unyte

# Effective Processing and Regulation

## The Essential Foundation for Health

# It’s *Not* All in the Mind.

Among this century’s medical and social breakthroughs is the recognition that the statement, *"It's all in the mind,"* is not fully accurate.

Whether it’s due to our growing awareness of the effects of ongoing stress or the mixed results of behavioral therapies, we can now see that there are aspects of our health that are out of our conscious control.

Taking a fresh look at the way we as human beings develop and the way our brain connects with our body can give us insight into how we can become our best selves.

# How Does the Nervous System Develop?

Starting soon after conception and continuing through childhood and young adulthood, the nervous system develops gradually, guided by both genetics and the environment.[1]

The **sensory and motor systems** are the **foundation of our central nervous system.** They allow the brain to take in and respond to information from inside and outside the body, through hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch, movement, and balance.

Higher thinking skills, including **learning and behavior**, are dependent on areas of the brain that develop sooner.

All of these areas are inter-connected. Just like a great team, they work best when they work together.

*Higher brain functions, such as learning and behavior are dependent on how well we're able to process incoming information at the sensory and motor levels.*

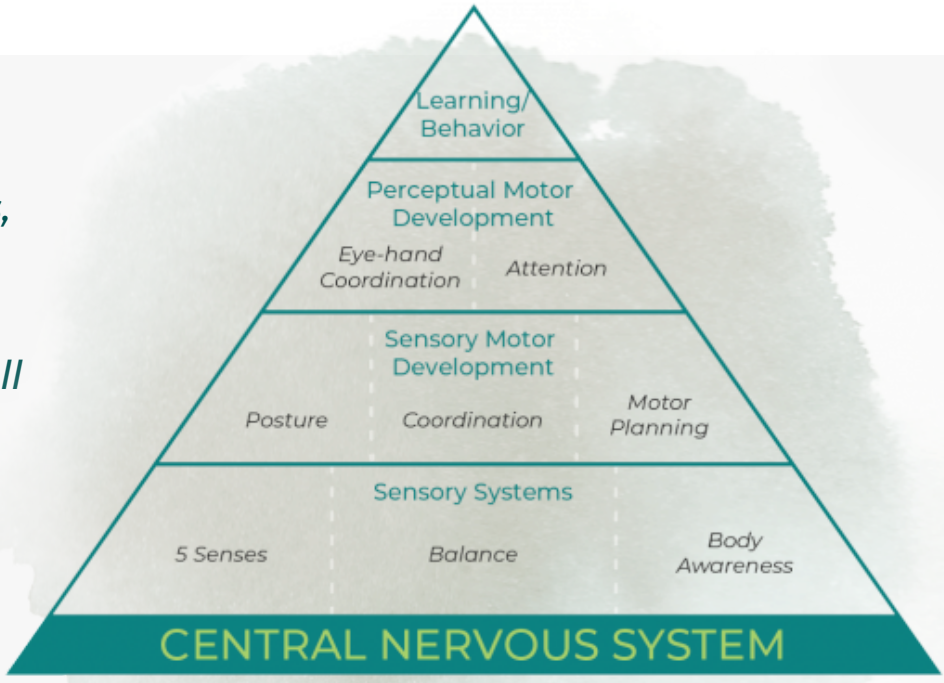


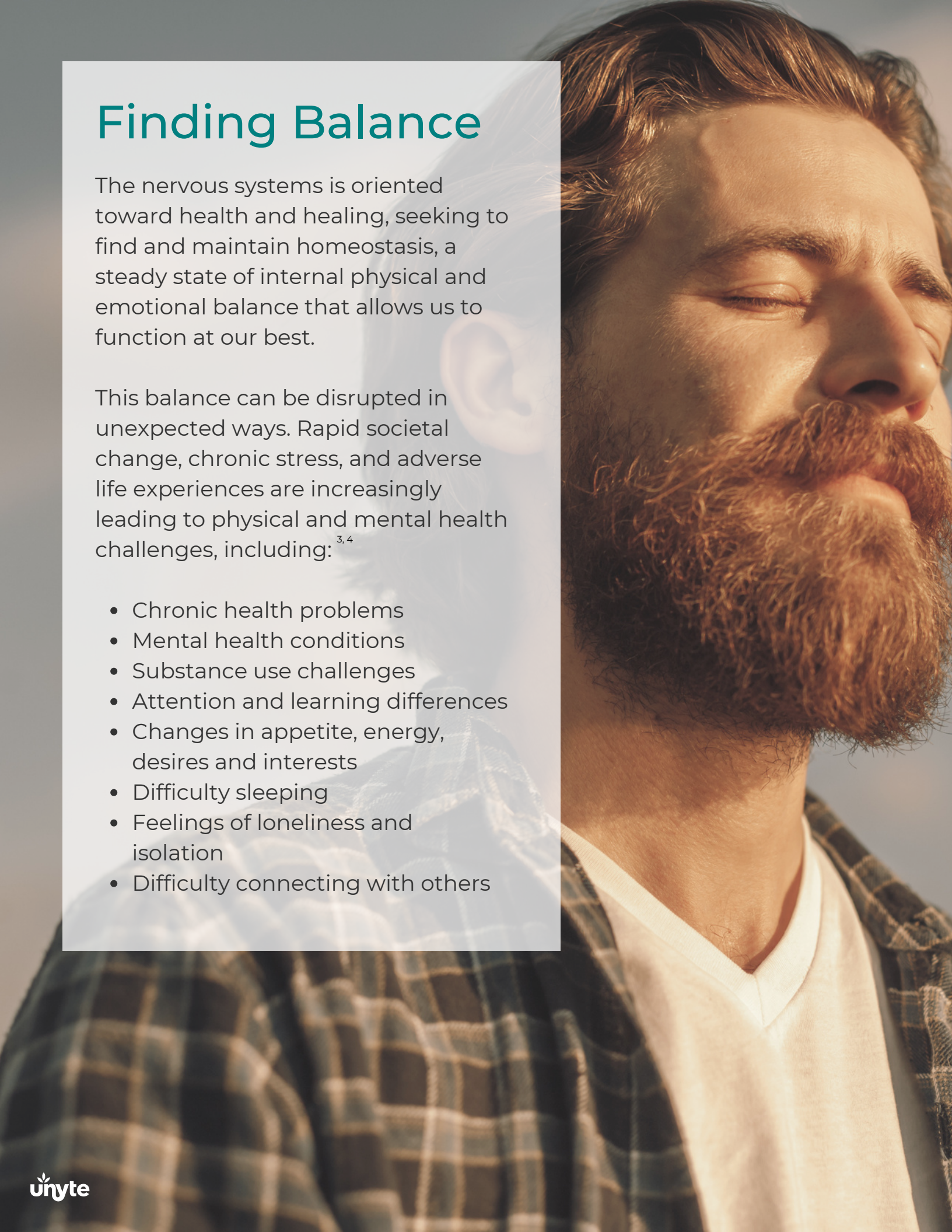

*Fig. 1 Pyramid of Learning*[2]

# Finding Balance

The nervous systems is oriented toward health and healing, seeking to find and maintain homeostasis, a steady state of internal physical and emotional balance that allows us to function at our best.

This balance can be disrupted in unexpected ways. Rapid societal change, chronic stress, and adverse life experiences are increasingly leading to physical and mental health challenges, including:[3, 4]

- Chronic health problems
- Mental health conditions
- Substance use challenges
- Attention and learning differences
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires and interests
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Difficulty connecting with others



# The Nervous System is the Key

While many innovative and life-saving treatments have been developed in the medical system to help some individuals, many with chronic or complex conditions are still not able to function at their best. This is part due to the mind-body connection and influence of the autonomic nervous system on our health and well-being.

If we're feeling stressed, worried, or unsafe, our defenses go up, and whatever activity or therapy we're engaged in can be less effective.

