

Staying Steady *in the* Storm

Jennifer Welch

GM Coach, Cellular Release
Therapist, Somatic Experiencing
Practitioner, Music Therapist



What We Will Cover

- Let's be real
- Nervous system basics
- What "regulation" means
- What "be gentle with yourself" really means
- How to clear within yourself when things around you are uncertain
- Simple sensorial self-awareness practices for nervous system well-being

Let's be Real

It's OK to be where you're at.

It's OK to feel what you feel.

It's OK to know what you know.

It's OK.



Nervous System Basics



Sympathetic Nervous System

The SNS gets our whole body ready for action. It regulates arousal. It increases activity during times of stress and arousal.

- Increases our heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure.
- Shifts blood away from our digestive system to our muscles to allow for quicker movement.
- Constricts our blood vessels and draining the blood away from the skin periphery (which turn pale and cold) to prepare for potential injury.
- Dilates our pupils, retracting our eyelids and focusing our eyes.

Para-Sympathetic Nervous System

The PNS helps us rest. It helps us unwind, reorganize and regenerate after threat or stress

- Let go of muscle tension.
- Lowers heart rate and blood pressure.
- Warms our skin and returning its blush.
- Aids in digestion.
- Slows and deepens breathing.
- Returns blood to the peripheral vessels (turning our skin flushed and warm again).
- Allows the immune system to fully function again.
- Secretes bodily fluids.

Healthy Nervous System Regulation

A healthy nervous system has ongoing cycles of charge/discharge, with a functional range and a full spectrum of resiliency.

- In a healthy response to threat, the PNS releases the brake, allowing the SNS to increase arousal and prepare to respond to the perceived threat.
- The increased arousal mobilizes flight and fight responses.
- High levels of arousal that could trigger an immobility, or freeze, response. This is like slamming on the brakes to shut down the high activation of the SNS.
- If threat responses are successfully completed, and danger is perceived to have passed, the PNS again begins its function of naturally dissipating the SNS response of arousal.
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Sympathetic and Parasympathetic

- The Sympathetic branch is like the gas pedal of our nervous system. It mobilizes energy and initiates the stress response (fight/flight)



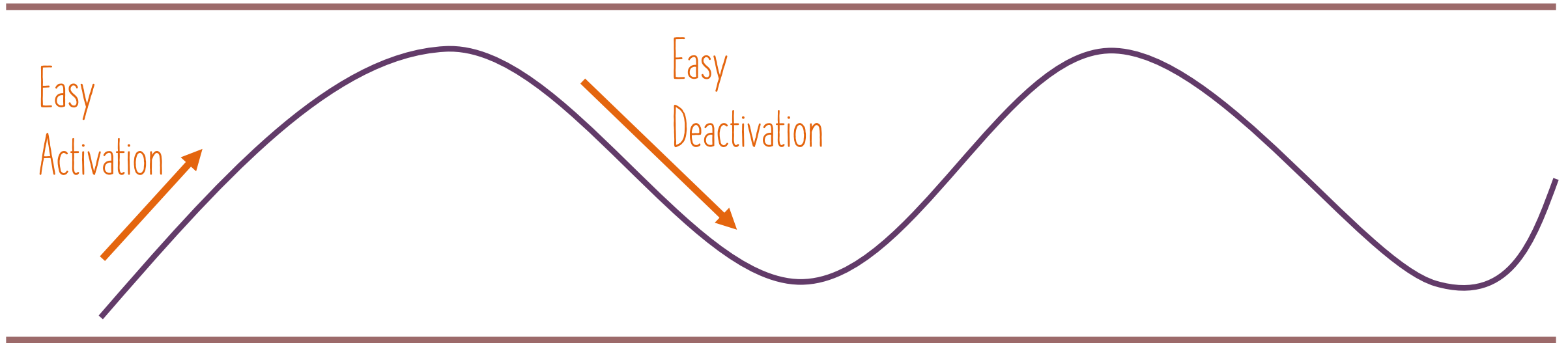
- The Parasympathetic branch acts like the brake pedal for our nervous system. It manages our response to stimulus, and regulates the stress response. It helps us to relax, unwind and ultimately discharge the arousal of sympathetic activation



