
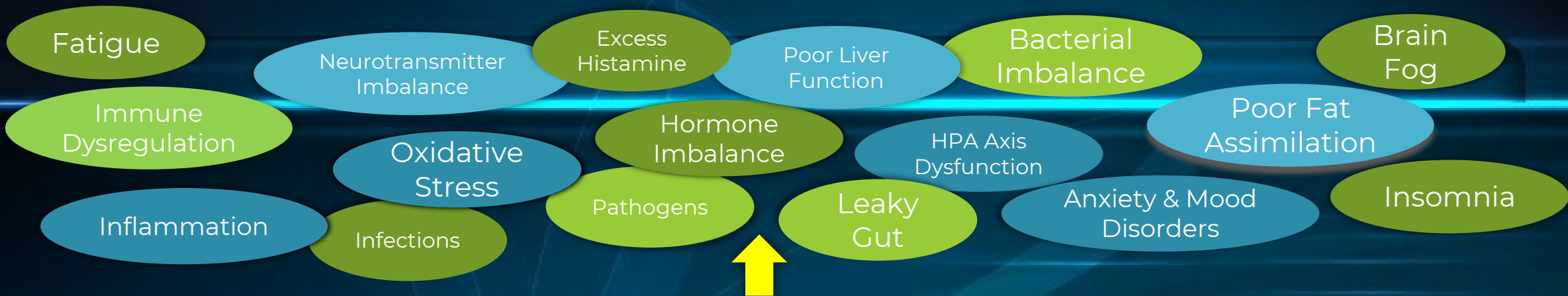




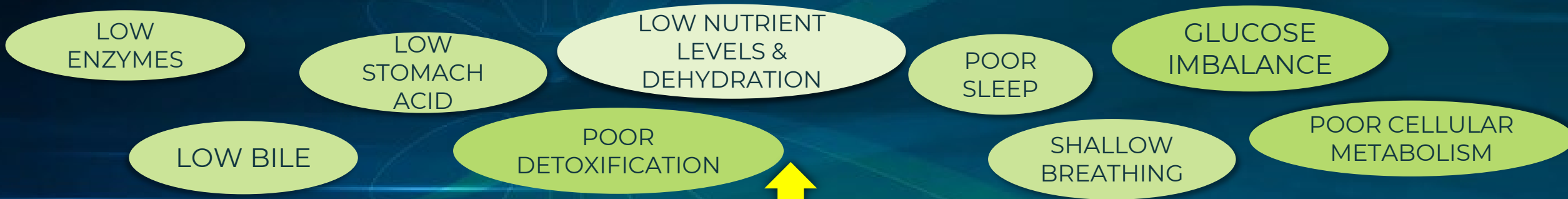
The Nervous System: Overcoming the Threat

3.24.23

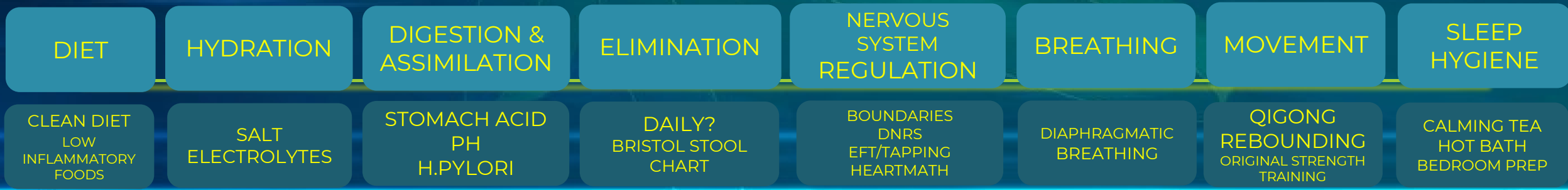




...THAT LEADS TO THE CREATION OF SYMPTOMS



LEADS TO CHANGES IN FUNCTION...



