

Understanding our Nervous System

Based on Polyvagal Theory

Fight



I need to Fight back against this threat

Sympathetic Nervous System

Activating - Increases energy
Gas pedal of system

Frustration
Irritation
Anger
Rage

Worry
Obsessing
Anxiety
Panic

Flight



I need to run away from this threat

Window of Tolerance

Optimal Functioning
Resilience, Flexibility, Balance

Parasympathetic (Ventral "smart" Vagus)

Tend and Befriend



Self-soothing
Breathing
Releasing trapped energy

Connection
Support
Belonging
Co-regulation

Freeze



trapped
helpless/hopeless
depressed
numb

Parasympathetic (Dorsal Vagus)

Slowing down.- decreases energy
Brakes on system

I can't fight or run away so I'll shut down