

# Scam Resistance

How scammers try to hijack your  
safety/danger system:  
and how you can outsmart them!

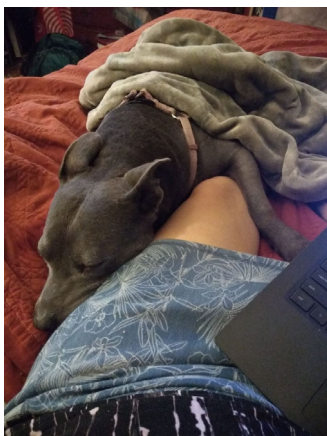


Scam  
Resistance  
Workshop  
Slides



# Meet the team

## Amy Mabery



- Assistant Director, ISSO
- Hobbies include:
  - My dog
  - Learning about the body's safety/danger system

**Photo:** Me trying to work from home and help my dog feel safe during a thunder storm.

## Background Info

- The presentation is based on concepts from the field of relational neuroscience
- I am an “armchair researcher”, not an expert
- Presenting big ideas in a simplified way

## Workshop Overview

- Scams impact on UNC Charlotte
- Your nervous system's safety/danger response
  - How scammers try to hijack it
- The body battery
  - How you can strengthen your nervous system
- Putting it into practice

# Scams

A big problem

## Definition:

- Scam - A deceptive scheme or trick used to cheat someone out of something, especially money.



## The Numbers Game

- If a scammer makes 10,000 calls per month
  - With a success rate of 0.0005%
  - And cheats each victim out of \$1000
- What is the scammer's monthly income?

Answer:  
\$5000

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## How does this impact you & me?

- Four times a semester
  - Students ask ISSO for feedback on a job offer that just doesn't feel right.
- Three times a day
  - ISSO staff members report receiving scam phone calls on their personal phones
- Twice a semester
  - Students report receiving scary phone calls or emails saying they are in trouble with the U.S. government.
- Once a semester
  - A student reports losing money to a scam.
- Fall 2021 – reported loss, \$4000

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# Why do smart people sometimes fall for scams?

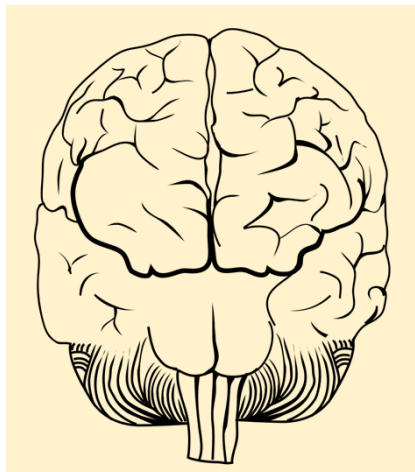
Understanding the brain's fast track safety / danger response

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## The brain's two processors

### Words & Logic Processor

- Conscious Thought
- Logic
- Words & speech
- Problem solving
- Stories
- Slow track (speed of conscious thought)



### Sensory Processor

- Relational & emotional connections
- Assessing good, bad, or scary
- Individual & group identity
- Fast track (faster than conscious thought)

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## Faster than conscious thought

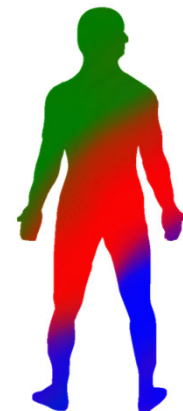
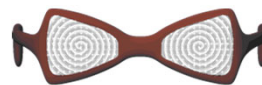
- The brain's slow track needs help noticing fast track processes:
  - Facial recognition
  - Reading other's emotions
  - Assessing safety & danger



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## Noticing the body's fast track safety / danger system

- Polyvagal Theory, Dr. Stephen Porges
- 3 states of your autonomic nervous system
  - Not a conscious choice
- Your body's response to stress



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## Safety / Danger State - Green

- Ventral, “Green”
  - A state of safety and connection
  - Relational skills are online
- Car
  - Can go fast or slow
  - Is able to problem solve



Polyvagal Theory,  
Dr. Stephen Porges

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## Safety / Danger State - Red

