

Treating Chronic Stress

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Chronic Stress & Regions of
the Brain Implicated in
Chronic Stress**

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Session 1

Understanding Chronic Stress & Regions of the Brain Implicated

What Is Stress?

Stress is a natural adaptive response of the body to a perceived threat.

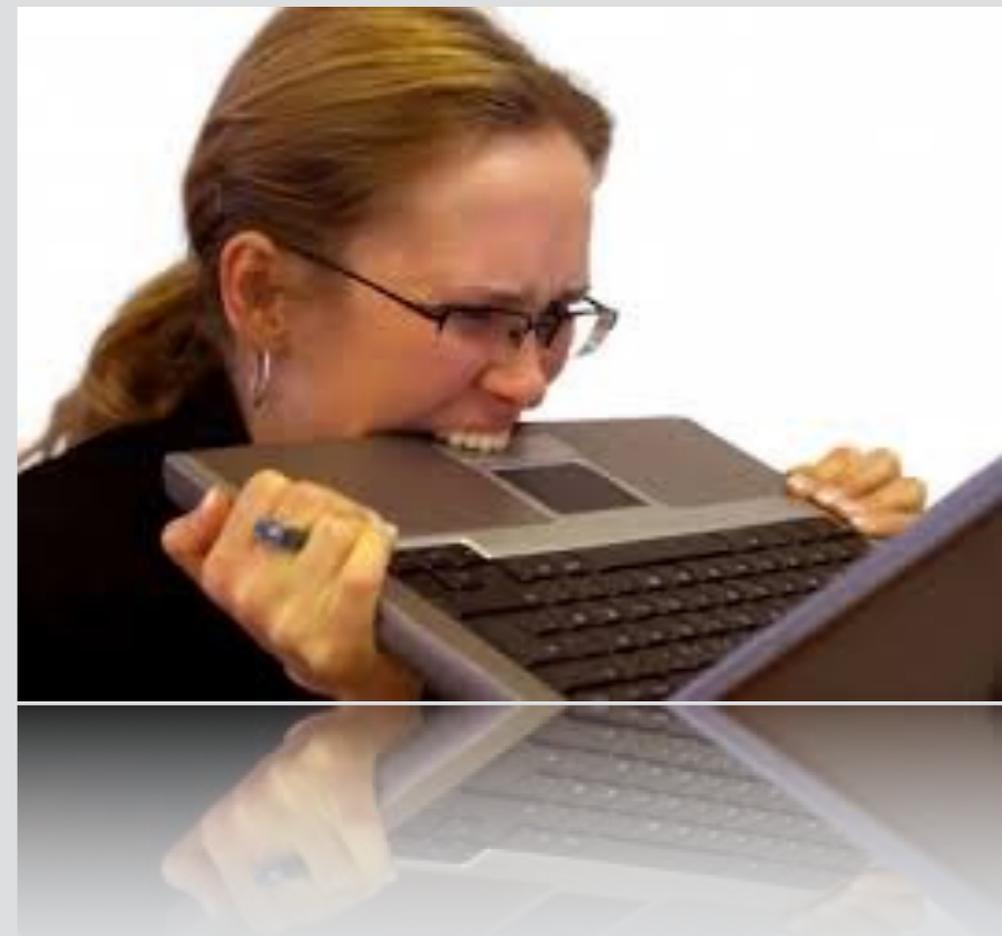
Your stress response (fight-flight-freeze response) is an attempt of the nervous system to enhance your chances of survival when faced with danger.



On exposure to prolonged and repeated stressors, the nervous system can lose its adaptive ability for **turning off** the stress response, leading to exaggerated chronic stress symptoms.

