
CONSCIOUS CARE & SUPPORT



Emotional Well-being

PTSD Desensitization & Triggers' Prevention

“Trauma results in a fundamental reorganization of the way mind and brain manage perceptions. It changes not only how we think and what we think about, but also our very capacity to think.”

Bessel A. van der Kolk

Session V – Resource 2





Land Acknowledgements

Australia

We start by acknowledging the Traditional owners of the land, air and sea on which we meet, the First Peoples of the Butchulla land where I live and work and all the lands on which you sit. We pay our respect and acknowledge their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that the lands of Australia were never seeded. Always is, always will be Aboriginal Land.

United States

Where I sit is on occupied ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation has called De-Jope since time immemorial. We now on this land acknowledge the circumstances that led to the forced removal of the Ho-Chunk people, and honor their legacy of resistance and resilience.

Canada

We acknowledge that this territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe , Haudenosaunee , Lenny Lenopee and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (including the Ojibwe , Odawa , Potawatomi) and Huron/Wendat Peoples. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place and we are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.



Symptoms of a Triggered Traumatized Emotional Brain That Often Causes Challenging Behaviour

- sensory irregularity
- inattention, anger, aggression
- gut wrenching sensations
- loss of control of bowels and urination
- head pounding
- breathing becomes fast and shallow
- intense feelings of heartbreak, emptiness, sadness
- speaking with an uptight and reactive argumentative voice
- not speaking at all
- body movements that signal collapse, rigidity, rage or defensiveness
- reactive and disorganized
- "self control strategies" stop working
- sounds and lights are intense and therefore fearful
- unwanted images from the past take control of the mind
- ADHD-like symptoms
- panic, fear, rage
- shut down
- feel numb in body and mind
- thinking becomes slow and sluggish
- trouble standing up



Triune Brain Theory

Thinking brain: reasoning, problem solving, verbal expression, memory for events and facts

Mammalian brain: non-verbal, emotional and relational experience, feeling and gut memories, and traumatic memory

Reptilian brain: instinctive responses, heart rate, breathing



Trauma Response

Brain Scan Research shows when we remember a traumatic event, memory centres in **the frontal lobes shut down**, and we get overwhelmed by feelings and impulses instead of recalling events.



Trauma Response

The Limbic system **responds to memories with increased activity**, especially the amygdala, the brain's smoke detector and emotional memory centre. **The amygdala sounds the alarm as if we were in danger right now.**

