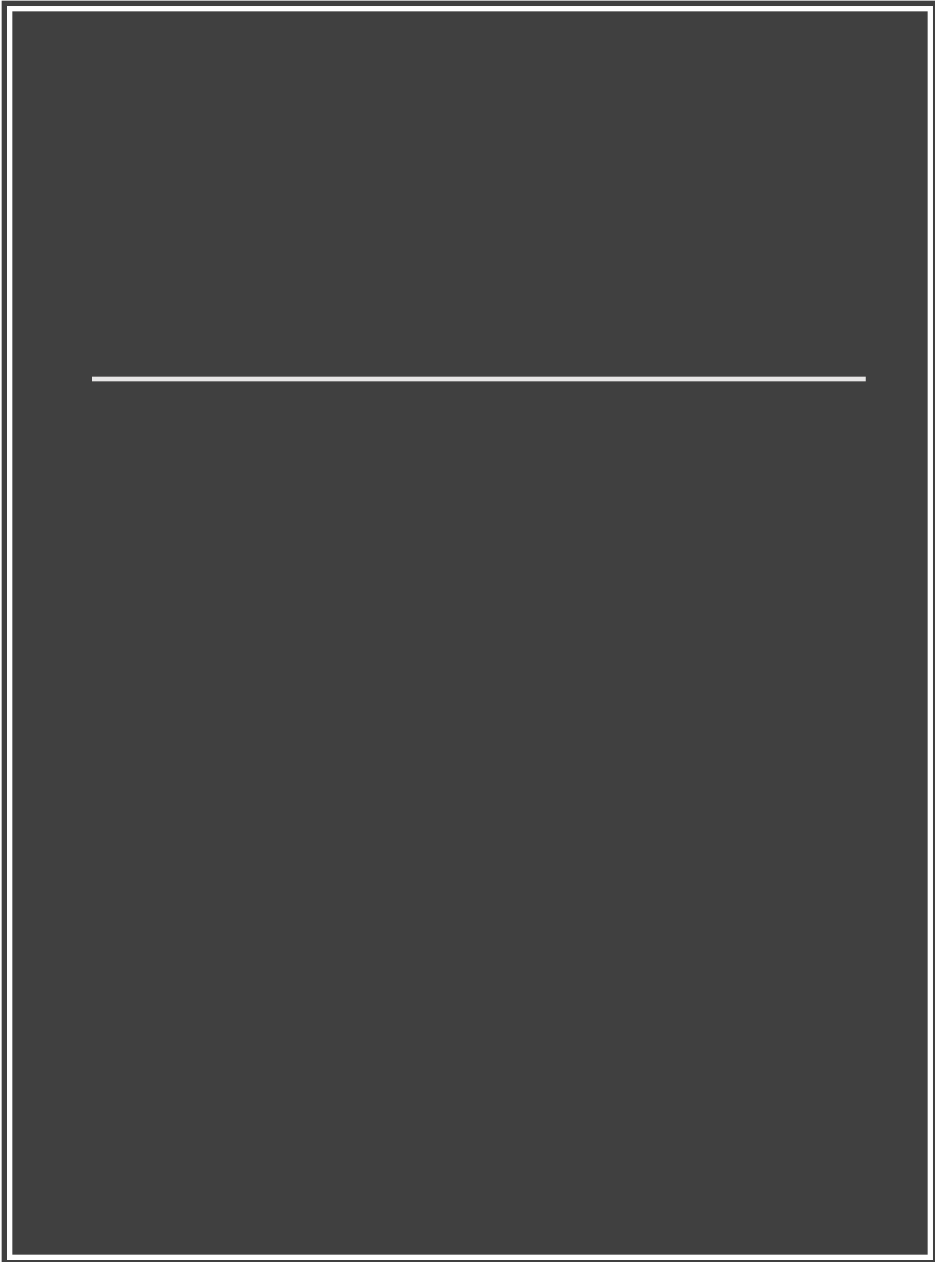
- Acute pain is a clear signal something's wrong
- Chronic pain often has no discernable source
- Chronic pain management is a matter of ***neuroplasticity***

Depression =
Pain
(just insert a
vice versa)

- The longer pain persists, the more likely one is to feel depressed
- As high as 80% of people with chronic pain suffer from some level of depression

Consequences of Pain





Psychological effects of Pain

- Complicated emotions: anxiety, depression, irritability, low stress tolerance
- Sleep deprivation: Plain old no good
- Existential suffering: may lead to difficulty in relationships, impulses to “tune out”, avoidance of previously pleasurable activities, and so on . . .

