

Creating a Story of Safety: A Polyvagal Guide to Navigating Challenging Times

In this time of deep disruptions to everyday life, we are confronted with experiences that challenge our ability to feel safe and find ways to connect. The demands of daily life can easily overwhelm us and pull us out of balance into a persistent state of worry. Finding a way to move from anxiety to ease is dependent on the nervous system. Polyvagal Theory, developed by renowned scientist Stephen Porges, offers a guide to the workings of the human autonomic nervous system and a way to partner with our nervous system to navigate this unfamiliar territory.

When we look through the lens of Polyvagal Theory, we recognize the role of the nervous system in shaping the way we live, love, and work. Our nervous systems are at the heart of our suffering and also provide the pathways back to regulation. Join clinician and Polyvagal Theory expert Deb Dana and learn the art of befriending your nervous system. Deb will teach you how to create a map of your nervous system and skills you can practice that strengthen your ability to anchor yourself and others in safety and regulation. Using the principles of Polyvagal Theory Deb will help you answer the essential question “What does the nervous system need in this moment to find safety in connection?”

In this workshop you'll get to know the predictable ways the autonomic nervous system works and explore practices to gently shape your system in new ways and enjoy the sense of ease that comes from living with a nervous system that responds with flexibility to the ordinary—and sometimes extraordinary—challenges you meet each day. Through didactic teaching and experiential practices you will learn how to use the body's regulating circuits to regain a sense of safety and skills to engage the nervous system's natural pathways to regulation. You'll practice ways to mindfully travel the autonomic pathways of protection and connection, navigate states of survival, and find the way back to regulation.

From an anchor in the safety of a regulated nervous system, pathways of connection come alive and we can travel those pathways in service of healing. With Polyvagal Theory as a guide, we can promote individual, family, community, and global well-being.

This workshop offers clinicians tools and practices that are beneficial to their clients and promote wellbeing in their daily lives.

At the end of this workshop participants will be able to:

Describe how the autonomic nervous system shapes behaviors and beliefs

Create an autonomic map

Identify practices that bring a return to autonomic regulation

Identify the distinct stories that emerge from autonomic states

Describe ways the nervous system responds to cues of safety and danger

Utilize skills to engage the nervous system's natural pathways to regulation

Discuss the responsibility of being a Polyvagal informed human