



Not Just Child's
Play! How
"Furry
Auxiliaries" Offer
Safe Ways to
Heal Trauma

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Psychodrama

An action method developed by Dr. J.L. Moreno and Zerka Moreno that involves enacting situations, problems and issues rather than simply talking about them.

Psychodrama has a philosophy and methodology and is the “parent” of what we call role play today.

Protagonist

The person who agrees to explore a personal issue with dramatic action and plays the main role in the enactment.



Auxiliary

The person playing a supporting role for the protagonist in the drama to support the action.

“Furry Auxiliaries”

Using stuffed animals, puppets and dolls to play roles in a drama – when human role players are not available OR to supplement the presence of human role players. This phrase has been coined by Linda Ciotola, M.Ed., TEP.

Puppets
Dolls
Stuffed
animals
Other
“stuffies”





Manila envelope “puppet”





Ways to display:
boxes, shelves,
signs



Use empty chair, clothing and other props as warm ups

Polyvagal Theory by Stephen Porges

(stephenporges.
com)

POLYVAGAL THEORY

The Polyvagal Theory explains the relationship between the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) and social behavior. The ANS is the neurological architecture of the mind-body connection. Through its sensory and motor components, it provides the physiological foundation of embodiment and the neural basis for feeling "I regulate my internal milieu and assess safety or threat internally, in our relationships, and in our environment. This ability to detect degrees of safety is known as neuroception. Neuroception selectively engages specific neural circuits (Ventral Vagal, Sympathetic, Dorsal Vagal) that shift depending on whether we feel safe, in danger, or under life threat. The Polyvagal Theory maps these circuits and the ways they combine into neural pathways of behavior. It affirms that human well-being is largely social in nature, and it holds significant implications for improved understanding and treatment of our physical and mental health.

Ventral Vagal (Safety)

When we experience a restoration of calm, our nervous system activates the ventral vagal pathway, the circuit enabling connection and co-regulation. This pathway regulates our physiological state through the vagus nerve, the primary nerve of the vagus nerve system. The ventral vagal pathway functions as a brake to inhibit the heart's activation, supporting the autonomic capacity for focus, concentration, and the maintenance of relationships while sustaining coordination of the sympathetic and dorsal vagal systems to support health (homeostasis).

Sympathetic (Danger)

The Sympathetic System mobilizes us to respond to threat. In our quest to survive, as the ANS withdraws from a ventral vagal state in response to a restoration of danger through the ANS, we enter a generalized state of arousal. Sympathetic states are high-energy, focused, and activated (think of fight or flight) as well as other (e.g., anger, etc.). As we move from sympathetic states, our focus shifts the ability to respond to positive emotions, our state less properly (involuntary), and our eyes dilated (the pupil of human eyes, having evolved as predator (like frequent) search).

Dorsal Vagal (Life Threat)

In circumstances of life threat, when the ANS has an unduly activated Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) the dorsal vagal system (DVS) largely a system following the vagus nerve below the diaphragm, including our gut, the sympathetic lower vagal system, when activated in distress, is our most primitive threat response. It designates our state and mobilizes the body, slowing our system into shutdown, numbness, and collapse, while releasing the highly natural protective mechanisms designed to demand the spirit of unengaged death.



Social Engagement

The social engagement system brings us into a calm state that historically enables connection with others. This system allows the neural regulation of the face and voice (vocal cords, larynx, pharynx, and mouth) and the processing into the brain (sensory, motor, and cognitive) of the signals coming from the face, voice, and posture of others. Through this system, we express our emotions and physiological states on our face and through our voice. The state of our body language through our face and voice enables us to form reciprocal relationships.



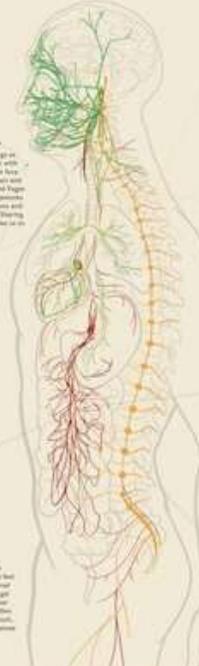
Play

When we play, both our ventral vagal and sympathetic systems are engaged, allowing us to connect our bodies and be heard. The ventral vagal system under play social. It is a state of play, which is a combination of calm and alert. Shown through a Polyvagal lens, play is a social activity.



Intimacy

Intimacy occurs when the ventral vagal system is engaged to connect with the dorsal vagal system. This most often occurs in face-to-face connection and eye contact. The underlying dorsal vagal system of connection is influenced by external conditions, in the moment of connection, a shared gaze and the capacity to maintain attention. Eye contact, body contact, and eye contact. This allows relations to develop, to be received, directly and indirectly, to be seen, experienced, and the experience of others.