The Challenges of Pain

- My pain is going to kill me
 - This is never going to end
 - I'm worthless to my family
 - I'm disabled
 - There is nothing I can do
for myself
 - I'm a bad parent, partner,
and provider
-
- Staying in bed all day
 - Sleeping all day
 - Staying away from friends
 - Decreasing activities that
have the potential
to decrease pain
 - Taking more medication
than prescribed



**Warning
Quicksand**

Essentially

- **FOR MOST**: The majority of discomfort comes not from the pain itself, but the struggle to make it go away
- This is because most efforts to control the pain means restricting life

Trauma-Informed Guiding Principle

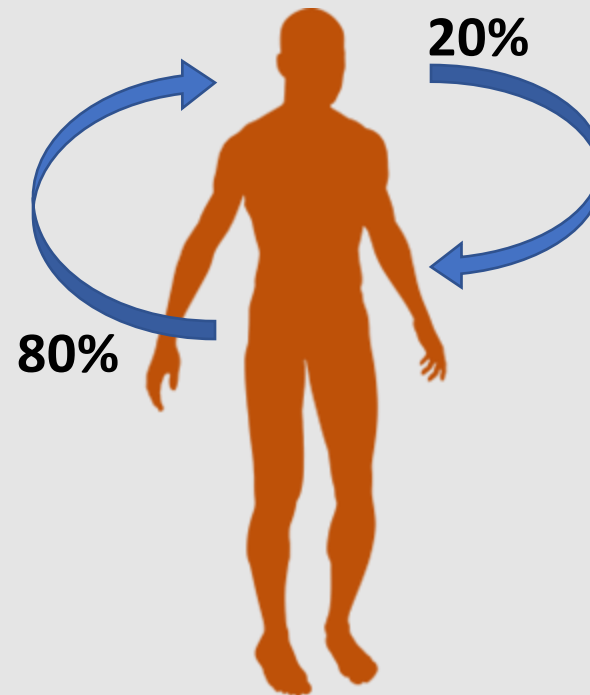
- “Learning about the psychobiology of stress, toxic stress, and trauma is liberating for people. It gives us explanatory reasons for some of the puzzling behaviors we engage in and the feelings that can come to dominate us.”

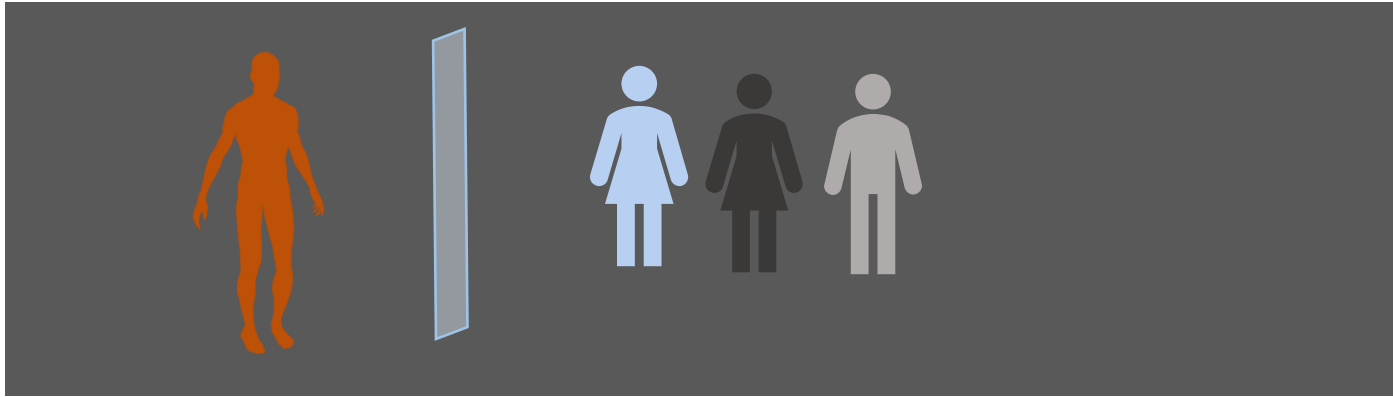


Thinking Brain and Survival Brain

- **Thinking Brain = Rider**
 - Makes informed, rational decisions
- **Survival Brain = Horse**
 - Protective instincts based on feelings
- **When triggered, the rider falls off the horse**

