



"Trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also the imprint left by that experience on the mind, brain and body."

Bessel Van Der Kolk

Nervous System Regulation

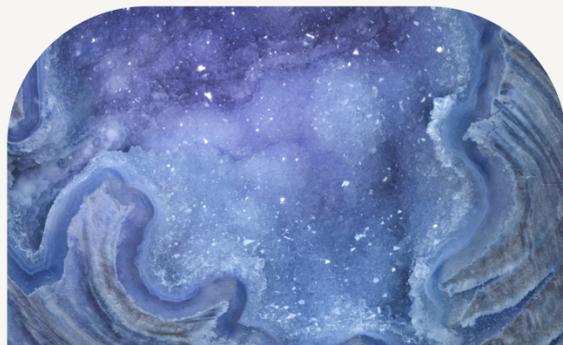


Introduction to trauma

Trauma can be described as a traumatic event that induces an emotional response.



It can also be in the form of abandonment, feeling unseen, unheard, not having your emotional needs met and not receiving the time and attention you required as a child.



Studies have shown that at times there isn't a great deal of difference in bodily reactions between a traumatic event and aspects like abandonment. Often the emotional and bodily response is very similar to traumatic events.

The effects of trauma



Two types of trauma:

Traumatic event

or

Relational-developmental trauma

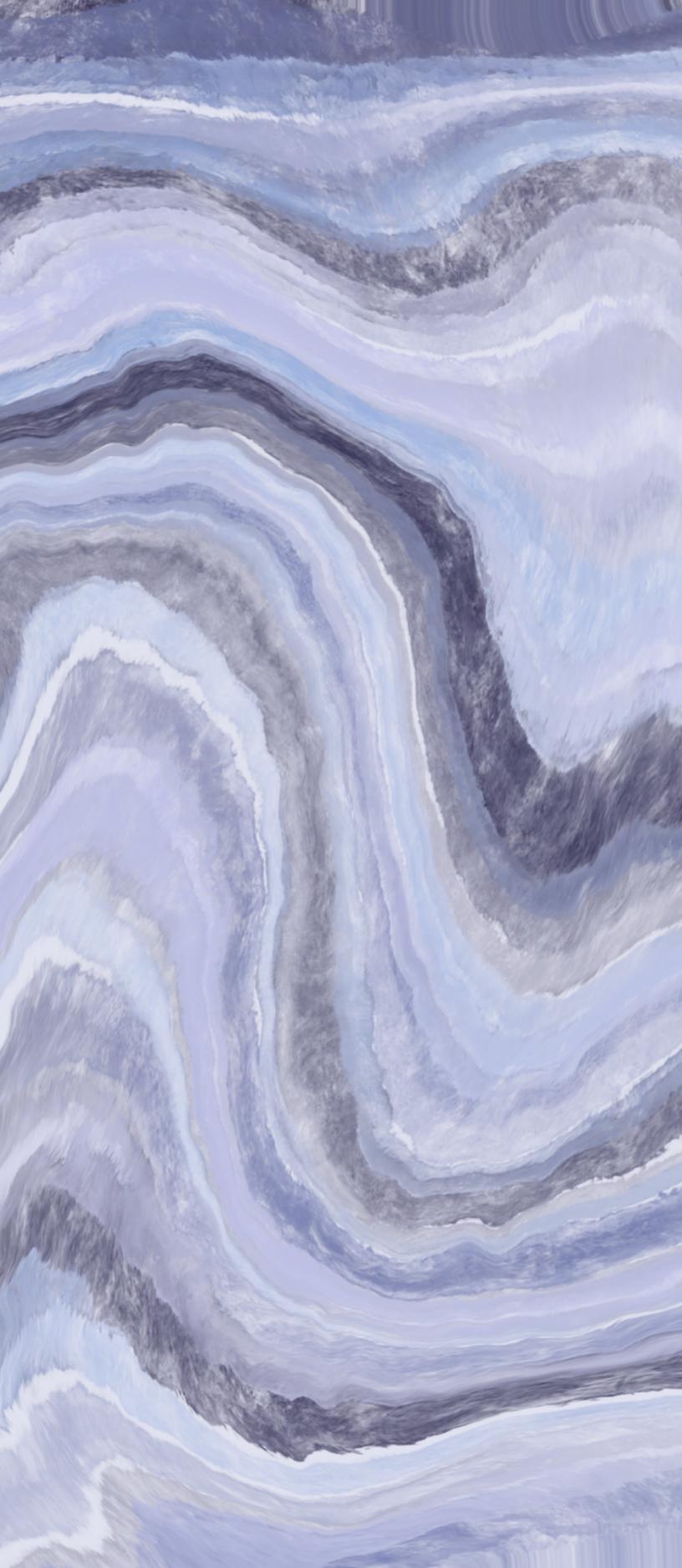


Trauma effects and changes the way your brain functions, it alters neurotransmitters as well as how you process information. It can cause mental health issues, along with changing the lenses of how you see reality. Trauma alters your perceptions of life, causing your filtering system to view life through the eyes of trauma.

This means you will possibly live your life in reflection to past traumas that are stuck in the brain, body and emotions until you become conscious of its imprint and release it.



Your window of perception is the filtering system your brain uses to interpret and make meaning of life and it's events.



Perception Model

2000 bits of information per second is coming at you through all your sense of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste.

Input / Filtering System:

Values & belief systems

Attitude

Memories

Language

Decisions

Output:

Physiology

State

Internal map of reality

This produces your behaviour





The Nervous System

Your nervous system is your hub, it guides everything you do, think, say and feel. It carries messages from the brain and spinal cord to various parts of the body. Your nervous system takes in information from it's environment and then takes that data to and from your brain. The areas it affects include;

