Tab 1

We cannot heal with urgency.

We cannot heal with busyness.

If you have an agenda with healing, it will leave you with frustration, set-backs, and a whole mix of emotions.

Healing happens in slowness. There is no other way.

You cannot be healing in a calm, rested state while approaching life with urgency.

Even if/when our schedules get busy, because they will, we still must find moments of slowness.

When we experience high stress in life, we dissociate from many things including our own body. If symptoms are ignored, the body continues to layer multiple symptoms until you start to listen. This can look like layers of tension, pain, anxiety, fear, or rigidity which will all influence our nervous system's adaptability.

When this happens, the nervous system lacks the 'opportunity' to grow and heal and we become embodied into a state of survival. Survival strategies cloud our ability to communicate, make aligned decisions, have a clear vision of our purpose, choose chaos over peace, pleasure and excitement over consistency and safety, it drives us to look for an quick answer as opposed to moving through a process.

Safety is the foundation for a resilient nervous system.

Safety to slow down.

Safety to be present.

Safety to feel joy and happiness.

Safety to feel love.

Safety to rest.

Your body cannot heal in the same way we learned to survive.

When we've become comfortable with urgency, busyness and rushing through life,

Our nervous system perceives slowing down as uncomfortable.

Long term consistency is better than Short term intensity

-Bruce Lee

You heal as fast as the

slowest parts of you feel safe enough to go.

Slowing down looks like:

Eating slowly.

Going for a walk.

Taking a moment.

Listening to your body.

Putting down the phone.

Arriving earlier just to sit.

Taking a social media cleanse.

Listening to the sounds of nature.

Take the afternoon to do nothing.

Love languages of the nervous system

• Play

• Laughter

• Creativity

• Gratitude

• Long hugs

• Restful sleep

• Phone free time

• Acts of kindness

• Mindful movement

• Deep belly breathing

• Nourishing your body

• Authentic connections

• Spending time in the sun

• Listening to uplifting music

• Immersing yourself in nature

The language of the

nervous system is not words, but Sensations.

Sensation = information

In order to heal the nervous system, we must speak the same language of sensations.

Sometimes, it's the most simple things consistently overtime that create the most profound change in life.

We don't have to flood our system with multiple modalities, we don't have to dig it all up at once, we don't have to feel everything at once, and we don't have to shut down, avoid and dissociate because we are feeling too much.

Healing happens in slowness and surrender.

Take it day by day. Take the time to process each awareness instead of urgently moving to the next major release.

And of course, sending so much love to your nervous system

Peace is also:

What we read

What we watch

Who we follow

What we listen to

The space we live in

Our work environment

Who we surround ourselves with

What we put into and on our body

When you are actively working towards your healing, remember that everything around you can either support you or hold you back. It is a hard realization.

And for the most part, these are not easy to just eliminate from our lives since they mostly are unconscious things we do. The first step is becoming aware of these things and how they make you feel.

Our early experiences become wired in habitual responses.

These survival responses that block us from connection show up in every word we use and every choice we make.

Trauma and/or chronic stress replaces patterns of connection with patterns of protection.

Healing starts with recognizing your own patterns of behavior and life and recognizing that some patterns no longer serve you. Healing begins when you recognize patterns that have been embedded into our childhood that are starting to show up in areas of adulthood that are no longer providing the best outcome. These patterns become our own individual 'normal' and therefore we don't recognize the responses from our body

- whether our body feels a stress response, or whether we immediately move into a protective mode.

Our way out of existing as a past pattern is to become more conscious. To pay more attention to what we think, how we respond, how we feel in our body, how we connect with other people, how we communicate. This awareness creates space.

Space that allows for new responses.

Effects from elevated cortisol:

The Body

• Fatty buildup between the shoulders in upper neck area.

• Weight gain in the abdomen

• Bruising cortisol slows the skin's healing process.

• Skin conditions -weakens skin moisture barrier and microbiome leading to conditions such as eczema, hives, rashes, psoriasis, dry skin, etc.

• Body temperature -hot flashes and flushing of the skin

Your nervous system will love it when you:

-prioritize you time

-take the time to rest

-spend time in nature

-move your body each day

-create healthy boundaries

-start to say no when necessary

-practice a healthy sleep routine

-listen to the cues from your body

- choose to maintain your inner peace

-get out of your head and into your body

- recognize the reactions from your body

-remove toxic relationships from your life

Stress is not a state of mind,

it is a reaction in your body.

Chronic anxiety aka STRESS is one of the main drivers of chronic illness.

Follow

Anxiety is a flight response from the nervous system.

