

## What is SRT?

Self Regulation Therapy (SRT) is a non-cathartic gentle mind/body approach aimed at diminishing excess activation in the nervous system. It has its basis in neurobiology and reflects our innate capacity to flexibly respond to novelty or threat.

Significant overwhelming events at anytime in one's life can result in changes in the nervous system that negatively impact the way a person feels and relates to others.

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SRT enables the nervous system to integrate overwhelming events and brings balance to the nervous system. SRT works by providing a safe, contained environment in which the individual can complete the thwarted responses of fight, flight, or freeze.

By resourcing the client, new neural pathways are developed to flexibly manage daily challenges and stressors. Once the nervous system is balanced, individuals are able to experience joy, closeness in relationships, and vitality and resilience in the body.

- ◆ Establish an embodied sense of safety
- ◆ Increase the capacity for joy
- ◆ Restore balance and bring fullness to life

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### Canadian Foundation for Trauma Research & Education

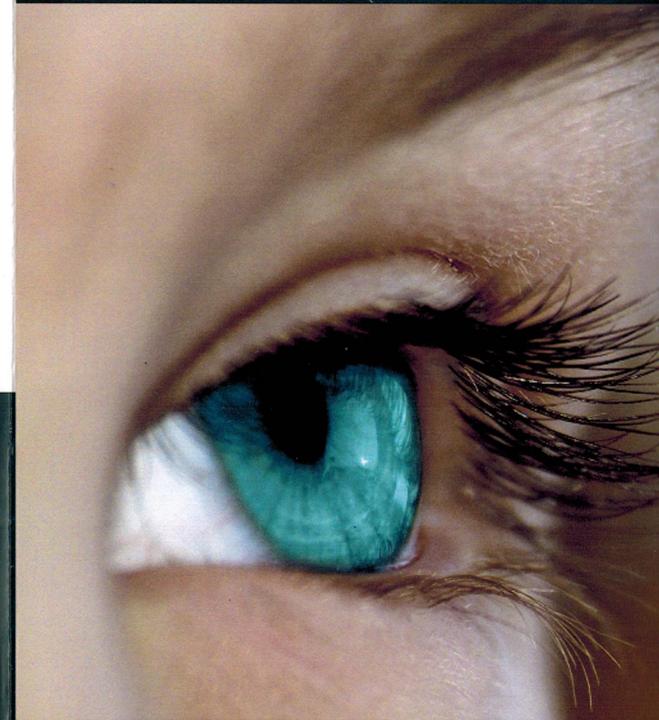
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The CFTRE is a registered charity which was created to further the understanding of the fields of neurobiology and psychophysiology, through education and research, as they pertain to the treatment of traumatic conditions.

SRT was developed by Dr. Lynne Zettl and Dr. Edward Josephs who teach it for the CFTRE around the world.

# SELF REGULATION THERAPY

A Neurobiological Approach  
to Healing Trauma



**CFTRE** 

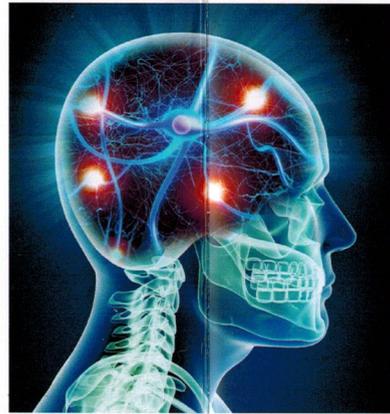
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# The Neuroscience of SRT

When an animal is confronted with a novel or life-threatening situation in the wild, it responds naturally by fighting, fleeing, or freezing. If the animal survives, it discharges excess energy from its nervous system through shaking, trembling, and twitching.

This discharge leaves the animal ready to fully respond to any subsequent threat. Animals may move through this sequence several times a day without experiencing any negative effects or exhibiting symptoms of trauma.

Apart from our well-developed neo-cortex or “thinking brain,” our innate responses to threat are identical to animals in the wild. However, we are not always able to respond in the natural way that our nervous system was designed. You may remember feeling cold and trembly after a



minor accident or close call. You may have been encouraged to stifle your feelings, told to pull yourself together, or felt embarrassed about your response. After all, it was just a minor accident.

Nevertheless, your “animal brain” responded as if it was a life-threatening situation, and a great deal of energy was mounted in your nervous system to protect yourself. It is likely you were unable to fight or flee and instead you froze.

Following this minor accident, you may have had trouble sleeping, were nervous particularly in situations that were similar to the accident, had intrusive thoughts, startled easily, had pain, and generally felt anxious or depressed. These are signs of dysregulation in the nervous system.

## What symptoms are helped with SRT?

Dysregulation is the inability to modulate emotional and behavioural responses, as a result of development derailments or shock trauma, which manifests in many disorders including:

- posttraumatic stress disorder;
- anxiety, panic attacks, and phobias;
- depression, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders;
- personality disorders.

Physical symptoms of dysregulation include:

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| insomnia                           | fibromyalgia                        |
| asthma                             | chronic fatigue                     |
| allergies                          | autoimmune disease                  |
| migraines                          | gastrointestinal difficulties       |
| tinnitus (ringing in the ears)     | headaches                           |
| hyperacusis (sensitivity to sound) | pain in neck and back               |
| photophobia (sensitivity to light) | temporomandibular joint dysfunction |
| chronic pain                       | alcohol and drug abuse              |

## What can you expect?

Because SRT is a non-cathartic approach, you can expect to feel a sense of control and a general sense of well being at the end of a session. You may experience a discharge of excess energy in the nervous system through heat, tingling, or trembling.

Occasionally, you may experience an increase in pain, but it is typically short-lived. As SRT helps to bring balance to the nervous system, you can expect to feel more alive, and more able to manage the unavoidable stress in daily life.

## How many sessions will it take?

It is likely that you will begin to feel better after a few sessions. It is important to talk with your therapist about your goals, both short and long-term, so that your progress can be assessed and an endpoint be established. Typically, both improvement of symptoms and completion of treatment are attained in significantly less time than conventional therapies.

## Are there any adverse effects of SRT?

Because SRT works with sensations in the body, you may notice that there is an increase in your sensory experiences, both positive and negative. Although the overall effect is a decrease in activation (i.e., anxiety, tension, pain), people will sometimes experience an increase in activation for a short time as their nervous system learns to balance energy.

