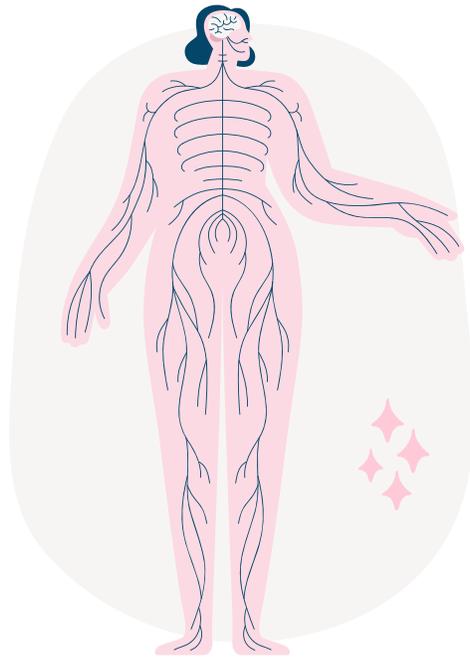


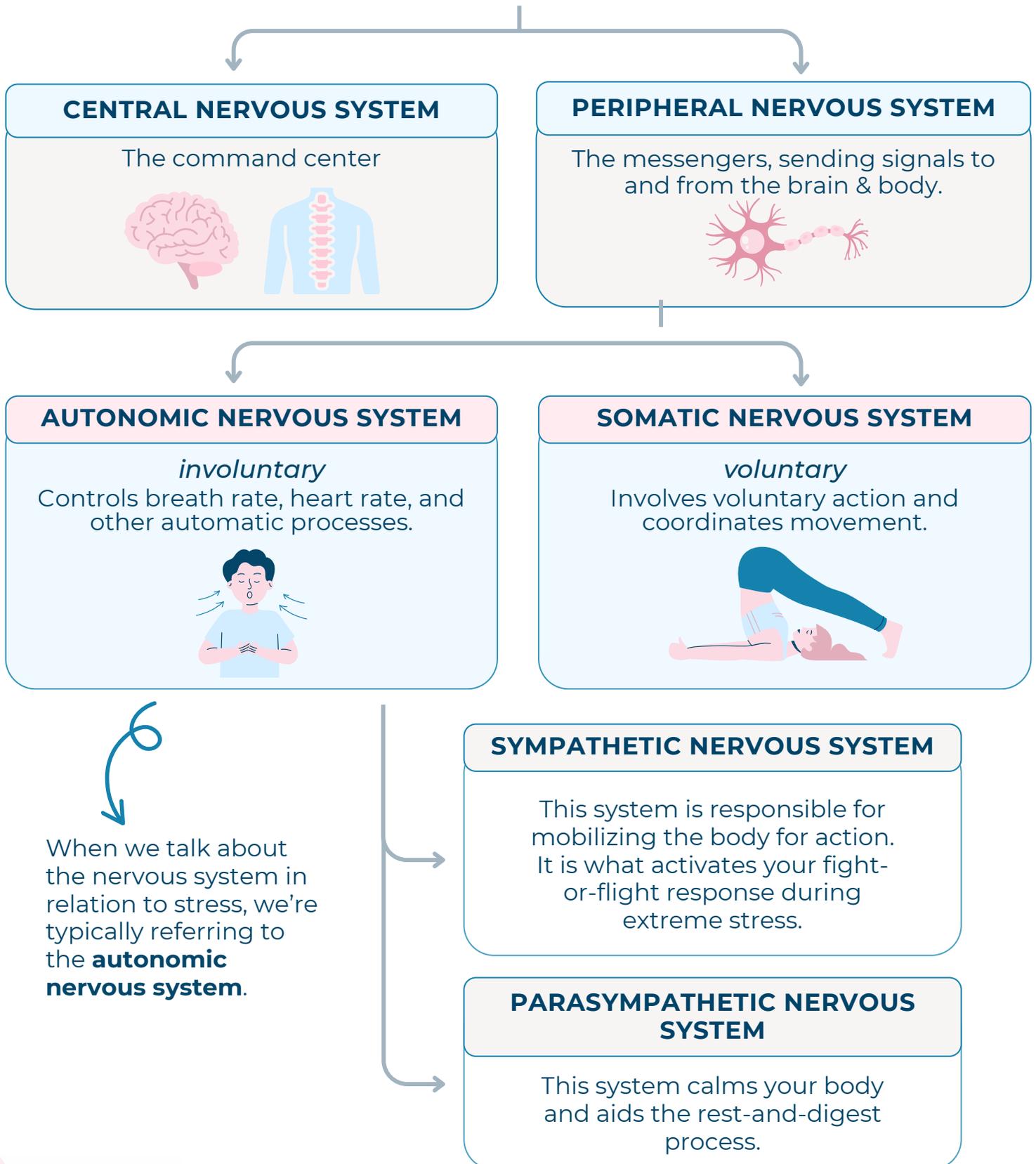
What Is the Nervous System?



