

WE ARE HUMAN, NOT BROKEN

BY KEVIN BERCELI, LPC, NCC, CPH, CP-TRE®, CP-NLP

FROM THE WISDOM OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS, INCLUDING:



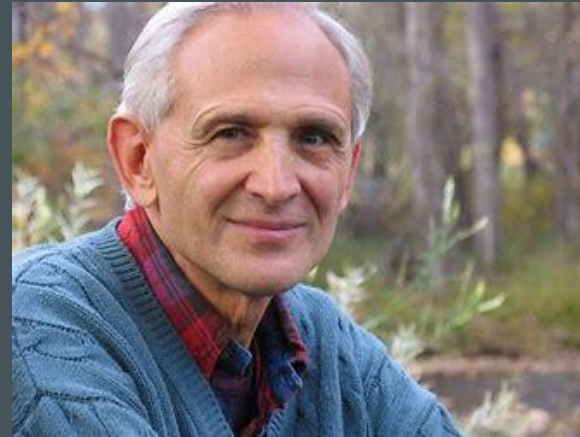
Dr. Stephen Porges



Dr. David Berceli



Dr. Peter Levine



Dr. Bessel van der Kolk



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TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

Increase understanding of the significance of:

- 1) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in correlation to mental health.
- 2) The Triune Brain, Intrinsic Connectivity Network, and what is know as Bottom-Up Treatment approaches to support mental health recovery.
- 3) Polyvagal Theory in mental health counseling.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

- Our life experiences matter -

“How do you turn a newborn baby with all its promise and infinite capacities into a thirty-year-old homeless drunk?”¹



Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

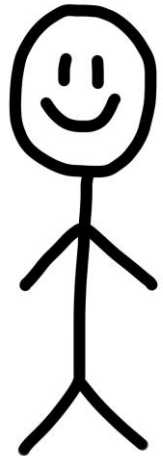
The Body Keeps the Score, p 143

“For every soldier who serves in a war zone abroad, there are ten children who are endangered in their own homes. This is particularly tragic, since it is very difficult for growing children to recover when the source of terror and pain is not enemy combatants but their own caretakers.”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, p 20-21

LIFE EXPERIENCE THE STRESS - TRAUMA CONTINUUM

We all have it.



**Traumatic
Stress**

Hard vs Soft Traumas²

ACEs, OVERVIEWED BY DR. BESSEL VAN DER KOLK¹

Correlation among experiences and mental illness

ACE score of 4 or more

- **More than 50%** reported a learning or behavior problem as a child
(compared to 3% of those with a score of 0)
- Chronic depression in adults rises to **35% in men, and 66% in woman**
(compared to an overall **rate of 12%** for those with a score of 0)
- **7 times more likely** to be an alcoholic

ACE score of 6 or more

- The likelihood of IV drug use is **4,600% greater**
- About a **5,000% increased likelihood** of a self-acknowledged suicide attempt
- **15% greater chance** to be currently suffering from any of the ten leading causes of death in the United States
- **Twice as likely** to suffer from cancer

The Body Keeps the Score, pp 144-148

TRAUMA IN TREATMENT

It has been found that up to:

81% of the general population, and

98% of Community Mental Health Center clients

experienced a traumatic event at some time in their lives.³

And **69%** of people in a psychiatric hospital had been found to have been repeatedly exposed to trauma for some length of time.⁴

Yet **ONLY 7%** received a PTSD Diagnosis⁴

The number of traumatic events is **negatively** correlated with **physical** and **mental** health **functioning**.³

After increasing screening rates for PTSD, they did increase the rate of PTSD diagnosis, however:

“the rates of actual PTSD treatment services provided did not change.”³

THE PROFESSIONAL PROBLEM



“The most stunning rejection of the DSM-5 came from the National Institute of Mental Health, which funds most psychiatric research in America. In April 2013, a few weeks before DSM-5 was formally released, NIMH director Thomas Insel announced that his agency could no longer support DSM’s ‘symptom-based diagnosis.’”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, p 165

Bessel van der Kolk, MD

“Diagnostic reliability isn’t an abstract issue: If doctors can’t agree on what ails their patients, there is no way they can provide proper treatment.