Here are some of the most common ways it shows up in the body:

-heart racing

-overwhelm

-ruminating thoughts causing worry and fear

-dysfunctional breathing patterns

-nausea

-difficulty concentrating

-restlessness

-fatigue or weakness

-random sweating

-headaches and dizziness

-muscle aches

-constantly running to the bathroom

-skin conditions

Now, the mind does play a part! However, it's important to understand the mind is a byproduct of the alarm happening in the body. Here's a quick breakdown..

When the body experiences a threat without the mind knowing why - a chronic perceived threat - the mind scrambles to make meaning by catastrophizing, panicking, ruminating thoughts, etc. which causes the BODY to protect. The short, nerdy explanation (my language og) - a message from the body triggered the amygdala to fire the stress response in the body via the hypothalamus.

How to get out of our mind and into our body?

-Find a practitioner if you feel you need support. You know you need support if you feel stuck. Stuck in patterns, reoccurring symptoms, behaviors, etc.

-Learn what self soothing tools feel good to you. Mindful movement, somatic stretching, breath work, journaling, reading, community, rest, heat therapies, cold therapies, visits with nature.. a combination of it all.

-Get into your body. Start to observe your body's cues.Do you feel safe here? Is this too much for today? Do you feel disconnected? Did the stress cause a symptom? Do you need to slow down?

Common does not mean normal! You do not have to live with anxiety.

Emotion is the nervous system's adaptive response-

shaping our perceptions, guiding our actions, and defining the very fabric of our lives.

The idea behind

emotional regulation is not to suppress or deny emotions, but to manage them consciously as they shape our words and actions.

The most habitual emotion associated with protection is fear.

The most abundant emotion associated with growth is love.

Emotion is an adaptive physiological response and it regulates our lives.

We express these emotions through the body with posture, facial expressions, and internal processes such as changes in heart rate or blood pressure.

Most of what happens when an emotion is elicited is subconscious, different than a feeling which is a conscious perception of those changes or shifts occurring in the body.

The physiological response is the result of the autonomic nervous system's reaction to the emotion we're experiencing.

It's the nervous system that controls our involuntary bodily responses and regulates our fight-or-flight response. These nervous system responses are how emotion helped us evolve and survive as humans throughout history.

I post often about emotions associated with survival responses, but it's important to note that emotions are not bad. We must feel and have a healthy relationship with emotions including fear, grief, anger and the other not so fun ones.

Why?

Suppression of emotions eventually develops into a mental state, which becomes your primary state because of a repetitive pattern- nervousness, irritation, anxiety, bad habits, procrastination and much more which are often regarded as a separate problem instead of realizing that this is an adaptation of the fact that at some point what you were experiencing was too hard for your consciousness, your heart and sensitivity, and those experiences were suppressed.

Further suppression and ignoring of the root problem leads to mental and physical exhaustion and health problems.

Just look at the way love and happiness look &

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/

PMC3896150/

"I've had anxiety as long as I can remember" - words I hear all too often in practice.

Follow

Though anxiety and feeling anxious is common, it does not mean it's normal. I'll say that on every post if I need to. You do not have to just 'deal' with it.

Here are some signs that can be an indication of anxiety in children.

Emotional signs:

-increased sensitivity

-fear of mistakes

-worrying

-nightmares

Physical signs:

-headaches

-stomach aches

-decreased appetite

-restlessness, difficulty sleeping

-distracted

-nail biting

-hair chewing

Behavioral signs:

-refusing school

-avoiding social situations

-temper tantrums

-seeking approval

-withdrawal

So how do we help them learn to regulate?

By teaching them self-soothing practices early on in life, we create nervous system resiliency to become better equipped to handle life's stressors.

-Teach them body awareness. In the moment of a response, ask them what they are feeling in their body. Allow them to express those emotions and create a safe space for them to do so or bring them into a safe place.This will encourage them to start to listen to their body.

-I'll always recommend you seek help from a practitioner like a nervous system focused chiropractor

-Teach them awareness of breath. If they are experiencing rapid breathing or holding their breath, use simple breathing tools to breathe with them. Have them pretend they are blowing up a balloon.

-Move with them. If they are very tense. In their body, do some quick jumping jacks, race, or jump rope. Movement can be as simple as wiggling their toes to bring awareness back into their body.

-Encourage creativity. Drawing, journaling, coloring, painting, chalk, etc. This can be an easy way for them to express!

-Get outside. Try any activity, get some grounding in, or simply count how many trees you can find. Our environment plays a major role in dysregulation so incorporating some fresh air, quietness and our view is a quick way to soothe.