Causes of and Contributors to Stress

1. Financial crisis
2. Health-related issues
3. Life changes
4. Work pressures
5. Interpersonal relationships
6. Traumatic events
7. Negative thoughts processes
8. Repressed negative emotions
9. Drug and alcohol abuse
10. Genetic predisposition
11. Brain injury



4 Categories of Stress symptoms

1. Physical Symptoms
2. Emotional Symptoms
3. Psychological Symptoms
4. Behavioural Symptoms



Physical Symptoms

- ★ Aches/pains
- ★ Muscle tension
- ★ Grinding teeth
- ★ Frequent colds/infections
- ★ Hyperventilating
- ★ Lump in the throat
- ★ Frequent pins & needles
- ★ Dizziness
- ★ Palpitations
- ★ Panic attacks/nausea
- ★ Physical tiredness
- ★ Menstrual changes/loss of libido/sexual problems

Emotional Symptoms

- ★ Feeling out of control
- ★ Lack of motivation
- ★ Angry
- ★ Frustrated
- ★ Lack of confidence
- ★ Lack of self-esteem
- ★ Irritable
- ★ Mood swings
- ★ Extra sensitive to criticism
- ★ Defensive
- ★ Tearful

Psychological Symptoms

- ☆ Inability to concentrate or make simple decisions
- ☆ Excessive Worrying
- ☆ Negative thinking
- ☆ Depression & anxiety
- ☆ Memory lapses
- ☆ Becoming rather vague
- ☆ Easily distracted
- ☆ Less intuitive & creative

Behavioural Symptoms

- ★ Social withdrawal
- ★ Relationship problems
- ★ Insomnia or waking tired
- ★ Reckless
- ★ Aggressive/anger outbursts
- ★ Nervous
- ★ Uncharacteristically lying
- ★ Prone to accidents
- ★ forgetfulness
- ★ Increased reliance on alcohol, smoking, caffeine or drugs
- ★ Becoming a workaholic
- ★ Poor time management
- ★ Poor standards of work

Chronic Stress Development

In 1936, **Hans Selye**, known as the father of stress research, introduced what he called the “General Adaptation Syndrome” model of stress (GAS).

Selye’s model of stress suggests that the human body responds to stress in **three stages**:

1. The Alarm Stage
2. The Resistance Stage
3. The Exhaustion Stage

1. The Alarm Stage

- ☆ This is when the alarm signal is activated because a situation or an experience has been perceived as threatening or harmful to your well-being.
- ☆ At this stage, the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) is activated. The SNS is the system responsible for the body's "fight-or-flight" response.
- ☆ Stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline are released into the blood stream.
- ☆ The body is now well furnished with additional energy to help fight the stress.