- Thoughts, memory, learning, and feelings
- Movement
- Senses; see, hear, taste, touch and feel
- Sleep, healing and ageing.
- Heartbeat and breathing patterns.
- Response to stressful situations.
- Digestion; hungry/thirsty
- Body processes, such as puberty



The main parts of the nervous system

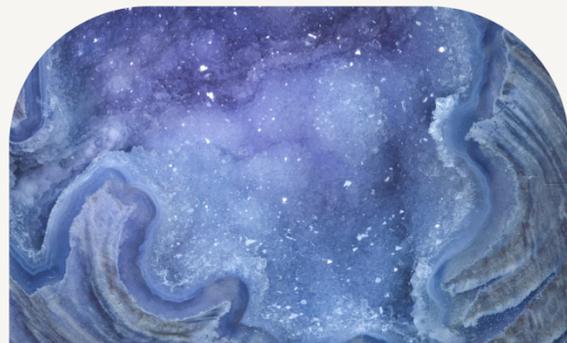
Central nervous system (CNS): This includes your brain and spinal cord. Your brain sends messages to the rest of your body through nerves that are protected by Myelin to ensure the messages are received.



Peripheral nervous system (PNS): This consists of nerves that branch out from your central nervous system all over your body. The system passes on information from your brain and spinal cord to your organs, arms, legs, fingers and toes. The peripheral system also includes your;

Somatic nervous system: voluntary movements.

Autonomic nervous system: controls the activities you do without thinking about them.



Sympathetic nervous system: Fight, flight or freeze response, prepares the body for stress or energy.

Parasympathetic nervous system: Conserves energy, eg when sleeping or relaxing.

The vagus nerve



The vagus nerve is one of the most important nerves that can be found in the parasympathetic system and runs from the gut, to the heart and the brain. Among with its many functions such as supporting the immune system and inflammation response to disease. It is one of the most important nerves in the body to counteract the fight, flight, freeze or fawn system.



When your vagus nerve is stimulated, your body is calm, you are compassionate and your mind is clearer. Stimulating your vagal tone takes care of your mental health, allows you to regulate your emotions, experience connection with others and improves physical health. The healthier your vagal tone, the more resilient you are to bounce back from life's challenges and traumas.



The vagus nerve sends messages from your gut to your brain, and manages aspects like fear, stress, emotions and anxiety. The healthier your vagal tone, the more equipped you are to manage these states of being.

