



The Role of Group Therapy: Stimulating The Ventral Vagal System

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A NEW PARADIGM FOR SOLVING
CHRONIC PAIN: FROM THREAT TO



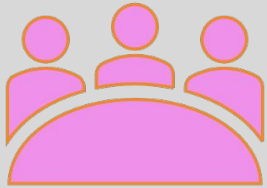
It Always Seems Impossible...
Until It is Done

- Nelson Mandela

Overview

- ❑ **The Five Reasons:**
 - ❑ Why Group Heals Chronic Pain.
- ❑ **Framework:**
 - ❑ The Y-Pain Model
- ❑ **Experiential Exercises:**
 - ❑ Fun Demos: Let's *Co-Regulation*, Right?!

Five General Reasons: Why Group Work Helps Heal Chronic Pain



1. Reduces isolation
(Cameras on please)



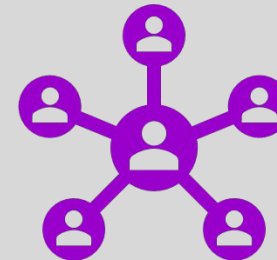
2. Receive support
(No advice giving)



3. Brain-Mind-Body Soothing Skills
(Evidenced-based skills)



4. Problem Solving/Emotional Process
(No Pain talk at home or in group)



4. Increase social support network
(A community in pain recovery journey)

Co-Regulation...

It's about the reciprocation of sending & receiving of signals of safety.

It's about the connection between **two+** nervous systems.

It's about nourishing and regulating others in the service of finding safety, connection and fun – rebuilding trust with the nervous system!



Polyvagal Theory - Informed [PVT-I]

It's when you (patient/clinician) understand how *biology influences our emotional states* in whatever therapy/treatment is being used.



The Polyvagal Framework

Is a framework for brain-body science to help us optimize a healthier nervous system through:

- ❖ Connecting: safe-fun people
- ❖ Creating safety: Inside-Outside-and-In Between
- ❖ Rebuilding trust: The nervous system

Leading to healing of chronic pain



Re-Tune

Corrective Sensory Experiencing

(Mindfulness, ACT, Expressive Writing,
Forgiveness, Somatic Experiencing/ART,
Self-Compassion, Play/Laughter,
PVT-Informed)

2

3

Re-Engage

Corrective Behavioral Experiencing

(Graded-Motor-Exposure, Lifestyle, Interpersonal
Skill, Play/Laughter, PVT-Informed)