When there’s no relationship between diagnosis and cure, a mislabeled patient is bound to be a mistreated patient.”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, p 165

Bessel van der Kolk, MD

WE ARE HERE

Opioid Epidemic

According to the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

The number of people who died from a drug overdose is now more than six times higher (from the 1990's to 2021).⁶

Mental Health Crisis

According to the CDC,
Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States.⁷ In fact:

9-8-8

has been enacted to be the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - effective July 2022.⁸

HARD TRUTHS



“And yet after thirty years and millions upon millions of dollars’ worth of research, we have failed to find consistent genetic patterns for schizophrenia – or for any other psychiatric illness, for that matter.”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, pp 151-152
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

Prior Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH),
two years after leaving the role:

“While I think I succeeded in getting lots of really cool papers published by cool scientists at fairly large cost – I think \$20 billion – **I don’t think we moved the needle in reducing suicide, reducing hospitalizations, improving recovery for the tens of millions of people who have mental illness.**”⁵



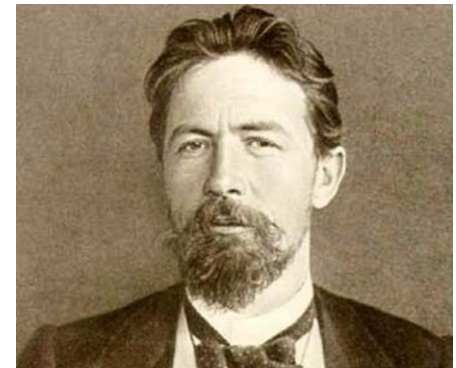
Dr. Thomas Insel

RESPONSIBILITY



“Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better.”

-Maya Angelou



“Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.” –Anton Chekhov

NEUROPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS / TRAUMA



“Body and brain are inseparable...We must recognize this as a truth in the recovery process.”

“The easiest way for us to recognize this simple concept is to realize that when we experience stress we most often identify it by talking about muscle aches and pains or some type of gastrointestinal or sleep disturbance.”⁹ *Shake It Off Naturally*, p 55

Dr. David Berceci



“Traumatized people chronically feel unsafe inside their bodies: The past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort.”¹ *The Body Keeps the Score*, p 96

“Patients respond to stress not by noticing and naming it but by developing migraine headaches or asthma attacks.”¹ *The Body Keeps the Score*, p 97

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

MIND-BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH

“We need strategies so clients can ‘unlearn’ the nervous system’s response to stress and trauma.”



“It’s not a research problem. It’s an implementation problem.”¹⁰

–Dr. Thomas Insel, prior director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)



TRIUNE BRAIN / INTRINSIC CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

Top-Down



Bottom-Up



Cortex
(Cognitive)

Limbic System
(Emotional)

Brain Stem
(Nervous system)

~80% is afferent (body to brain)¹¹

“Intrinsic connectivity networks (ICNs) have emerged as fundamental, organizational elements of human brain architecture.”¹²

NEED FOR BOTTOM-UP THERAPY

“Even though the mind may learn to ignore the messages from the emotional brain, the alarm signals don’t stop. The emotional brain keeps working, and stress hormones keep sending signals to the muscles to tense for action or immobilize in collapse. The physical effects on the organs go on unabated until they demand notice when they are expressed as illness. Medications, drugs, and alcohol can also temporarily dull or obliterate unbearable sensations and feelings. But the body continues to keep the score.”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, p.46

“I think some of the best therapy one can do is therapy that is very largely non-verbal where the main task of the therapist is to help people to feel what they feel – to notice what they notice, to see how things flow within themselves, and to reestablish their sense of time inside.”

Advances in the Treatment of Trauma,
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