- Sympathetic, “Red”
  - Mobilization in response to fear, danger
  - Relational skills are dimmed or offline
- Car
  - It is hard to go slow or stop
  - Problem solving is ‘running over’ or ‘running away’



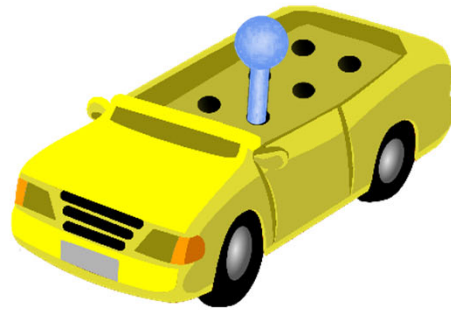
Polyvagal Theory,  
Dr. Stephen Porges

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## Safety / Danger State - Blue

- Dorsal, “Blue”
  - Immobilization in response to fear, danger
  - I can’t get away from the danger, so I shut down
  - Relational skills are dimmed or offline
- Car
  - Difficult to even move
  - Problem solving is ‘going into my shell’

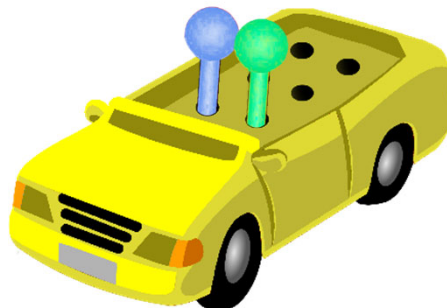


Polyvagal Theory,  
Dr. Stephen Porges

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## Is green the ‘best’ state?

Do we want to always be in “green” (ventral) to be in the driver’s seat?

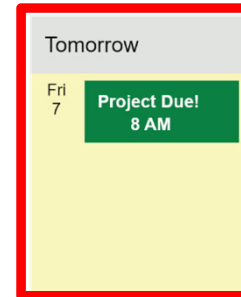


The goal is flexibility, being able to move freely between states without getting stuck.

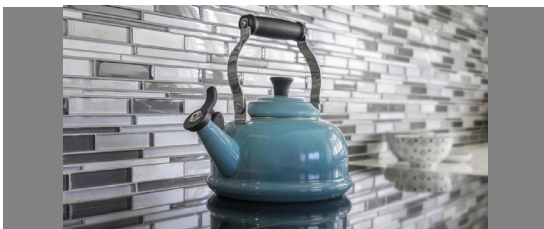
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# Adaptive Green

Can move fast and slow down as needed.



# Adaptive Red



- Jerk hand away from a hot kettle
- Respond quickly to a project due



# Adaptive Blue

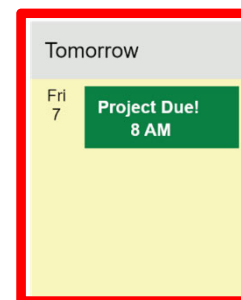


- Slowing during illness
- Shock, the body protects essential functions



# Stuck in Red

Moving fast, get out of the way!



## Manipulating Red



If you act **RIGHT NOW**, you can pay the fine and avoid being arrested.

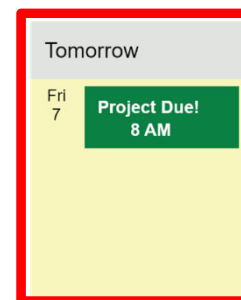


- Scammers try to read your state
- They try to push you into “a little more red”
- Message – “Act Now”

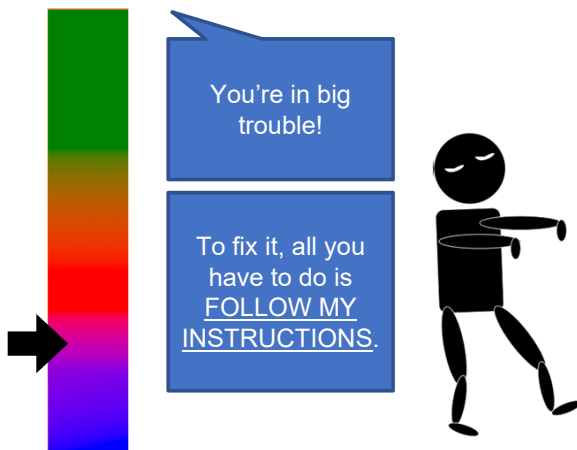


## Stuck in Blue

Overwhelmed & slowing or shut down.