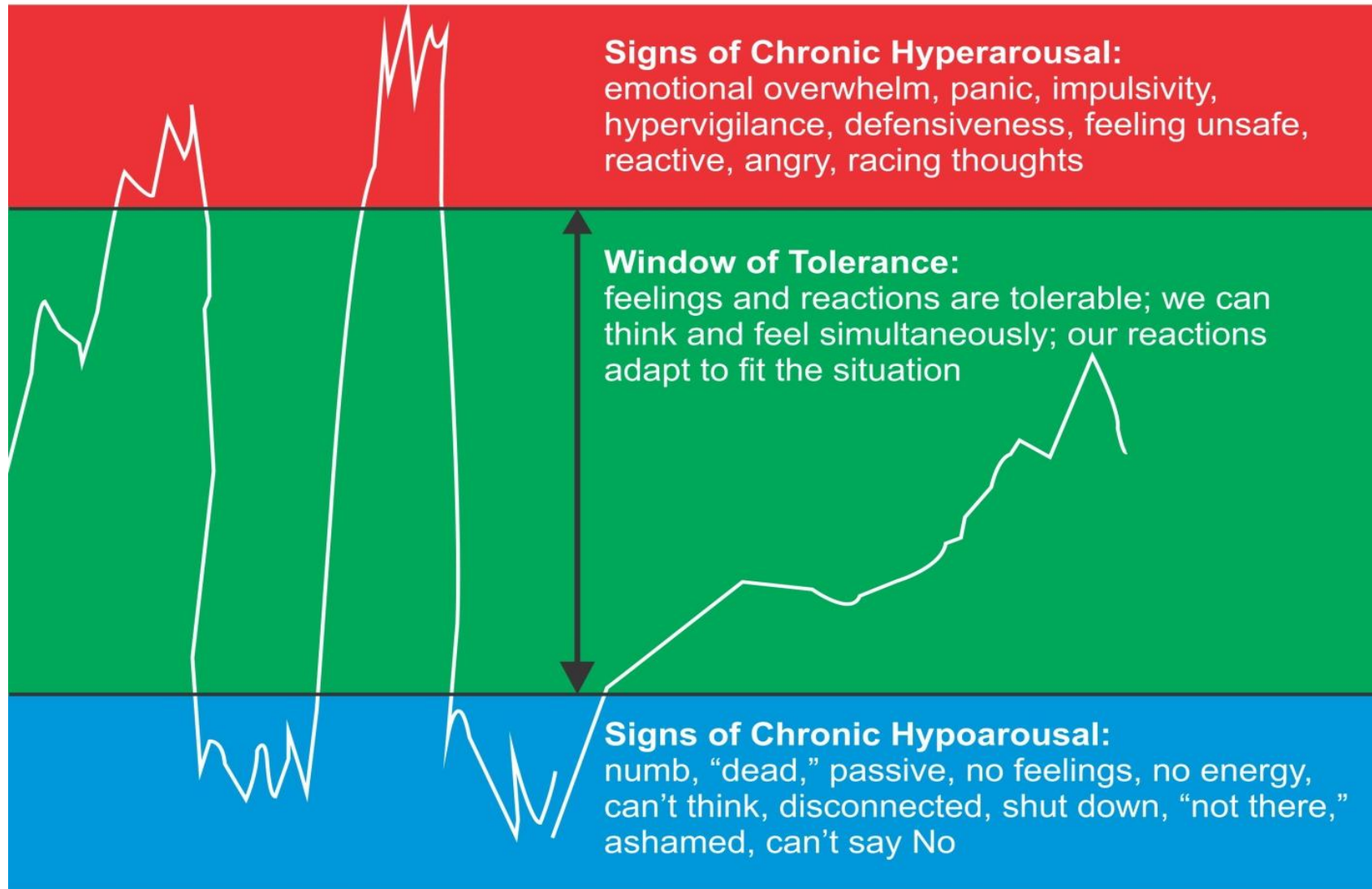


Trauma Response

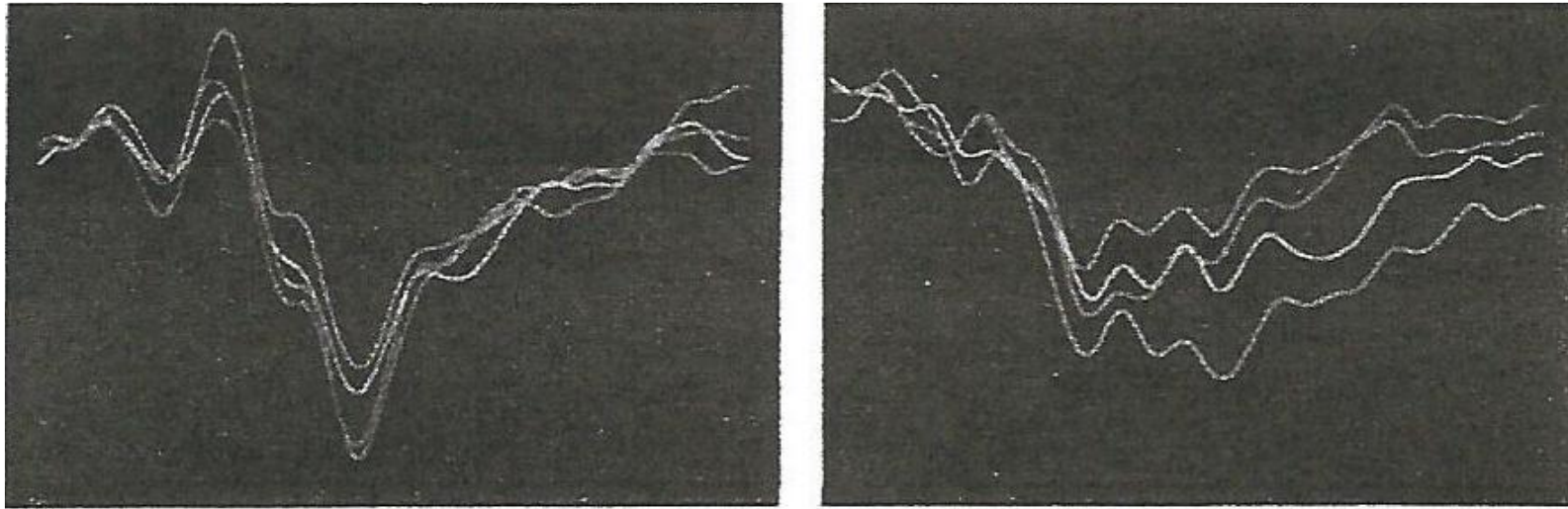
- The reptilian brain reacts to the amygdala's alarm.
- Heart rate increases.
- We stop breathing or hyperventilate.
- Muscles tense.
- We either speed up or shut down.



