Polyvagal Theory Chart of Trauma Response

Southwest Trauma Training
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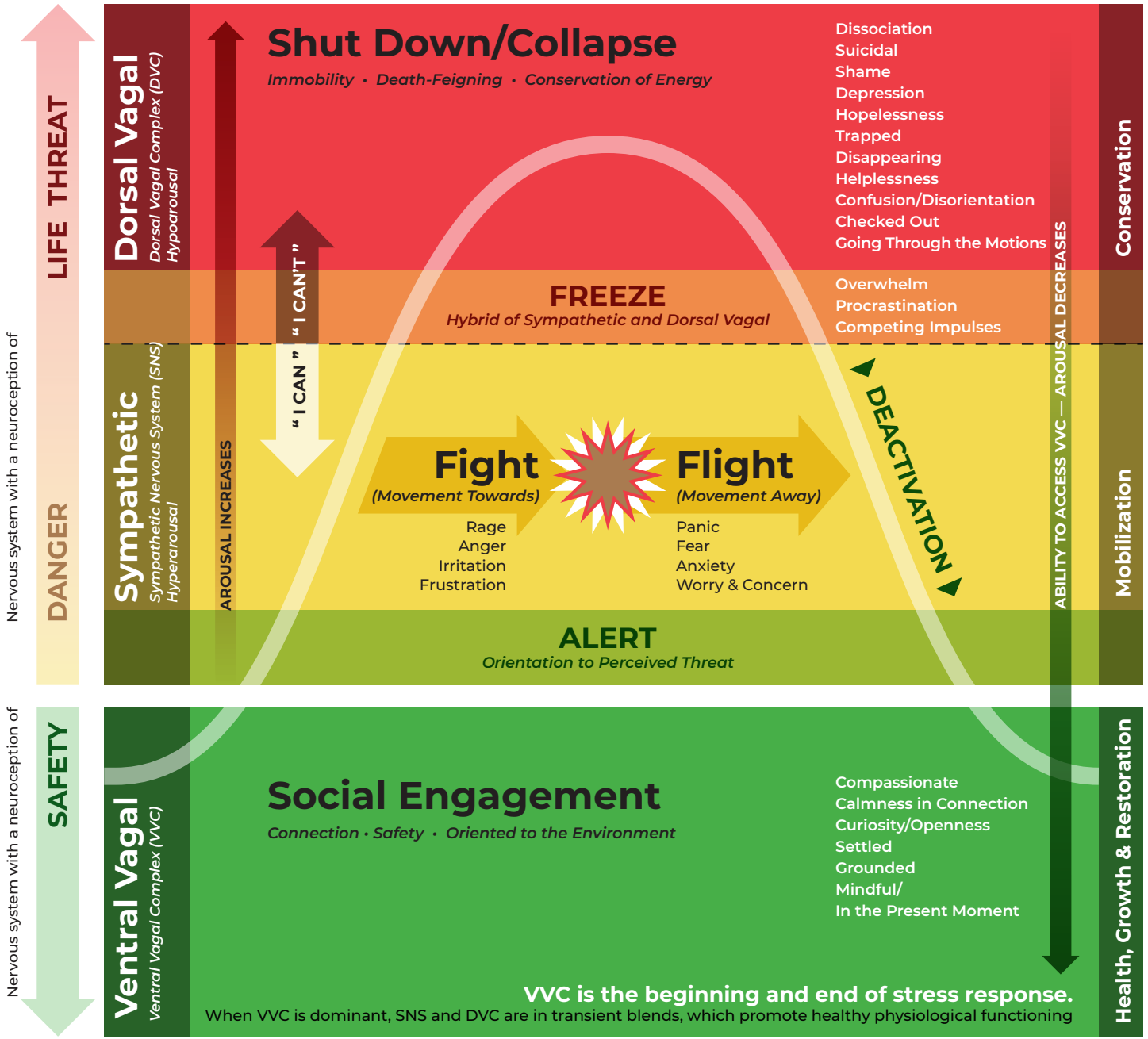

Parasympathetic Nervous System
Dorsal Vagal Complex (DVC)

INCREASES
Fuel Storage and Insulin Activity
Immobilization Behavior (with fear)
Endorphins to Numb/Raise Pain Threshold
Conservation of Metabolic Resources

DECREASES
Heart Rate · Blood Pressure
Temperature · Muscle Tone
Facial Expressions and Eye Contact
Depth of Breath · Social Behavior
Attunement to Human Voice
Sexual Responses · Immune Response

Sympathetic Nervous System *(SNS)*

INCREASES
Blood Pressure · Heart Rate · Fuel Availability
Adrenaline · Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs
Blood Clotting · Pupil Size · Dilation of Bronchi
Defensive Responses

DECREASES
Fuel Storage · Insulin Activity
Digestion · Salivation · Relational Ability
Immune Response

Parasympathetic Nervous System
Ventral Vagal Complex (VVC)

INCREASES
Digestion · Intestinal Motility
Resistance to Infection · Immune Response
Rest and Recuperation · Health and Vitality
Circulation to Non-Vital Organs (skin, extremities)
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear)
Ability to Relate and Connect
Movement in Eyes and Head Turning
Prosody in Voice · Breath

DECREASES
Defensive Responses

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