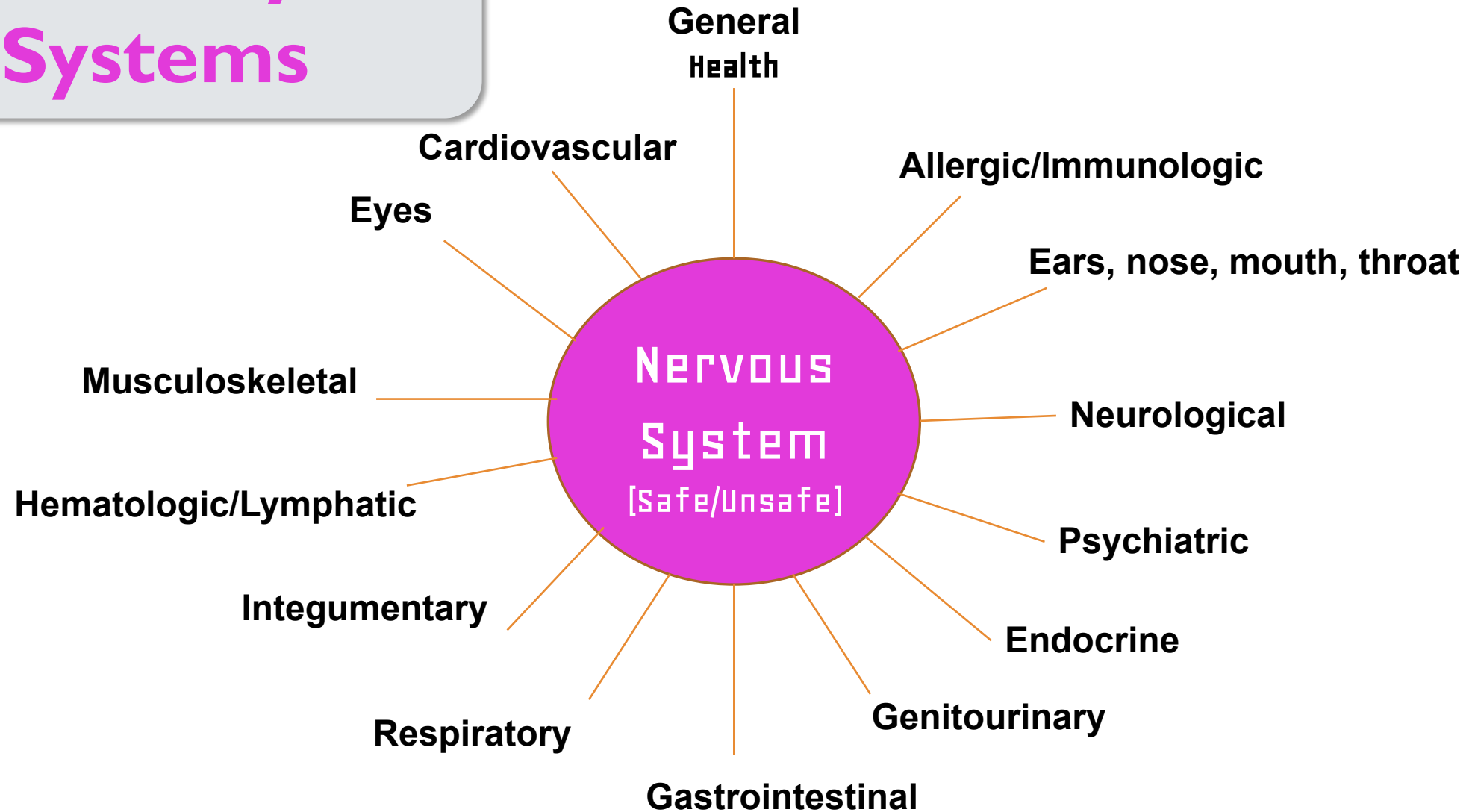
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Re-Educate **Paradigm Shift**

