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# Moving and Soothing



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The Australian Childhood Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of this land and we pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future.



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## Learning outcomes

- ✓ Revised their understanding of the neurobiology of trauma
- ✓ Explored the knowledge of body based interventions and their grounding in current theory and research
- ✓ Consider the core principles of body based interventions
- ✓ Engaged with specific strategies that participants can take into their practice, and
- ✓ Utilised a critical thinking model to examine the application considerations of this way of working.



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## The Body - Soma

- The body is the medium through which we experience ourselves and the environment. The ways we gather and interpret sensory information affect both how we monitor our internal workings and how we construct our views of the world.

• Source: Andrea Olsen; *Body and Earth an Experiential Guide*



## Ethical considerations and practice principles

## Ethical considerations in somatic therapies

- Use of touch
- Safety
- Personal/professional boundaries
- Code of conduct
- Dept of Ed policies
- **What considerations do you need make in the context of your work?**



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## All activities should consider the following:

- The child's sense of safety and your relationship with them
- The child's developmental age and stage
- The child's known history and triggers
- The child's likes and dislikes
- The child's individual needs
- Use of a titrated approach...

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Moving and soothing in therapeutic practice – what does it mean for our clients ...

*“It’s about dancing your feelings and learning to be calm”*

*(Source: Bridget – aged 10 years)*



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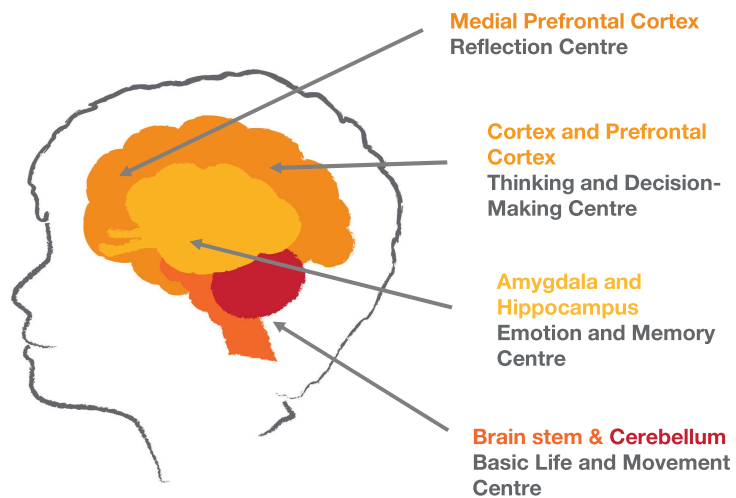
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# Brain Development and Developmental Movement Patterns



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## Brain development



Source: Peggy Hackney. *Making Connections Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*

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## Developmental Movement Patterns

1. **BREATH** – individual cells
2. **CORE DISTAL CONNECTIVITY**  
Navel radiation – brainstem
3. **HEAD TAIL CONNECTIVITY**  
Spinal push – brainstem  
Spinal reach – brainstem  
Spinal reach & pull – diencephalon
4. **UPPER-LOWER CONNECTIVITY**  
Homologous push & reach – diencephalon
5. **BODY HALF CONNECTIVITY**  
Homolateral (left side, right side) push – cerebellum
6. **CROSS-LATERAL CONNECTIVITY**  
Contralateral crawling – two hemispheres/ corpus collosum

Source: Peggy Hackney. *Making Connections Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*

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## 1. Exploring breath

Cellular breathing



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

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## 2. Core distal connectivity - navel radiation

- Starfish – opening and closing

<https://youtu.be/Gh3nHI5Bzr8>



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

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### 3. Exploring head-tail

- Cobra pose
- Cat stretch
- Child's pose



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

Image sourced from: <https://www.abcyogaforkids.com/>

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### 4. Exploring homologous movements (upper/lower):

- Frog jumping
- Kangaroo jumps – image of heavy tail
- Skipping rope jumps with two legs together
- Rolling up through the spine
- Up down movements with scarves



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

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## 5. Exploring homolateral or body half movements:

- X on the floor
- Warrior lunges to side
- <https://youtu.be/HJU8yExIs9E>



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

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## 6. Exploring cross lateral movements:

- Crawling
- Skipping
- Opposite arm to knee movements



*Reflection: how do you feel after this activity, do you notice anything about your arousal.*

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## Non verbal legacies of complex developmental trauma...

