

CASA Keynote 2026

Polyvagal PLAY

How Safety, Play, and Relationships Can Change the World

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Welcome & Connecting

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Say hello with your *whole body*.

01

Turn to your table

Find the faces around you.

02

Name + Motion

Say your first name and add a motion that shows how you arrived today.

03

Echo it back

Your table repeats your name and your motion. Then the next person goes.

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Picture one child you've walked alongside.

In a courtroom. On a visit that ended too soon. During a long, quiet car ride.

What did their body do? What did yours do?

You don't need to share. Just notice.

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Your body is always asking:

Am I safe right now?

Neuroception

Your nervous system scanning for safety and danger, all the time, below conscious awareness. Before you have a thought about it, your body has already decided.

- Dr. Stephen Porges, developer of Polyvagal Theory.

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a quick polyvagal map

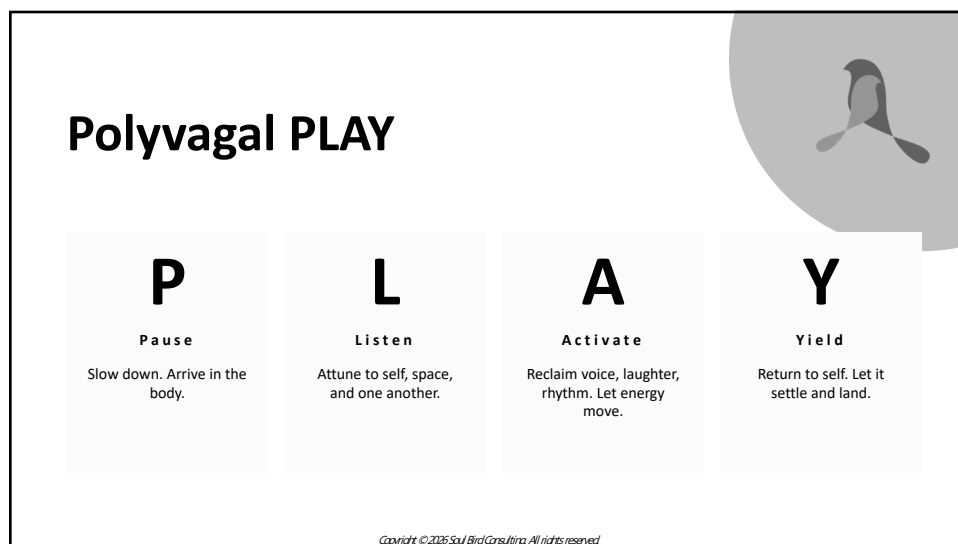
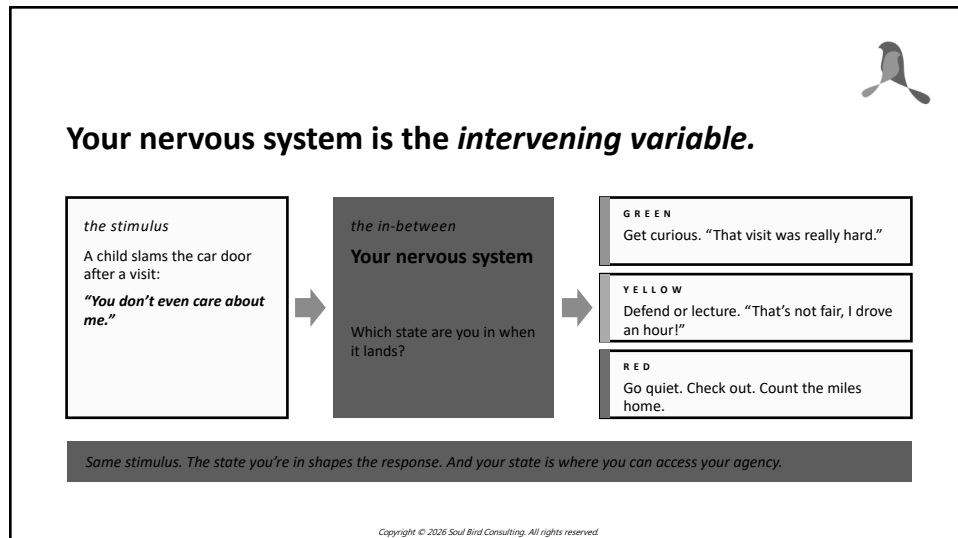
Your Nervous System has 3 Main States