↑ POOR and INCONSISTENT ATTENTION TO THESE AREAS... ↑

Nervous system

Central nervous system (CNS)

Peripheral nervous system
Carries messages to and from the CNS

Brain

Spinal cord
Connects brain and peripheral nervous system

Somatic nervous system
Controls voluntary muscles and transmits sensory information to the CNS

Autonomic nervous system
Controls involuntary body functions

Sympathetic nervous system
Arouses body to expend energy

Parasympathetic nervous system
Calms body to conserve and maintain energy

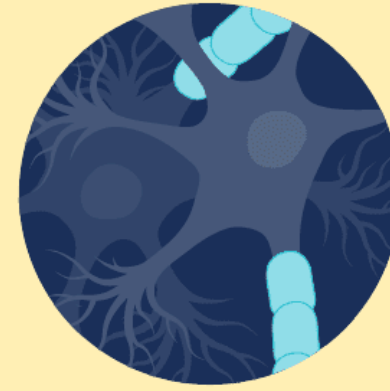
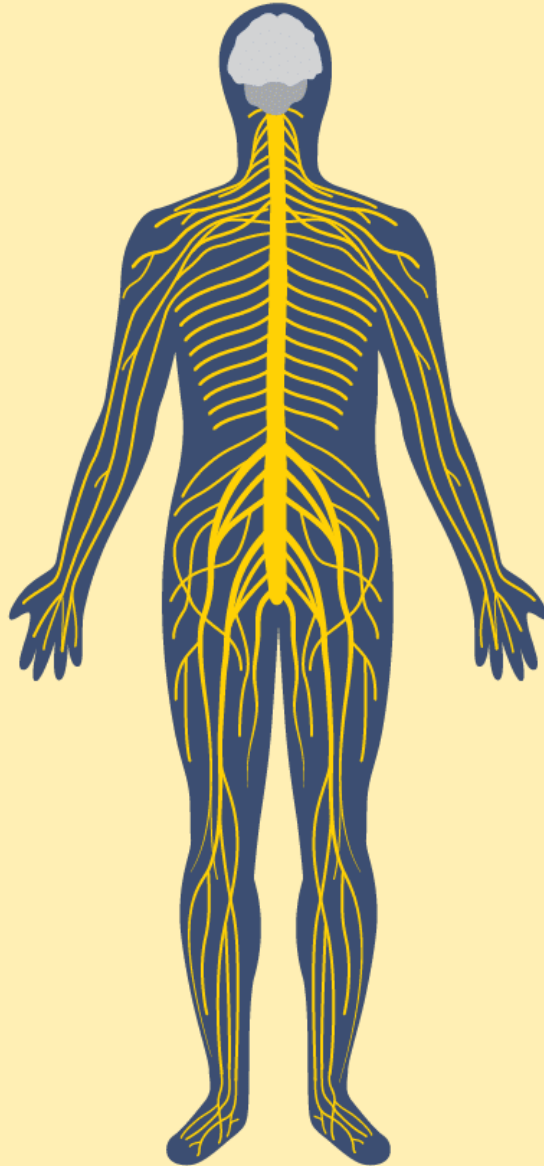
What Does the Peripheral Nervous System Do?



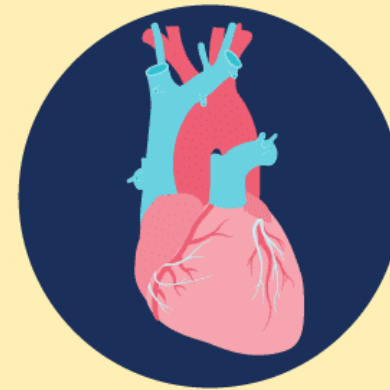
Connects the central nervous system to the organs, limbs, and skin



Allows the brain and spinal cord to receive and send information to other areas of the body



Carries sensory and motor information to and from the central nervous system



Regulates involuntary body functions like heartbeat and breathing

The Autonomic Nervous System Explained



The Sympathetic Nervous System

- Fight or flight
- Prepares the body for stress
- Cortisol and adrenaline
- Increases heart rate and blood pressure
- Decreases digestion