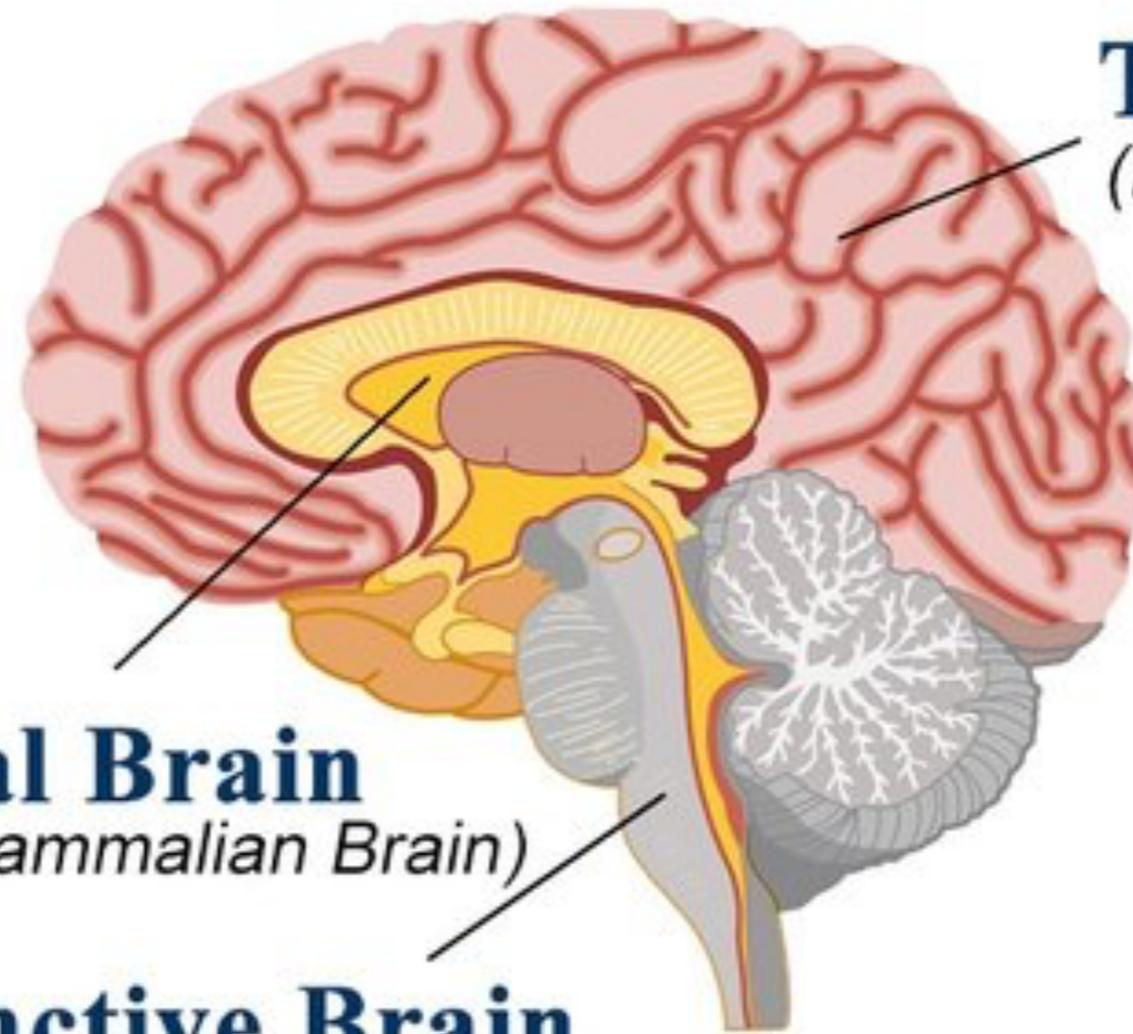
2. The Resistance Stage

- ☆ This is the stage where your body's "Rest and Digest" response kicks in to restore balance. The parasympathetic nervous system is activated, (PNS) which is responsible for healing, growth, body repair and rejuvenation.
- ☆ If the stress inducing-situation persists, the body will continue to attempt to restore homeostasis and healing.
- ☆ Due to the limitation of the body's adaptive energy, constant exposure to the stress-inducing situation can weaken the body's effectiveness to restore balance.

2. The Exhaustion Stage

- ☆ At this stage, the adaptation process has failed. The body has lost the battle to restore internal balance because of the persistence of the stressor.
- ☆ All the resources have been exhausted. The body is now exposed to greater hazards.
- ☆ The effects of this failure can include heart and blood vessels conditions and stress-related diseases such as heart disease, stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, impaired thinking and memory, chronic anxiety disorders and depression, etc.
- ☆ The key task here is to ensure that your body's adaptive energy is not over-deployed to a stage of exhaustion.

