



*Safety Through Attunement:
Is your nervous system creating an unsafe
environment for your horse?*

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ACCESSING EQUANIMITY: THE PATH OF THE HORSE

- Know the signs of dysregulation in horses.
- Understand the 3 key factors for creating a safe environments for equines.
- Implications of maintaining a nervous system based approach.
- Consider the avenues for further research.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EMOTIONALLY SAFE?

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WHY REGULATION?

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Co-regulation is “a biological imperative: a need that must be met to sustain life. It is through reciprocal regulation of our autonomic states that we feel safe to move into connection and create trusting relationships.”

Deb Dana

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ALL MAMMALS REACT TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THREE DIFFERENT FORMS OF SAFETY EXPRESSION (PORGES, 2017).

- **Dorsal Vagal**
 - **Oldest**
 - **Parasympathetic - Hypoarousal - Collapse**
- **Sympathetic Nervous System**
 - **Hyperarousal - Fight/Flight**
- **Ventral Vagal**
 - **Newest - Mammalian Brain**
 - **Social Engagement System**

“A HISTORY OF MISATTUNED CAREGIVING AND UNREPAIRED RELATIONSHIP RUPTURES SHAPES THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM TOWARDS PROTECTION AND AWAY FROM CONNECTION” (DANA, 2018, P. 74).

- **Decreases growth and reproductive capabilities**
- **Inhibits the immune system**
- **Digestion issues - increased risk of ulcerations, colic and diarrhea**
- **Sleep issues**
- **Pacing, Cribbing, Rubbing Manes**
- **Avoidant behavior**
- **High reactivity and fear**
- **Increases aggressive**
- **Misinterpretation of connection as threat**

IS YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM CREATING AN UNSAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR HORSE?

- **Attunement without Regulation**
- **Regulation without Attunement**
- **Regulation without Integration**
- **Attunement without Integration**
- **Attunement and Regulation without Integration**



“Polyvagal Theory leads to an understanding that to connect and co-regulate with others is our biological imperative. We experience this imperative as an inherent quest for safety that can be reached only through successful social relationships in which we co-regulate our behavior and physiology.” Porges

REGULATION AT ITS
CORE IS THE ABILITY
TO PERCEIVE
DISPARATE
INFORMATION FROM
OUR INNER AND
OUTER ENVIRONMENT,
WHILE FACILITATING
THE MOVEMENT OF
THIS ENERGY.

.....
- Heather Gunther





Resilience occurs when we remain present and attuned to our environment and perceive our challenges as surmountable.

It is imperative that horses not lose their "me" in assisting us as Equine Professionals, and in healthy relationship they won't have to.

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"Knowing about the brain empowers you to transform confusion into insight, self-blame into self-compassion." -Dan Siegel



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