Brain and Body Stress Feedback Loop



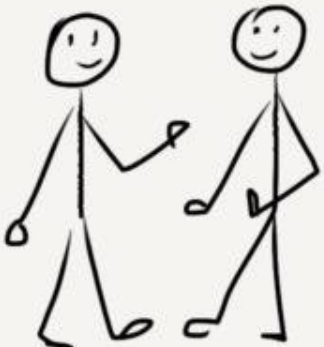




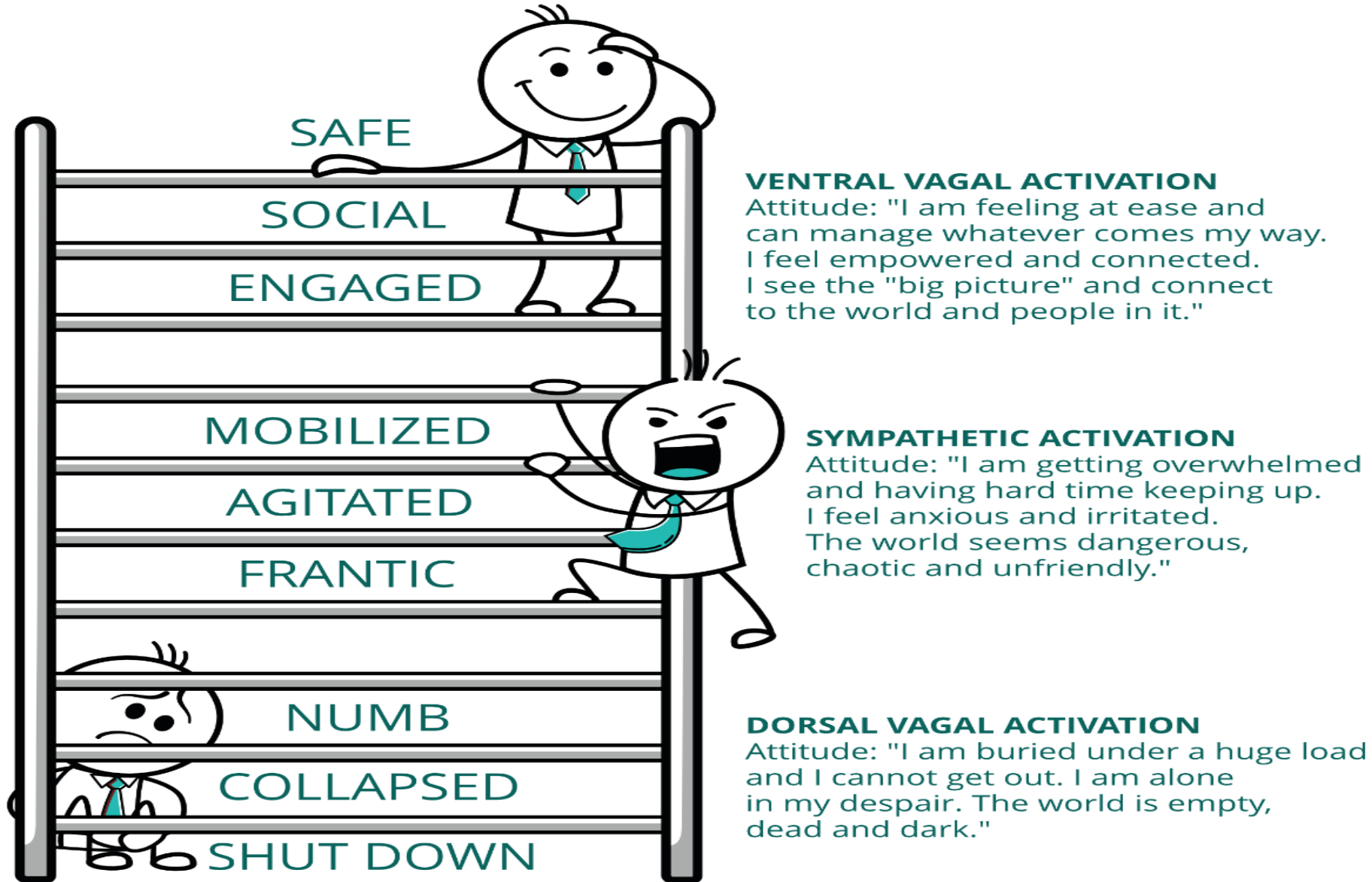
- When we are perpetually stressed or traumatized, we view the world through that “lens”
- This lens then modulates our feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about others and our interactions with them

