

# Meet & Complete

## NERVOUS SYSTEM GUIDE



*Journey to Wellness*

REBEKAH BALLAGH

# Nervous System

## THREAT STATE GUIDE

### WHEN YOU FEEL...

Anxious,  
angry, afraid,  
stressed,  
overloaded,  
frazzled,  
irritable,  
rageful,  
frustrated,  
worried

Depressed,  
hopeless,  
shame,  
numb,  
exhausted,  
dissociated,  
apathetic,  
low

Insecure,  
hypervigilant  
to others  
emotions,  
people  
pleasing,  
socially  
anxious

Tired but  
wired,  
unmotivated  
but stressed,  
burnt out,  
chronic  
fatigue, stuck,  
anxiety

& you notice

Tense muscles,  
shallow  
breathing,  
tummy &  
digestion  
changes

& you notice

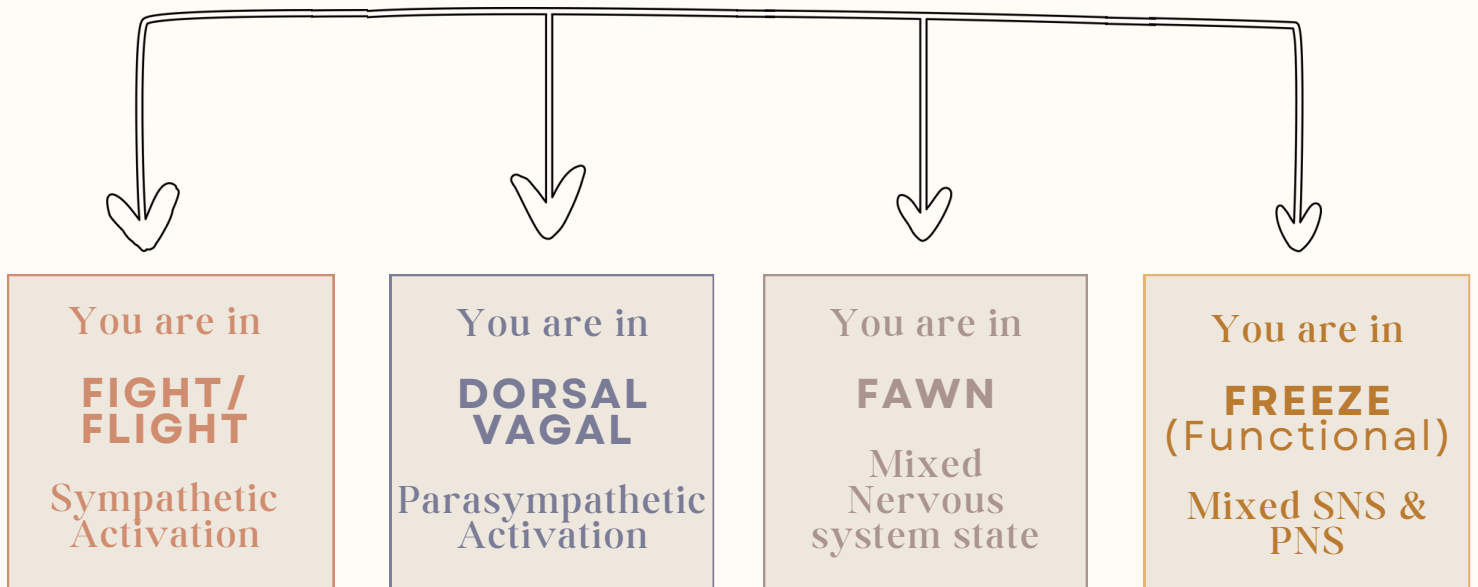
Fatigue,  
slower heart  
rate, heavy  
body, tired  
eyes

& you notice

Lump in throat,  
tight jaw, tense  
shoulders,  
shallow  
breathing,  
struggle saying  
"no" to others

& you notice

Tense muscles,  
feeling heavy,  
bracing,  
trouble  
sleeping, guilt  
with rest,  
racing mind



