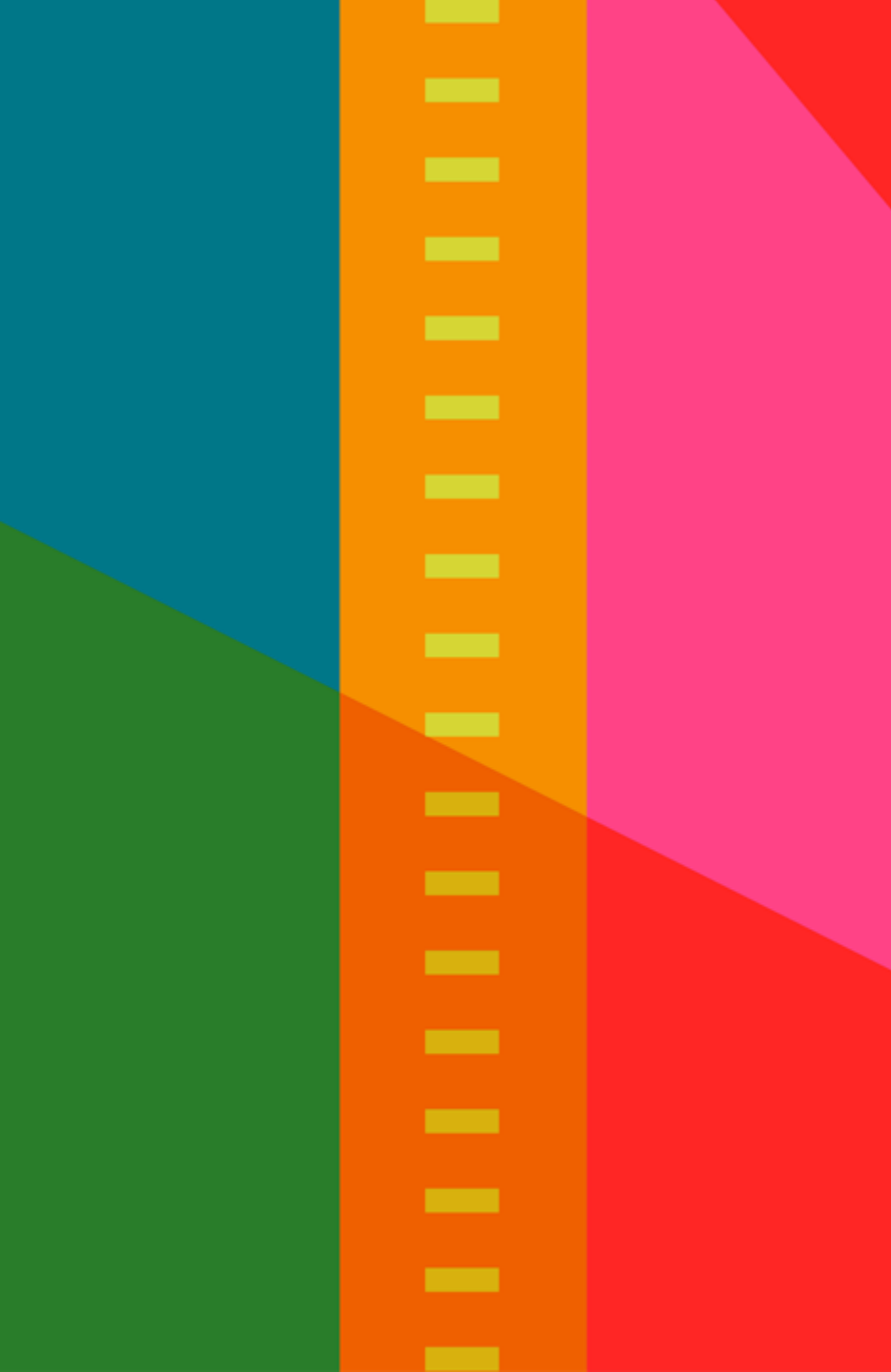




FY 24–25 Training Series

Focus Today: Somatic Awareness

*In partnership with
Pajaro Valley Prevention and
Student Assistance, Inc.*

Presented by:
Oscar Flores, M. Ed., ACC, CMT-P, IFEC-TMHP
www.respondmindfully.com

Disclaimer about Training & Meditation Practices

- I am a coach and educator, not a mental health therapist. I am trauma and healing-informed practitioner. This workshop is therapeutic in nature, but not therapy.
- Stop any practice if it's not helpful to you.
- Education can be an important complement to medical care; however, it is never a substitute for diagnosis, treatment, or care of disease by a medical provider.