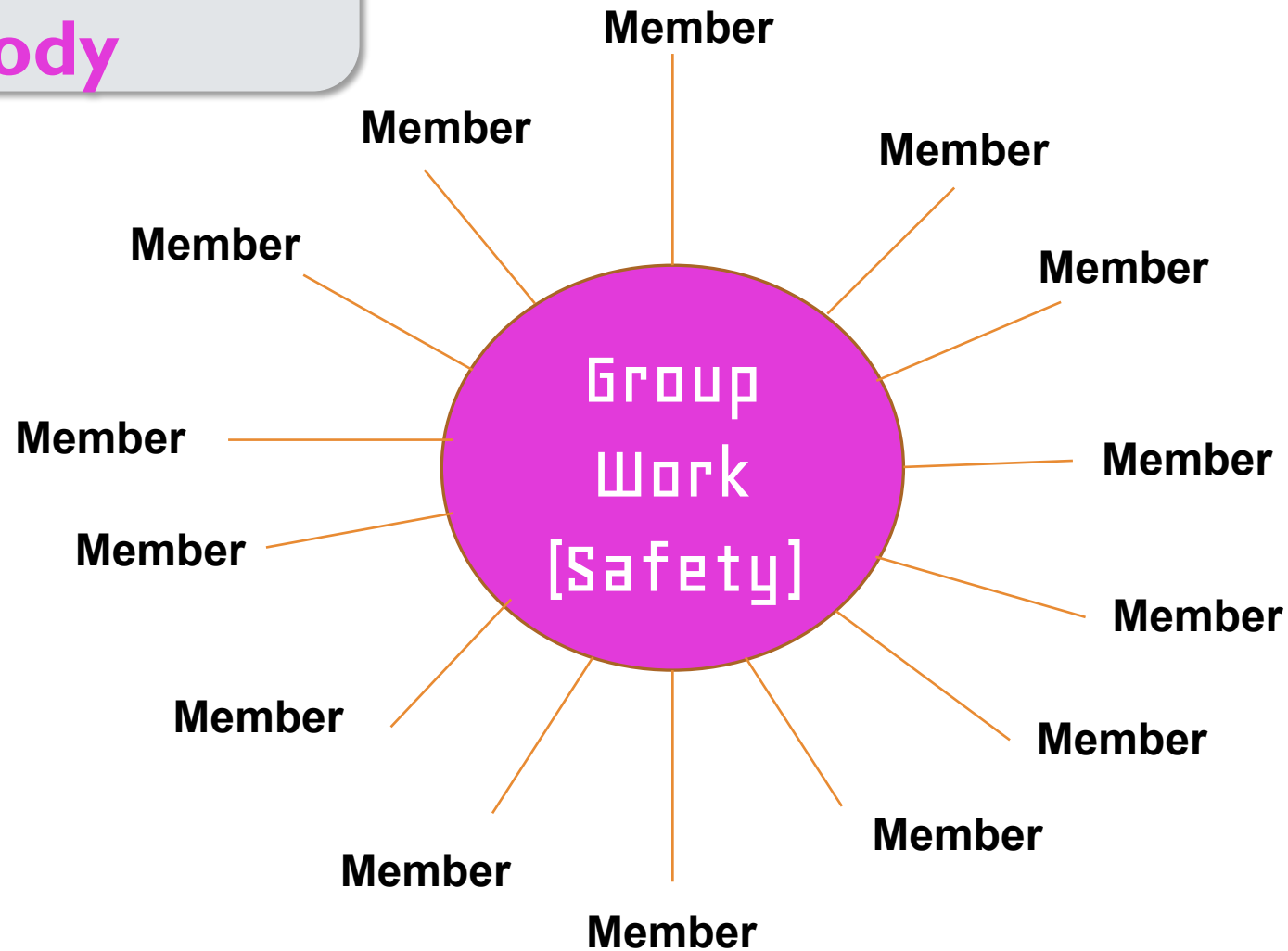
(LNP Self-Assessment, Emotion-Pain
Connection, Modern Pain Neuroscience,
PVT-Informed)