# Nervous System

## SOMATIC REGULATION GUIDE

When you are in

**FIGHT/  
FLIGHT**

Sympathetic  
Activation

When you are in

**DORSAL  
VAGAL**

Parasympathetic  
Activation

When you are in

**FAWN**

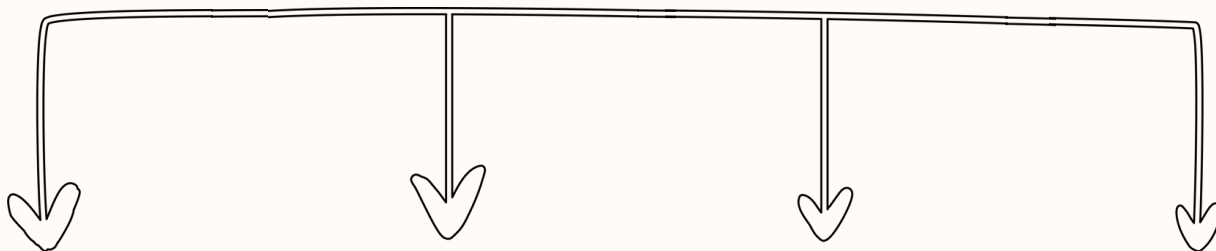
Mixed Nervous  
system state

When you are in

**FREEZE  
(Functional)**

Mixed SNS &  
PNS

## REGULATE YOURSELF BY...



Shaking

Pillow  
slams/squeezes

Heel thuds

Heels pedals

Palms over eyes

1:2 breathing

Grounding  
outside

Walking

Cold Exposure

Wall push

Tense & shake

Butterfly Wings

Gentle  
movement

Wiggle fingers  
& toes

Seaweed  
swaying

Havening

Childs pose

Visualise  
yourself moving

Slow walk

54321

Vagal activation

1:1 gentle breath

"voo" practice

Havening

Body  
tap/squeeze

Boundary  
sweep

Neck massage

Power pose

Humming

Gargling

Singing

Safe place  
visualisation

Butterfly taps

Containment  
Hold

Weighted blanket  
or burrito wrap

Havening

Listen to calm  
music or binaural  
beats

Brain dump

Self-massage

Safe place  
visualisation

Comfort colour

Alternate nostril  
breath

### *Ear Massage*

Activate your vagus nerve through an ear massage - massage circles gently where your airbud would sit.

### **Burrito Wrap**

Wrap yourself up snug & tight in a cosy blanket like a burrito & take lovely deep breaths

### Cold Exposure

Hold ice on back of neck or over top lip, run hands/wrists under cold water, dunk face in cold water or try a cold blast at the end of your shower.

### 54321

5 things you can see  
4 things you can feel  
3 things you can hear  
2 things you can smell  
1 thing you can taste

### **Containment Hold**

Tuck your left hand under right armpit and wrap right arm over left in a comfort hold. You can rock back & forth & breathe deeply here

### Butterfly Taps

Cross your arms over your chest with your hands on your shoulders. Tap your hands back & forth slowly like a comforting heartbeat

### *Heel thuds*

Raise up onto the balls of your feet then drop back onto your heels with a thud. Notice the sensations created up into your legs & pelvis

### **Belly Breath**

Put something on your belly, like a book, a blanket or a teddy. As you inhale your object rises up. As you exhale it settles and lowers down

### Safe Place

Close your eyes & imagine a safe & happy place - It can be somewhere you love to go or imaginary. Picture all the details & enjoy the feeling of calm

### *Wall Push*

Push with all your might against a wall to help you get out any anger

### **Shaking**

Shake out your arms and legs, peddle your heels, wiggle and bounce. Shake off the stress energy & activation

### Heel Pedals

Stand and pedal your heels as though walking or running, play with the pace and allow your legs to shake and jiggle

### *Palms over Eyes*

Warm your hands by rubbing your palms vigorously together then press them gently over your eyes

### **Havening**

Sweep your hands over your chest, down your arms & face etc. Optional: look left for 30 seconds then right for 30 seconds without moving your head.

### Butterfly Wings

Take a seat with the soles of your feet together & your knees wide like butterfly wings. You can rock or sway here, pulse your legs like flapping wings, then fold forward or lie back to rest

### *Alternate Nostril Breath*

Block your right nostril, inhale through your left. Block your left nostril. Release your right & exhale through your right. Inhale through right then block & exhale left & so on.

### **Seaweed Sway**

Sway gently side to side (seated or standing) like seaweed in an ocean current

### Tense & Shake

Tense up a muscle group or all your body and hold for 7 seconds then shake it out

### *Comfort Colour*

Pick a favourite colour & imagine it wrapping around you like a safe glowing light. Then look around the room & see what you can find with your colour on it

### **Sound Scan**

close your eyes & listen to all the sounds around you. Name what you can hear, near & far

### Squeeze & Tap

Squeeze &/or tap down each arm, your chest, your legs to connect to your body. Breathe deeply here.

### *Vagal Activation*

Tilt your left ear towards left shoulder and look as far up and right as you can. Hold 30-60 seconds & repeat on other side.

### **Vocal Calming**

Hum, sing or gargle.  
Make the sound "voo" or "mmm" on your exhale.  
Or connect with and talk/laugh with a friend or loved one.

### Boundary Sweep

Imagine a protective boundary around yourself; move your arms out around you like pushing through water. Slowly sweep your hands over your body feeling all your edges.

# DAILY REGULATION

## Routine

### Morning

#### Upon waking

Belly breathing in bed for 1 minute  
Gargling in shower or before brushing teeth  
"voo" or other vagal drill while boiling jug

### Day

#### During the day

3 x body scans during the day & meet any needs present  
Gentle walk or stretch on lunch break  
Mindful first bite of lunch  
Bumble Bee Breath (bhramari) or "voo"  
Vagal drill

### Evening

#### Upon arriving home | Around dinner time

Energy sweep & containment hug & sway  
Mindful meal prep/ eating  
Vagal drill

### Night

#### Before bed

Low stimulation shower  
Vagal drill  
Weighted belly breath in bed  
Guided meditation or safe place visualisation in bed

# DAILY REGULATION

## Routine

### FIGHT/FLIGHT

### FREEZE

Morning

Shaking  
Straw breathing  
Voo  
Move slowly  
One thing at a time

Seaweed sways  
Safe place visualisation  
Self-massage  
Voo  
Roll out of bed & crawl!

