



WIRED FOR CALM

The Vagus nerve is like a motorway, but a **sensory motorway**. It allows our brain to communicate with the body and understand what is going on in the body at any given time.

The Vagus nerve transports information such as our heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, temperature, etc. to our brain, for our brain to interpret and decide if we are safe or in danger. The brain then sends its own information back down through the body as a result.

If our body picks up on danger through our senses, our internal cues or even observing others, it can set off an internal alarm and cause our nervous system to activate, pushing us to fight / flight or shut down.

The Vagus nerve is an essential part of the calming nervous system, which helps deal with the aftermath of fight-or-flight.

Feeling stressed, noticing the anxiety levels are rising? Has a deadline been pushed forward? A difficult email just come in? A staff member handed in their notice?

Our brain responds to stress in three main ways – fight, flight and freeze. During these states, our brains and body can feel dysregulated and the problem-solving part of our brain can switch off. So how do we switch it back on?

Try some of the grounding techniques outlined here...



Breathing Exercises

These can help to calm the nervous system and bring the focus to the present, which can help to manage stress and anxiety. Consciously controlling your breath can shift your body from a fight-or-flight to a more relaxed state.

Below are some exercises to practice:



The 4-7-8 Technique: Breathe in for 4, hold for 7 and exhale for 8. Repeat 4 to 6 times, or as many as necessary. *Adjust if needed for your own comfort, just make sure your exhale breath is longer than your inhale breath.

Balloon Breathing: This is useful for visual individuals; pick a colour of a balloon, if comfortable, close your eyes or lower your gaze. Imagine your balloon is at the bottom of your stomach. As you inhale, visualise inflating the balloon by pushing your stomach out... PAUSE... Deflate the balloon slowly by exhaling.

Tip: stick a note beside your kettle or fridge to remind yourself to take a few deep breaths throughout the day!

Cognitive Distraction

Sometimes when stressed, our brains can react and respond as if we are in danger even when we are not. Firstly, try, asking yourself am I unsafe or am I uncomfortable? If uncomfortable, we need to attempt to come back into a neutral state to allow our rational and problem-solving part of our brain to re-activate. To do this we may need to break away from the stressor and think of something else. **Try some of the exercises below:**



Pick up an object and describe it in detail: look at it, describe its colour, texture, size, weight, scent, and any other qualities you notice – try this two or three times.

Make a list – e.g. list all your friends / neighbours' cars, visualise and name the different types.

Think of your favourite thing to cook, talk yourself through the steps of making it, from start to finish.

Stepping away from the stressor can help to break the cycle of stress and possibly provide some perspective on the issue.

Ground the Body

Our body works in sync with our brain. If the body is experiencing changes to it, including increased heart rate, a change in temperature or even a rise in blood pressure, our brain can interpret these changes as a threat and react immediately. By soothing our body and calming the nervous system, it can also help the brain to relax and regulate quicker. **Below are some ideas of how you can do this:**

Water - Have a few slow sips of cold water, feeling the sensation of the cold water in your mouth and notice the sensation as you swallow.

Connect with your body - Think about yourself in your chair right now, notice how your body connects with the chair and the places where your body makes contact with it.



Tense and release your shoulders, fists or feet. Tense for 5 seconds and release.

Take your shoes off, place your feet on the ground, wriggle your toes. Notice how your sole and heel are connecting with the ground underneath.

Like any other skill, grounding takes practice. Practice regularly, and before you actually need it. Then, when you need to call upon this skill you will have it, know it, and use it well.

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SREANGAITHE LE HAGHAIDH SUAIMHNIS

Tá an Néaróg lúbach cosúil le mótarbhealach, **mótarbhealach na gcéadfaí**. Ligeann sí dár n-inchinn cumarsáid a dhéanamh leis an gcorp agus tuiscint a fháil ar a bhfuil ag tarlú sa chorp ag aon am ar leith.

Aistríonn an Néaróg lúbach faisnéis – ar nós ráta croí, brú fola, díleá, theocht an choirp, etc. – dár n-inchinn le go mbainfeadh sí ciall aisti agus go n-oibreodh sí amach an bhfuilimid sábháilte nó i gcontúirt. Mar thoradh air sin, seolann an inchinn a faisnéis féin ar ais síos tríd an gcorp.

Má bhraitheann ár gcorp contúirt trínár gcéadfaí, trí leideanna inmheánacha nó fiú tríd an méid a fheicimid i gcás daoine eile, is féidir go dtabharfaí rabhadh inmheánach agus go gcuirfí an néarchóras ar siúl, rud a spreagfaidh sinn le troid / teitheadh nó druidim síos.

Tá an Néaróg lúbach ina cuid ríthábhachtach den néarchóras suaimhneasach, agus cuidíonn sí linn dul i ngleic le hiarmhairtí na freagartha ‘troid nó teitheadh’.

An airíonn tú faoi strus nó an bhfuil an imní ag méadú? An bhfuil spriocdháta curtha chun tosaigh? An bhfuil tú tar éis ríomhphost cigitheach a fháil? An bhfuil ball foirne le héirí as a bpost gan choinne?