1. Fight

Body prepares for fight due to perceived danger

- Yelling, screaming, mean words
- Hitting, throwing things
- Blaming, defensive, deflect responsibility
- Intense anger
- Grinding teeth
- Knot feeling in your stomach

2. Flight

Body believes you can't overcome the danger so it causes you to run away.

- Wanting to run away
- Struggle to pay attention
- Fidgeting, restlessness
- Hyperactive
- Always busy, avoiding
- Procrastination, sweeps things under the carpet
- Moves away from the perceived threat
- Anxiety, worried, scared, overwhelmed

3. Freeze

Your body feels stuck because it doesn't believe it can fight or flight.

- You get stuck on what to say, mind goes blank
- Unable to move your body, feeling stuck
- Depression
- Bored or helpless
- Unresponsive, says "I don't know"
- Can't complete tasks
- Daydreaming, never present
- Racing heart, numbness in arms and legs

4. Fawn

People who grew up in abusive homes or situations experience fawn.

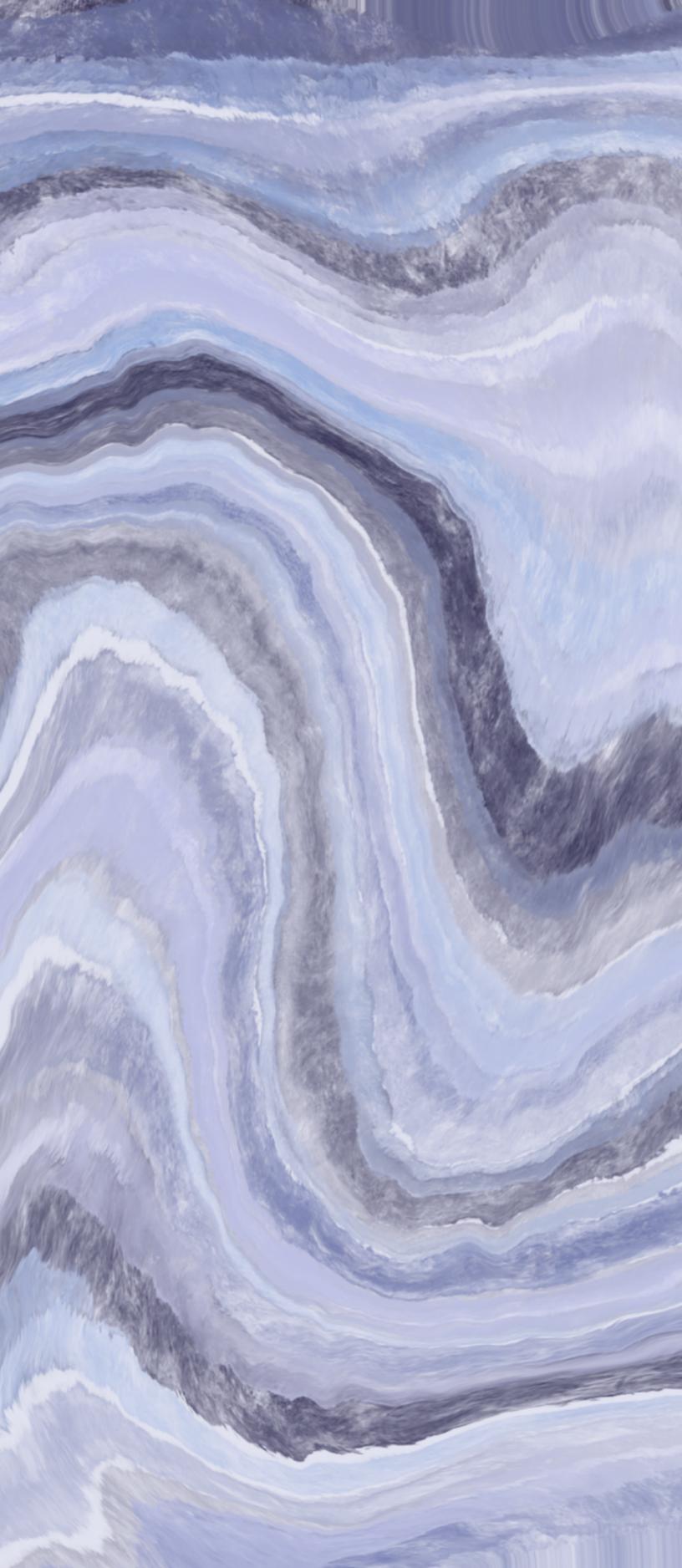
- Being overly helpful
- People pleasing
- Agreeing to everyone else
- Make everyone happy
- Overdependence on other peoples opinions

