

Clinical Applications of Polyvagal Theory for Trauma, Attachment and Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB): *A Masterclass with Dr Stephen Porges*

An online workshop with Dr Stephen Porges
Discussions led by Dr Jan McGregor Hepburn

Zoom Webinar

10 October 2024, Thursday

Times:

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm, London UK

11:00 am – 1:00 pm, New York, USA

CPD hours: 2 / CE credits: N/A

Limited number of early bird tickets at £69 only
Regular price: £79



Location: Online streaming only

(all our webinar tickets now include complimentary access to a video recorded version for 1 year)

In contemporary healthcare, there exists a gap in acknowledging the deeply layered link between our mental well-being and physiological sense of safety governed by our autonomic nervous system. As therapists, we navigate the complexities of trauma, adverse experiences, chronic pain and stress within our practice, seeking a transformative lens to illuminate our therapeutic approaches. **Polyvagal Theory is a revolutionary tool that provides the missing key to transforming our mental well-being by restoring the balance between our neurobiology and physiological well-being.** Central to this theory is the understanding that our sense of safety and sociality is deeply rooted in the physiological responses orchestrated by the autonomic nervous system. For example, Trauma is often treated as a purely psychological issue – but trauma is also physiological. The impact of trauma is not isolated to our brains, but stretches through our nervous system to virtually every part of our body. Trauma changes our bodies, in addition to our brains. Anxiety, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, insomnia and numbness are just a few after-effects of trauma that last in our bodies for years.

Drawing on groundbreaking neuroscience research, this structured-interview workshop with Dr Stephen Porges highlights how we, as therapists and counsellors, can explore the ways in which autonomic regulation profoundly interlinks mental health, behavioural patterns, learning processes, and social behaviours. From integrating Polyvagal practices in EMDR and sensorimotor therapy for transforming trauma treatment, to



understanding the role of ventral vagal in forming secure attachments and sustaining social connections; and from **understanding its linkages in treating clinical manifestations of chronic pain, anxiety and depression to exploring the intersection of Polyvagal theory and other frameworks such as Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB), Attachment Theory, and Systems Theory – this workshop with Dr Porges will cast light on the clinical applications of Polyvagal theory.**

We will also explore the significance of *neuroception* and *sociality* in Polyvagal Theory. Polyvagal theory emphasizes sociality as a core human process that helps to mitigate threat and support mental health. More specifically, it highlights the importance that the parasympathetic nervous system and vagal circuits play in the neurophysiological mechanisms related to trauma and trauma responses. **Faulty neuroception which compromises a person's Social Engagement System can significantly impact an individual's well-being and mental health trajectory.** Deficits in *neuroception* thus resonate deeply with recurrent behavioural and psychological manifestations we see in our clinical settings.

The profound implications of these deficits underscore the importance of integrating therapeutic interventions that focus on rewiring autonomic responses and nurturing pathways towards safety and connection to provide transformative healing for our clients. As practitioners, once we have an initial grasp of Polyvagal Theory, we find it especially helpful to gain understanding of its more advanced aspects that enhance therapeutic outcomes for our clients, including:

- **Polyvagal Theory in Trauma Treatment:** Exploring the complex interplay between the autonomic nervous system and trauma responses, **particularly understanding how the ventral vagal, sympathetic, and dorsal vagal systems manifest in different trauma presentations.** This entails integrating Polyvagal insights into trauma-focused therapies like EMDR or Sensorimotor Psychotherapy to facilitate regulation and safety.
- **Social Engagement System and Attachment:** Investigating the role of the ventral vagal complex in forming secure attachments and sustaining social connections. This involves examining how disruptions in the social engagement system contribute to attachment-related difficulties and exploring interventions that target the restoration of social engagement capacities, such as dyadic regulation in couples therapy, parent-child interventions or family therapy dynamics.
- **Polyvagal Theory and Psychopathology:** Unravelling the **links between Polyvagal Theory and various disorders, including anxiety disorders, depression, autism spectrum disorders, and personality disorders.** This requires a sophisticated understanding of how dysregulation within the autonomic nervous system contributes to symptomatology and informs targeted interventions tailored to regulate physiological arousal and enhance emotional regulation.
- **Clinical Application of Polyvagal Interventions:** Implementing Polyvagal-informed interventions across diverse clinical populations and therapeutic modalities. This entails developing personalised treatment plans that integrate techniques like vagal nerve stimulation, breathwork, mindfulness practices, and somatic experiencing to promote neurophysiological regulation and enhance therapeutic outcomes.
- **Interpersonal Neurobiology and Polyvagal Theory:** Exploring the **intersection between Polyvagal Theory and other frameworks such as Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB), Attachment Theory, and Systems Theory.** This involves synthesizing insights from multiple disciplines to create a comprehensive understanding of how relational dynamics, neurobiology, and social context shape human experience and inform therapeutic interventions aimed at fostering connection and healing.