## Manipulating Blue



- Scammers read your blue
- And push you into “a little more blue”
- Message – “Follow my instructions”

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## How Can We Put Green in the Driver's Seat?



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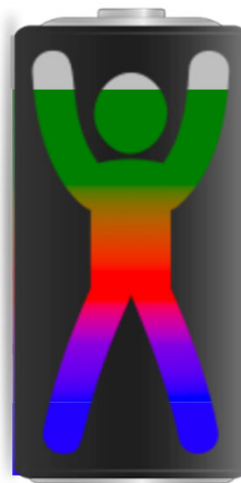
# The Body Battery

Growing capacity and green strength

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# The Body Battery

- Green - Operating at a full battery/capacity
- As the battery drains, it goes through green, red and blue



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## Gauging Your Capacity

- How many challenges can you handle while remaining green?
- How quickly can you return to green from red or blue?



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## Growing Capacity Over a Lifetime

- Infant - Baby cries, caregiver feeds it
- Adult - When hungry, feeds themselves
- Elder - Feeds themselves, helps feed the community



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# Energy Balance, Building Capacity

## Energy Outputs Include

- Thinking
- Physical movement
- Adapting to a new environment
- Navigating relationships
- School projects
- & more



## Energy Inputs Include

- Nutritious food
- Quality sleep
- Activities that 'bring life'
  - Specific for each person: Running? Pets? Cooking?
- Capacity "super boost"

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# Capacity super boost – relational joy



## Relational Joy

- One nervous system communicates to another "I am glad to be with you"
- Joy creates an amplification feedback loop
  - Joy/Rest cycles grow capacity
  - Both charges the battery & grows the battery
- Cannot be faked
  - Your brain can tell the difference between authentic joy and "smiling for the camera"
- Researchers: Ed Tronick, Alan Schore, and others

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## Building 'joy strength' increases capacity



Even seemingly small 'glad to be with you' moments increase our capacity.

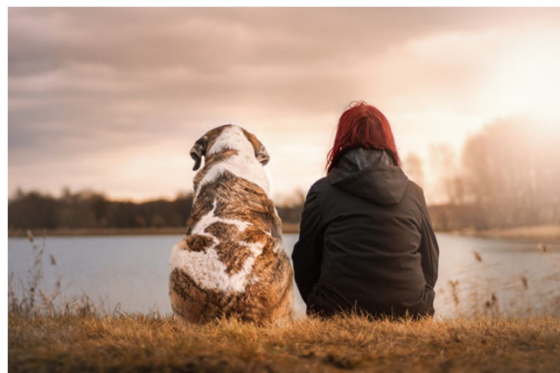


We can use 'glad to be with you' strength to recover from very unhappy circumstances (students grieving together after a campus shooting).



## Coregulation – sharing green strength

- One nervous system communicates to another
  - I see you, I understand how big this is for you
  - I am GLAD TO BE WITH YOU, even in your distress
- Your green can help someone else return to green



# Strengthening Your Nervous System

Activities to grow green strength

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## Creating A “Pause”

When experiencing sudden pain, say out loud  
“Pain, Pain, Pain, Pain.”



The words bring awareness to the discomfort  
before we act to minimize the pain.