Thanks for signing the electronic waiver.

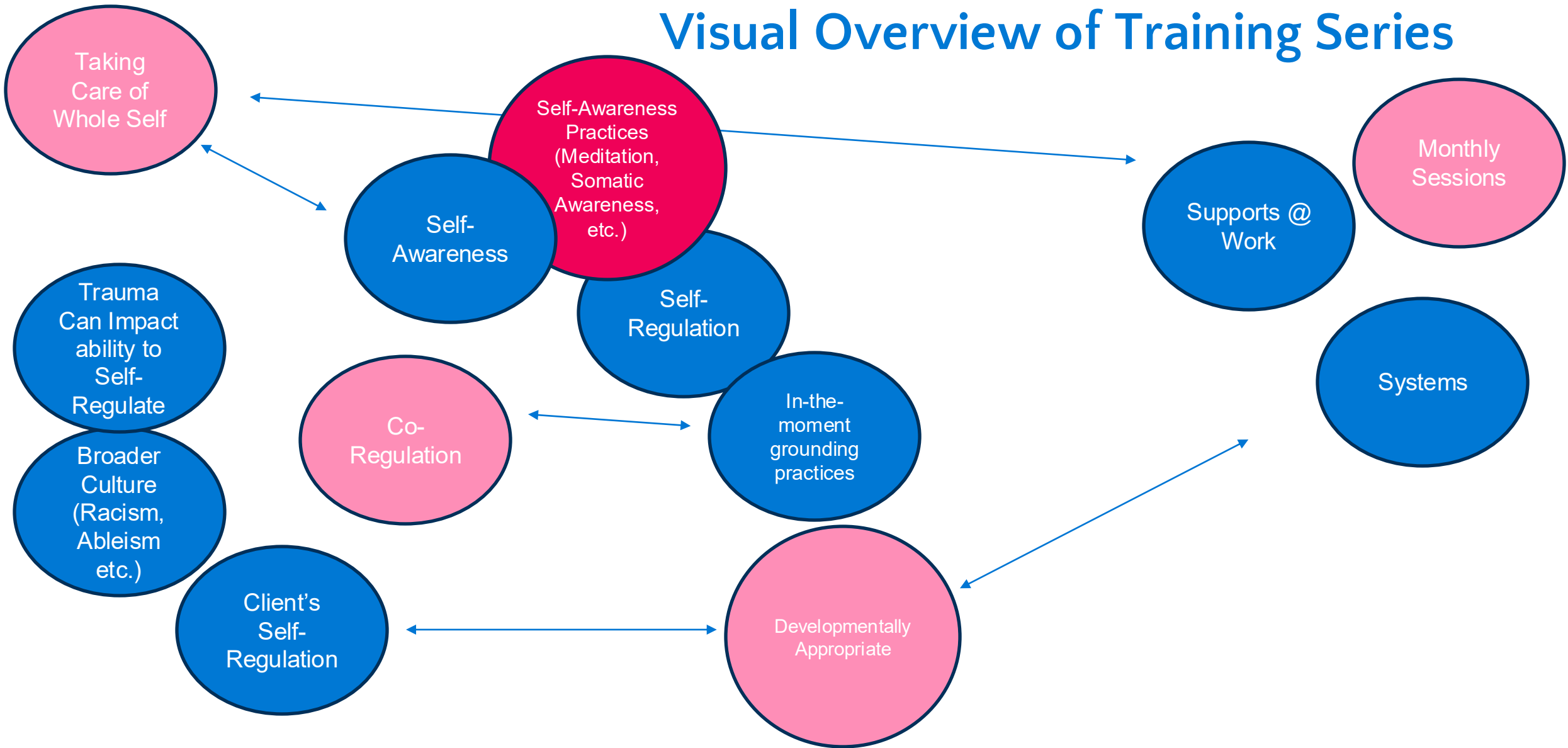


Community Vibe and Learning Space

Any new folks?