**Maladaptive procedural tendencies**

**Sensory processing problems**

**Dysregulated arousal**



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## Mal-adaptive procedural tendencies



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## 5 fundamental movements (Bainbridge-Cohen 1993)



Yield



Push



Reach



Grasp



Pull

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## Procedural learning

- Procedural learning refers to the acquisition of motor skills and habits, and certain types of cognitive skills.
- Unlike declarative learning and memory, procedural memory is typically inaccessible to conscious recollection.



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## Implicit memory – Pat Ogden



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## Sensory Processing Issues



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## Our 8 sensory systems

1. **Visual**
2. **Auditory**
3. **Olfactory** (*smell*) System
4. **Gustatory** (*taste*) System
5. **Tactile** System
6. **Vestibular** (*sense of head movement in space*) System
7. **Proprioceptive** (*sensations from muscles and joints of body*) System
8. **Interoception**

<https://www.spdstar.org/basic/your-8-senses>



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## Practice basics - Sensory modulation

- The brain's ability to pay attention to relevant stimuli, while shutting out irrelevant stimuli.
- This helps the brain to function at an optimal level of arousal and performance
- Sensory approaches look to modulate emotional and physiological arousal



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## Dysregulated arousal



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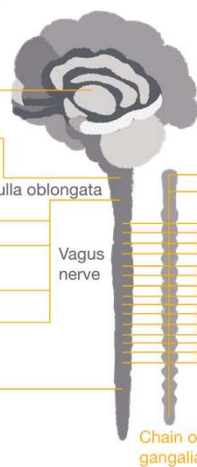
## Polyvagal theory the vagus nerve

### Immobilisation

hypo-arousal

#### Parasympathetic

- Ganglion
- Stimulates flow of saliva
- Slows heartbeat
- Constricts bronchi
- Stimulates peristalsis and secretion
- Stimulates release of bile
- Contracts bladder



### Mobilisation

hyper-arousal

#### Sympathetic

- Dilates pupil
- Inhibits flow of saliva
- Accelerates heartbeat
- Dilates bronchi
- Inhibits peristalsis and secretion
- Conversion of glycogen to glucose
- Secretion of adrenaline and noradrenaline
- Inhibits bladder contraction



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# The social engagement system – polyvagal theory

**Behavioural Functions**      **Body Functions**      by Stephen Porges

<b>Social Engagement</b> Soothing and calming Indicates safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowers or raises vocalisation pitch</li> <li>• Regulates middle ear muscles to perceive human voice</li> <li>• Changes facial expressivity</li> <li>• Head turning</li> <li>• Tears and eyelids</li> <li>• Slows or speeds heart rate</li> </ul>
<b>Mobilisation</b> Fight or Flight Active Freeze Moderate or extreme danger	<b>Hyper arousal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases heart rate</li> <li>• Sweat increases</li> <li>• Inhibits gastrointestinal function</li> <li>• Narrowing blood vessels - to slow blood flow to extremities</li> <li>• Release of adrenaline</li> </ul>
<b>Immobilisation</b> Collapse or submission Death feigning Increased pain threshold Conserves metabolic resources Life threatening situations	<b>Hypo - arousal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slows heart rate</li> <li>• Constricts bronchi</li> <li>• Stimulates gastrointestinal function</li> </ul>