You were rejected or neglected as a child and being agreeable was your only way of survival.

Calm an overstimulated nervous system



- Sunshine and nature
- Movement, yoga, dance, work out, qi gong
- Reduce over stimulation by reducing phone/screens
- Connection with others
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Meditation
- Gargle water
- Chew gum
- Breathwork
- Humming
- Supplements that support your nervous system
- Music with theta waves
- Petting an animal
- Doing art
- Laughter
- Cold shower
- Chanting
- Singing
- Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Mindfulness
- Deep sighs
- Body touch with a safe person



What are triggers for?

Your triggers are opportunities for healing, and coming back to your authentic self.

It's not just triggers that set off your nervous system however, it can also be a sign of the following:

Overworking

Over giving

Lack of boundaries

Eating the wrong foods

Sensitivities

Underdevelopment

Alcohol

Gut health issues

Ignoring your own needs

Carrying other people's problems

Sign of trauma stuck in the body

Lack of down time

Your nervous system has been created to protect you and let you know when your out of alignment with what is of highest good for you. There is always a reason as to why you are dysregulated. It is a feedback system however, it's important to find out if the feedback you're receiving requires a change from the external or the internal.

Dysregulated Nervous System



1. Body Awareness

Noticing how your body feels. Are you feeling triggered?

2. Pause

Your body has gone into stress response, something has hit a trigger. Don't ignore your triggers they are there to guide you into healing.

3. Breathe

Practise breathing slowly, breath in for a count of 5, hold for 2 and breathe out for a count of seven.

4. Trigger

Look into what triggered a response in your body or what your body is trying to tell you.



Dysregulated Nervous System



5. Present moment

Come back to the present moment by focusing on your senses eg. Notice what you see, notice what you feel, notice what you taste, notice what you smell. Look around you and get into the present moment.

6. Get moving

When we move our body it changes our psychology. So go for a walk, run, dance, be silly just move your body in a way to get you out of the state.

7. Connection

Connect with people who are good for the soul. Connection is the fastest way to calm a dysregulated nervous system.

Breathing exercises



Back to Front Breathing

Breathe in and notice how your breath fills your body. As you release make different sounds like ahhhh, phaaa, laaaa. Empty the breath until the sound is gone. Notice your stomach muscles loosening. Once finished place your hands on your chest as you make the sound hmmmmmm.



Ballon Breathing

Imagine deflating a balloon breathing in as you count 5-4-3-2-1 and blowing it up breathing out 1-2-3-4-5. When you feel connected to your body again say out aloud. "I am calm in my body as I breathe in, I am relaxed in my body as I breathe out and I'm back in control".



Breathing in Self Compassion

Breathing in love, kindness and safety and allow it to spread through your whole body. Breathing out and imaging love, kindness and safety going around your body as a ball of light.

Body Breathing

Notice where the tension is in your body, breathe in healing energy to that spot and then release the tension in your body through your breath.

Self Inquiry

Do you recognise yourself in either fight, flight, freeze or fawn?

What are the characteristics that you feel you have taken on in fight, flight, freeze or fawn?

If you could heal one of these right now, which one would that be? (please bring this to your session)

What does a dysregulated nervous system feel like to you?