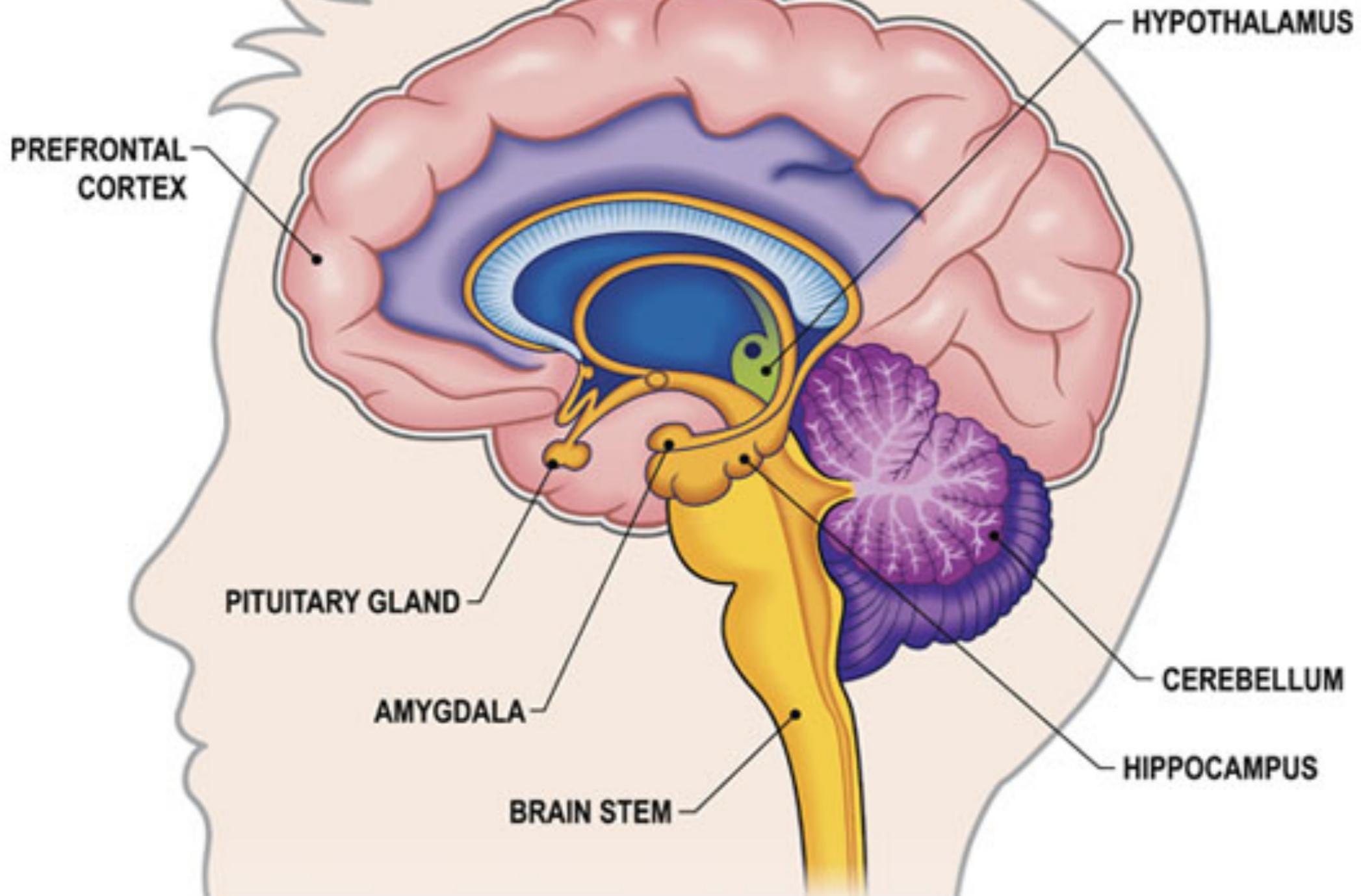
Regions of the Brain Implicated in Chronic Stress



Thinking Brain
(Neocortex, New Brain)

Emotional Brain
(Limbic System, Mammalian Brain)

Instinctive Brain
(Reptilian Brain, Old Brain)

