

Tending the Nervous System

Somatic Practices for Trauma-Informed Care



What we'll cover today:

1. Intro & session plan
2. Trauma-informed basics
3. O.R.C.A.S. Model Somatic Practices
 - a. bottom-up learning
 - b. how to use in your practice
4. Questions



We're so pleased to be here:



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- Certified Somatic Experiencing Practitioner
- Social Worker
- Certified EMDR Practitioner
- Certified Personal Trainer & Movement Educator



Lucia Roncalli, MD

- Certified Somatic Experiencing Practitioner
- Medical Doctor
- Certified Transforming Touch Practitioner
- Former Midwife

Trauma Informed Care Basics:

- bottom-up (body-based) learning
- choice
- tempo
- taking care of your own nervous system
 - and helping others take care of theirs, too



What is Somatic Experiencing®?

- Body-based psychotherapy and approach to healing trauma
- Developed by Peter A. Levine, PhD.
- 3 year trainings; used in trauma work throughout the world
- Grounded in humans' innate biological resiliency and ability to overcome trauma







Introduction to the Nervous System

Threat Response Cycle



1) Arrest Response:

- “Attentive Freezing”
- Full stop of normal activity, alert to novelty or possible danger. Something’s different!

2) Startle Response:

- Surprised expression in eyes and face, shivery jolt to attention throughout the body. Closely related in time to the Arrest response.

Introduction to the Nervous System

Threat Response Cycle

3) Orientation:

Locating the threat or novelty, usually by scanning visually: extending the neck, turning the head toward sound or pivoting the body to look for movement or identifiable threat. “Where is it?”



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4) Non-conscious evaluation of novelty to determine if dangerous. “What is it?” “Safe?/Not Safe?”

- If perceived as safe, return to activity and relaxation
- If perceived as dangerous, go to defensive orienting or self-protective responses (Fight, Flight and/or Freeze.) “How to best defend?”