At this online interview-workshop, we have the privilege to learn directly from Dr Stephen Porges, founder of Polyvagal Theory. At the workshop, Dr Jan McGregor Hepburn will facilitate, and Dr Porges will directly address questions including:

- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** How has Polyvagal Theory informed your understanding of trauma treatment, specifically regarding the nuanced interplay between the autonomic nervous system and trauma responses?



- **Attachment and Social Engagement:** Can you elaborate on how Polyvagal Theory elucidates the mechanisms underlying secure attachments and social engagement, and how this understanding translates into therapeutic interventions?
- **Psychopathology and Polyvagal Dynamics:** In your view, what are the key Polyvagal-informed insights into disorders, and how do these insights guide clinical interventions for conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, and autism spectrum disorders?
- **Advanced Interventions:** What are some examples of advanced Polyvagal-informed interventions you have found particularly effective in clinical practice, and how do these interventions target specific autonomic nervous system states to promote regulation and healing?
- **Integration with Interpersonal Neurobiology:** Could you discuss how Polyvagal Theory intersects with Interpersonal Neurobiology and other frameworks, and how this integration enhances our understanding of relational dynamics and therapeutic efficacy?
- **Neurophysiological Mechanisms:** Can you delve into the neurophysiological mechanisms underlying Polyvagal Theory, particularly regarding the modulation of autonomic nervous system activity and its impact on emotional regulation and social behaviour?
- **Developmental Trajectories:** How does Polyvagal Theory elucidate the developmental trajectories of the autonomic nervous system, especially in relation to early attachment experiences and subsequent psychosocial functioning?
- **Ethical Considerations:** **What ethical considerations arise when applying Polyvagal Theory in clinical practice, particularly concerning informed consent, power differentials, and cultural sensitivity?**

Specifically, we will:

- Explore the complex interplay between the autonomic nervous system and trauma responses, and integrating Polyvagal insights into trauma-focused therapies to facilitate regulation and safety
- Investigate the role of the ventral vagal complex in forming secure attachments and sustaining social connections, and exploring interventions to restore social engagement capacities
- Unravel the links between Polyvagal Theory and various disorders, and understanding how dysregulation within the autonomic nervous system contributes to symptomatology
- Discuss Implementing Polyvagal-informed interventions across diverse clinical populations and therapeutic modalities to promote neurophysiological regulation and enhance therapeutic outcomes
- Explore the intersection between Polyvagal Theory and other frameworks such as Interpersonal Neurobiology, Attachment Theory, and Systems Theory, to create a comprehensive understanding of relational dynamics and inform therapeutic interventions
- **Delve into the neurophysiological mechanisms underlying Polyvagal Theory, particularly regarding the modulation of autonomic nervous system activity and its impact on emotional regulation and social behaviour**
- Discuss the developmental trajectories of the autonomic nervous system, especially in relation to early attachment experiences and subsequent psychosocial functioning

Learning Objectives:

- **Explain the neurophysiological mechanisms underlying Polyvagal Theory, particularly regarding the modulation of autonomic nervous system activity and its impact on emotional regulation and social behaviour**
- Discuss the intersection between Polyvagal Theory and other frameworks such as Interpersonal Neurobiology, Attachment Theory, and Systems Theory, to create a comprehensive understanding of relational dynamics and inform therapeutic interventions

About the speaker

Stephen W. Porges, Ph.D. is Distinguished University Scientist at Indiana University where he is the founding director of the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium. He is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina, and Professor Emeritus at both the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Maryland.



He is the author of *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation* (Norton, 2011), *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe*, (Norton, 2017), co-editor of *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal-Informed Therapies* (Norton, 2018) and author of *Polyvagal Safety: Attachment, Communication, Self-Regulation* (Norton 2021). Dr. Porges is the creator of a music-based intervention, the Safe and Sound Protocol™ (SSP), which is used by therapists to improve social engagement, language processing, and state regulation, as well as to reduce hearing sensitivities.

© nscience 2023 / 24

There is no known commercial support for this program.

This course does not qualify for CE credits.

For more information on how to access webinar joining links, handouts and video recordings please visit <https://www.nscience.uk/faqs/>

Questions and requests for information: customerservices@nscience.co.uk

If you have a disability, please contact us in advance of the course so we can accommodate your needs:

customerservices@nscience.co.uk

US: +18337161044

UK/Europe:
+44(0)2070961722

Australia:
+1800861953