Unbecoming is unlearning.

Control is not security

Avoidance is not peace

Self criticism is not motivation

Perfectionism is not excellence

Hyper-independence is not sustainable

People pleasing is not obedience or kindness

Sometimes when we feel nothing is working, we continue to add more things to help solve the problem when the solution may be to do less. We want to heal, heal and heal and can forget about integration during the process. So now we're aware of some patterns. What needs to shift? Instead of jumping to the next thing, stay there for a bit to integrate

When we experience any disruption in our experience of connection, (trauma), our nervous system adapts in order to source safety.

Trauma is a chronic disruption of connection. This means, the earlier the trauma, the earlier we begin to reshape our system.

The more frequent the trauma, the more often our system reshapes into a mode of protection.

Our early experiences become wired in habitual responses.

These survival responses that block us from connection show up in every word we use and every choice we make.

Healing starts with recognizing your own patterns of behavior and life and recognizing that some patterns no longer serve you. Healing begins when you recognize patterns that have been embedded into our childhood that are starting to show up in areas of adulthood that are no longer providing the best outcome. These patterns become our own individual 'normal' and therefore we don't recognize the responses from our body

- whether our body feels a stress response, or whether we immediately move into a protective mode.

So this is your reminder to be gentle with yourself as you move through healing and learn the things around you change

### **Maslow, Safety, and the Foundations of Healing**

Before we attempt to shift habits, transform our thoughts, or rewire patterns, we must ensure our basic needs are consistently met. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs reminds us that without stability at the foundation—like food, rest, shelter, and emotional safety—higher levels like self-actualization or transformation feel impossible.

We often skip over these foundational needs in our rush to “fix” ourselves. But your body and nervous system are asking you to come home—to ground yourself before you grow.

#### **Core Foundation Prompts:**

* Am I eating enough, regularly, and with intention?
* Do I feel safe in my home or with the people closest to me?
* Am I sleeping in a way that restores me, not just passes time?
* Do I feel physically secure—sheltered, stable, and protected?
* Is my inner world safe enough to rest, or do I feel constantly alert?

You do not need to earn rest, safety, or nourishment. They are your baseline—your birthright.

Once these needs begin to feel secure, you may notice your body naturally becomes more receptive to new ideas, shifts in perception, and deeper inner work. Safety creates space. And from that space, healing can begin—not through force, but through invitation.

Tab 2

# **A Guide to Root‑Cause Healing for the Nervous System**

### **Kat Garner, naturopathic consultant**

## **1. Welcome to THRIVE**

### Hi there! I’m Dr. Kat, your ally on this journey toward embodied, empowered wellness.

### THRIVE means Transformative Healing Resources & Insights for Vibrant Empowerment. In this series, you’ll receive just that as Dr. Kat shares with you key insights on how the body is asking for help. At THRIVE, we acknowledge that symptoms are the body’s way of alerting us that something is out of balance and needs addressing before it becomes a disease state. This is prevention and is where naturopathy thrives.

### This guide is meant to serve as education for your healing journey. It is a “take what you like and leave the rest” sort of document and is created with heart-centered intention. It is a point of view, not judgement. You are worth transforming and healing. It is wise to acknowledge that healing takes time and in our experience, a team. As a personal note, I’m honored to be a member of your team and I hope this resource guide serves you well.

### **2. Understanding Naturopathic Medicine**

### What is Naturopathy?

### A holistic, root‑cause approach to health, honoring your body’s innate wisdom. We address the root cause and aim to achieve balance in the body by implementing The Therapeutic Order™

### Remove obstacles to health

### Stimulate the body’s self‑healing mechanisms

### Strengthen Weakened or Damaged Systems – Restore and Regenerate

### Correct Structural Integrity

### Use Natural Therapies to Address Pathology and Symptoms

### Use Pharmaceutical or Synthetic Substances to Stop Progressive Pathology

### Use High Force, Invasive Therapies to Suppress Pathology

## **3. Insights to Healing: the Nervous System**

### **Maslow, Safety, and the Foundations of Healing**

Before we attempt to shift habits, transform our thoughts, or rewire patterns, we must ensure our basic needs are consistently met. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs reminds us that without stability at the foundation like food, rest, shelter, and emotional safety, higher levels like self-actualization or transformation feel impossible.

We often skip over these foundational needs in our rush to “fix” ourselves. But your body and nervous system are asking you to ground yourself before you grow. It needs a safe space.