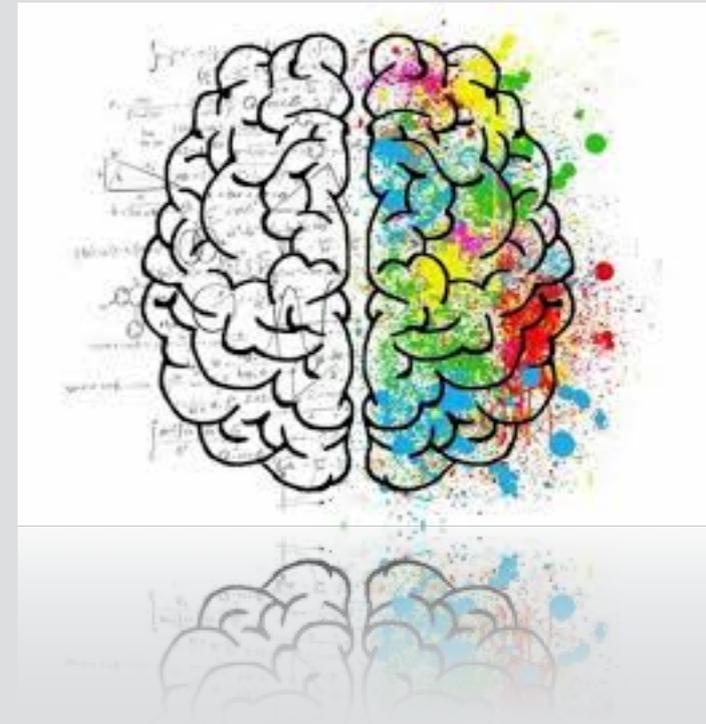


Session 2

Chronic Stress Recovery Steps

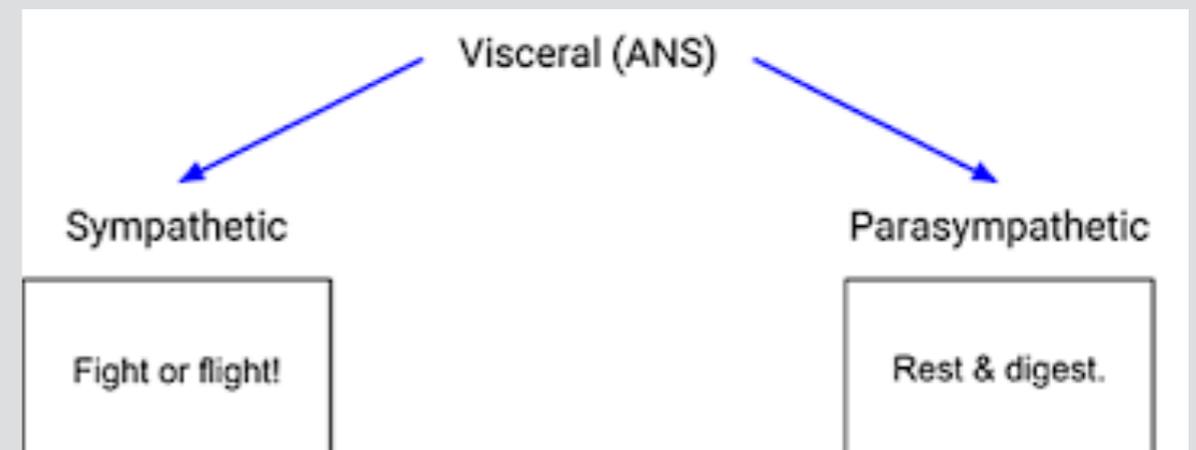
Transforming Chronic Stress

- ★ **S**trengthen the parasympathetic centre
- ★ **T**erminate excessive sympathetic sources
- ★ **R**emove key subconscious negative beliefs
- ★ **E**volve the brain towards calm and confidence
- ★ **S**tamp out a negative avoidance
- ★ **S**trengthen the balance and communication of key hormones