- No advice giving from others (*we are here to primary learn about ourselves*). *If you want advice, please ask. If you want to comment, pause.*
- Speak up or take a step back.
- What is said here, stays here. Learning can move beyond this space.
- Expect non-closure. Good news: we have monthly sessions!
- Keep in mind that there is a difference “knowing” something and following through with a new habit or practice. Approach this training from a curiosity stance, and with humility.
- As it relates to self-awareness and mindfulness, it’s learned best by practicing and modeling – we’ll get more into that later. Notice if you are trying to over-intellectualize.
- This is your training. Your experience is more important than slides; *I will move us forward, if needed.*

Visual Overview of Training Series



Transition Practice

(Self-Awareness & Self-Regulation)

Noticing our body with a Stance of Curiosity

How was that practice? What did you notice?
Any "ahas" or insights since last session?



What is Somatic Awareness or Embodiment?

There are many ways to define.

In very simple ways, *it means to listen to the language of the body.*

The language of the body is different than the language of the brain.

The language of the body (nervous system) influences the brain all the time.



Self-Awareness Tool Kit Grows

"Mindful Body-Awareness: the ability to observe, be present-with, sense, and feel our moment-by-moment experience of embodiment."

Self-awareness allows us space to be with what is, and access our wisdom and present-moment awareness.



Practice

Mindful Body Awareness with Equanimity

Try not to label sensations are good, bad or neutral

Describe the actual sensations, not what you think about them.

How as that practice for you?

What did you notice?



What is meant by body awareness?

Exteroception -- "sensitivity to stimuli that are outside the body, resulting from the response of specialized sensory cells called **exteroceptors** to objects and occurrences in the external environment. Exteroception includes the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste." [Source](#)

Interoception -- "interoception processes information from the heart, gut, lungs, and more as our internal organs interact with the brain." [Source](#)

Proprioception -- "But proprioception, the sensation of body position and movement, is fundamentally personal and typically absent from conscious perception.

Being self-aware of these, helps us to cultivate the ability to self-regulate or co-regulate (more next month).



Polyvagal Theory supports Somatic Awareness

Hierarchy - three predictable pathways of response

- Ventral Vagal (Safety and Ability to Calm and Regulate)
- Sympathetic Nervous System (Protection through Action)
- Dorsal Vagal (System of Immobilization – Protection through Disappearing)

"**Neuroception** is the word Stephen Porges coined to describe the way the autonomic nervous system takes in information without involving the thinking parts of the brain. Neuroception responds to cues of safety and danger through three pathways: inside the body, outside in the environment and between people."

(Deb Dana)

Co-regulation – others can help us be in or out of Ventral Vagal.

"When signals of danger from the past activate in the present, we can quickly be pulled into survival energy and enter a familiar pattern of protection. A discernment practice brings awareness to the present moment and supports making an intentional choice rather than simply following an old pathway."

"This is not a cognitive choice...it is a biological one."

"From the brain stem at the base of the head (medulla), the vagus travels down through the lungs, heart, diaphragm, and stomach... and upward connecting with nerves in the neck, throat, eyes, and ears... ..to form the "face-heart" connection"

Deb Dana

Hierarchy of Response

Ventral Vagal --- We can say "yes, and", we are mindful.
We have options.

Sympathetic --- I have energy to do what I need and want to
do

Dorsal Vagal --- Digestion is working well

When we cannot say "yes, and..." all of these flip.

"...sense of unease and impending danger mobilization of
fight and flight active aggression or escape alarmed,
hypervigilant ...a story of an unsafe world and unsafe
people..." Deb Dana



Practice

Where are you on the Autonomic Ladder?

- Ventral Vagal – Safe and Connected
- Sympathetic – Mobilized --- Fight or Flight
- Dorsal Vagal – Immobilized --- Collapsed

Lean on what we've covered in the past, including:

Mindful Self-Compassion

Mindful Intentions: Patience & Wisdom

Grounding: What helps you feel safe?



For Upcoming Sessions

- Today: Mindfulness Meditation 202
- Lifestyle Medicine Science (Today)
- Somatic Awareness (Friday)
- Co-Regulation
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice:
- Early Childhood/Preschool-Focused
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice:
- Middle Childhood
- Developmentally Appropriate: Adolescence
- Social-Cultural Awareness
- Equity, Ableism and Neurodivergence
- Mindful Communication
- Conflict and Difficult Conversations



Transition & Goodbye

What is sticking with you?
What will you try to practice?

Questions: Oscar@RespondMindfully.com

Resources: www.respondmindfully.com/pvpsa