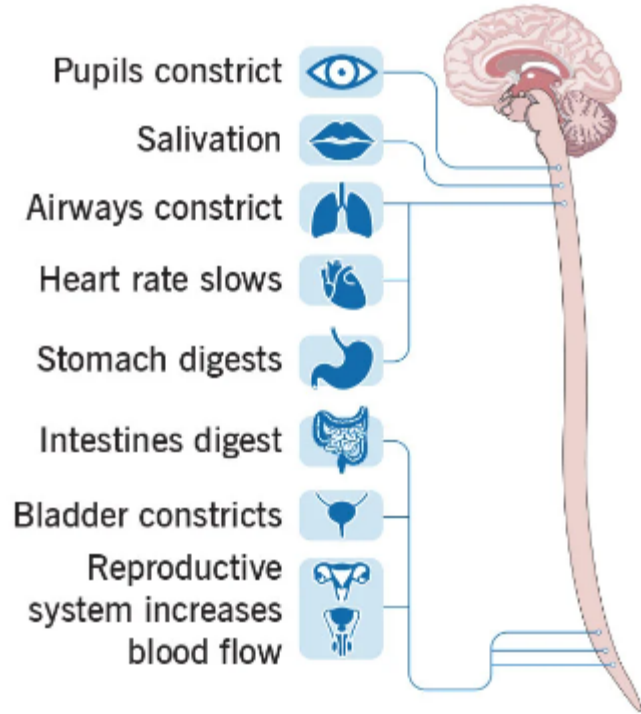
The Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Rest and digest
- Returns the body to a calm state
- Growth hormones, DHEA, Melatonin
- Decreased heart rate and blood pressure
- Repairs the body

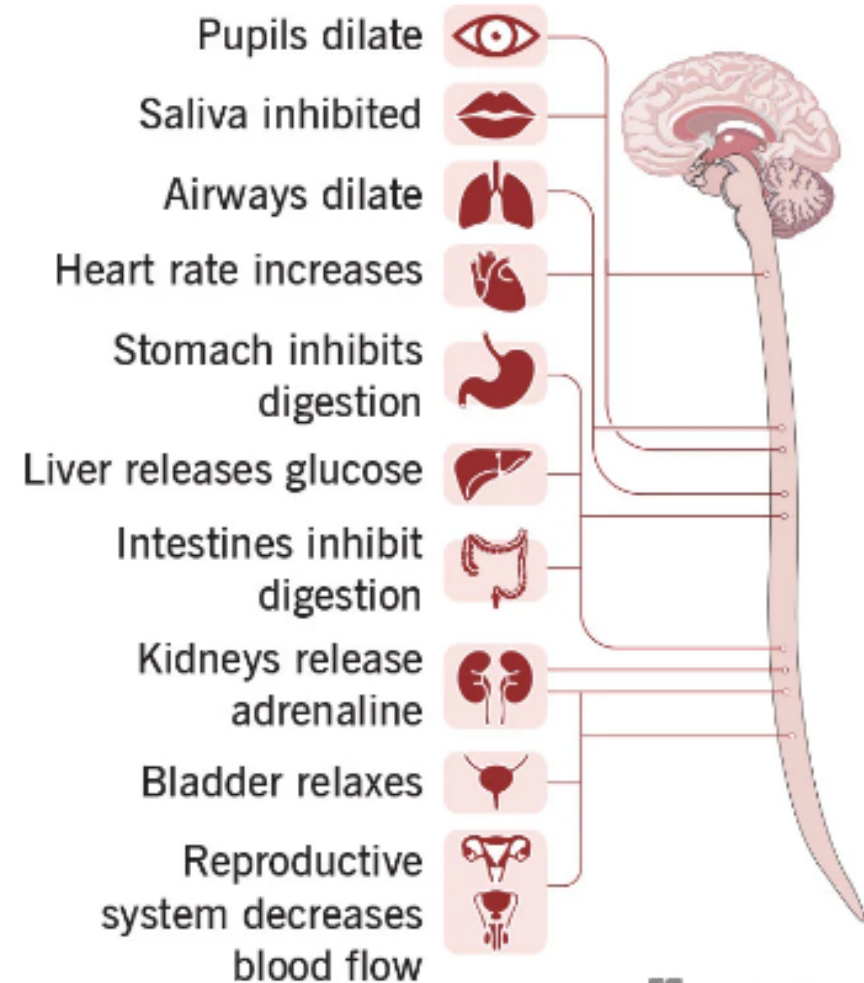
Your autonomic nervous system is the part of your nervous system that controls involuntary actions in the body.