#### **Some Foundation Prompts:**

* Am I eating enough, regularly, and with intention?
* Do I feel safe in my home or with the people closest to me?
* Am I sleeping in a way that restores me, not just passing time?
* Do I feel physically secure in my shelter? Do I have stability? Do I feel protected?
* Is my inner world safe enough to rest, or do I feel constantly alert?

You do not need to earn rest, safety, or nourishment. Are your needs being considered?

Once these needs begin to feel secure, you may notice your body naturally becomes more receptive to new ideas, is able to experience shifts in perception, and allows the deeper inner work to take hold. Safety creates space and fosters creativity. From that space, healing can begin. New ideas can be invited in; I like to think of it as allowing self experimentation.

This reflects the Therapeutic Order’s obstacle to cure. Does it feel intuitively like you may need work here? Assessing what stands in the way of your basic needs being met may be the best way to feel empowered in moving toward your goals.

### **The Nervous System Toolkit**

### Healing unfolds in slowness. Urgency creates resistance. Have you noticed this yourself?

### Why slow matters:

### Urgency can lead to frustration and emotional volatility

### Chronic stress can foster dissociation and layered symptoms

### Survival mode can dull our ability to cultivate presence, clarity, and purpose

### *You heal as fast as the slowest parts of you feel safe enough to go.*

### Here are some prompts to journal with, mini practices to perform, and ideas to engage your presence.

### Let’s ground your thoughts by taking a pen to paper:

### **In this moment, what is your hurry?**

### **What part of you says you are not allowed to slow down?**

### **What would your body feel like if you paused now?**

### Mini practices:

### **Five-minute belly breathing**

### **Walking meditation with sensory focus**

### **Social-media pause followed by quiet**

### **Phone-free hour**

### **One afternoon with no obligations**

### Ideas to Engage the Nervous System:

### **Play: What’s one playful activity from childhood that still brings you joy?**

### **Laughter: What genuinely made you laugh today? Can you laugh at yourself?**

### **Creativity: What small creative act would bring you into a calm state?**

### **Gratitude: Name one thing today you’re genuinely thankful for. Two? More?**

### **Long hugs: Who in your life can you hold or be held by?**

### **Restful sleep: What could help you fall asleep more deeply tonight?**

### **Phone-free time: When can you step away from all screens today?**

### **Acts of kindness: Who could use a small act of kindness from you today?**

### **Mindful movement: How can you move with intention today? If only for two minutes?**

### **Deep breathing: Pause now for three slow, belly breaths.**

### **Nourishing your body: What food would feel healing and energizing?**

### **Authentic connection: Who can you reach out to for a heart-to-heart check-in?**

### **Sunlight time: Can you move your body outside in the sun, even for five minutes?**

### **Uplifting music: What song could shift or calm your mood?**

### **Nature immersion: Where outside can you spend a moment this week?**

### **The Nervous System Toolkit for Children**

For children or the inner child within us.

Recognize signs like headaches, restlessness, or zoning out.

Co-regulation tools:

* Balloon breathing (engages the belly via diaphragm)
* Quick movement: jumping jacks, toe wiggling, twisting, clenching and unclenching your whole body
* Sensory games: count trees, listen for birds, butterfly kisses, scoop water, ground in the earth with bare feet
* Creative release: draw, color, scribble, sing, play bongos, dance, create an outfit, safely prepare a meal
* Breath awareness: slow inhale, longer exhale, hold at the top of the inhale, hold at the bottom of the exhale

## **4. Symptoms of a Nervous System that Needs Attention**

## **Stress & Cortisol: How to Spot**

#### Cortisol is a steroid hormone, often referred to as the "stress hormone," produced by the adrenal glands (those sit on top of our kidneys). It plays a crucial role in regulating various bodily functions, including metabolism, blood sugar levels, inflammation, blood pressure, and the sleep-wake cycle. Cortisol also helps the body respond to stress and is vital for maintaining overall health. Cortisol levels are carefully regulated by the adrenal glands, the hypothalamus, & pituitary gland in the brain through a feedback system called the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.

#### High Cortisol can look like

* Tension in shoulders/neck
* Abdominal weight gain
* Bruising, slow skin healing
* Hot flashes, flushed skin
* Sleep disruption
* Blood sugar imbalances

Low Cortisol can look like

* Deep fatigue
* Low blood pressure
* Salt cravings
* Lightheadedness upon standing
* Social withdrawal
* Poor motivation
* Reduced stress tolerance
* Burnout with apathy

### **Anxiety: The Body’s Alarm**

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

If you have one foot worrying about tomorrow and the other foot ruminating in the past, then what footwork can you do really expect to do in the present?