A Transdiagnostic Treatment Model

14 Body Systems



**Each Group
Member makes up
the Body**



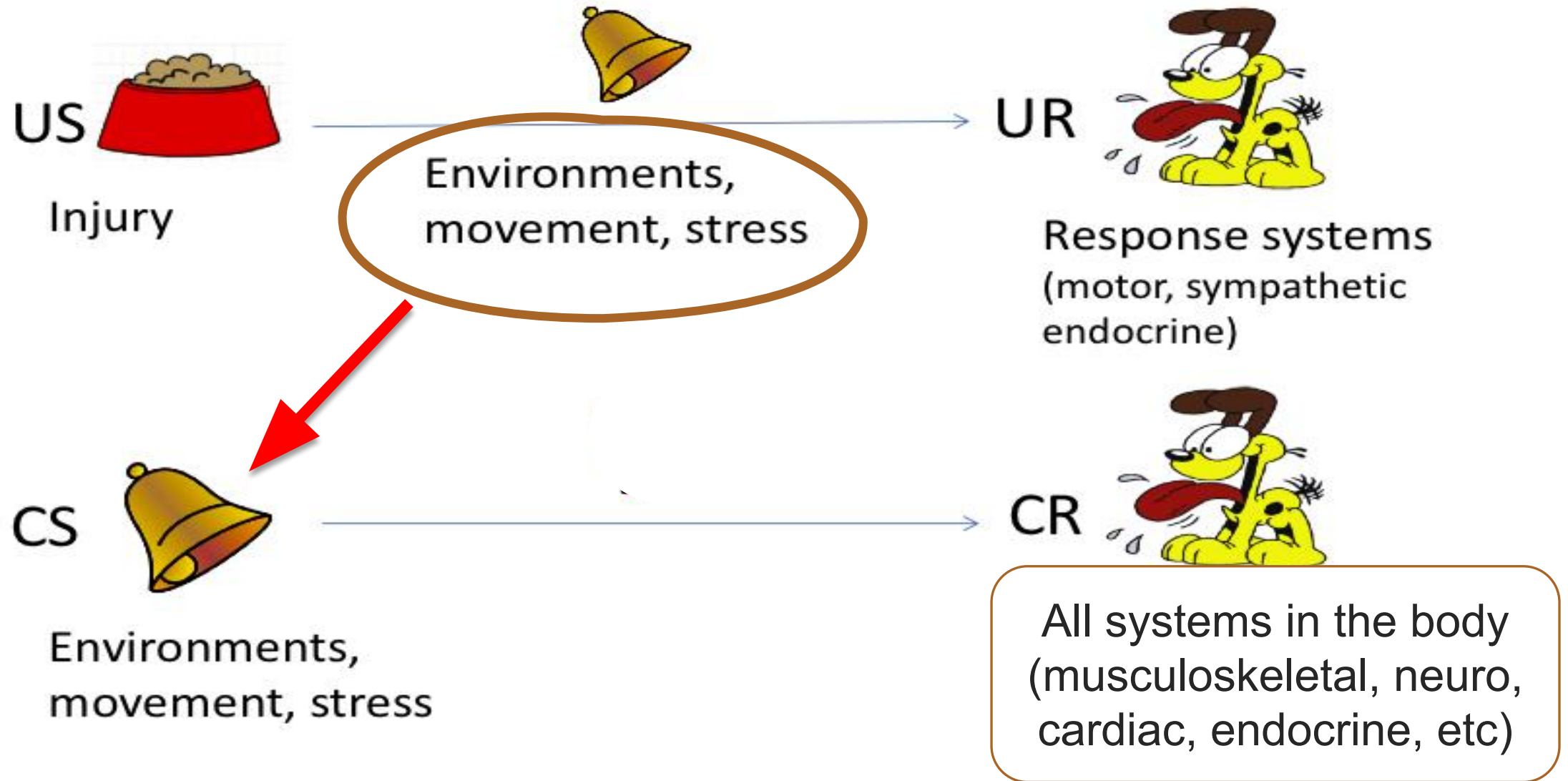
MODERN PAIN SCIENCE

Pain is...



Classically Conditioned

Learned Neural Pathways



Let's Do A Quick Experiment

What information is your brain telling?
What are you seeing?



Squint...then...
gently tilt your head to the right



The brain perceives, evaluates, then determines
if this is a threat...

based on **past information**/cues & context



...if this is a threat

The brain does the same thing
when it comes to pain

Pain is normal...

Pain is in the service of protection...

Pain is in the brain and can be retrained!