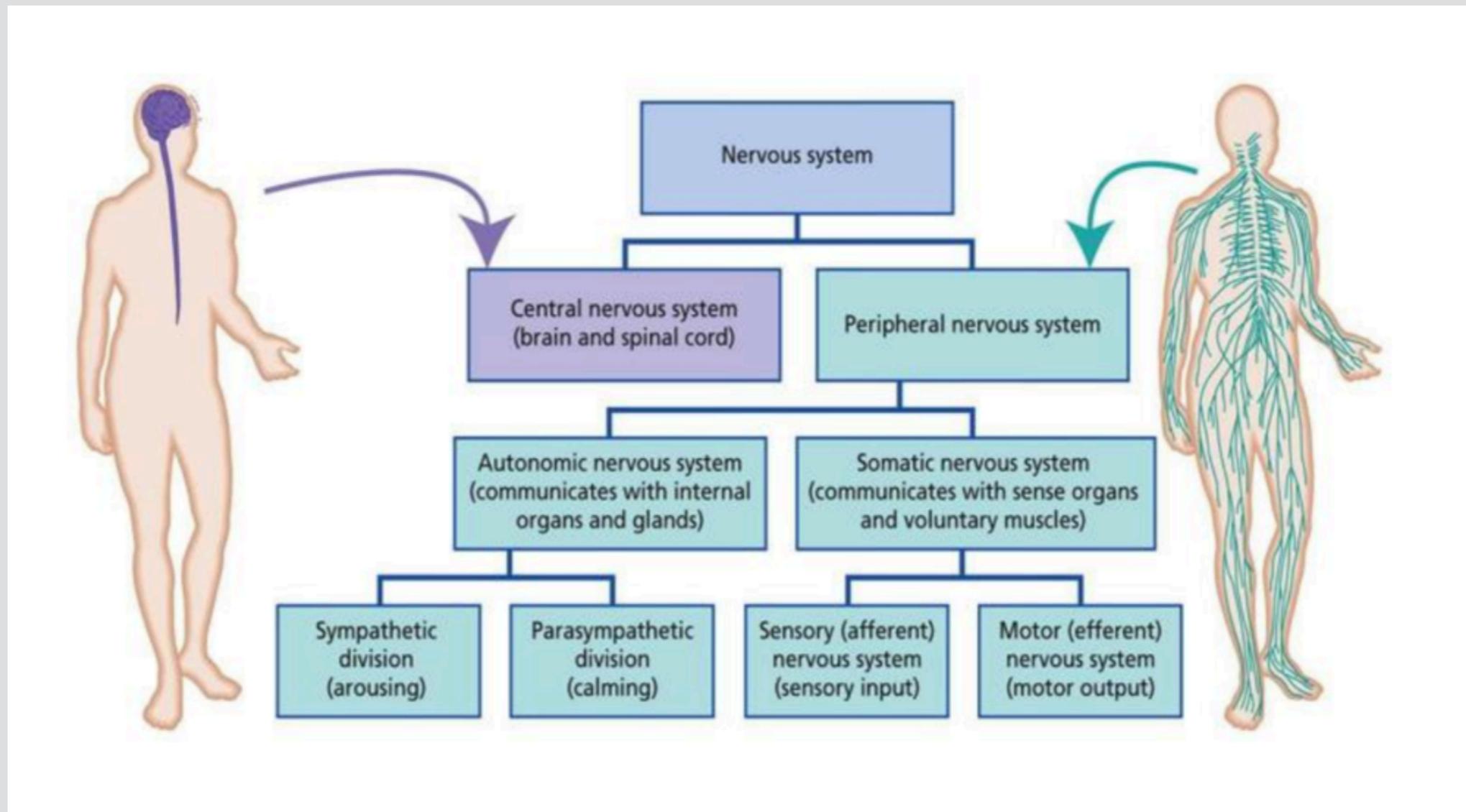
1. Strengthen the parasympathetic centre

- How can you increase your parasympathetic activity?
 - Regular aerobic exercise at least 4 times a week (not less than 30 minutes long each time)
- Identify what you really love and enjoy doing, then do it daily.
- Regularly stimulate the vagus nerve for safety, healing and social engagement