**Finding balance means regulating the nervous system to flexibly respond to challenges.**

# Connecting with the Vagus Nerve

The autonomic nervous system helps regulate important systems in the body, including our heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and digestion.

The autonomic nervous system relies on a nerve that is hugely important to our overall well-being: **the vagus nerve.**

The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve in the body, stretching from the brainstem all the way down to the stomach. It is often referred to as the **mind-body connection**.

The vagus nerve sends and receives information between the brain and body, helping us respond to changes in our internal and external environment.

# Vagal Connection to Social Engagement

**Polyvagal Theory explains the connection between the vagus nerve and feelings of safety.**

Connected by the vagus nerve, the state of our autonomic nervous system can influence how we feel, think, and behave.

This connection is explained by **Stephen Porges**, Ph.D., whose Polyvagal Theory is widely accepted as a neurobehavioral scientific breakthrough and has revolutionized our understanding of the body's response to stress and trauma.

Dr. Stephen Porges
Author of the Polyvagal Theory and Chief Scientific Advisor at Unyte

By learning to better regulate our nervous system, we can change how we respond to life's challenges, how we experience and engage in therapy, and how we connect to the world around us and others in it.

Continue reading to learn how listening therapies that stimulate the vagus nerve can vastly improve nervous system regulation and re-pattern the nervous system for lasting change.

# A Polyvagal Approach

**Polyvagal Theory provides a new framework for understanding how the autonomic nervous system functions in our modern world.**[5]

When under stress, one part of our autonomic nervous system helps us to "fight or flee" by sending blood to our arms, increasing our heart rate and blood pressure, speeding up our breathing, and making us hyper-aware of our surroundings.

According to Polyvagal Theory, the other part of our autonomic nervous system is guided by a ventral and dorsal division of the vagus nerve. The dorsal vagus helps our body "shut down" in response to stress, much like an animal playing dead when they can't run or fight.

When we feel safe, the ventral vagus brings our body into homeostasis, and is connected to a social engagement system. This part of our nervous system supports social behaviors like facial expressions, listening, and language.

