

MAINTAINING BALANCE: COPING WITH STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY





Sensory Overload



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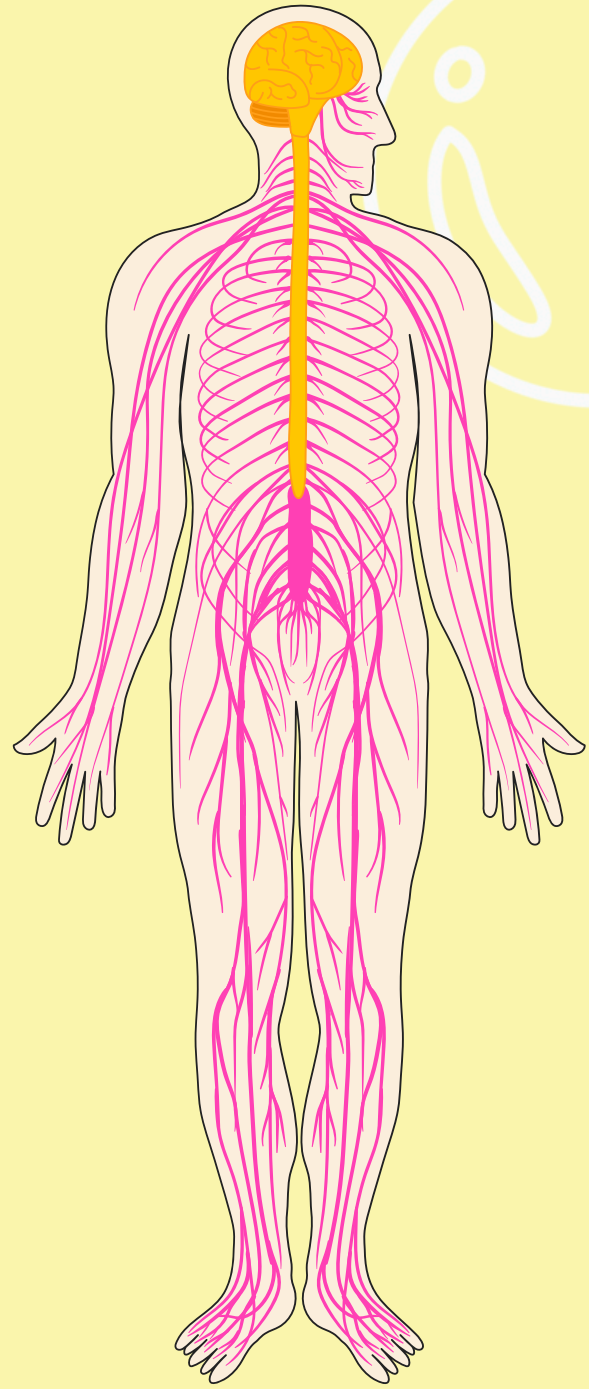


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A stylized sun with a smiling face, composed of concentric semi-circles in shades of yellow and orange. The sun has a simple face with two curved lines for eyes and a small upward curve for a mouth. It is surrounded by several yellow rays of varying lengths.

VAGUS NERVE ACTIVATION

What is the Vagus Nerve?



The Vagus Nerve controls the parasympathetic nervous system or “**Fight or Flight**” and “**Rest and Digest**”

It controls/regulates:

- Digestion: Regulates stomach acid secretion, gastric motility, and bowel movements
- Heart rate: Slows down the heart rate and reduces blood pressure
- Respiration: Controls breathing rate
- Immune system: Modulates inflammation and immune responses
- Sensation: Carries sensory information from the throat, larynx, and digestive organs
- Voice and swallowing: Innervates muscles involved in speaking and swallowing

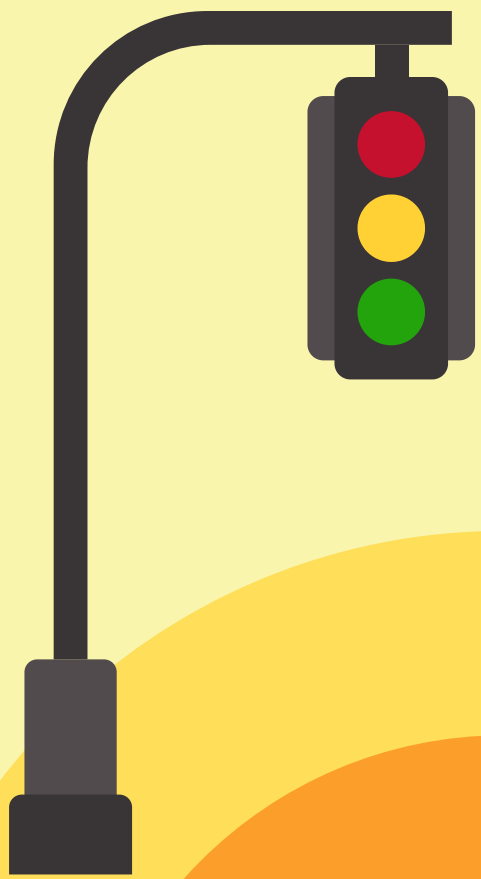
When in survival mode, how can we make conscious and active decision?



MINDFULNESS

What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is giving your full attention to the present moment without judgement. It means being aware of what is going on with your emotions/feelings, thoughts, and senses/somatic experience.



Why Is Mindfulness Important?

- **Stress reduction:**

Regularly practicing mindfulness can lower cortisol levels, the body's stress hormone, leading to a calmer state.

- **Emotional regulation:**

By observing emotions without getting caught up in them, mindfulness can help individuals manage their emotional responses better.

- **Improved focus and concentration:**

Mindfulness practices can enhance attention span and ability to stay focused on the present moment.

- **Increased self-awareness:**

Mindfulness promotes a deeper understanding of one's thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations, leading to greater self-awareness.

- **Better relationships:**

By cultivating empathy and understanding, mindfulness can improve communication and interactions with others.

- **Potential for mental health benefits:**

Studies suggest that mindfulness can help alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD.



4 Ways to Practice Mindfulness

1

Five Senses

2

Sunshine Fill Up

3

Belly Breathing

4

Sound Bath

Five Senses

You can do this activity ANYWHERE. Use your five senses to observe what is happening around you at this moment.

5 See?

4 Hear?

3 Touch?

2 Smell?

1 Taste?



Belly Breathing

While sitting, place your hands on your belly. Close your eyes and take a deep breath, in and out.

You can count your breaths or just imagine a place that makes you happy. Try to do this quietly for one minute.



Sunshine Fill Up

You can do this activity while sitting or standing. Close your eyes. Imagine warm, bright sunshine is slowly filling up your body.

Start at your toes and let it rise all the way up to the top of your head.

As it gets higher be aware of any sensations or feelings you are having.
This will help you focus on what is going on inside you.



Sound Bath



REMEMBER

**Mindfulness
takes
practice**

At first, it may seem that your head is busy with thoughts or uncomfortable feelings. It can be challenging to try and observe them without reacting to them.

When you are practicing mindfulness and you get distracted, just gently bring your attention back to the moment and your breath.

Resources

These are the elements used in the presentation. Feel free to add more and then delete this page.