Fight

The sympathetic nervous system. In fight, sympathetic activation takes the form of aggression and withdrawal from connection. It is a state of fight, which is a combination of calm and alert. Shown through a Polyvagal lens, fight is a social activity.



Flight

The sympathetic nervous system. In flight, sympathetic activation takes the form of avoidance and fleeing to escape the threat. Essentially, it is a state of flight, which is a combination of calm and alert. Shown through a Polyvagal lens, flight is a social activity.



Freeze

When we are nervous or afraid in distress, we are entering a state of sympathetic and dorsal vagal system. When the sympathetic system keeps the body right, the dorsal vagal system immobilizes.

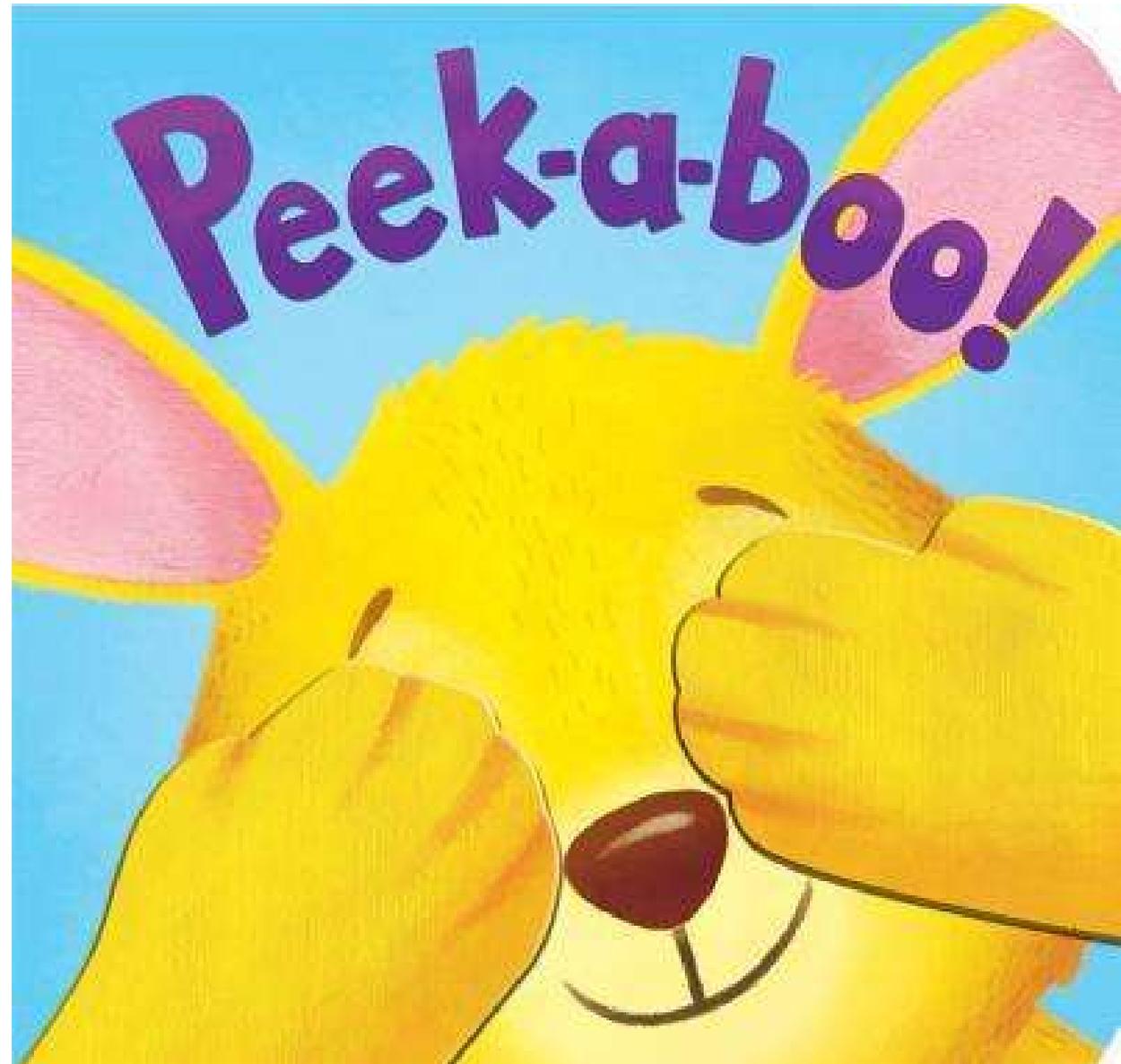


Shutdown

The dorsal vagal system leads to collapse and shutdown. As a state of body immobilization, it is associated with a combination of shutdown and withdrawal from connection. It is a state of shutdown, which is a combination of calm and alert. Shown through a Polyvagal lens, shutdown is a social activity.