Trauma Closes the Window of Tolerance



At Its Roots, PTSD Behaviour Is Not Based On Social Motives Such As Task Avoidance, Attention Or Power And Control



Above is a comparison between a normal versus a PTSD brain. **Normally all regions of the brain collaborate in a synchronized pattern** (left), while the brainwaves in PTSD are less well coordinated; the brain has trouble filtering out irrelevant information and has problems attending to the stimulus at hand. This causes anxiety that leads to agitation, anger and aggression especially if brain waves are destabilized through inadvertently triggering PTSD symptoms.



(Adapted from “The Body Keeps The Score” - Bessel A. van der Kolk)

How PTSD Changes Body And Brain Hard Wiring

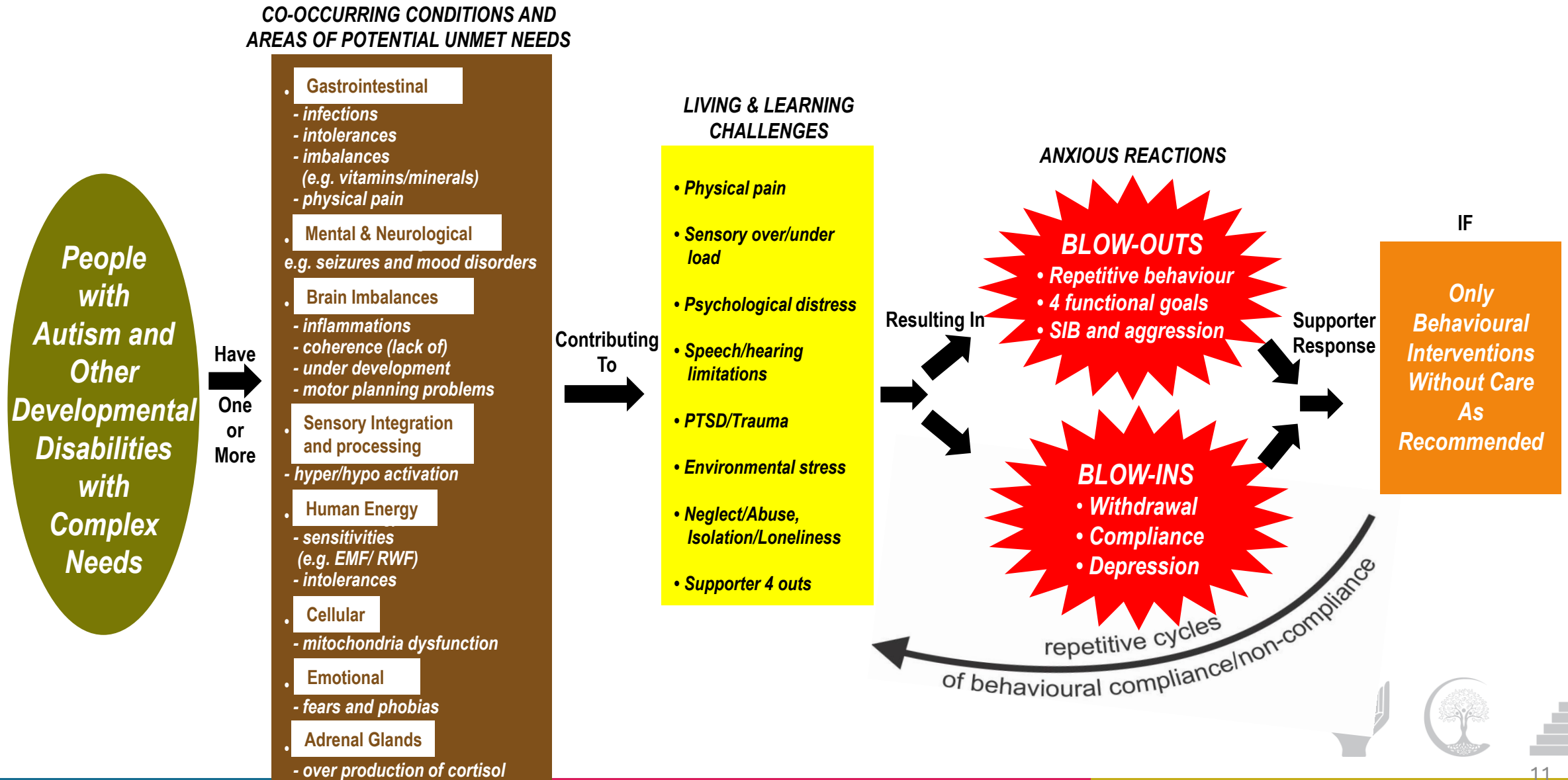
“Trauma results in a fundamental reorganization of the way mind and brain manage perceptions. It changes not only how we think and what we think about, but also our very capacity to think.”