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
<i>Safe + Connected</i> Ventral vagal. Present, curious, available. "I can listen. I can play. I can repair."	<i>Mobilized</i> Sympathetic. Fight or flight. Fast heart, shallow breath. "Something is off."	<i>Shut Down</i> Dorsal vagal. Freeze. Numb, foggy, disconnected. "There is no way through."

No state is bad. Each one is trying to protect you.

The goal is flexibility: the ability to find your way back.

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P

PAUSE

the PLAY arc · pause

Arrive in your *body*.

01

Big morning stretch

Stretch like you just woke up from the best nap of your life.

02

Let the yawn come

Yawns are contagious in a room this size. Let it be.

03

Long exhale

Exhale longer than you inhale. Three rounds.

What changed, even a little?



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L

LISTEN

the PLAY arc · listen

Let the room *find* you.

01

Orient

Let your eyes wander the room. Find three things you like looking at.

02

Anchor

Feel what is holding you up: chair, floor, feet.

03

Listening Pairs

Turn to one person. 60 seconds each: What first brought you to CASA?

Notice what it feels like to be heard all the way to the end.

For the listener

Just listen. No fixing, no advice. Soft eyes. Let your face say "I'm here."



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A

ACTIVATE



the PLAY arc · activate

One room. *One heartbeat.*

01

Find your heartbeat

ba-DUM, ba-DUM on your chest or the table.

02

Join your section

Heartbeat · clap · “shh” · stomp. Layer in one at a time.

03

Follow the conductor

Louder, softer, faster... and STOP. Together.

Four sections

- 1 Heartbeat
- 2 Clap
- 3 “Shh”
- 4 Stomp

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A

ACTIVATE



the PLAY arc · activate

Your body doesn't need a *joke.*

01

The chant

Ho ho, ha ha ha! Very good, very good, YAY!

02

Greeting

Laugh hello to a neighbor. Take a hilarious pretend phone call.

03

Milkshake

Pour, sip, laugh.

04

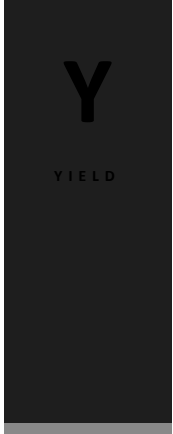
Cell Phone laughter

Take a hilarious pretend phone call.

Laughter Meditation!

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the *PLAY* arc · yield

Let it *land*.

01 **Collective exhale**
One slow breath out, all of us together.

02 **Hum one note**
Feel it buzz in your chest and face.

03 **Rest a hand**
Wherever feels good. Stay here a moment.

Noticing

Where are you now?
Green? Yellow? Red?
Somewhere in between?

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What just *happened*?

P Pause brought you into the room.	L Listen gave your body cues of safety, from the space and from each other.	A Activate let stored energy move.	Y Yield let it settle.
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Shout out one word: What shifted for you?

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Your nervous system goes to *court with you*.

The courtroom hallway

Pause. Long exhale, feet on the floor, before you walk in.

The car ride

Listen. Side by side feels safer than face to face. Music, humming, I spy.

Transitions + goodbyes

Activate. A shared rhythm or handshake that belongs to the two of you.

Hard conversations

Yield. Slow your voice. Soften your face. Let silence be okay.

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**You cannot co-regulate
another nervous system
from a depleted one.**

Pick one practice to try this week.

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When adults regulate, the people in their care thrive.

When relationships shift, systems shift.

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Gratitude *Ripple*

01

Listen closely

Hear the gratitude from the person before you.

02

Repeat it

Say back only what they said.

03

Add your own

Then share your own gratitude and pass it on.

"I'm grateful for the vulnerability today."

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**Thank you for PLAYing
and for the work you do!**



If something in your body said yes today, I'd love to keep journeying with you.

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