POLYVAGAL THEORY

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Sympathetic	Dorsal Vagus	Ventral Vagus
<p data-bbox="555 411 733 445">Fight/Flight</p>  <p data-bbox="606 716 693 745">Threat</p> <p data-bbox="463 916 769 988">Mobilization First line of defence</p> <p data-bbox="402 1045 820 1073">Location: Along spinal cord</p> <p data-bbox="377 1130 845 1202">Increased heart rate, shallow breath, muscle tension.</p> <p data-bbox="377 1259 845 1330">Mobilising the body's resources to deal with stressor.</p>	<p data-bbox="1014 416 1472 445">Shut down/ Collapse/ Freeze</p>  <p data-bbox="1075 953 1431 1025">Immobilization Second line of defence</p> <p data-bbox="998 1082 1508 1110">Location: Diaphragm, gut, viscera</p> <p data-bbox="998 1168 1508 1325">The last resort if fight/ flight isn't possible. When life needs to be preserved, freeze occurs.</p>	<p data-bbox="1661 416 2068 445">Social Engagement System</p>  <p data-bbox="1625 1031 2119 1059">Communication and connection.</p> <p data-bbox="1651 1116 2094 1145">Location: Face, throat, chest</p> <p data-bbox="1686 1202 2058 1316">Helps us rest/digest Engaging with ourselves and others.</p>

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM AS A LADDER



Adapted from *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy* by Deb Dana

Reflect and
Discuss:
How do you
know when you
are?

- Ventrally regulated (Socially engaged)?
- Sympathetically activated (mobilized, agitated, ready to fight or flee)?
- Dorsally activated (shut down, numb, ready to give up)?



