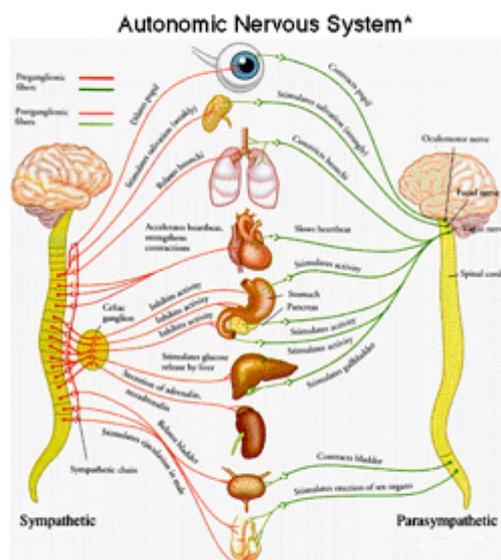


Be proactive – learn how to become – and remain, calm and in control

For those people in an anxious stressed or depressed state it is encouraging to know that there are things they can do today that will make tomorrow better.

When the brain senses danger, the autonomic nervous system (ANS) sends signals to the adrenal glands, which prepare the body for flight or fight by producing chemicals such as adrenalin. The ANS has two subdivisions, the sympathetic, which prepares the body for action and the parasympathetic, which acts a stabilizer and restores things to normal once the need to be alert is past.

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For some people, perhaps those who have been under prolonged stress, or who have had stressful childhoods, there can be a predisposition for the sympathetic and parasympathetic to be continually out of balance, which results in constant feelings of anxiety and a system that is on high alert.

It stands to reason that as the problem is an out of balance autonomic nervous system, any therapy needs to focus on redressing this, through strengthening the stabilizing, calming function, and reducing the sensitivity of the arousal function.

The way that we think about our day to day situations has a large part to play in how stressful we find them. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an effective means of challenging unhelpful thought patterns and introducing useful more manageable ones. This reduces the stress input. Hypnotherapy, including self hypnosis, is a well validated approach to accessing a state of mind,

which is calming, relaxing and comfortable: this strengthens the parasympathetic, calming function. There is another powerful and well proven therapy called EMDR, which has the effect of reducing illogical negative emotions.

Combining these three therapies appropriately to suit each individual enables people to:

- think clearly
- behave effectively
- relate positively to themselves and others (as taught in interpersonal therapies)
- reduce vulnerability to relapses
- master those butterfly feelings in the stomach and feel in control

The most recent statistics show that between 75 – 85% of people are able to recover completely using these and related methods to change their patterns of thinking and this has been my experience too.