The Hand-Breath Technique

CALMING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

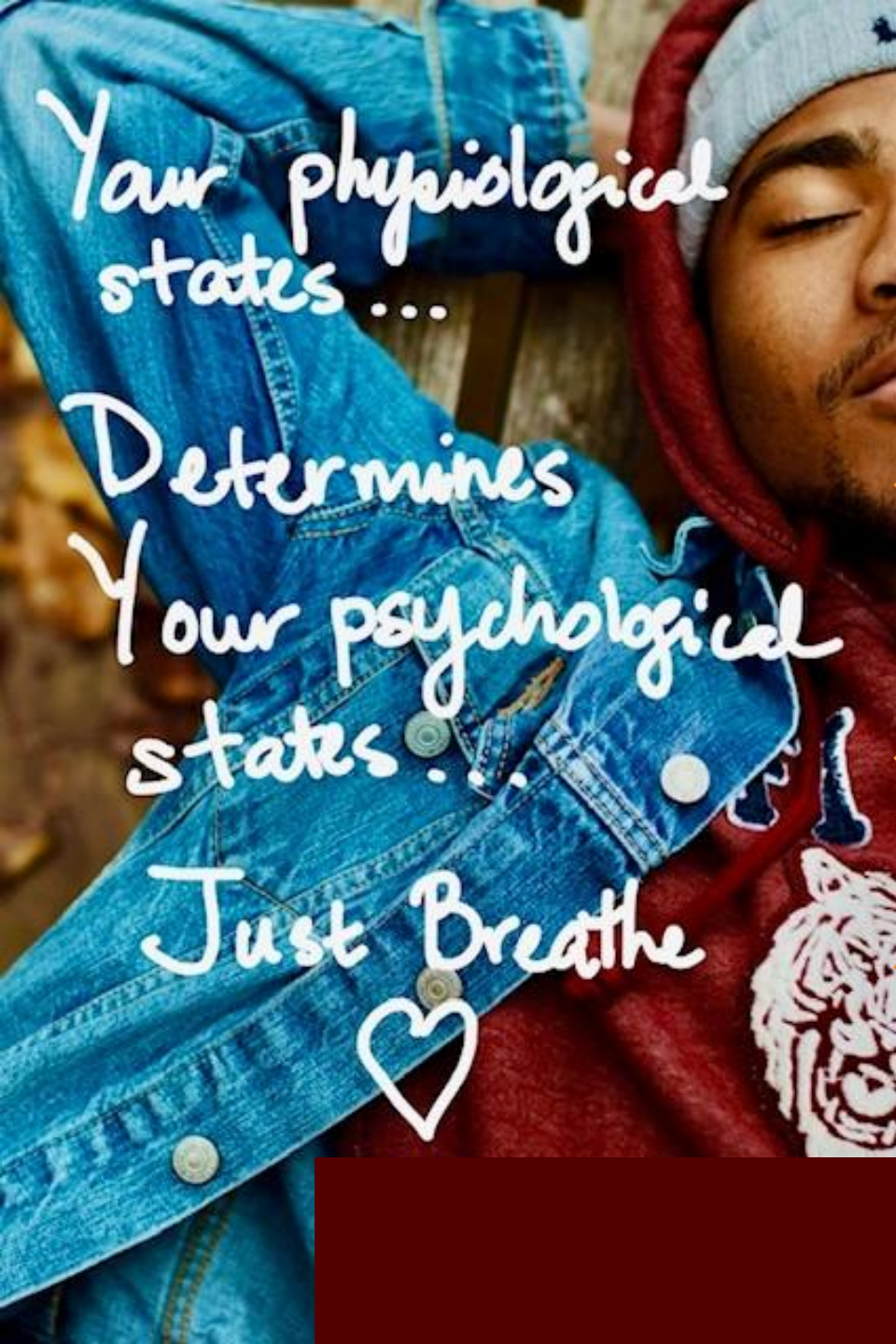
I am releasing all unnecessary tension in my body
down to zero now, thank you.

Pendulation Technique [Modified Version]

<https://youtu.be/x3mZKPK2Hh8>

Patient Testimonial





Your physiological
states ...

Determines
Your psychological
states ...

Just Breathe
♥

Group Work = Training Nervous System

❖ Connecting

- ❖ Sharing, laughter, smiling and empathic eyes, tone of voice
[no advice giving, no pain talk; if pain talk, then use replacement word: *App-Nanas*]
- ❖ Who can you have fun and feel safe with?

❖ Creating Safety Messages

- ❖ Education about the Polyvagal Theory: Hierarchy of nervous system
- ❖ Neuroception – perception [mindfulness] – discernment [ACT]

❖ Rebuilding trust [with the nervous system]

- ❖ *See quote*
- ❖ Safely expressing emotions, holding space in difficult emotions/sensations
- ❖ Various ways to stimulate the vagus nervous [breathwork, meditation, laughter]



Additional Information

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