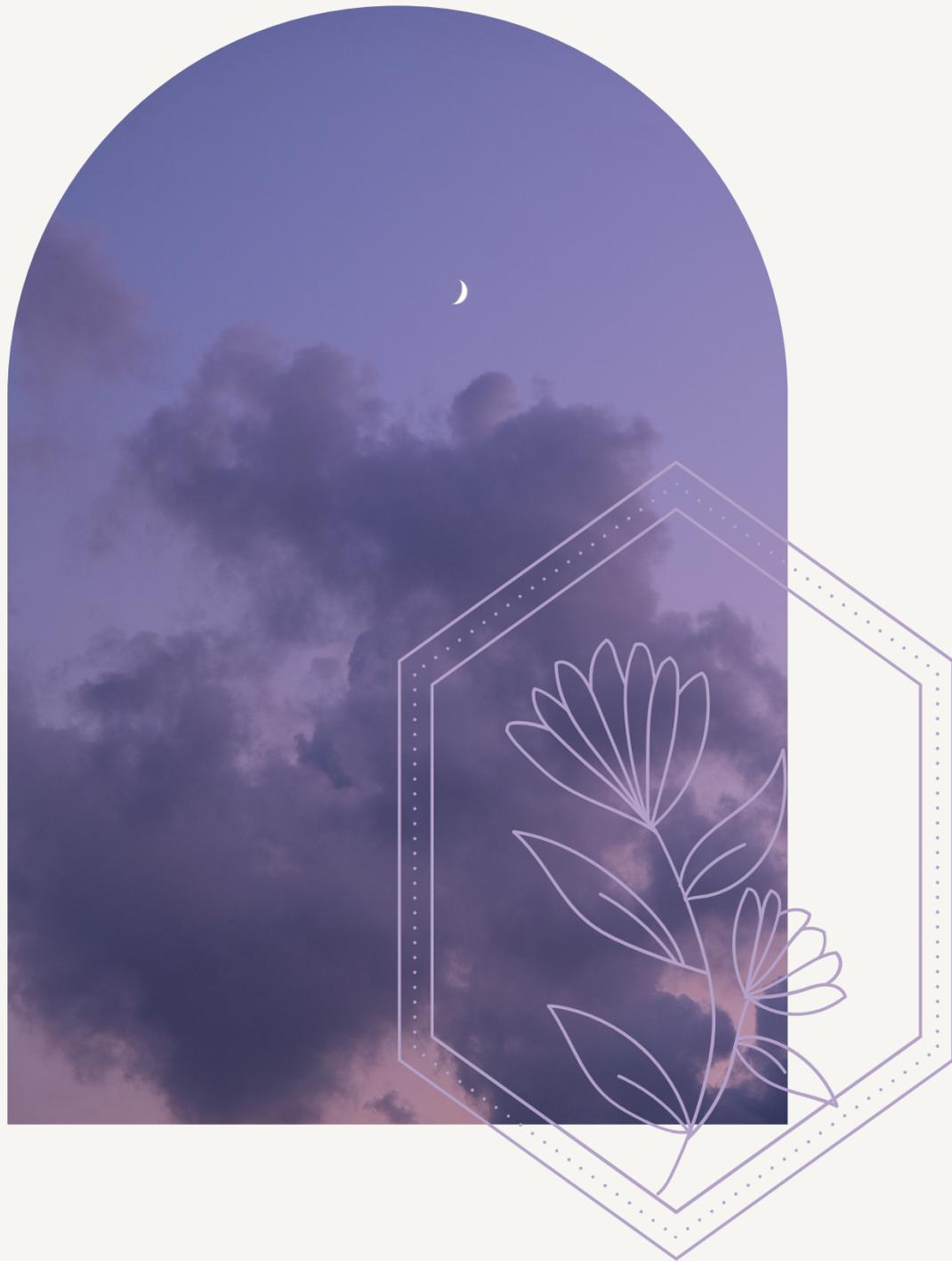
Where do you feel it in your body?

What happens to you?

What are the early warning signs that your body is heading for dysregulation?

How will you look after yourself when you are dysregulated?

Are you more dysregulated than regulated?



Today may of brought up some heavy feelings, please take time after this session to take care of you and come back to a calm state. If you need to chat please reach out to me.



Thank you