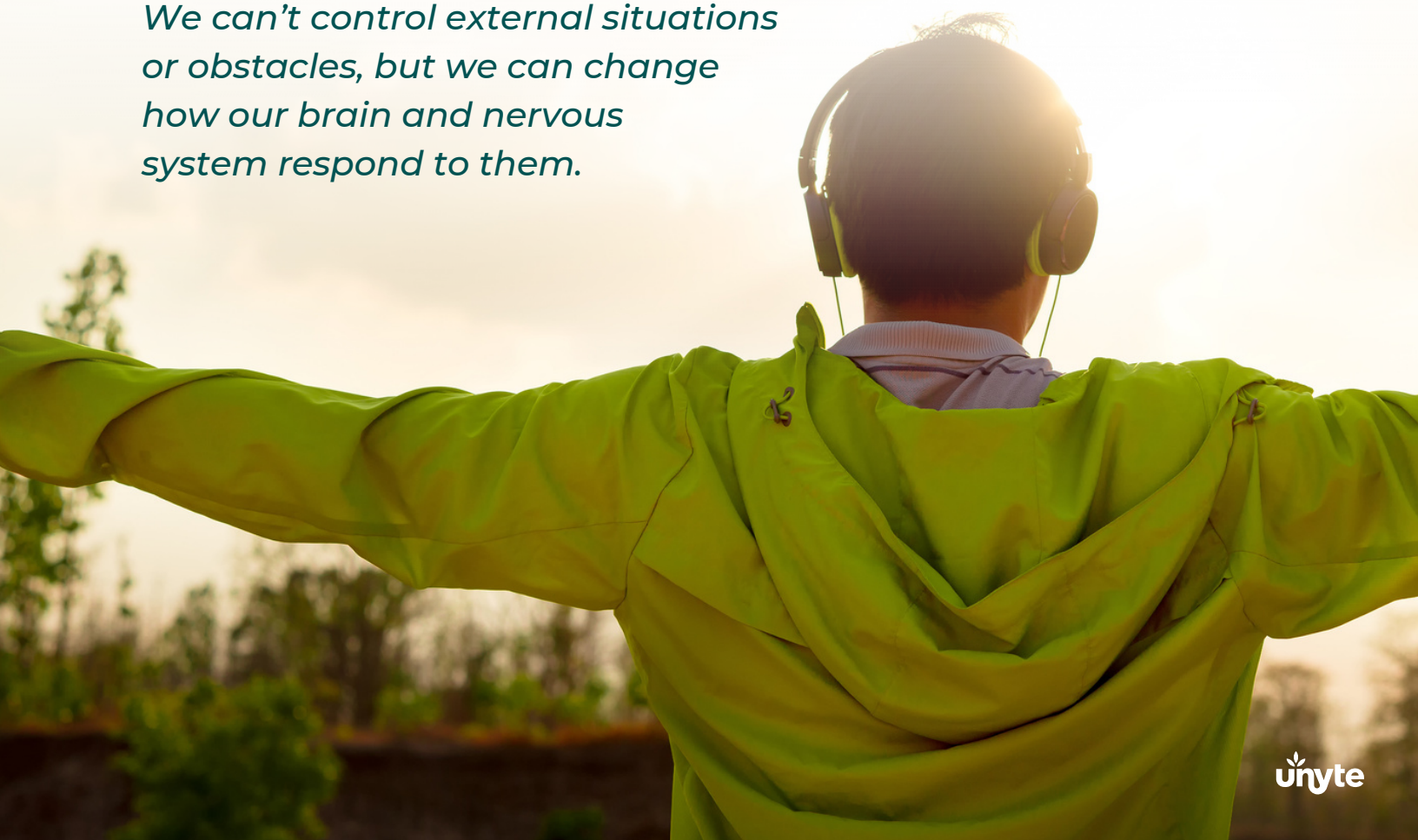
# Neuroplasticity Aids in Healing

Integrated within our nervous system are sensory pathways that help us interpret our environment. Like the regulation of emotions, our ability to process sensory input determines our ability to think, learn and communicate with others.

For example, an individual with differences in how they process sensory information can feel isolated and have difficulty socializing, connecting with others and feeling welcome in the world. As a result, they can be less receptive to engaging in therapy.

The good news is that our brain and nervous system are plastic, meaning they can change. Listening therapies, like the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) and the Focus System, can help re-pattern sensory pathways to be more effective at processing and responding to our environment.

*We can't control external situations or obstacles, but we can change how our brain and nervous system respond to them.*