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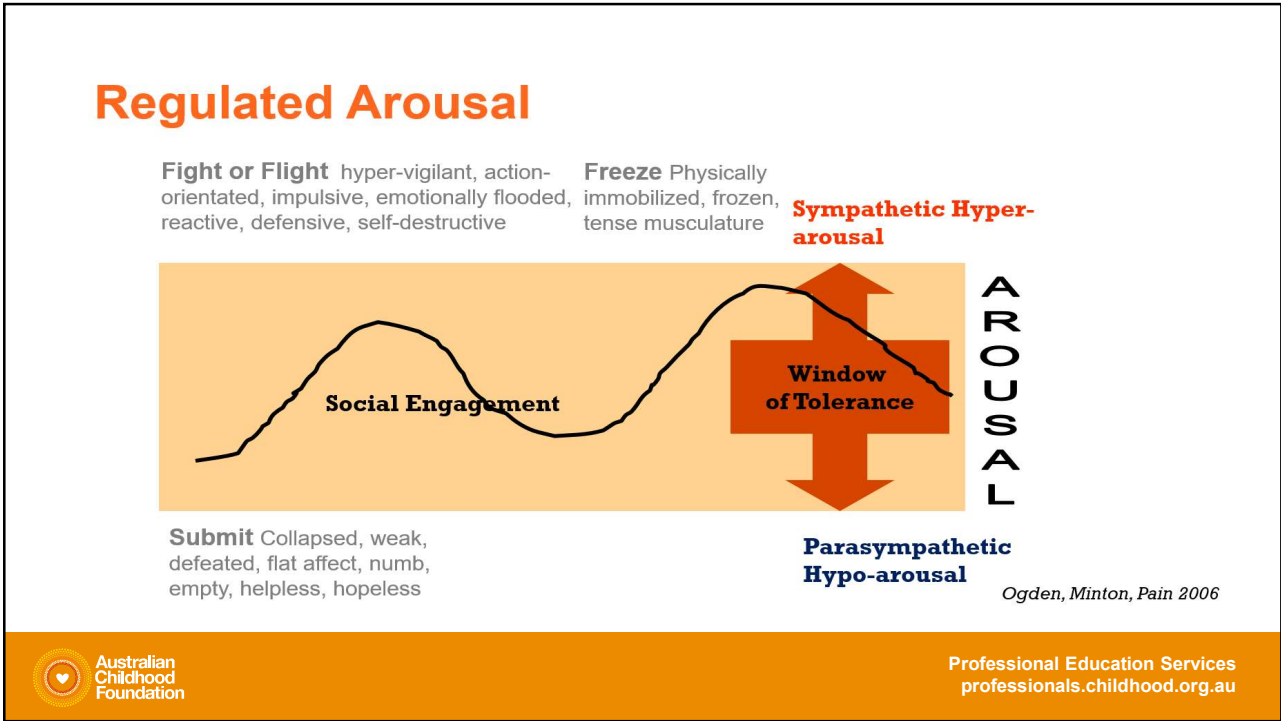
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY

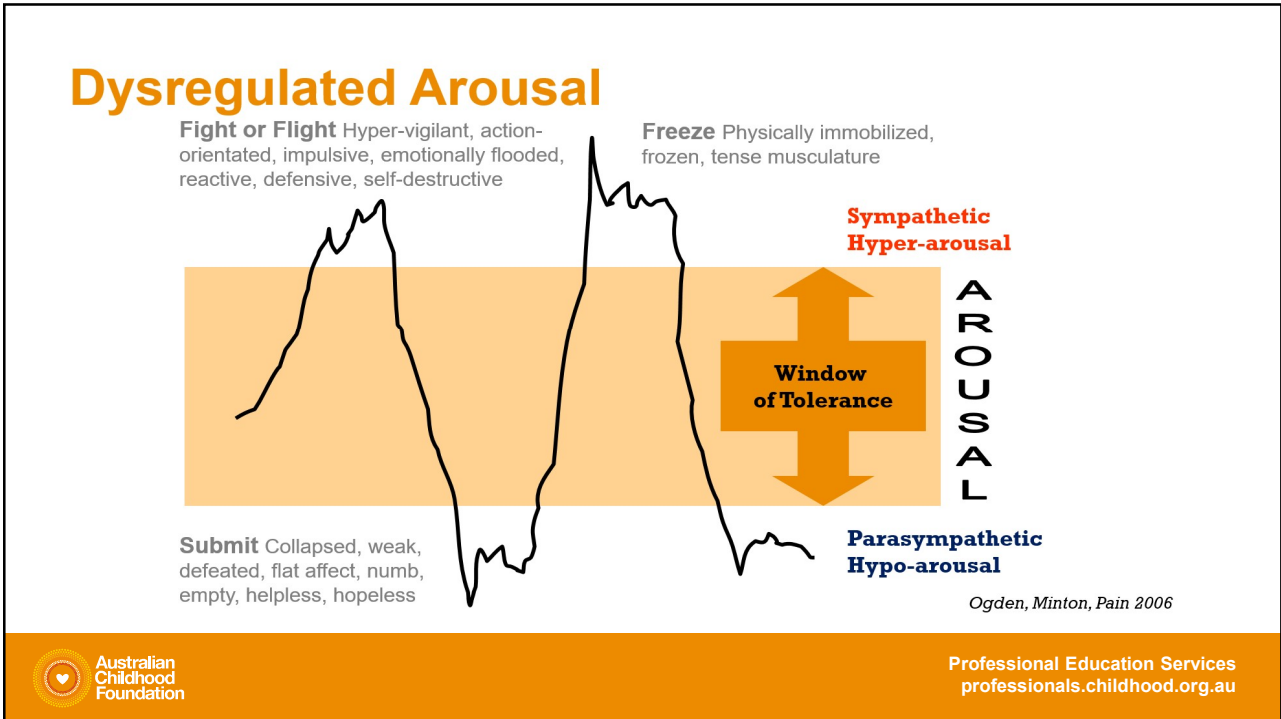


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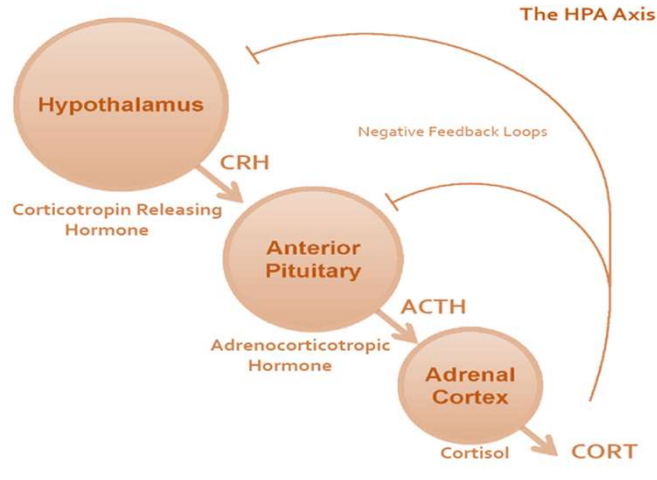
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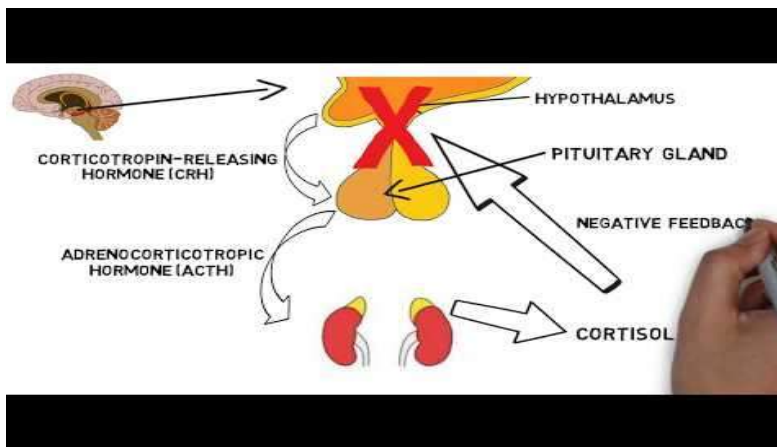