“The act of telling the story doesn’t alter the automatic physical and hormonal responses of the body that remains hyper vigilant as it prepares to be assaulted or violated at any time.”

Bessel A. van der Kolk



The Recurring Cycles



Supporters – First, Do No Harm

Let us ensure that Supporters do not become part of the reactive trauma response.

- The Supporter must catch and calm themselves (become Mindful) to avoid fearful **entrainment** of the student. "Fear begets fear, calm begets calm." (Reference CCS five step model)
- Reduce/eliminate environmental triggers e.g. overwhelming stressors, people, places, situations etc. until coping skills are adequate.
- Interact calmly and watch the language we use- Power for example yelling, always creates fear and manifests as challenging behaviours or withdraw.



“Bottom Up” Supporting Strategies to Heal the Brain, Body and Being

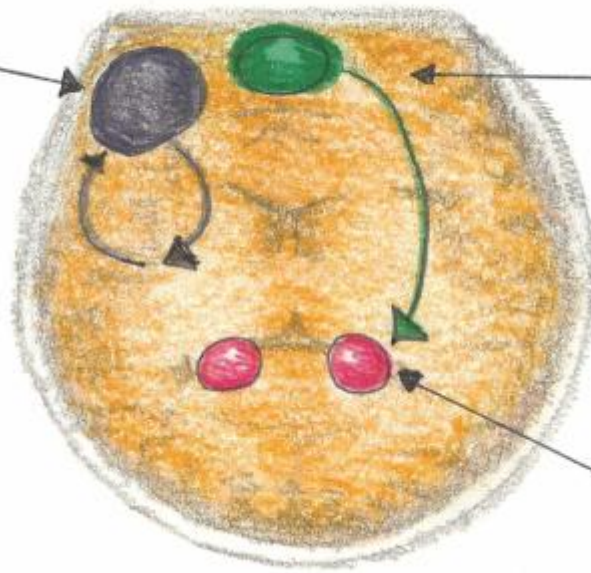
1. Cardio Exercise e.g. mini trampoline, platform swing.
2. Be intentional with positive emotions e.g. body, eyes, smile i.e. entrain positive.
3. Bilateral, Biomeridian Awareness Based Calming, as much as is possible.
4. Provide prescribed sensory integration exercises.
5. Hand massage.



Mindful Emotional Self Regulation

The main way we can consciously access the emotional brain is through self awareness*, i.e. becoming mindful. Mindfulness increases connections in the medial pre-frontal cortex. This reduces anxiety for the Supporter and the Person Supported.

Dorsolateral pre-frontal Cortex
Working Memory
Impulse Control



Medial pre-frontal Cortex
(part of the brain that notices what's going on)

Amygdala

(*Research reference: J. LeDoux, "Emotion Circuits in the Brain", Journal of Neuroscience 33, no. 9 (2013) 3815-23)



“Bottom Up”

Support Strategies to Heal the Emotional Brain cont’d

Teach/Model individual to do Calming Breathing Exercises

Exercise:

Mindfully inhale as arms are lifted to shoulder height.

Mindfully exhale as arms are lowered to side.

Let exhale be slower than inhale

NOTE: Mindful feeling body awareness activates the Vagus nerve. 80% of the fibres of the Vagus nerve run from the body into the brain. This means that one can directly calm an aroused (emotional brain) system by mindful movement practise, like Nei Yang Gong.

(Reference *Spark*, Ratey, J.)



Engaging Family and Professionals

Engage the services of professionals.

e.g.

- A Qualified “Bottom Up” PTSD Counsellor e.g. EMDR Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Naturopath
- Psychiatrist
- Neurofeedback Specialist
- Other



Supporting Others Through Mindful Connecting

As we quiet our mind and heart while supporting others,
Our stillness nurtures their calm and courage.

Now they can peacefully manifest more of their
complete Being, in part because of our mindful
presence.