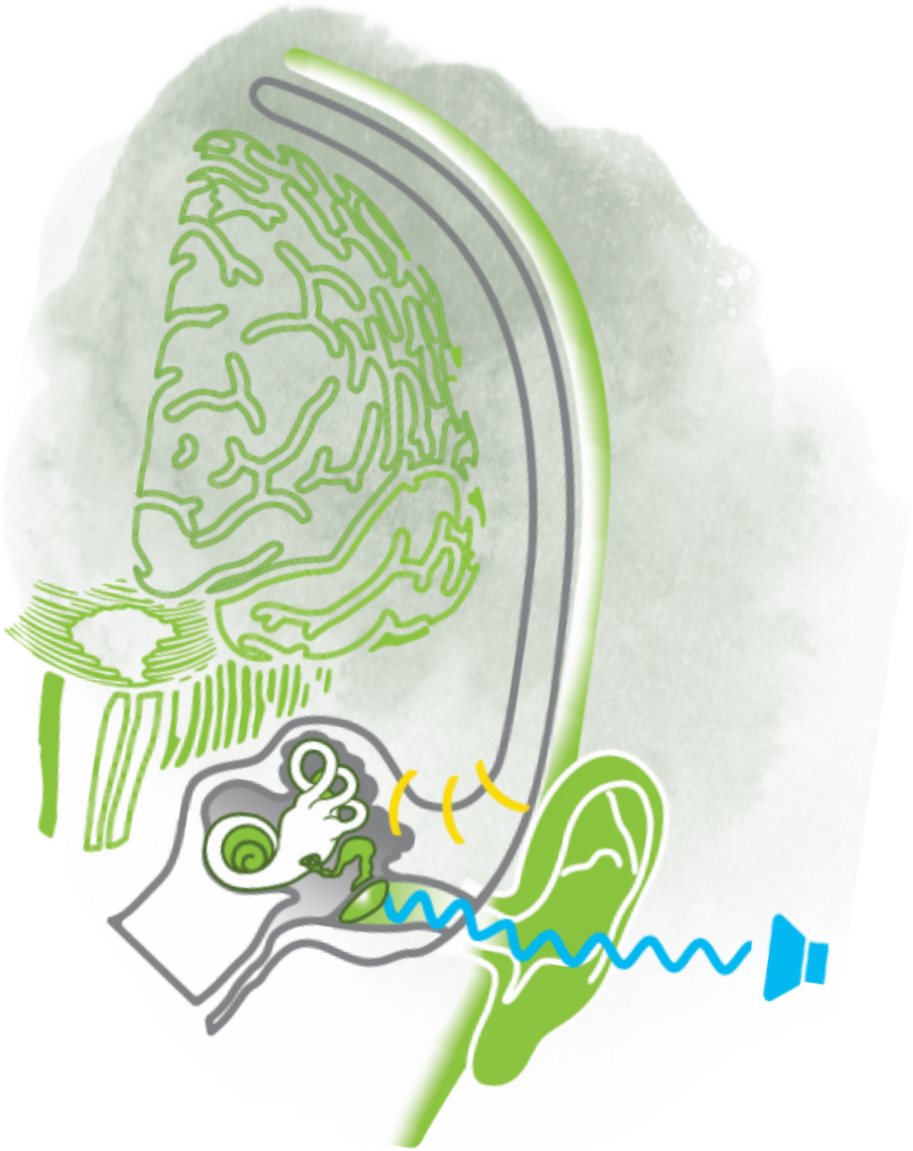


# The Ear as the Portal to the Brain

Listening therapies like the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) and Focus System influence the nervous system through specially filtered music, activating the auditory neural network, including a branch of the vagus nerve.

Based on hierarchical recruitment of the autonomic nervous system, the **SSP** trains the auditory processing system to tune into cues of safety signaled by frequencies of the human voice, which stimulates the social engagement system through the neural network associated with listening.

The **Focus System** combines filtered music through air and bone conduction with movement activities, harnessing the power of neuroplasticity to change the brain.



# Help Your Clients Thrive

**Our mission is to empower every person to guide their nervous system to be more aware, regulated and resilient so they can feel safe, happy, healthy, and more effectively respond to life's challenges.**

## The Safe and Sound Protocol

The Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) is a listening therapy designed by Dr. Stephen Porges based on research that is now known as the Polyvagal Theory.

The SSP works alongside other therapeutic approaches and modalities, and can help individuals with trauma, anxiety and depression, sensory processing and other neurodevelopmental differences.

Watch Video

## The Focus System

The Focus System was developed with Ron Minson, MD, and is used to improve brain function through brain and body integration via multisensory input.

The Focus System can be used in-person or at home, using specially filtered music combined with fun movement activities and, when ready, cognitive challenges to further activate brain networks.

Learn more

Speak with one of our Programs Consultants to learn how to integrate Unyte's life-changing tools into your unique practice.

BOOK A DEMO

# Success Stories

Maria is a 42-year-old woman with a history of early childhood trauma. She has been in counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy for many years to address her hypervigilance and difficulty in social situations.

**Programs Used:** Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP)

Maria's therapeutic goals with her SSP-certified therapist were to regulate herself more effectively, calm her feelings of fight, flight and freeze, and achieve more genuine feelings of social engagement.