Freagraíonn an inchinn ar an strus ar thrí phríomhbhealach – troid, teitheadh agus stad. Le linn na riochtaí sin, d’fhéadfaí go mothódh an inchinn agus an corp dírialaithe agus d’fhéadfaí go mífhaí an chuid den inchinn ina réitítear fadhbanna. Conas is féidir í a chur ar siúl arís mar sin?

Bain triail as na teicnící stuamaithe a leagtar amach anseo...



Cleachtaí Análaithe

Cuidíonn na cleachtaí seo leis an néarchóras a shuaimhniú agus le díriú ar an am i láthair, rud a chuidíonn le dul i ngleic le strus agus imní. Trí do chuid anála a rialú go comhfhiosach is féidir do chorp a aistriú ón riocht ‘troid nó teitheadh’ go riocht atá níos suaimhní.

Tá roinnt cleachtaí le triail anseo thíos:



An Teicníc 4-7-8: Análaigh isteach ar feadh 4 shoicind, coinnigh d’anáil istigh ar feadh 7 soicind agus análaigh amach ar feadh 8 soicind. Déan arís é 4 go 6 huaire, nó chomh minic agus is gá. *Is féidir an cleachtadh a athrú de réir do chompoird féin, ach bí cinnte go maireann an anáil amach níos faide ná an anáil isteach.

Análú Balúin: Tá an ceann seo úsáideach le haghaidh amharcsmaointeoirí; roghnaigh dath balúin agus, más compordach, dún do shúile nó ísligh d’amharc. Samhlaigh go bhfuil an balún ag bun do bhoilg. De réir mar a tharraingíonn tú anáil isteach, samhlaigh go bhfuil tú ag líonadh an bhalúin le haer trí do bholg a bhrú amach... STAD... Scaoil an t-aer amach as an mbalún go mall agus tú ag análú amach.

Leid: cuir meabhrán in aice leis an gciteal nó ar an gcuisneoir le meabhrú duit féin cúpla anáil dhomhain a tharraingt i rith an lae!

Seachrán Cognaíoch

Uaireanta, agus sinn faoi strus, bíonn ár n-inchinn ag freagairt amhail is dá mbeimis i gcontúirt fiú mura bhfuilimid. Ar dtús, bain triail as a fhiafraí díot féin, an bhfuil mé i gcontúirt nó an bhfuil mé míchompordach? Má táimid míchompordach, ní mór dúinn iarracht a dhéanamh filleadh ar riocht neodrach le deis a thabhairt don chuid loighciúil dár n-inchinn, ina réitítear fadhbanna, tosú ag gníomhú arís. Chun é sin a dhéanamh d'fhéadfaí go mbeadh orainn éalú ón rud atá ag cur strus orainn agus smaoineamh faoi rud éigin eile.

Bain triail as cuid de na cleachtaí seo thíos:



Tóg rud i do lámh agus cuir síos air go mion: féach air, cuir síos ar a dhath, a uigeacht, a mhéid, a mheáchan, a bholadh agus aon tréithe eile a thugann tú faoi deara – bain triail as sin a dhéanamh dhá nó trí huair.

Déan liosta – e.g. liostaigh carranna do chairde / chomharsan go léir, samhlaigh agus ainmnigh na cineálacha éagsúla.

Smaoinigh ar an mbia is fearr leat a réiteach, labhair leat féin faoi na céimeanna lena ullmhú, ó thús go deireadh.



Ach fanacht amach ón strusaire, d'fhéadfaí timthriall an struis a bhriseadh agus peirspictíocht a fháil ar an bhfadhb.

Stuamaigh an Corp

Oibríonn ár gcorp in éineacht lenár n-inchinn. Má tharlaíonn athruithe sa chorp, lena n-áirítear ráta croí méadaithe, athrú ar theocht an choirp nó fiú ardú ar an mbrú fola, d'fhéadfadh ár n-inchinn a mheas go bhfuil na hathruithe sin baolach agus freagairt láithreach bonn.

Trínár gcorp agus néarchóras a shuaimhniú, d'fhéadfaí cuidiú lenár n-inchinn féinrialú agus suaimhneas a ghlacadh níos tapa freisin.

Seo thíos roinnt leideanna chun é sin a dhéanamh:

Uisce - Ól cúpla súimín uisce fhuair go mall, braith an t-uisce fuar i do bhéal agus tabhair faoi deara conas a mhothaíonn sé agus tú á shlogadh.

Bí i dteagmháil le do chorp - Smaoinigh fút féin ar an gcathaoir anois, tabhair faoi deara conas a nasctar do chorp leis an gcathaoir agus na suíomhanna ina ndéanann sé teagmháil léi.

Teann agus scaoil do ghuaillí, do dhoirne nó do chosa. Teann ar feadh 5 shoicind agus scaoil.

Bain díot do bhróga, cuir do chosa ar an talamh, bí ag lúbarnaíl do chuid ladhracha. Tabhair faoi deara conas a nasctar do bhonn agus do sháil leis an talamh thíos fút.



Cosúil le haon scil eile, glacann sé cleachtadh le thú féin a stuamú. Bí ag cleachtadh go rialta, agus sula bhfuil sé de dhíth ort. Ansin, nuair is gá duit leas a bhaint as an scil seo, beidh sí agat, beidh tú cleachta léi agus bainfidh tú úsáid mhaith aisti.

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