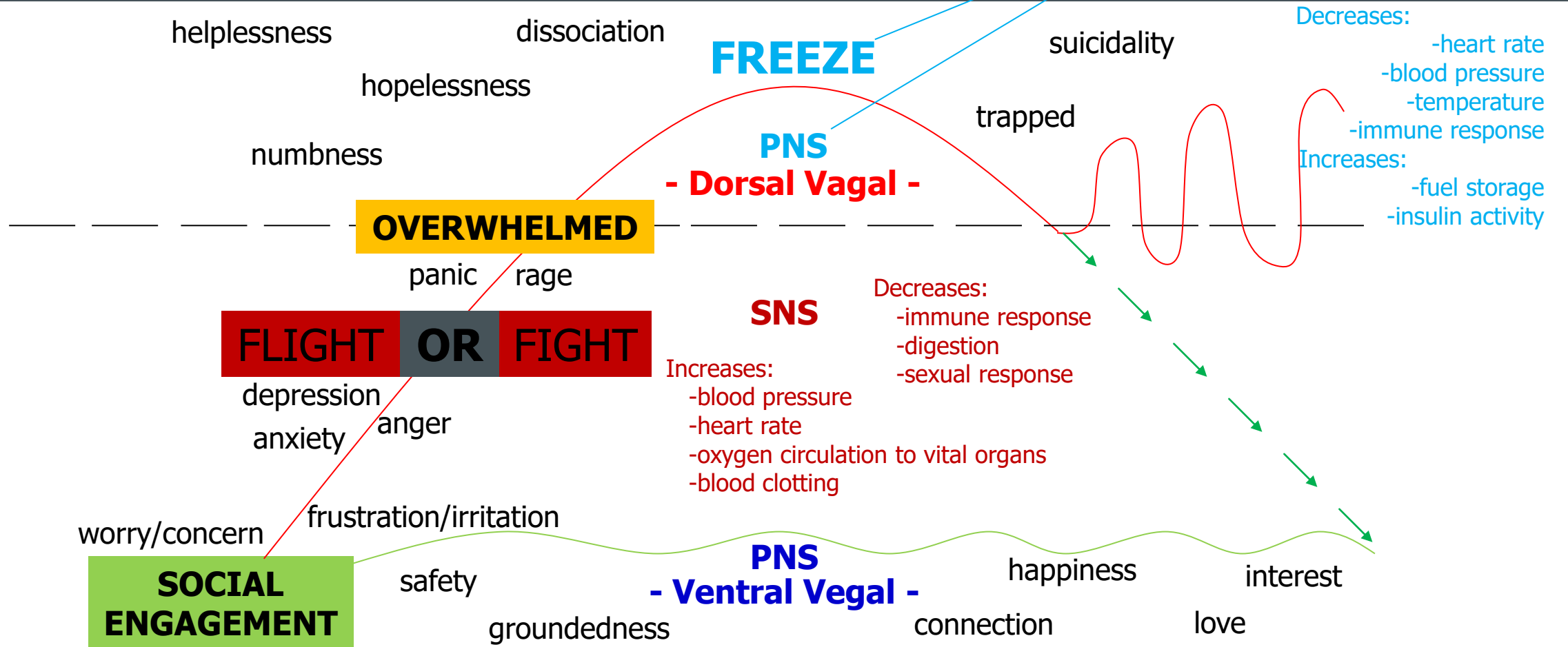




Dr. Stephen Porges

POLYVAGAL THEORY ^{13, 14, 15}

Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Dorsal Vagal -



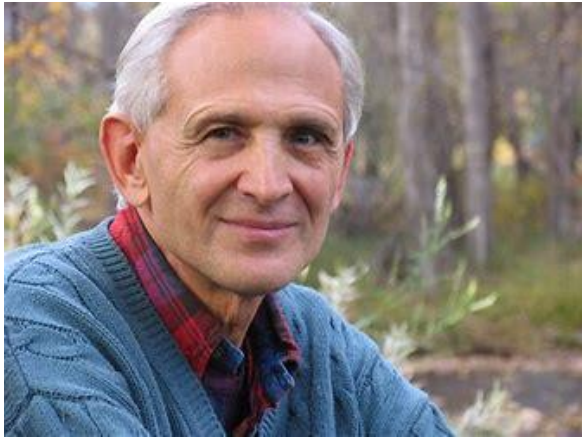
RECOVERY

“The body is physically restricted when emotions are bound up inside. People’s shoulders tighten; their facial muscles tense. They spend enormous energy on holding back their tears – or any sound or movement that might betray their inner state. **When the physical tension is released, the feelings can be released.** Movement helps breathing to become deeper, and as the tensions are released, expressive sounds can be discharged. The body becomes freer – breathing freer, being in flow.”¹ *The Body Keeps the Score, p 216*



Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

RESTORING HEALTH



Dr. Peter Levine

“The failure to restore homeostasis is at the basis for the maladaptive and debilitating symptoms of trauma.”