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# Creating A “Pause”

Breathing, Lazy 8



Inhale & Exhale slowly

Yawning, Left, Right



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## Seek opportunities for positive connection

- Campus events
  - ISSO orientation events
  - FACE, Coffee Hour, Final Friday’s Lunches
  - Student orgs
- Offer “I see you” to others



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## Appreciation - indirectly growing joy

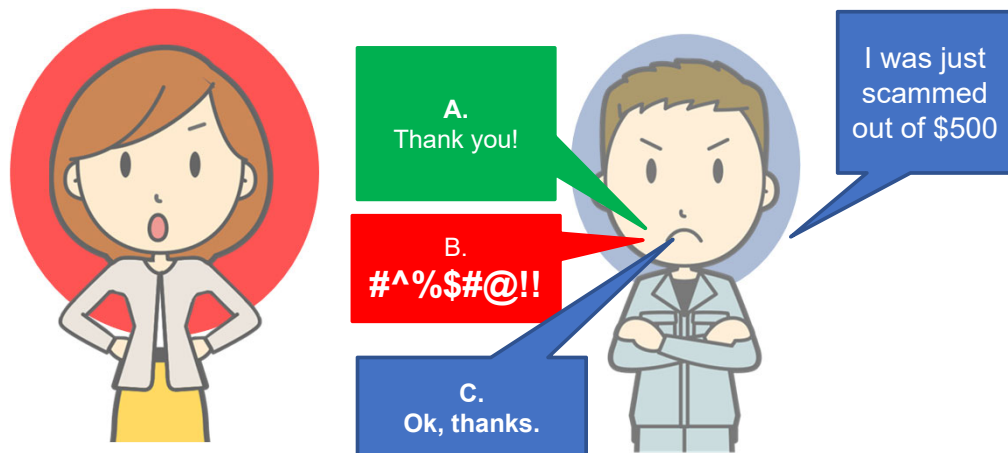


### Appreciation exercise

- Remember something you are grateful for
- Relive the experience while recalling as many sensory details as possible
- Goal – stay in “appreciation” for 5 min
- Bonus: Share the experience with someone else

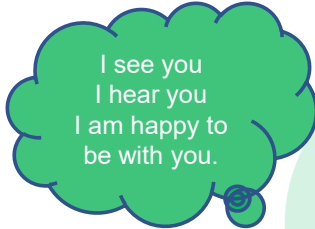
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## Coregulating to share green strength



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## Coregulating to share green strength



In the state of coregulation, we can share our nervous system resources



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## Putting it into practice

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## Example 1 – Scam Call



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## Example 2 – Your friend lost \$500



## Wrap up

- Our body has 3 stress response states: Green, Red, Blue
  - Scammers 'see them' and manipulate them
  - We can 'see them' and invest in strengthening green
- As adults, we are in charge of:
  - Taking care of our bodies (sleep, nutrition, exercise)
  - Investing in "glad to be with you" relational connections

## References

### Polyvagal Theory

- Stephen Porges and Rick Hanson on Resilience - <https://youtu.be/UeN4mWATl9g>
- Deb Dana describes Polyvagal Theory. - <https://youtu.be/JXGy7M4kvaY>
- Using colors to describe polyvagal states - Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children's Behavioral Challenges. By: Mona Delahooke

## References, continued

Allan Schore's neurological explanation of the Tronick Still Face Experiment (the importance of relational joy)

- The First 1000 Days - Importance of Face-to-Face Contact - <https://youtu.be/OIEIJxOd-Co>

Direct relationship between gratitude and joy

- The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are. By: Brené Brown

Right/left brain gratitude as a neurologically informed spiritual practice

- Passing the Peace with Kitty Wilder, <https://youtu.be/qyOg1KHSPak>

## References, continued

- How safety and resilience are grown in the brain
  - What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing By: Oprah Winfrey, Bruce D. Perry
- How safety and resilience are grown in the brain
  - Panic Free: The 10-Day Program to End Panic, Anxiety, and Claustrophobia By: Tom Bunn, Stephen Porges (Afterward)



## References, continued

- Growing capacity in a community (religious community)
  - RARE Leadership: 4 Uncommon Habits For Increasing Trust, Joy, and Engagement in the People You Lead by: Marcus Warner, Jim Wilder
- Building capacity in the workplace
  - Rare Leadership in the Workplace: Four Uncommon Habits that Improve Focus, Engagement, and Productivity by: Marcus Warner, Jim Wilder