© Jennifer Nurick

Parasympathetic Division



Sympathetic Division





What controls the autonomic nervous system?

What controls the autonomic nervous system?

The hypothalamus.

Limbic system impairment is psychoneuroimmunological (PNI) in nature, which means it involves psychological processes as well as the nervous and immune systems of the body.


Consequently, a limbic system impairment expresses itself via the central nervous system, which can affect our state of physical, psychological, and/or emotional health.

Hopper, Annie. Wired for Healing

Impairment may be caused from:

- physical injury (head or neck trauma),
- toxicant injury from chemicals,
- electromagnetic fields/radiation,
- bacteria,
- viruses,
- fungi, exposure to molds,
- psychological or emotional stress.

All of these can result in brain trauma, inducing overactivation of the mechanisms within the deep limbic system circuits in the brain that deal with threat, with self-protection, and with survival, and they can initiate a multiple system breakdown in the body. Or to put it another way, the brain gets 'stuck' in an unconscious state of chronic emergency that perpetuates illness and inflammation. This typically involves the central nervous system, the musculoskeletal system, the respiratory system, the immune system, the digestive system, and the endocrine system.




The brain is directly wired to the immune system so it comes as no surprise that limbic system impairment and a chronic 'fight-or-flight' state would affect the ability to fight disease.

Chronic stress can also lead to damaging levels of inflammation.

Additionally, studies have suggested that chronic stress can reactivate latent viruses as well as change gene expression.

Hopper, Annie. Wired for Healing



The limbic system, especially the amygdala, plays a vital role in controlling various emotional behaviors, such as fear, rage, anxiety, etc.



The brain adapts to protect itself from the stress that trauma produces.

Certain parts of the brain are placed on high alert, while other parts become much less active. This has a significant impact on a child's ability to control emotions, stay calm, pay attention, be less impulsive and form healthy relationships.

What are boundaries? They come from speaking our truth.

- what we'll do if people don't stop treating us a particular way;
- what people can or can't do to or around us—in our space;
- how far we'll go for someone;
- how far other people can go with us;
- what we will and won't tolerate;
- “yes” when we mean it;
- “no” when that's our answer;
- “maybe” when we're unsure;
- what we will or won't do if people don't respect the boundaries we set.

Beattie, Melody. *The New Codependency: Help and Guidance for Today's Generation*

What does it require to have boundaries?

- self-awareness,
- self-love,
- honest communication,
- saying the hard stuff,
- aligning with or stepping into our power.

Beattie, Melody. *The New Codependency: Help and Guidance for Today's Generation*

What does it look like when we have boundaries in place?

- we're done saying "yes" when we mean "no"
- hurtful, disrespectful behavior must stop
- we're ready to say how we feel, whether people want to hear it or not
- we're willing to part ways unless we have equal rights in relationships that became one-way streets
- we're ready to let people feel awkward by reminding them they didn't pay back money they borrowed instead of us feeling awkward when we didn't do anything wrong

Beattie, Melody. *The New Codependency: Help and Guidance for Today's Generation*

HAVING GOOD BOUNDARIES WITH PEOPLE INCLUDES:

- respecting their rights, privacy, and personal business;
- asking, not expecting, assuming, demanding, or insisting;
- doing what we say we will, and saying when plans change;
- asking if it's a good time to talk when we call;
- not arriving unannounced unless both parties agree that's okay;
- not borrowing without asking;
- paying debts on time;
- telling the truth;
- being nonjudgmental;
- not pushing our beliefs on others;
- not feeling entitled to taking what others have by manipulation;
- calling at normal hours unless it's a true emergency and not drama;
- not assuming we know the facts unless we do.