# Hypothalamic Pituitary Adrenal Axis



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# The HPA Axis



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## Working with Protective Responses –

## Activating the Social Engagement System



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## Working with protective responses- social engagement

- Various breathing techniques
- (3 counts in, pause, 4 counts out, pause) repeat
- Sighing activity (1 2 3 Sigh - then repeat)
- Falling feathers or silk scarves or leaf
- Blowing a pin wheel
- Blowing bubbles
- Blowing up balloons



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## Working with mobilised responses- Fight/Flight



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## Working with children who show mobilised responses- fight/flight

- Rhythm techniques
- Containing techniques
- Grounding techniques



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## Rhythm techniques

- Rhythm tools engage the child's natural organisation.
- "Drumming simultaneously activates both hemispheres of the brain and it promotes use of the corpus callosum (bridge between 2 hemispheres which is negatively affected by cumulative trauma)."
- "Drumming enhances recovery through inducing relaxation and enhancing theta-wave production. Drumming produces pleasurable experiences and releases emotional trauma."
- Winkelman, 2003

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## Containing techniques

- Body sock
- Pushing against pillows
- Pushing against the wall
- Use weighted blankets / wheat bags
- Medicine ball
- Pillow sandwich
- Self holding
- Clapping hands
- Martial arts
- Soft punching bag



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## Grounding techniques

- Imagery- tree roots
- Imagine being magnetised to the ground
- Design your own anchor and imagine being close to shore and lowering your anchor down onto the sea floor

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## Working with children who show immobilised responses

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## Working with children who show immobilised responses- intervention tools



- Orienting to the space
- Orienting the senses
- Alignment- engaging the spine

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## Orienting to the space

- Point to something **green**
- Encourage the child to look up and out rather than down- hang an interesting object at height in the space
- Name objects in the room out loud
- Ask them the time
- Open a window, move outside if you're inside and inside if you're outside
- Encourage children to take their shoes off and feel their feet on the floor
- Offer the child a cold drink



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## Orienting the senses

- Walk around the room and mentally notice an object and name it aloud
- 5 senses hand on paper
- Working with clay – make a talisman or object that can help you to feel calm

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## Orienting the senses

- 10 mindful moves
- Singing bowl
- Pearls dropping in a bowl of water
- 4 x Pebble meditation
- Rock painting
- Mindful colouring
- Sensory experiences: feathers, water, snow
- Smelling oils

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## Alignment ... engaging the spine

- Move like you have a tail – extension of the sacrum (base of spine).
- Tic toc like a clock until you find your centre
- Imagine being lifted by a hook from the top of your head, while feeling the pull of gravity on the tail of your spine.
- Zip yourself up
- Walk with a toy balanced on your head



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## 10 mindful moves by Thich Nhat Hanh



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## Body based Practice basics

- **Regulate child:** down regulate and up regulate to maintain attention and alertness for learning
- **Work Bottom-Up:** “Physicalize:” find a way to address child’s issues through movement, rhythm, activities and gestures that integrate emotions and cognitions/beliefs
- **Use props:** pillows, therapy balls, body socks, fidget toys, throwing balls, rope, blankets, etc.
- **Emphasize strengths:** Positive reinforcement, acknowledge
- **Atmosphere of play,** fun, non-coercive, child in charge
- **Challenge child’s window of tolerance** appropriate for his/her developmental stage
- **Do your best to assure success:** provide appropriate challenges at which the child can succeed rather than fail.

*Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute 2012*



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- Janina Fischer (2009) **Sensorimotor Approaches to Trauma Treatment**



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