



# ELM Medicine

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**Specialist Clinic. Internal Medicine. Infectious Diseases. Hepatitis B & C. Chronic Pain.  
Lifestyle Medicine Clinic. Stress Reduction Clinic**

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## **SAFE AND SOUND PROTOCOL**

*This integrative therapy works best with ongoing counselling, by a health care professional.*

Developed by Dr. Stephen Porges, the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) is an auditory intervention designed to reduce stress and auditory sensitivity while enhancing social engagement and resilience. Based on Dr. Porges' Polyvagal Theory, by calming the physiological and emotional state, the door is opened for improved communication and feeling of safety.

The SSP exercises the neural pathways associated with regulating behavioral state and social engagement. These are aspects of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS). And just as the brain is plastic and can change based on experience, the ANS is also plastic. Peer-reviewed research has shown the SSP to significantly increase vagal regulation of the heart, which promotes better control of our state.

Research shows that SSP based therapy showed significant results in the following areas:

- Social and emotional difficulties
- Auditory sensitivities
- Anxiety and trauma related challenges
- Inattention
- Stressors that impact social engagement
- Better response to Counselling

This non-invasive intervention involves listening to music that has been processed specifically to retune the nervous system (regulating state) to introduce a sense of safety and the ability to socially engage. This allows the patient to better interpret not only human speech, but, importantly, the emotional meaning of language. Once interpersonal interactions improve, spontaneous social behaviors and an enhanced ability to learn, self-regulate and engage are often seen.

### **What is Physiological State?**

Physiological or emotional state is at the root of all behavior. Some states promote sociability. Some promote tantrums. Others promote shut down.

- What is the “just right” state for therapy? It’s the sweet spot where a person is available and motivated for the task at hand.
- How do you know when you are in the perfect state for optimal performance? You’ll notice signals in the: eyes (bright and focused); face (content with the ability to express all emotions); voice (capable of prosody or tone changes); body (relaxed but with good muscle tone); and rate of movement (smooth and responsive – not too fast or slow).
- These are all indicators of a state of focused, relaxed, and confident alertness optimal for learning and performing with confidence.

### **Instructions for use**

SSP Prescription: \_\_\_\_\_

The SSP protocol is safe for everyone to use, except those with a history of seizures. No harmful effects have been reported with its use to date. Using common sense, the SSP protocol confers the same risk as someone using a Walkman and headsets to listen to music.

- 1) Ensure that you are in a quiet room without any distractions. Please do not multitask while using the SSP as it defeats the purpose. That means that your cell phone must be put away and you should not be reading while listening to SSP.
- 2) Active listening to the SSP music is key to how it works.
- 3) Set the volume to medium and use the same volume for the entire protocol. Please do not adjust the volume, once it’s set. The music volume will be quiet and it normal for people to report that it’s hard to hear.
- 5) You do not have to listen to the music at the same time each day.
- 6) Ear lobes or face may become flushed while or after listening