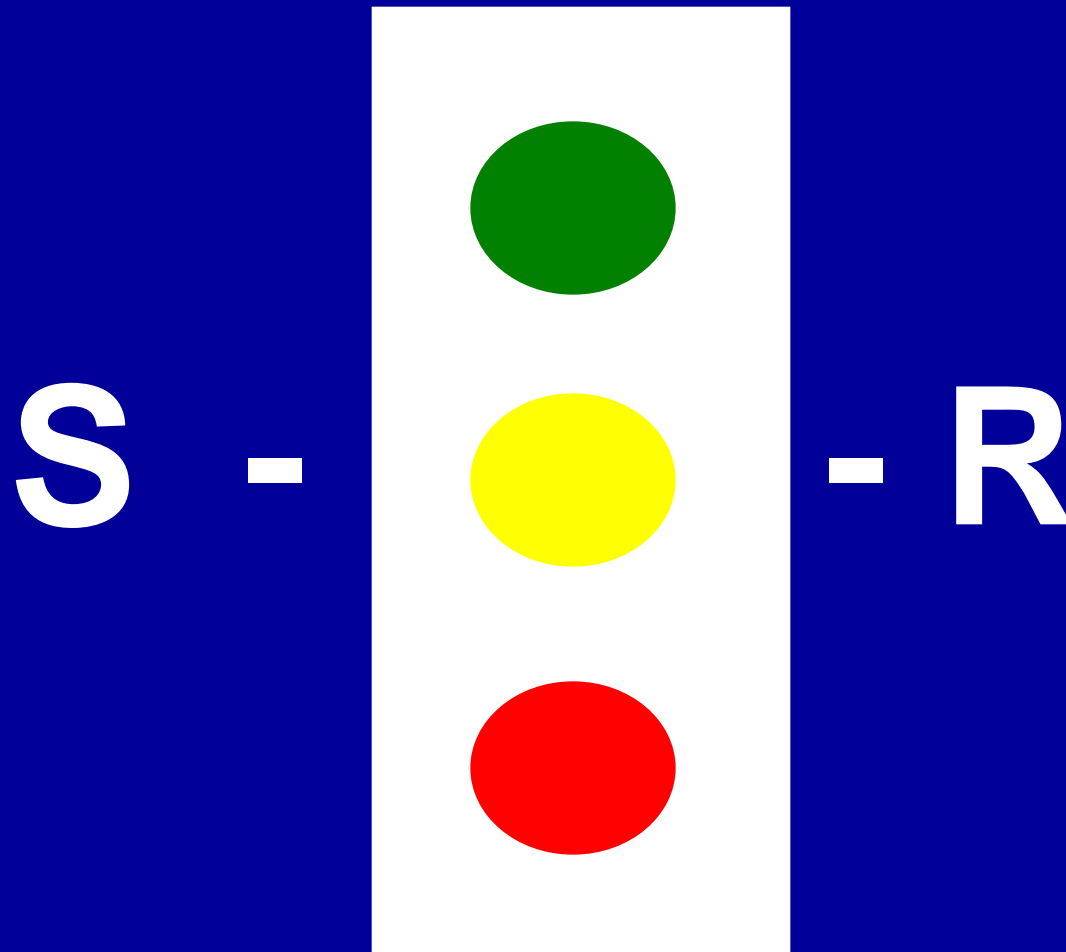


How risk in our environment determines affective state: Insights from the Polyvagal Theory