Dr. Megan Anna Neff



THE HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM



SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM



“Fight-or-Flight” Mode



This is our body’s **natural response to threat**. While invaluable in the face of immediate physical danger, it poses challenges in our daily lives because the body **doesn’t differentiate** between something like escaping from a tiger and work pressures.



Pupils Dilate



Increased Heartbeat



Airways Widen



**Inhibits Activity of the
Stomach**



Inhibits Intestines



Inhibits Gallbladder



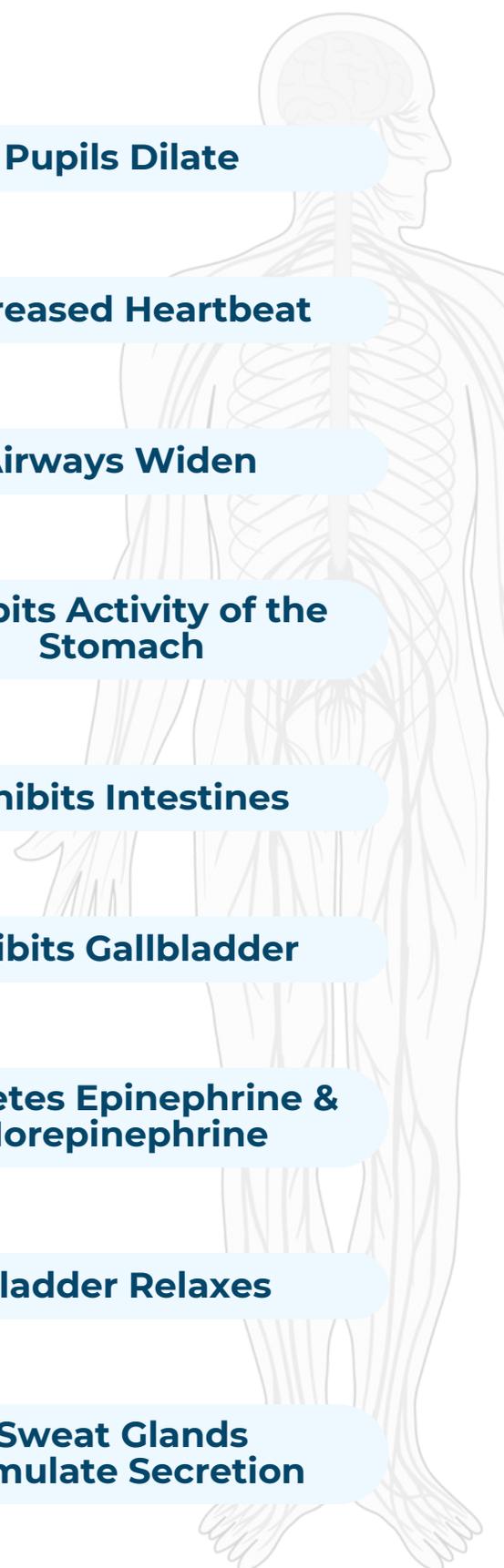
**Secretes Epinephrine &
Norepinephrine**



Bladder Relaxes



**Sweat Glands
Stimulate Secretion**



PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

“Rest-and-Digest” Mode

The parasympathetic nervous system serves as our body's natural way of **conserving energy** and replenishing resources after periods of stress or activity. It's also instrumental in **regulating our mood** and has a calming effect on our emotional state.