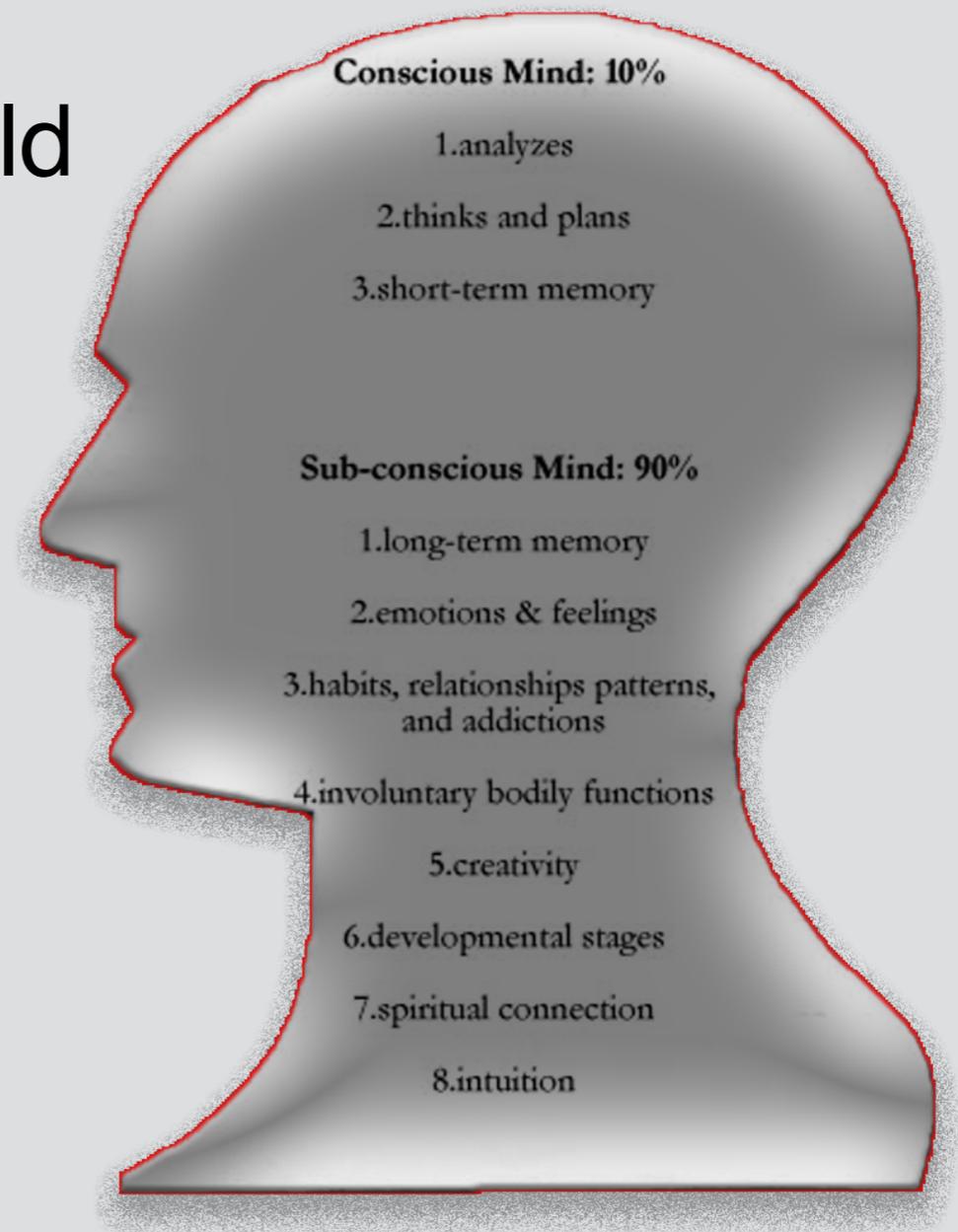
2. Terminate the sympathetic sources

Identify your major sources of stress



3. Remove key subconscious negative beliefs

- What deep subconscious belief could be blocking your transformation?
- What recent incident pressed your button?
- Use the 'Beam of Light Method' to expose and release your deep unconscious negative belief.



