

# What is Safe and Sound?

Safe and Sound Protocol is a passive, music-based system developed by Dr. Stephen Porges that supports vagus nerve regulation.

The Protocol is delivered through 5 x 1 hour music modules that contain specific audio frequencies. The specific frequencies that are utilised in the music cause the vagus nerve to respond to the stimulation, resulting in a better regulated nervous system.

## The Nervous System Response

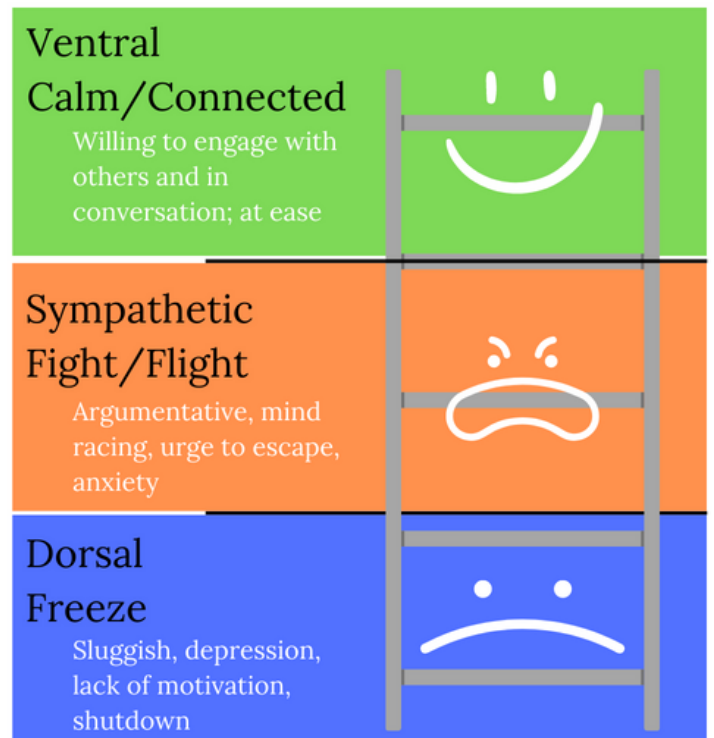
The vagus nerve is responsible for the fight/flight/freeze response in the body. We're often taught that it's the adrenal/endocrine system, but the vagus nerve governs the endocrine system and innervates all other organs in our body.

Imagine a ladder, with the various states of our nervous system on the ladder. At the bottom, is our survival response – freeze. In the face of certain danger, our nervous system will cause our body to freeze. This can be helpful for those times in the wild, where our ancestors were confronted with a tiger. The response kept them alive. When our nervous system is constantly exposed to this threat of the tiger, it can become conditioned to respond to **all** threats as if they are all tigers. Over time, this can result in what we call "depression", and a range of physical and mental symptoms like: sluggishness, lack of motivation, inability to complete daily tasks, exhaustion.

The next section of the ladder is our fight/flight response. If we were faced with a tiger in the wild, all our systems would be ready to stand our ground and fight. Most of us living and operating in the modern world are spending most of our time in this state. It is also known as "sympathetic dominance" and can be helpful when we need bursts of energy to cope with a short term situation. Also known as "anxiety", we may have a range of physical symptoms that can help us identify we are in fight/flight: difficulty focusing, racing thoughts, a never ending to-do list, "busyness", the need to constantly move, and difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep.

At the top of the ladder is the state of being calm and connected. In this state, we are responsive to the world around us. We can see the tiger in the bush, but we know it is too far away to pose an immediate threat. In this state it is easier for us to interpret the behaviours and facial expressions of others, we are better able to separate voices from background noise, and we feel relaxed.

The goal of Safe & Sound is to allow the body to return to the state of being calm and connected. And to utilise strategies and tools to help us remain in this state, in the long run.



Ideally, we want our nervous systems to be in this calm and connected state. However, when we are impacted by trauma; 21st century life; processing large streams of information from the media; disability; and just being human, our nervous systems can easily move into fight or flight, or the freeze response.

Our nervous system is a positive feedback loop – the more of something we feed it, the more we will elicit that response. If we keep entering into high stress situations, over time, our systems will acclimate to fight/flight and can have difficulty moving back to that calm and connected state. Specific events, or constant periods of fight/flight can result in the body moving into a freeze response.

The Safe and Sound Protocol will support the nervous system to reset itself, and allow us to experience more time in the calm and connected state. That reinforces us feeling calm and connected, and we're able to regulate our systems to that state more often, and for longer periods of time.



## Best Practices for Using Safe and Sound

Although the Protocol is divided into 5 x 1 hour long listening sessions, most participants do not use the program this way.

During our intake call, we will determine the best way to break the program up into smaller listening sessions, and how often might work best for you to listen.

The plans are not set in stone. Everyone responds differently, and we will adjust your pathway through Safe and Sound depending on your individual needs.

A few things you **WILL** need:

- Over-ear headphones without noise cancelling (or where noise cancelling is turned off)
- A quiet and comfortable environment where you can listen
- Access to the app (via phone/tablet/computer)
- Something quiet to do while you listen - play a card game, colouring pages, knitting, folding laundry

A few things you **MAY** need:

- A break during listening to move around
- Someone to help you co-regulate after your session
- A follow-up email/message/call with me to adjust your listen duration or frequency

**We'll be in contact during your Protocol access to ensure you have all the support you need.**