When a threat is perceived but not understood, *the body reacts before the mind can reason.* The nervous system fires to protect. I invite you to consider the following.

**Anxiety Awareness Practice**

If you feel

* Racing heart or chest discomfort
* Ruminating thoughts
* Digestive upset
* Skin flares
* Insomnia
* Muscle tension
* Frequent bathroom trips

Then

* Pause.
* Notice your breath.
* Scan from head to toe.
* Ask: Do I feel safe or is this too much?
* Note any phrase, image, or words that arise.

### **Boundary Exercises**

* Practice saying “no” kindly but clearly. “No” is a complete sentence. An explanation may not be necessary. Silence is an acceptable response to “no.”
* Identify what drains you. Action may not be appropriate right away, but noticing and reflecting might be apt.
* Ideas to set a boundary for yourself: leave 5 minutes earlier; stop scrolling after 9 p.m.; smile in the mirror at yourself once a week; eat a fresh veg or fruit.

**Allow Integration**

Stay in the awareness. Don’t rush into the next healing task.

Pause. Let it settle. Trust the integration process.

Control is not security.

We are not human doings.

## **5. Practitioner Directory**

As I mentioned earlier, a comprehensive team may be what you need. In the Therapeutic Order, restoring structures are a part of achieving balance to allow the body to heal. That’s why I’m adding local practitioners to this guide, or at least what to search for if you are not located in northwest Georgia, USA.

### **Nervous-System–Focused Chiropractic Care**

Unlike traditional chiropractic that focuses solely on pain relief or spinal alignment, nervous system–based chiropractic care works more deeply by supporting the body’s communication center: the brain–spine–nerve connection.

When this system is stressed or stuck in a survival pattern (fight, flight, freeze), your body compensates. You might feel wired but tired, overly sensitive, emotionally flat, or stuck in old patterns. Chiropractic adjustments done gently and intentionally help your nervous system shift out of survival mode and into a state of rest, repair, and resilience.

Over time, this can lead to:

* Improved stress response
* Better sleep and digestion
* Calmer emotional regulation
* More body awareness
* Less chronic tension and reactivity

A well-functioning nervous system gives your body permission to heal, not just cope.

Practitioners in North Georgia

* Dr. Caitlin Q – Cultivate Health, Cartersville, GA
* Dr. Samm Bouchard – Rome, GA
* Dr. Ashley Harper – Collective Chiro, Woodstock, GA

### **Tai Chi for Nervous System Regulation**

Tai Chi is often described as “meditation in motion,” but it’s also a nervous-system reset. The slow, flowing movements of Tai Chi gently activate your parasympathetic nervous system (the rest-and-digest side of your stress response).

In contrast to high-intensity workouts, Tai Chi teaches your body to move without triggering stress. This rhythm of slowness, breath, and presence helps rewire how your brain and body interpret stimuli. I personally notice I start with fear or tension and shift into curiosity and calmness.

Benefits over time include:

* Lower baseline anxiety
* Improved body awareness and coordination
* Balanced energy—not overstimulated or sluggish
* Enhanced recovery after stress
* Greater emotional resilience

It’s one of the few movement practices that builds strength and safety at the same time.

* Judy C Tai Chi – meets on Zoom, first visit is complementary

## **6. Dr. Kat’s Naturopathic Toolkit**

Since your healing is deeply personal, my toolkit provides a host of complementary modalities alongside your interpersonal journey. These are rooted in nature with the aim of returning the body to balance. Each approach offered is tailored to your unique goals and expectations.

* Nutrition + Intuitive Eating: Slow eating, embracing hunger/satiety cues, “diet” freedom. Bringing nutritious options to provide the body with its healing substrates.
* Botanical Medicine: Gentle herbs for enhancing the organs as they help our body’s assimilation of food, cleaning of our blood, cleaning our lymph, gut, mood, & hormone balance.
* Supplements: Targeted, evidence-informed nutraceuticals.
* Lifestyle: Sleep rhythm, gentle movement, light exposure, screen hygiene.
* Environmental: Clean water, reduced toxin load in home and body care.

## **7. Closing Thoughts**

By reading through this, you have shown you can choose presence. Thank yourself for setting aside time to steep into your thoughts and your body.

If you’d like to explore further into the root of your symptoms, I offer functional labs, 1:1 consults, and Transformative Healing Insights for Vibrant Empowerment. The first step is to reach out for a chat about how to move forward https://linktr.ee/thrivewithdrkat

Final food thought: the world doesn’t need a more perfect you, it needs a more grounded, connected you.

With warmth,

Kat Garner