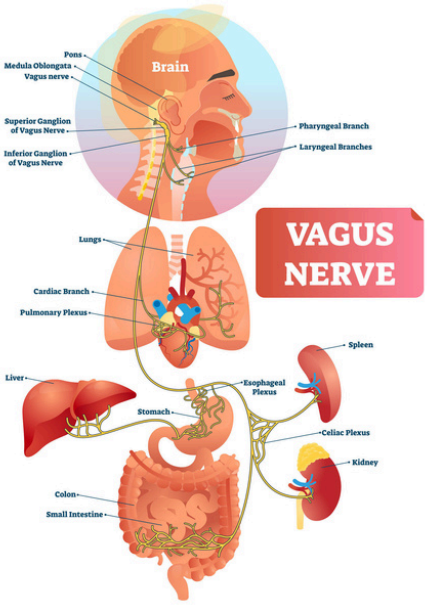
Regulation
Polyvagal Theory

The vagus nerve is a nerve that exits the base of the skull and runs down the spine.



The vagus nerve is part of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) including the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems. When the nervous system detects threat it influences the response - fight, flight, freeze.

Ventral Vagal:

- Enables optimal participation, social connectedness, sensory modulation and flexible thinking.

Sympathetic:

- When regulated and operating in its typical capacity it is responsible for mobilisation, motivation/passion, and management of stress.
- The survival response limits the person's capacity for social connectedness, sensory modulation, executive functioning (problem solving, organisation and planning) and flexible thinking. It can be observed as a person who has large reactions to sensory experiences, yelling, outward aggression, scattered thoughts, difficulties focusing and limited meaningful engagement.

Dorsal Vagal:

- When regulated and operating in its typical capacity it is responsible for regulating digestion.
- The Survival response limits the persons capacity to engage with others, and can be observed as a person who is disconnected, withdrawn, foggy, going through the motions, sleep difficulties, fatigue, disassociation, and difficulties with digestion.

It is expected that people move through each of these states at various times and in response to various stimuli. It becomes a problem when a person becomes "stuck" in this nervous system influence, finding it challenging to return to ventral vagal.

OKAY Therapy