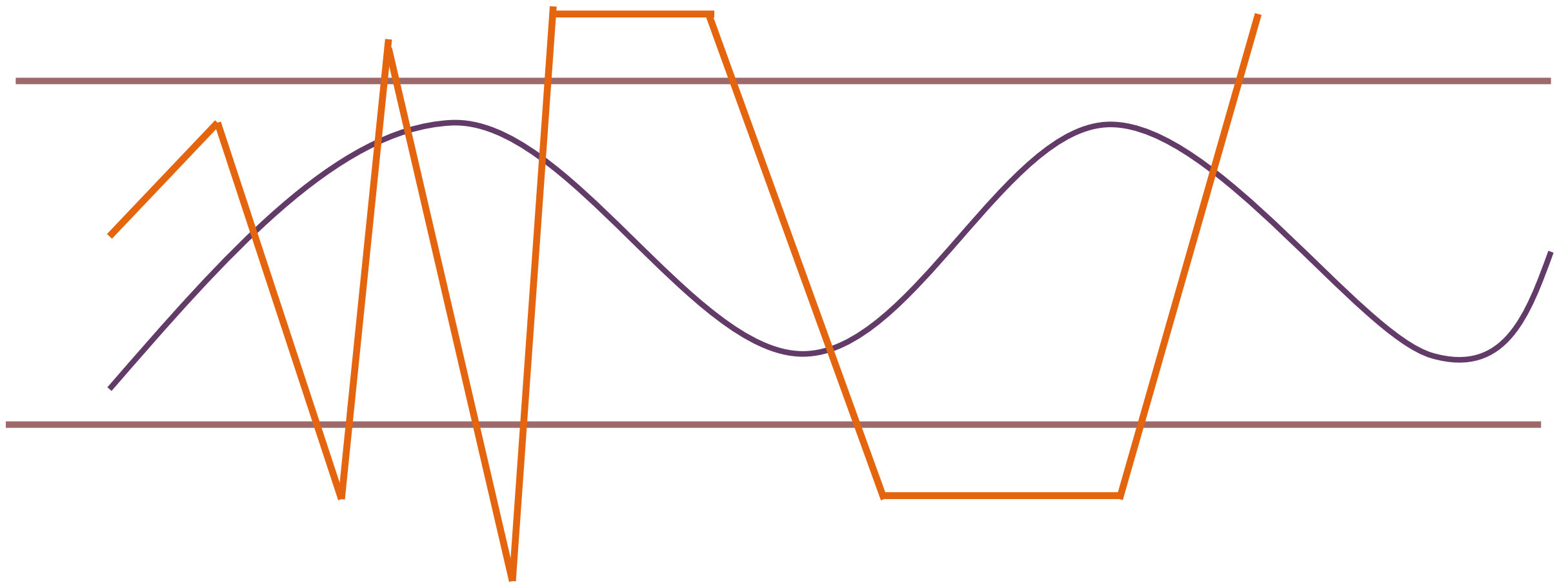
Dysregulated Nervous System

- The dysregulated ANS is much like a car driven with both the brake and accelerator fully engaged. It is characterized by severe erratic fluctuations and/or fixity in nervous system response.
- The nervous system becomes over-activated when stimulation is introduced too fast or too soon, or when it is too much for normal resiliency to process.

Healthy Nervous System Regulation



Dysregulated Nervous System



Stress Symptoms

SNS Over-Activation

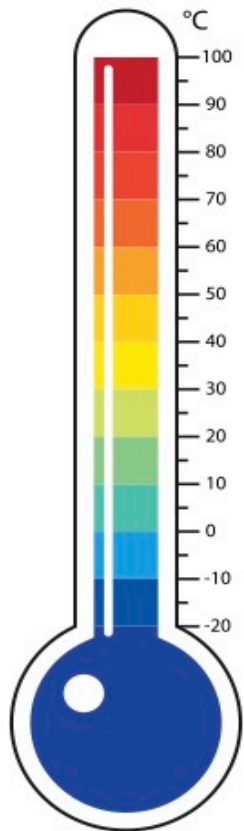
- Increased heart rate
- Difficulty breathing
- Cold Sweats
- Tinging
- Muscular Tension
- Exaggerated Startle Response
- Chronic Pain
- Inability to sleep or relax
- Tendency toward panic attacks
- Rage
- Outbursts
- Racing thoughts

Stress Symptoms

PNS Over-Activation

- Low energy
- Exhaustion
- Numbness
- Low muscle tone
- Poor digestion
- Low heart rate or blood pressure
- Poor immune function

Working With the Nervous System



Panic, Rage

Anxiety, Fear, Anger

Worry, Concern, Irritation, Frustration

Safety

Freeze

Danger: Flight/Flight

Safety and Social Engagement





What Helps Regulate
the Nervous System?



Quickest Way to Regulation

- The quickest way to help our bodies remember the possibility of settling and stabilizing is to connect with the sensory experience or sensation that's anchored in the present moment.



Learn to Track What's Happening in the Body

- What sensations are you aware of?
- Can you feel your feet on the ground?
What is that like?
- How is your breath?
- What does the body want to do?



A wide-angle photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, with some clouds. The water is dark blue with small, choppy waves. In the distance, there are silhouettes of mountains. On the right side, there is a dark, silhouetted cliff or headland.

Sight – Visual Cues

A serene sunset scene over a beach. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and the water. In the foreground, tall, thin grasses are silhouetted against the bright light, with some blades catching the sun's rays. The ocean waves are visible in the distance, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

Sound – Auditory Cues



Bodily Sensation

A bald eagle is perched on a dark, gnarled tree branch. The eagle has a white head and neck, a yellow beak, and dark brown feathers on its body. It is looking towards the right. The background is a soft-focus view of a snowy landscape with more tree branches. The text "Connect with Nature" is overlaid in a white, cursive font across the lower half of the image.

Connect with Nature



*Find Ways to
Safely Connect
with Others*

What Does it Mean to be Gentle with Self?

- Give yourself permission to do only what you can reasonably do. Be realistic with with yourself.
- Find one thing in a day that you can have control of, that's for yourself. Enjoy this!
- Let yourself have moments of relief through the day.
- Practice generous self care: hydrate, get sleep as you can (nap even!), do extra visualizations, turn off your phone, let yourself slow down, even when things may be busy, take baths, walks, etc...



How to Be Clear in this Moment

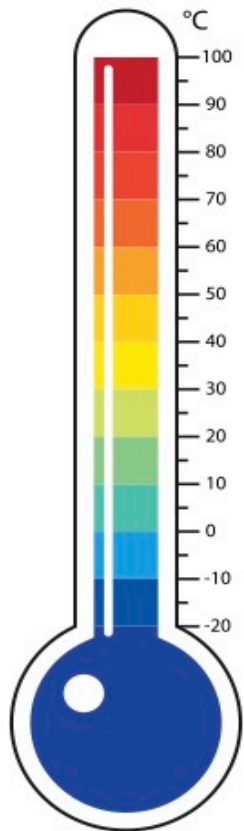
Ask yourself, "What do I need for myself right now?"

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.



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