“You can tell equilibrium has been restored when the physiology [body] calms down.”¹

The Body Keeps the Score, p 112
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk



A BOTTOM-UP TECHNIQUE

Tension/Trauma Releasing Exercise (TRE)® Technique

Restoring the body-emotions-mind to homeostasis

Swedish Special Forces Soldier demonstrates TRE® – before & after:¹⁶

<https://youtu.be/YJL-l3Dbk2Y>

Polyvagal Explanation of TRE® (Interview with Dr. Stephen Porges):¹⁷

<https://youtu.be/NPaj3QgcyAU?t=1355>



Dr. Berceli



Dr. Porges

TRE® / NEUROGENIC TREMOR

“[The neurogenic tremor] can potentially be the brain’s deliberate activation of the Autonomic Nervous system (ANS) to down-regulate an over excited system. Therefore the tremor mechanism is not seen as part of the pathology of human neurophysiology but rather the brain’s attempt to correct the pathology of a hyper-aroused nervous system.”⁹

Shake It Off Natural, p 7
-Dr. David Berceli



“There are certain muscle patterns, associated to certain Central Pattern Generators, associated to that emotional expression. The insula is an intrinsic part between the brain shifting from knowing how I feel and what I experience, and going to do something about it. The insula is a part of the ‘Salience Network’ which is a part of a certain mechanism called the ‘Intrinsic Connectivity Network’ in the brain, and that has a really important function in determining how stable you are emotionally or mentally.”¹⁸

-Dr. Riccardo Cassiani-Ingoni

“The bodily tremors of TRE may restore interoceptive and proprioceptive functions through a normalization of the brain’s salience network and, thus, homeostasis and the reduction of such PTSD symptoms as hyper vigilance.”¹⁹



TRE® / NEUROGENIC TREMOR RESEARCH

Mind-Body Skills for Regulating the Autonomic Nervous System

June 2011 Version 2

“It [TRE] appears promising for its ease of use, reducing hyper-arousal and multiple anecdotal reports of its immediate benefit, including those from military personnel.”²⁰



Neurogenic Tremors Training (TRE) for Stress and PTSD: A Controlled Clinical Trial¹⁹

2015 – 2018

Carl T. Hayden Medical Research Foundation,
prepared for: U.S. Army Medical Research and
Material Command



[Continued, next slide]

CONTROLLED CLINICAL TRIAL (2018 FINAL REPORT)

“The participants in this study were **complex**: had **multiple psychiatric and medical diagnoses**, had received a **variety of therapies for some time**, had been and were on **numerous medications**.”¹⁹



Benefits included:

- PTSD symptoms
- affective pain symptoms
- sleep symptoms
- attention
- working memory

“The evaluation of study outcomes indicate that **the TRE intervention yielded significant benefits** over both the Placebo-Yoga and waitlist control groups...”¹⁹

“showed **significant change in PTSD symptoms** over time... **sustained change** from pre-levels through the **6-month follow-up**.”¹⁹

“Our findings point to **TRE as a potentially useful approach** for not only affecting physical functions such as sleep, but cortical functions associated **with trauma**.”¹⁹

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE

I hope that, together, we increased understanding of the significance of:

- 1) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in correlation to mental health.
- 2) The Triune Brain, Intrinsic Connectivity Network, and what is know as Bottom-Up Treatment approaches to support mental health recovery.
- 3) Polyvagal Theory in mental health counseling.

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” -Maya Angelou

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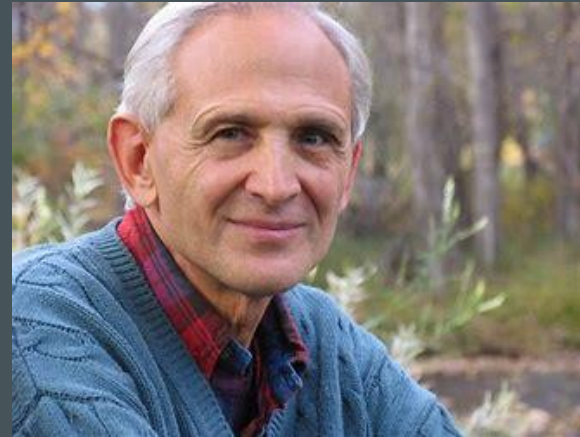
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