Understanding how to **consciously engage and strengthen** our parasympathetic nervous system can empower us to **better manage stress.**



Pupils Constrict



Decreased Heartbeat



Airways Narrow Slightly



Stimulates Activity of the Stomach



Stimulates Intestines



Stimulates Gallbladder



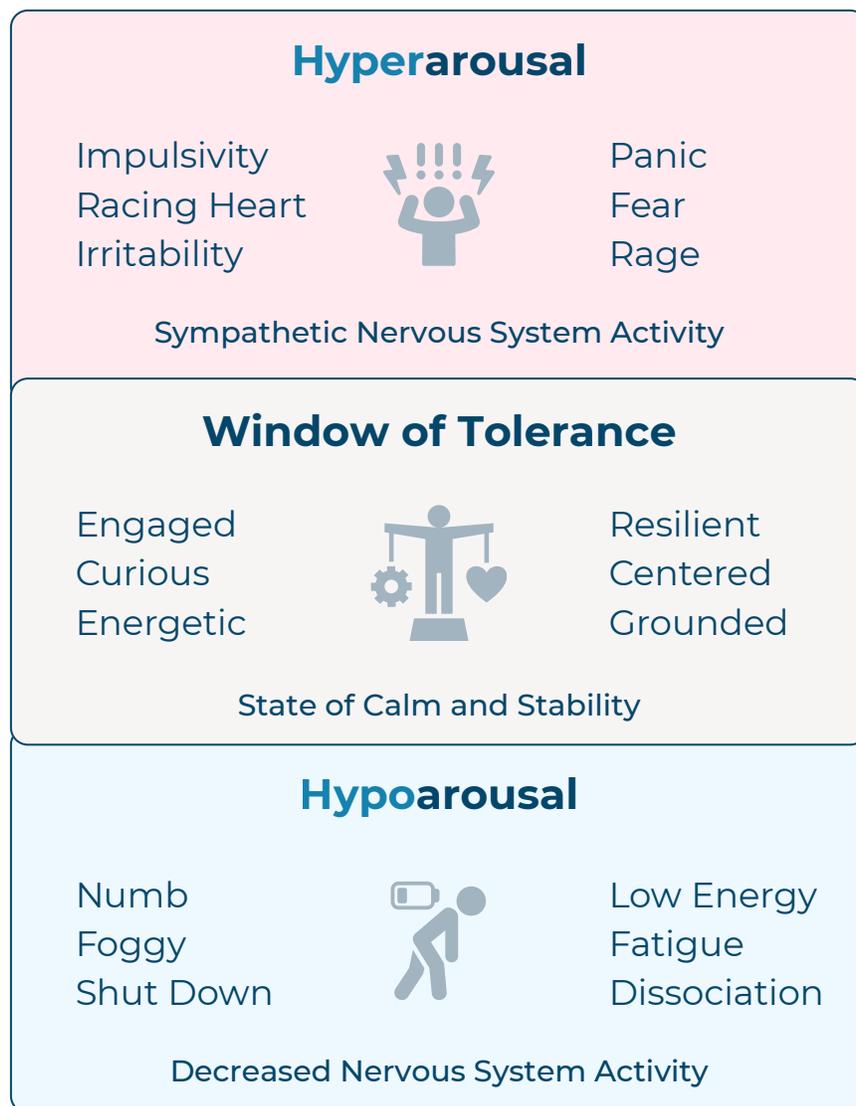
Bladder Contracts



WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



The “Window of Tolerance” is the **optimal zone** where we can effectively **manage emotions and stress**. Within this zone, individuals can **stay balanced** and **respond to challenges** without becoming overwhelmed.



To stay within this window, we can practice **nervous system state shifting**, intentionally engaging in activities to adjust the arousal of your nervous system.



