

Techniques

There are a great many techniques that would facilitate down regulating vagal activity, I am going to suggest two. The vagus nerve exits the skull through the jugular foramen, before journeying south along the lateral neck on its journey to the viscera as mentioned above. The first technique will access the beginning of the vagus, the second technique the lower portion.



The Cervical Cradle Hold

By gently cradling the neck, in the palm of your soft, responsive hand (fingers one side and thumb the other) you can connect with the fascial tissue surrounding the vagus as it travels south. Allow your hand to soften and the neck will respond by dropping into your hand. If there is increased cervical muscle tone stimulating the vagus, your sustained contact will allow the fascial tissue to soften. The Vagus will also down regulate in response to your own nervous system, so ensure as a therapist that you are well resourced before commencing any treatment. This subtle yet incredibly powerful technique will assist the client in down regulating; with the client in supine you will witness their breathing change, perhaps witness the jaw dropping and a softening of facial features - indicating to you, the profound efficacy of this technique. At the end of the treatment, you may notice the tone of voice has changed.



Abdominal Hold

The second is a simple yet powerful technique, where we contact the abdomen. Our "underbelly", as we have seen, contains many of our viscera, is served by the vagus, and therefore holds our "gut instincts"- be mindful that this can be a sensitive, vulnerable area. You can apply this technique in supine or prone, the advantage of prone is that the underbelly will literally drop into you hand(s) as the body lets go. The advantage of supine is that you can observe facial features. Place one or both hands on the belly, ensure they are soft, responsive and contouring the body, connect with your clients fascial system and simply wait. Allow the clients fascial system to respond to your touch, be responsive to any changes. Again the vagus will regulate with your nervous system.