Introduction to the Nervous System Threat Response Cycle

5) Completion of self-protective responses of Fight, Flight and/or Freeze

6) Discharge of energy mobilized to meet threat through completion

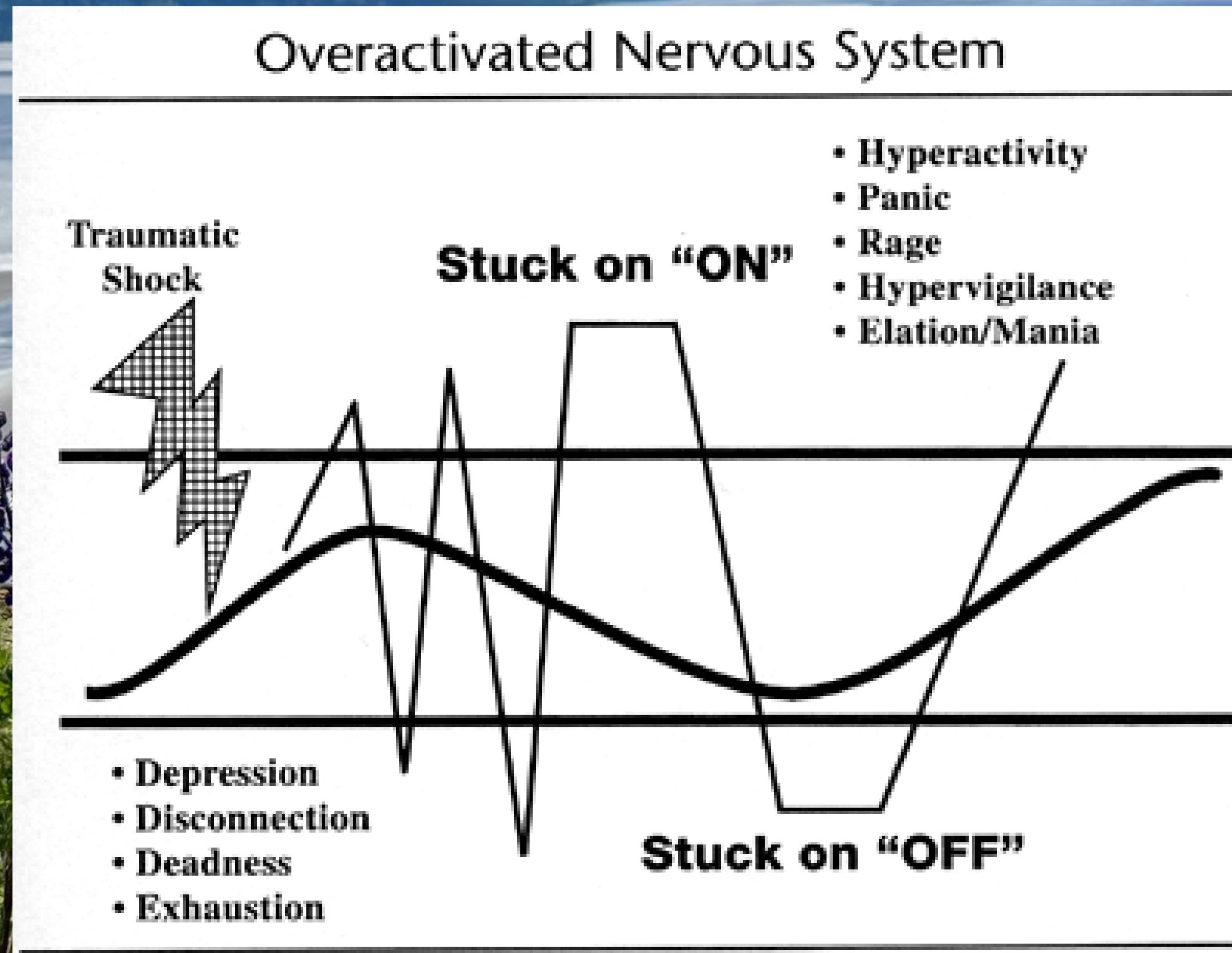
7) Relaxation Response

8) Sense of Mastery: exhilaration of successful escape leads to confidence and empowerment.
“This in itself is an antidote to the helplessness that is at the core of traumatic experience”.