SOOTHING ACTIVITIES

These are activities can help us **downregulate** our nervous system. Downregulating involves decreasing the body's arousal and activation levels, beneficial for calming an overly stimulated state.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Tapping



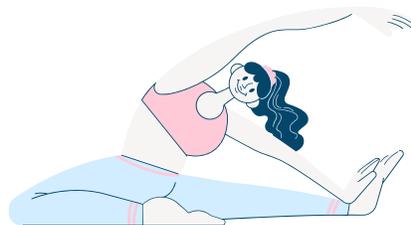
Guided Imagery Meditation



Binaural Beats & Calming Music



Breathwork
(slow and deep)



Yoga

(especially restorative poses like child's pose, forward folds, or legs-up-the-wall)



ALERTING ACTIVITIES

These are activities can help us **upregulate** our nervous system. Upregulating boosts your body's energy, alertness, and arousal levels, aiding in overcoming states of immobilization.



Rapid
Breathwork



Listen to Upbeat
Music



Expose Yourself
to Sunlight



Brisk Walk or Pacing



Lift Weights



Creating Pressure or Friction
(like rubbing hands together)



SUMMARY

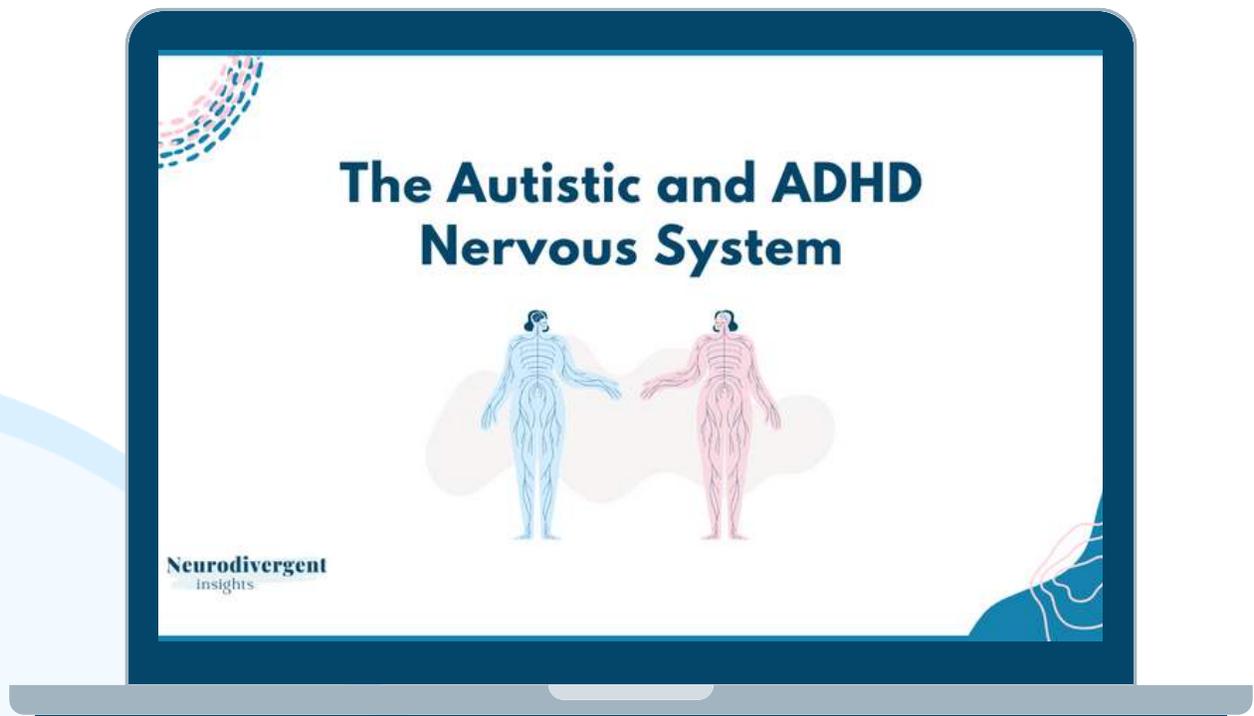
Your nervous system is at the heart of how you experience the world. For Autistic and ADHD people, its sensitivity and tendency toward overload make it **especially important to understand (and work with not against)** our body's responses.