----- Behavioral Problems

----- Physical Illness

----- Emotional Dysregulation

----- Trauma & Loss

----- Chronic Hyperarousal &
Chronic Inflammation

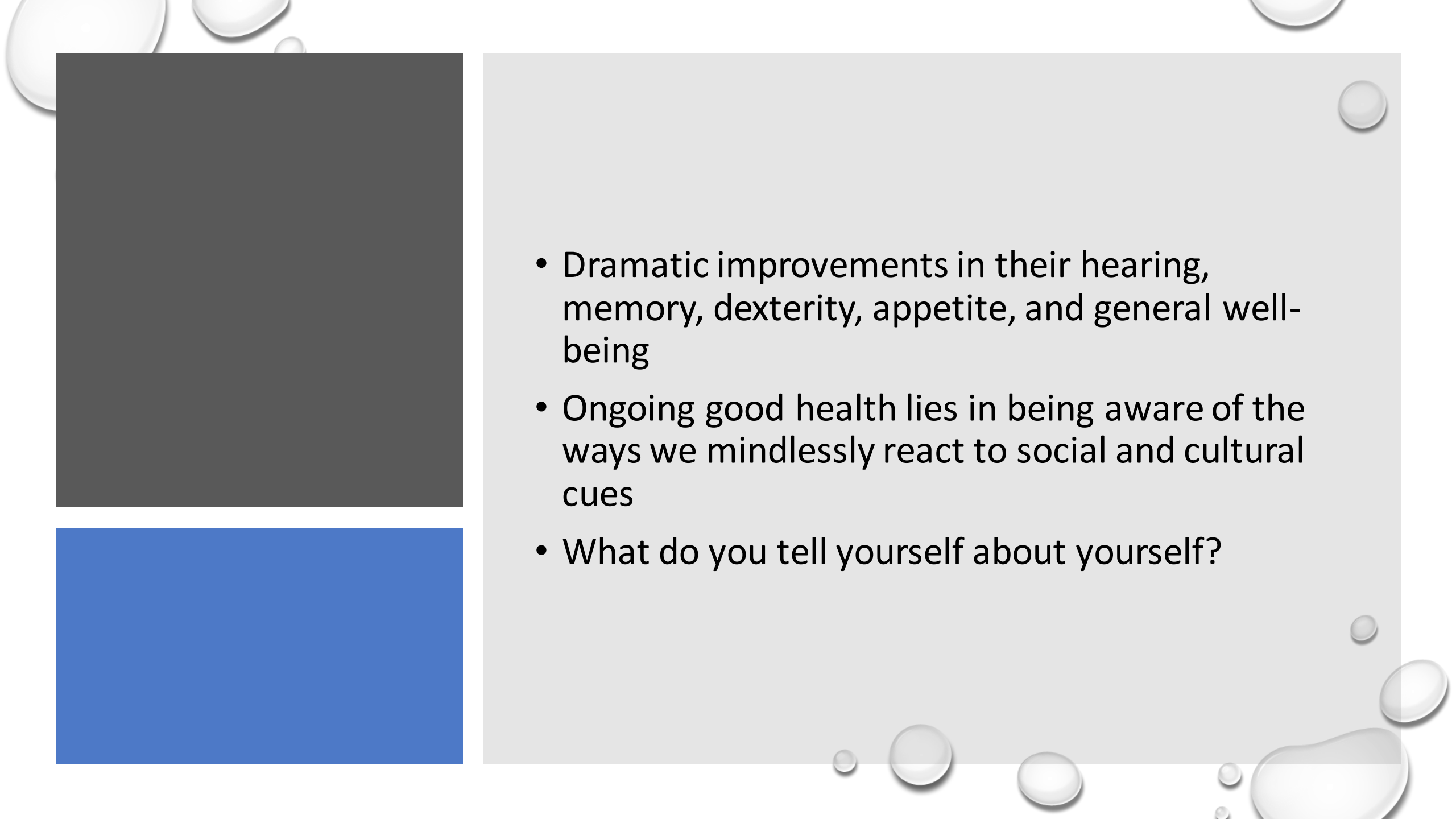
----- Adverse Childhood
Experiences

Ellen Langer

- “. . . health and illness are much more rooted in our minds and in our hearts and how we experience ourselves in the world than our models even begin to understand.”



Counterclockwise

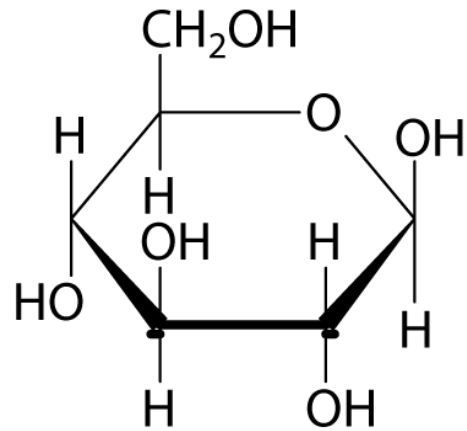
- 
- Dramatic improvements in their hearing, memory, dexterity, appetite, and general well-being
 - Ongoing good health lies in being aware of the ways we mindlessly react to social and cultural cues
 - What do you tell yourself about yourself?

Chamber Maids



- 84 hotel chamber maids who reported not getting enough exercise
- Lost weight, improved body mass index, hip-to-waist ratio, BP
- The only difference was the change in mind-set

Diabetes



- Could glucose levels in people with Type 2 diabetes be manipulated by a subject's perception of time?
- Blood-glucose levels followed perceived time rather than actual time, spiking and dipping when the subjects expected them to

Pilots

- People playing at being pilots performed 40% better on eyesight tests



Placebo



- Healthy volunteers who were given a placebo and told that experiences of pain were beneficial to their bodies were found to produce higher levels of endorphin
- An expensive placebo is more effective than a cheap one

“If we treat ourselves as we are,
we’re going to remain that way. If
we treat ourselves as we can be,
then we’ll become as we can be.”

Ellen Langer

Find the
coping
strategy that
works for you

- Keep your neurobiology in mind when you think about taking care of yourself
- Don't cope alone
- Organize support at work and cultivate a sense of community in your areas