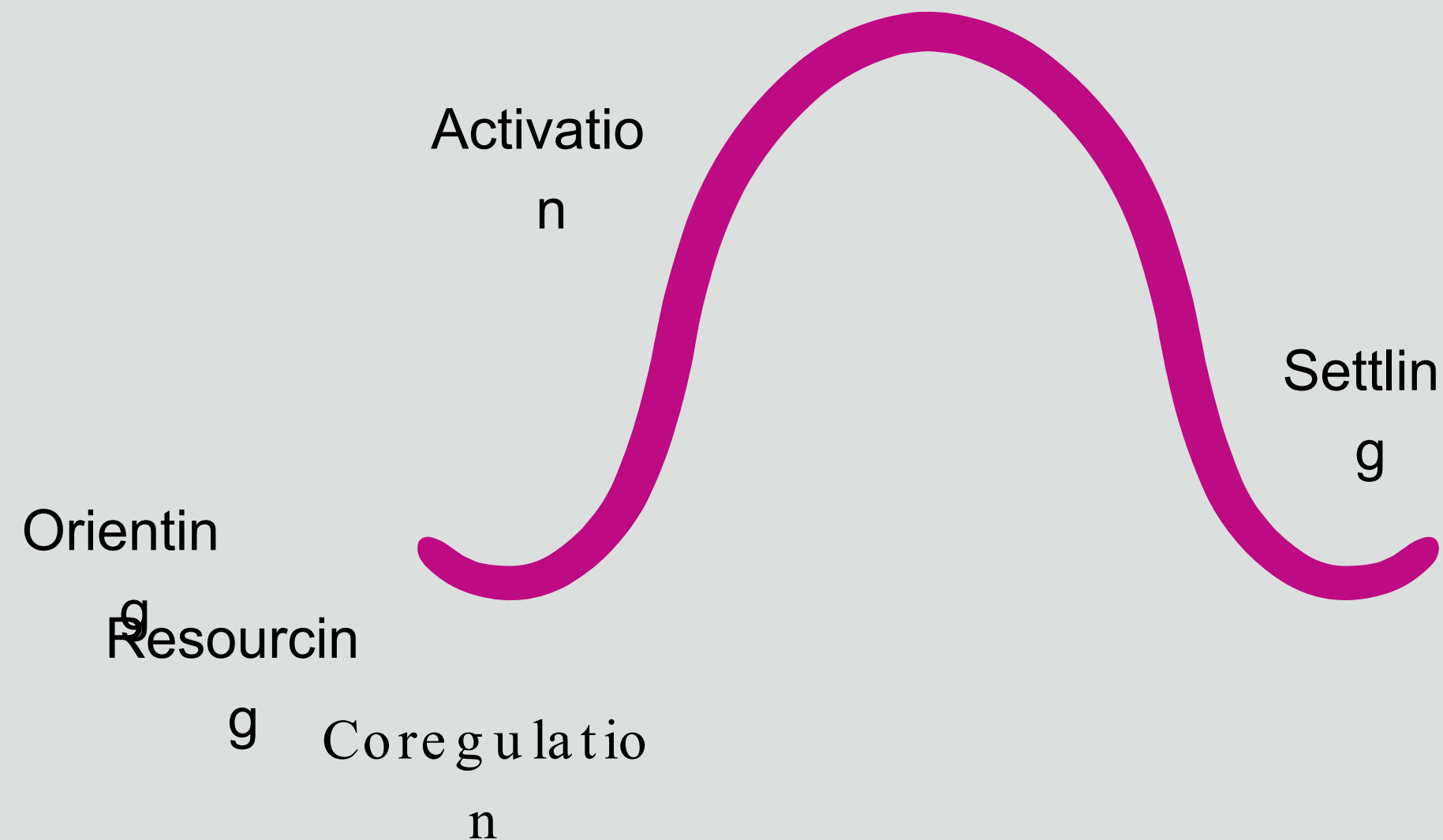


When the threat response
is interrupted...

Over/under-activated nervous system, superimposed on normal nervous system



Introduction to the Nervous System Wave: O.R.C.A.S.





Orienting

Becoming more present





How to use Orienting in your practice?

- point out interesting things in the room
- look for all the [pick a color] things you see
- pretend you're an owl



Resourcing

Expanding the
container

[link to video](#)



How to use **resourcing** in your practice?

- Notice the good things around you
- Feel the support of the chair at your back
- Carry a favorite rock in your pocket



Coregulating

Expanding the container



How to use coregulation in your practice?

Have gentle chit-chat conversations with people. Talk about the weather & the animals

Ask if they want touch, like holding hands or placing a hand on their shoulder

Support your own nervous system well—
your state will impact theirs





Activation & Settling

Riding the wave up and
down





[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=-QggITik6G4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QggITik6G4)



misunderstandings of freeze

- Defensive survival response, but often not perceived that way
- Immobility guilt
 - War, violent attacks on others
- Wrongful attestation of consensual relations in rape trials
 - Survivor guilt for “not having fought”



Se você observar esse animal depois que ele termina de convulsionar, você verá...

Release of Tranquilised Polar Bear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwDjOeM8GHM>



How to use Activation & Settling in your practice?

Squeeze a pillow or blanket a couple of times.

Kids might want to play-wrestle or pretend they're animals.

Push hands, growl if you feel like it.

Listen to an angry song and let your body move how it wants to.

Allow for shaking, trembling, or other organic body movements to happen.

After any of these practices, **notice how you feel.**
Ride the back side of the wave all the way down.

Orientin

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SE Training Anchorage 2027-28

- Three 4 -day trainings x 3 years
 - 2027: Feb 26-March 1; May 21-24; Sept 24-27 (online)
 - 2028: Feb 25-28; May 5-8 (online); Sept 22-27
- CE's available
- At The Nave
- More info and applications:
 - <https://portal.traumahaaling.org/s/events>





Transforming Touch Training Anchorage 2027-28

- Developed by Dr. Stephen Terrell
 - “7-point protocol” and tailored enhancements, covering limbic system, adrenals, etc.
- Especially helpful for
 - developmental trauma
 - aftermath of prolonged abuse (detention, eg)
 - “syndromes”
- Two 6-day trainings
 - Oct 7-11 2026
 - April 21-26 2027
- CE’s available
- On APU Campus
- More info and applications:

<https://transformingtouch.com/transforming-the-experience-based-brain/teb-alaska/>



Questions?