Beattie, Melody. *The New Codependency: Help and Guidance for Today's Generation*




Trauma can damage boundaries.

If you have experienced trauma, you may be less likely to actively defend yourself, your desires, and your personal boundaries in new situations.

Trauma impacts the way you understand and relate to your own boundaries. Boundary pushing and crossing can cause emotional damage.




Working on establishing solid, healthy boundaries removes a burden from the body and allows it better accessibility to healing.



A common difficulty with individuals after trauma is the inability to say no to others out of fear that by setting a limit the other person will react negatively with anger, abandonment, or even abuse.

In turn, the individual focuses on pleasing others to the detriment of their own needs and wants.



Boundaries can help you determine what you will accept and what you won't accept.


Personal boundaries in relationships are necessary because you may feel resentful and exhausted without them. Many have found that setting boundaries improves your mental health and mood.

Without limits, it's hard to be self-aware and independent.

Boundaries are an essential part of the trauma recovery process for two main reasons:

- **Setting boundaries is a good way to feel safer even in situations where triggers arise**
- **Helps those recovering from trauma to develop a greater sense of self-worth.**

Having boundaries in place elevates these feelings of safety and self-worth, motivating change while soothing the process.




Setting boundaries lets us modulate emotions and lessen both the triggering of threats and the response to them.



Why do many struggle with setting healthy boundaries?

The number one reason some people struggle with this concept is they simply don't know how to go about setting a clear boundary.

They may not be in touch with their feelings, making it tough to understand what a reasonable personal limit would be.



Helping a client define the necessary boundary work is as detrimental to the healing process as is diet, hydration and breathing.

It is foundational to supporting the nervous system.

Questions to consider when building boundaries:

Can I identify and express my emotions?

Am I comfortable sharing a differing perspective in my relationships?

Can I accept that my feelings, thoughts, and preferences change frequently?

Am I safe in my relationships to express my inner world?

Healthy boundaries are fluid, not fixed, meaning they can change over time and hour by hour.

Boundaries are not rules.

They are about establishing a safe environment for you to identify what you need and communicating those needs to others.

Exercises for Nervous System Regulation by Boundary Building

Breathing

Boundary Worksheets

Rebounding

Deep Breathing

Breathing exercises are a core component of any anger management training. They are simple, very effective, and can be used anywhere at any time. **Deep breathing** works by countering the fight or flight response (our body's response to a threat, which contributes to anger), regulating our central nervous system, and distracting our thoughts. Here are the steps:

- **Instructions: Deep Breathing**

1. Sit comfortably in your chair. Place your hand on your stomach so you are able to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.
2. Take a deep breath through your nose. Breathe in slowly. Time the breath to last 5 seconds.
3. Hold the breath for 5 seconds. You can do less time if it's difficult or uncomfortable.
4. Release the air slowly (again, time 5 seconds). Do this by puckering your lips and pretending that you are blowing through a straw (it can be helpful to use a straw for practice).
5. Repeat this process for about 5 minutes, preferably 3 times a day. The more you practice, the more effective deep breathing will be when you need it.

Deep breathing should be used in the moment when you notice your anger growing, but like all of the skills we've discussed, practice is a must. Plus, the positive effects of deep breathing are long-lasting.

Therapist Aid Resources Links for Boundary Work

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/boundary-styles>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/boundaries-discussion-questions>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/setting-boundaries>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/healthy-boundaries-tips>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/boundaries-exploration-activity>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/boundaries-psychoeducation-printout>

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/self-care-tips>



UNLEASH YOUR REBOUNding PASSION

Ditch the gym and put some bounce back into your life. Five fun minutes on a trampoline is equivalent to one mile of running!



Rebounding

Bouncing on a trampoline can improve your mood and make you happy! It increases blood flow to muscles that haven't been used, loosens the overused ones and triggers the release of endorphins (your brain's natural calming aid). This also helps feelings of anxiety and depression go down.

<https://leapsandrebounds.com/pages/benefits>