The protocol was completed in five consecutive days. After the first night, she began sleeping better. After the third, she felt exhausted earlier and needed more sleep than usual throughout the program. By the fifth session, she appeared happier and "lighter" to her therapist, and remarked that she wasn't sure why but she felt noticeably more relaxed.

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**Results:** In the ensuing days and weeks, Maria has come to feel significantly more positive about her life, more open to conversations with others (which she used to shy away from), and no longer has the mood swings she used to endure on a daily basis. Two months after her therapy, her friends comment that she "looks different."

## In her own words: *"My life has changed."*

# Success Stories

Tom is an eight-year-old boy. He was having significant trouble in school with sustaining his attention in class as well as sensory sensitivities that made it hard for him to be in large groups.

**Programs Used:** Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP), Focus System

Tom was brought to an occupational therapist who developed a program that addressed:

- Higher order attention and executive abilities
- Processing speed
- Phonetic decoding
- Reading skills
- Sensory-seeking behaviors

Tom completed the SSP within five days, followed by the Focus System program, which was abbreviated to 20 hours over six weeks.

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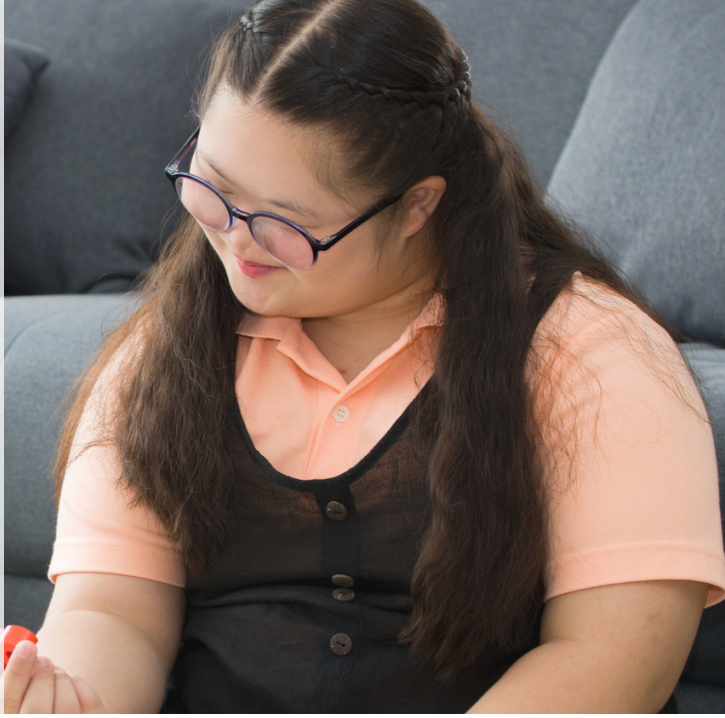
**Results:** Tom's academic achievement post-therapy increased by an average of 1.6 grade levels. His score on the IVA (ADHD assessment) improved by 32%, bringing him into the normal range for his age group.

Tom was able to participate in school activities in the classroom and on the playground as if he had never been hypersensitive. He became more social and active with other children and seemed happier overall.

# Success Stories

Sarah is an 11-year-old girl diagnosed with autism. Prior to going through the SSP, her areas of difficulty included auditory and tactile sensitivity, separation anxiety, poor eye contact, and a narrow field of interest within her physical and social environments.



**Programs Used:** Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP)

Sarah went through the five-hour SSP program over the course of eight days at her occupational therapist's clinic.

Although her auditory sensitivity required her to take longer than usual to complete the program, she did so without disruption and enjoyed playing while listening to the SSP music.

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**Results:** Sarah's response to the SSP was apparent to everyone who knew her. Teachers and therapists remarked that she was much more engaged and aware of her surroundings, engaged with students as she hadn't before, and maintained good eye contact for the first time.

Her parents reported similar behavior changes at home and were able to take her out to public places. She still has an occasional meltdown but is now better able to verbalize her problem and regulate herself to come out of it.

Speak with one of our Programs Consultants to learn how to integrate Unyte's life-changing therapeutic tools into your practice.

BOOK A DEMO


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