Day

54321  
Mindful eating  
Extended exhalations

Gentle walk  
Orient to glimmers  
Social safe connection

Evening

Shake & energy sweep  
Low stim/sensory shower  
Swaying  
Hip rocks  
Brain dump  
Vagal drill

Gentle yoga practice  
Walk around the block  
"well done" list  
Vagal drill

Night

Screen-free time  
Guided meditation  
Progressive muscle  
relaxation in bed

Containment hold  
Guided meditation

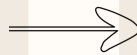
# RE-FRAMES

*for resilience & embodiment*

Move  
from...

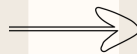
to...

How do I get rid of this?



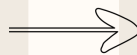
How can I be with this?

Why does this happen to me?



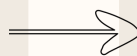
What can I learn from this?

How can I fix it?



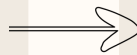
How can I integrate or transform this?

How do I stop this feeling?



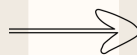
What is the need behind this feeling?

Why do I keep feeling this way?



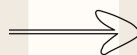
What is unmet here?  
What is the root?

How can I get back to calm?



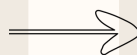
How can I move towards regulation?

Why am I so emotional?



How can I build my capacity while allowing my emotions?

Why do I react the same way over and over?



How can I create space to respond differently? How can I step out of the safety of the familiar to create change?

# NERVOUS SYSTEM

## *Tonics*

Moving slowly

Doing one thing at a time

Novel input

Sensory soothing

Somatic tracking

Curiosity

Compassion

Co-regulation

Safe touch

Breath work

Gentle movement

Nature

Sleep

Balanced blood sugar

Glimmers

Gratitude

Loving self-talk

Humming & music

Reduced stimulation/sensory input

Play & laughter



# NERVOUS SYSTEM

## vagal drills

### Diaphragmatic Rib Expansion Breathing

Place hands on the sides of your lower ribs, inhaling deeply to expand your ribs outward. This movement engages the diaphragm and stimulates vagus nerve response.

### Vagal Hum & Swallow

Hum for a few seconds, pause, then swallow. The hum creates gentle vibration, engaging the vagus nerve.

### Ear Massage

Gently massage the outer edge of each ear and make little circles where an ear-bud would sit.

### Gaze Stabilization Drill

Pick a single spot at eye level, hold your gaze on it while moving your head slowly side-to-side. This engages ocular nerves that are connected to the vagus.

### Left-Side Lie Relaxation

Lie on your left side, placing one hand on your belly to feel each breath. This position can activate the vagus nerve and support digestive balance.

### Lip Tapping

Gently tap around the edges of your lips with your fingertips. This engages facial muscles connected to the vagus nerve, stimulating a calming effect.

### Vagus Nerve Wrap

Lightly wrap a scarf or a soft cloth around the back of your neck, applying gentle pressure on the area below the skull. The sensation can stimulate the nerve, signalling safety to your system.

# NERVOUS SYSTEM

## vagal drills

### Forehead Stroking

Slowly stroke from the middle of your forehead to the temples with light pressure. This can engage the prefrontal cortex, helping to calm the nervous system

### Diaphragmatic Release

Place your hands just under the ribs on each side and gently press inward while taking deep, slow breaths. This engages the diaphragm, releasing tension that may be affecting the vagus nerve

### Open Focus

Widen your gaze to take in your peripheral vision while keeping your head still. This practice helps to activate parasympathetic responses and reduces hyper-focus, supporting relaxation

### Jaw Release

Open your jaw slightly and let it relax. Tap gently along the jawline from your chin to your earlobes. This can release tension, activate the vagus nerve, and encourage deep relaxation.

### Occipital Hold

Place both hands at the back of your neck, fingers spread across the base of your skull. Apply gentle pressure with your palms. Holding here sends signals of support and safety, helping to calm the nervous system

# THE (OFTEN UNSPOKEN) *keys* TO YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Minimum effective dose - more is not always better when it comes to using regulation tools. In fact, you can overload your nervous system & make it feel worse. Find the minimum effective dose for you - the least you can do that has a positive effect.

Your nervous system prioritises surviving over thriving - this means sometimes we need to move out of the comfort zone of our nervous systems familiar patterns in order to re-wire & change.

Seeking the familiar - the known feels 'safe' (to your brain and nervous system) because it is predictable. This can keep you caught in repetitive loops with behaviours, relationships etc. Breaking free will feel uncomfortable but this does not mean it is unsafe.

You have an innate capacity for compassion, creativity, joy & healing. Sometimes we just need to teach the body how to access this organicity (& felt sense of safety) again.

Your body holds immense wisdom spoken via the language of intuition and impulses - you will often uncover natural resourcing behaviours & the innate pull to homeostasis if you can grant the body the space to speak.

Learn the language - your nervous system speaks in emotions, physical sensations, posture, impulses - messages from the body. When you learn this you can talk back to soothe, regulate & rewire.