

Befriending Your Nervous System

DEB DANA

Looking Through the Lens of Polyvagal Theory

Session One: Exploring the Autonomic Pathways

1. Introduction to Session One
2. Polyvagal theory has changed my life
3. The science of connection
4. Autonomic pathways
5. The vagal brake
6. The sympathetic system
7. The autonomic hierarchy
8. The ventral vagal experience
9. Exploring the autonomic landscape
10. Exploring dorsal and sympathetic survival states

Session Two: Learning to Listen

11. Introduction to Session Two
12. Listening is an essential part of befriending
13. Self-Compassion Practice
14. Awareness, understanding, choice
15. How your nervous system says yes, no, and maybe
16. Listening inside out and outside in
17. Autonomic Listening Reflection

Session Three: The Longing for Connection

18. Introduction to Session Three
19. Reciprocity, rupture, and repair
20. Face-Heart Connection Meditation
21. Exploring the elements of the social engagement system
22. Essential connections to self, world, and spirit
23. Nourishing our autonomic nervous system
24. Returning to our essential need for connection

Session Four: Autonomic Intuition

25. Introduction to Session Four
26. Detection without awareness
27. Listening to sounds
28. Listening to voices
29. Neuroception of state shifts
30. Attending to cues of safety and danger
31. Building a perception connection

Session Five: Patterns of Protection and Connection

32. Introduction to Session Five
33. The biology of protection and connection
34. Your personal protection-connection equation
35. Autonomic Navigation Meditation
36. Exploring your pathways of connection
37. Listening to the autonomic story
38. Guided Practice: Explore Your Home Away from Home
39. The ways we're taken out of connection into protection

Session Six: Anchoring in Safety

40. Introduction to Session Six
41. The way home to ventral
42. Three Circles Visualization
43. The many flavors of ventral
44. Glimmers
45. Anchoring in ventral vagal safety
46. Stories, actions, feelings
47. The benefits of a flexible system
48. Savoring

Session Seven: Gentle Shaping

49. Introduction to Session Seven
50. The right degree of challenge for our systems
51. Stretch, Savor, Stress, Survive Practice
52. Both/And Shaping Practice
53. A gentle process unfolding over time
54. Shaping with breath
55. Shaping with touch

Session Eight: Restorying

56. Introduction to Session Eight
57. New stories about who we are
58. Seeing an experience through the eyes of each state
59. Shaping and restorying
60. Exploring stories through movement
61. Exploring stories through image
62. Exploring stories through music
63. Exploring stories through words
64. The journey

Session Nine: Transcendent Experiences

65. Introduction to Session Nine
66. The biology of awe
67. Gratitude
68. Compassion and elevation
69. Just Like Me Practice
70. The story of stillness
71. Discovering Moments of Stillness Practice
72. Benevolence Meditation

Session Ten: Caring for Our Nervous Systems

73. Introduction to Session Ten
74. Tuning in, taking in, tending to
75. Our resilience continuum
76. Sustainable self-care practices
77. Self-Care Circle Practice
78. Showing up for others
79. Going deeper

Session Eleven: A Polyvagal Conversation

80. Introduction to Session Eleven
81. We are all transmitting and receiving
82. We don't need to know why
83. The experience of well-being in ventral
84. Getting underneath our stories
85. The power of listening
86. I am a welcoming, safe presence
87. Rhythms of rupture and repair
88. Enjoying the world in new ways

The sounds in Session Four were made by Mitchell Clute, and the voices provided by Solay Howell and Matt Zimmerman. The music for this program was created by Mitchell Clute and Matt Zimmerman.