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❖ Metaphor

Physiological State Colors our Perception



Physiological State

The Quest for Safety: Emergent Properties of Physiological State

Environment
outside the body
inside the body

Nervous System
Neuroception

Safety

Danger

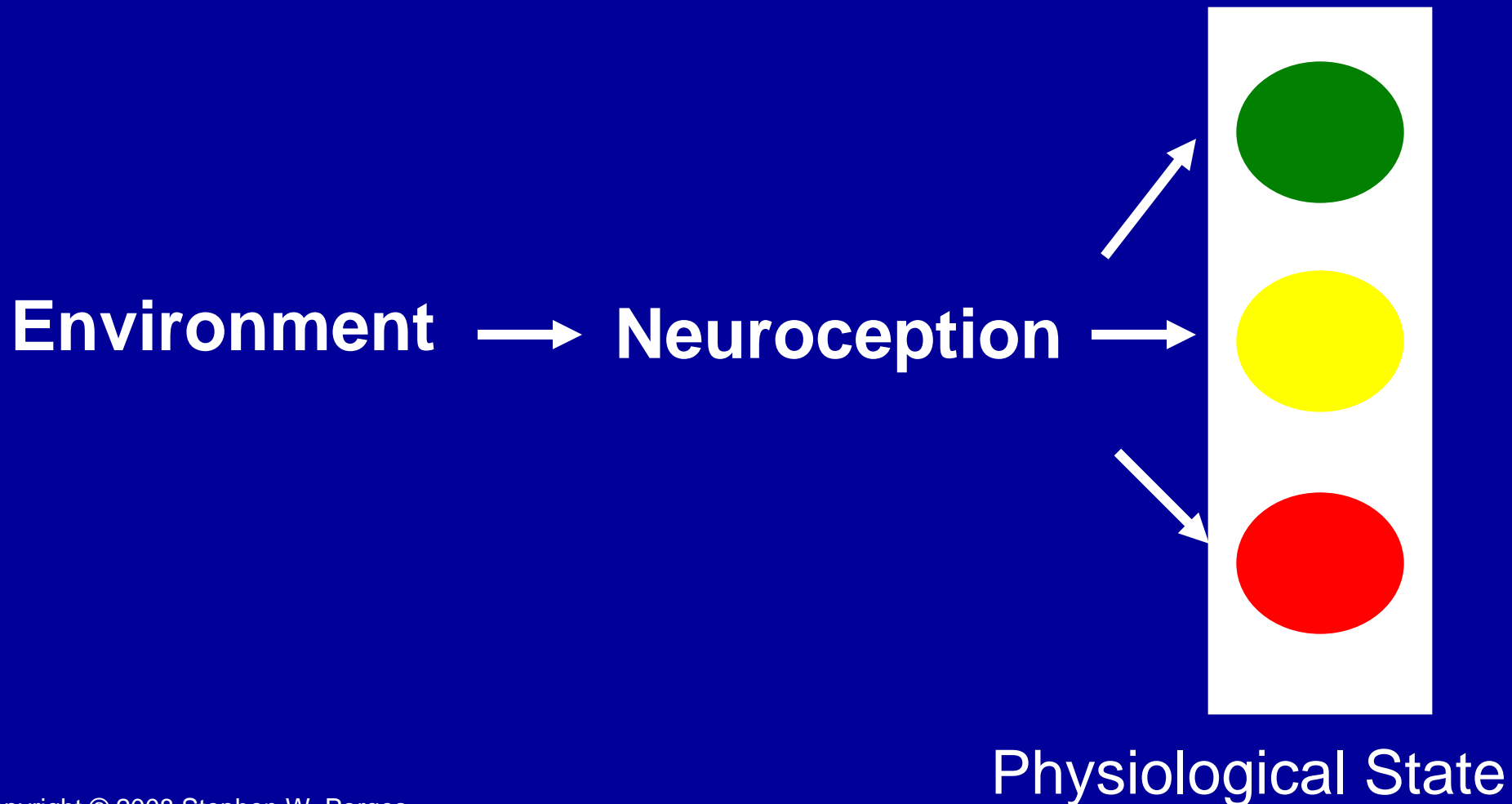
Life threat

Spontaneously engages others
eye contact, facial expression, prosody
supports visceral homeostasis

Defensive strategies
death feigning/shutdown (immobilization)

Defensive strategies
fight/flight behaviors (mobilization)

Environmental Features Trigger State Changes



Neuroception

How do we turn on and off the adaptive defensive systems (flight, fight, and freeze) to enable the expression of positive spontaneous social behavior?

Neuroception: The importance of the face-to-face interactions

Why are face-to-face interactions so important?

How do face-to-face interactions change our physiology to promote states of social awareness?

How do we “feel” when there is a violation of the face-to-face interactions?

Scientists and Entertainers: Manipulating Neuroception

The magician's skill is in framing relevant maneuvers as trivial. When it is done poorly, Teller (from Penn and Teller) said, "the actions immediately become suspicious, and you instantly click that something's wrong."

David Blaine, a New York magician and performance artist, said he started doing magic at age 4 and quickly learned that he did not need any drama or special effects. "A strong and effective way to distract somebody is to directly engage the person," with eye contact or other interaction, Mr. Blaine said. "That can act on the subconscious like a subtle form of hypnosis."

August 12, 2008 New York Times

- ❖ When we engage another what determines whether we feel safe or are fearful?
- ❖ What features enable us to feel safe?

Interpersonal Features of Therapy

1. The importance of face-to-face interactions
2. Cooperative and contingent behaviors between client and therapist

❖ Physiological states can facilitate or block access to social engagement processes

❖ Has society dealt with vulnerabilities in Social Engagement?

The Importance of Social Engagement in Therapy

1. The importance of face-to-face interactions in creating “states” of safety
2. Cooperative and contingent behaviors between client and therapist promoting use, accessibility, and exercise of the Social Engagement System