

# Outline

## Relationships – The Interaction of two nervous systems

- The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) as the basis of understanding the dynamics of a couple
  - Three principles of the Polyvagal Theory
    - Neuroception – the biology of safety and danger
    - Experiential exercise
  - Three nervous system states and their hierarchy of response
    - Experiential exercise
  - Co-regulation - purpose and meaning
- Implicit memory

## The ANS in action in the Couples Therapy Session

- Survival adaptations
- Attachment styles
- Co-morbidities of depression/anxiety/trauma
- Unique factors specific to sexual difficulties

## The Structure a Couples Therapy Session with the ANS in Mind

- Challenges to effective communication
- Beginnings of a session – enhancing safety; techniques for “settling” the nervous system
- Creating a structure in session – why?
- Mapping nervous system response

## Once the Conversation Begins

- How to facilitate a conversation between two nervous systems
- The value of mirroring; case ex: Sasha and Lilly
  - Experiential exercise
- Tracking the body for subtle signs of nervous system activation into fight/flight or emotional shutdown; case ex: Gillian and Steve
- Overwhelm and underwhelm; case ex: Brad and Sara
- Strategies for regulation
  - Experiential exercise

## Repair and Healing Inside the Dyadic Relationship

- Using the language of body as a resource for therapeutic inquiry; case ex: Larry and Ben
- Specifics unique to addressing sexual difficulties; case ex: Gina and Dan
- Repairing ruptures in connection
- Memory reconsolidation; case ex: Mark and Alicia
- Finding safe harbor in co-regulation as the path to healing

## Live Webinar Schedule (Times listed in Eastern)

- 8:00 Program begins
- 11:50-1:00 Lunch Break
- 4:00 Program ends

There will be two 15-min breaks (mid-morning & mid-afternoon).  
Actual lunch and break start times are at the discretion of the speaker.  
A more detailed schedule is available upon request.

# Objectives

1. Demonstrate two techniques designed to promote a feeling of safety between partners at the beginning of a session.
2. Investigate Stephen Porges’s concept of neuroception and how this can be used as psychoeducation.
3. Assess for at least three early signs of nervous system activation that indicate one or both partners are feeling threatened.
- 4 Practice three somatic interventions to decrease automatic nervous system activation.
5. Demonstrate three interventions that utilize a focus on body sensations to help couples identify the vulnerable feelings that are the source of their conflict.
6. Propose a somatic-based technique for couples who are focused on improving their sexual relationship.

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Sex, Couples and the Integration of Somatic Interventions

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- Create a NEW session structure to improve treatment outcomes
- Increase effective engagement, resolution and healing
- Track the client's nervous system activation to improve the therapeutic process

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SEX, COUPLES AND THE INTEGRATION OF SOMATIC INTERVENTIONS
The Path to Safety, Connection and Resolution

There is no conversation worth having if the nervous system isn't in a "settled-enough" state.

The frustrations of working with couples can be often feel overwhelming. Couples who easily become angry and defensive toward each other, or emotionally shutdown in session can make therapy unrewarding – for clinician and client alike.

This seminar with couples' therapist Deborah Fox, MSW, LICSW, will teach you how to use the natural workings of the autonomic nervous system to help couples engage more effectively in session.

And from then on, you can have enough time in session to address their concerns versus the reactivity.

Somatic Intervention skills are an essential addition to every couple's and sex therapist's toolbox. When couples become emotionally charged or shut down it's because they're feeling threatened. Their nervous system engages to protect.

Become equipped to intervene effectively at the first sign that their nervous system is signaling danger is crucial. Body-based therapeutic strategies enable the therapist to help the couple delve more deeply into the sources of distress so that constructive solutions can emerge.

Sign up today!

Target Audience: Marriage and Family Therapists • Counselors • Social Workers • Psychologists Therapists • Addiction Counselors • Case Managers • Nurses Other Mental Health Professionals

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Meet Your Speaker

Deborah J. Fox, MSW, LICSW, is a Certified Imago Relationship therapist and Certified Sex Therapist in private practice in Washington, DC. She offers individual, couples, and group psychotherapy, as well as clinical consultation. Deborah conducts seminars and consultation groups on couples therapy and sex therapy. She has presented on these subjects at the Washington Society of Clinical Social Workers, the Institute for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, and the Integrative Sex Therapy Institute and at the 2018 International Imago Relationship Therapy conference. She has studied Somatic Experiencing and wrote the chapter, The Mind Body Connection: Sex, Couples and Somatic Therapy in Integrative Sex and Couples Therapy, by Tammy Nelson, Ph.D. She is passionate about taking couples therapy to a deeper emotional level and enabling greater intimacy and satisfaction. Speaker Disclosure: Financial: Deborah Fox maintains a private practice. She receives a speaking honorarium from PESI, Inc. Non-financial: Deborah Fox has no relevant non-financial relationship to disclose.

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This continuing education activity is designed to meet state board requirements for the following professionals: Addiction Counselors, Counselors.

For specific credit approvals and details, visit pesi.com/webcast/84676

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Recommended Reading:

Couples Therapy Workbook 30 Guided Conversations to Re-Connect Relationships Kathleen Mates-Youngman, M.A., LMFT \$24.99 \$19.99\* Integrative Sex & Couples Therapy A Therapist's Guide to New and Innovative Approaches Tammy Nelson, Ph.D. \$34.99 \$24.99\* \*Discount Included with purchase of the Webinar

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