The Polyvagal Theory

The polyvagal theory (Porges, 1995) introduced a new perspective relating autonomic function to behavior. This perspective includes an appreciation of the autonomic nervous system as a “system,” the identification of neural circuits involved in the regulation of autonomic state, and an interpretation of autonomic reactivity as adaptive within the context of the phylogeny of the vertebrate autonomic nervous system. The polyvagal theory encourages a level of inquiry that challenges scientists to incorporate an integrative understanding of the role neural mechanisms play in regulating biobehavioral processes.



Therapeutic Spiral Model

A model of psychodrama that has been adopted for use with trauma survivors, developed by Kate Hudgins, Ph.D., and colleagues and trainees. This strength-based model identifies specific observation and containment roles that support trauma recovery.

Three types
of strengths
according to
the
Therapeutic
Spiral Model

Personal

Relational

Spiritual



3 types of
strengths
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Personal

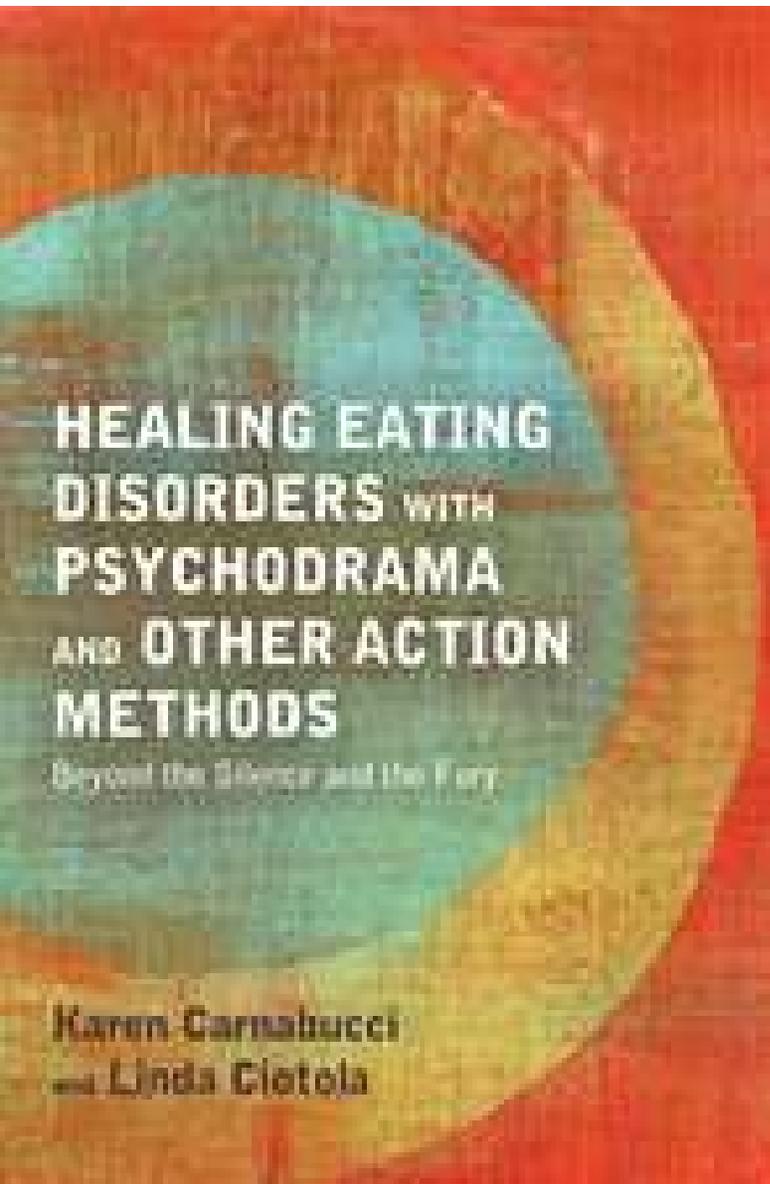
Traits that you carry within yourself

Relational

Supportive relationships with people,
pets, groups, others

Spiritual

What nourishes your spirit



Healing Eating Disorders with Psychodrama and Other Action Methods: Beyond the Silence and the Fury

By Karen Carnabucci and Linda Ciotola

Thank you for attending!

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Healing Bridges

Healing-bridges.com