4. Evolve the brain towards calm and confidence (re-programme the subconscious)

- Take a few moments to think about what you really want in life
- Starting with 'I' or 'I AM', write a few sentences detailing what you want as though it is already your reality. How would you like your brain to wire itself in the next 21 days?
- Use daily guided meditation to map your new intention in the brain and detach your new self from your old self.
- Experience the new self by feel the feeling, using all your senses.



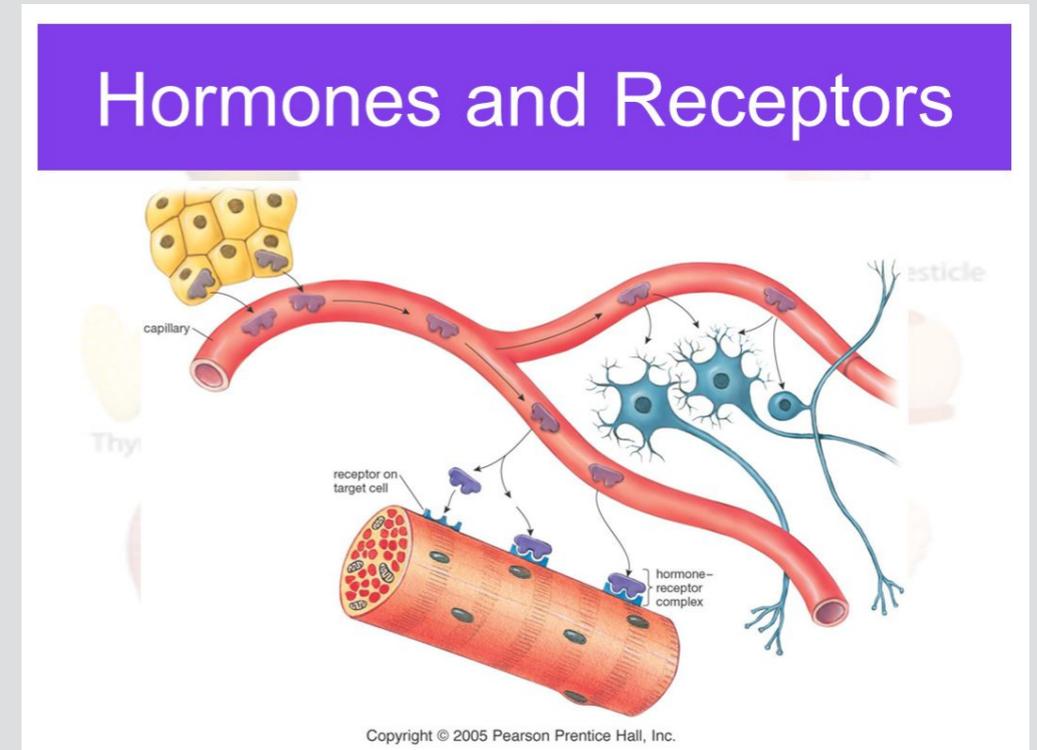
5. Stamp out an avoidance

- Identify one avoidance that you want to challenge (we recommend a less severe avoidance).
- Use the ***Imaginary desensitisation technique*** to kill the fear gradually. Do this for at least 21 days.
- Once comfortable and confident with the imaginary desensitisation activity, attempt the ***direct desensitisation technique***. *This is when you physically challenge your avoidance.*



6. Strengthen the balance and communication of key hormones for cortisol reduction

- Insulin control
- Calorie restriction
- Eicosanoids modulation



Q&A Session

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“There are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect.”

—Ronald Reagan, 40th U.S President