Building awareness and practicing simple, nervous system-friendly practices can help you: **stay grounded, expand your Window of Tolerance, and be more resilient from** from burnout.



This guide was adapted from a longer article. To read the full article, visit:



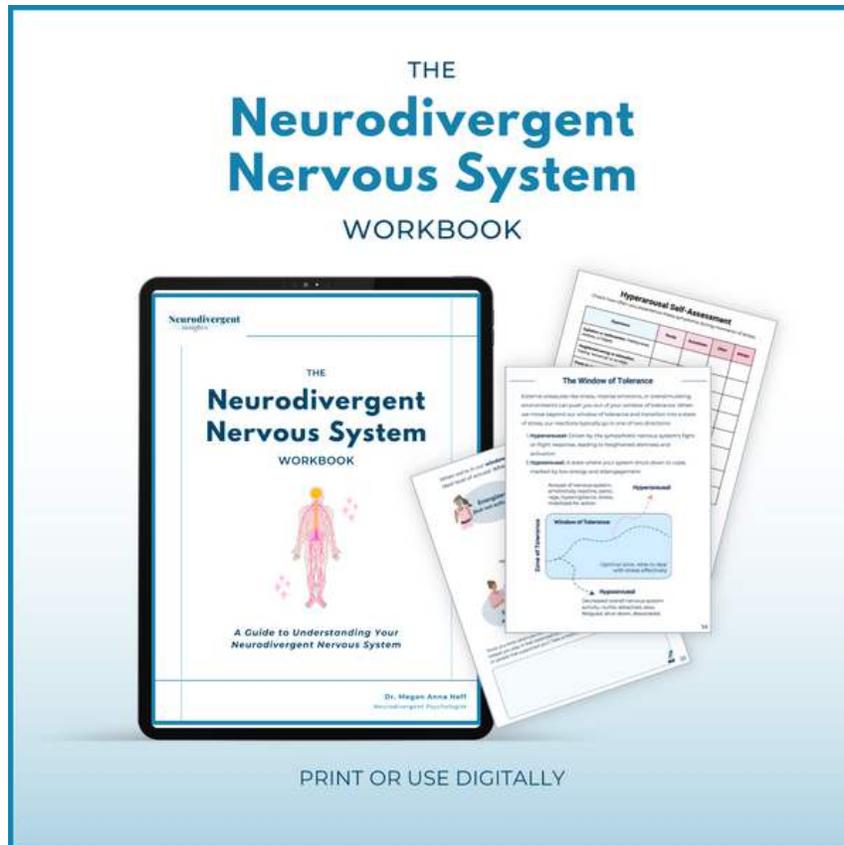
neurodivergentinsights.com





RELATED RESOURCES

Check out The Nervous System Workbook for more!



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One use per customer



ABOUT US



Dr. Neff – Info & Resources



Website: neurodivergentinsights.com

A growing library of resources on neurodivergence, mental health, wellness, and neurodivergent identity.



Available at all major book outlets



Community: neurodivergentinsights.com/membership



Instagram: [@neurodivergent_insights](https://www.instagram.com/neurodivergent_insights)

Dr. Megan Anna Neff is a neurodivergent psychologist, author, and educator who founded Neurodivergent Insights after discovering she is Autistic and ADHD. She now creates visual-forward resources that blend research, clinical insight, and lived experience.

Neurodivergent Insights



Born from lived experience and gaps in clinical frameworks, Neurodivergent Insights offers reflection, learning, and care for neurodivergent people and those who support them. We create resources, education, and tools grounded in research and real life to help you make sense of your mind, story, and nervous system.

Whether you're exploring your own neurodivergence, supporting a child, or showing up as a more affirming clinician, we offer resources to help you feel more human, informed, and less alone.

