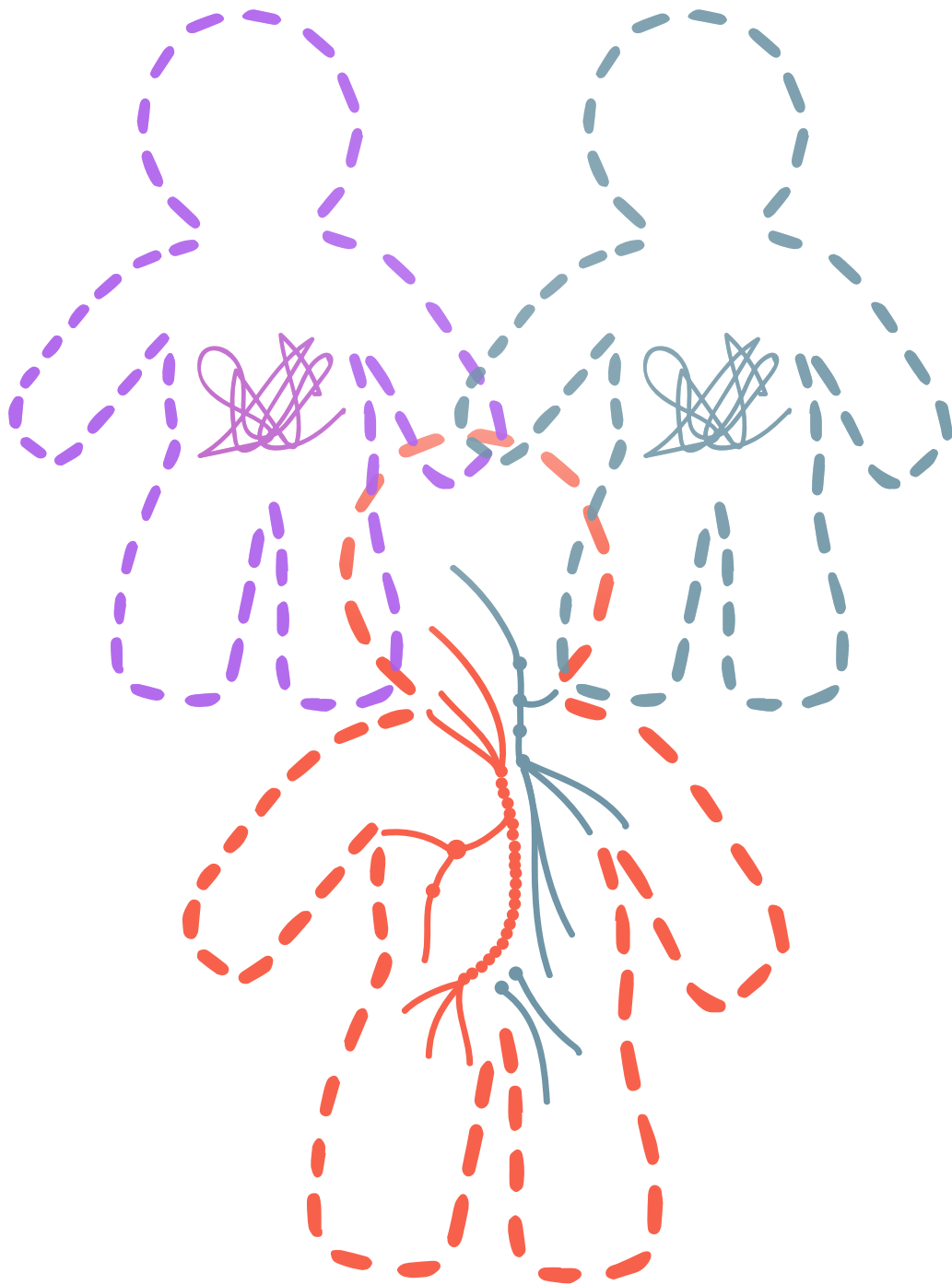


The connected body



What pushes you out of balance?

The connected body

Our world

'Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment.'

- The World Health Organisation

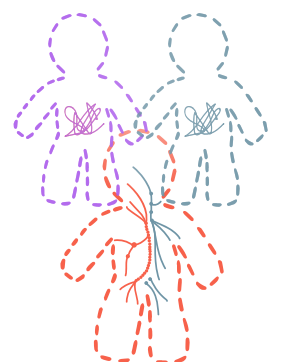
There's a lot of research that tells us where we live and who we're with affects our health.

Think about when a tree in a forest shows signs of poor health. Ecologists do not just look for disease in the body of the tree, they also need to understand what is happening in the forest. Changes in climate may be putting the forest under stress. The forest floor may lack nutrients and water. Fungi that help the tree absorb vital nutrients through its roots may have disappeared.

In the same way, when something's not right in our bodies, it could be because things around us, like the social structures and ecosystems that support us, are also not balanced.

Optimal Healing Environments

Bodily stress, and its symptoms do not affect everyone equally. These differences are not just about genes or the choices we make. The environments where we live and the pressures we are under are under can contribute to symptoms.



For example, if there's a lot of violence in the streets where we live, our bodies become more tense and stressed, even if we are not directly attacked or assaulted. Impacts usually come in combination. For example, air in high crime neighborhoods is also often polluted about the safe level for health. Both fear and poor air quality over time can lead to symptoms related to dysfunctional breathing and bodily stress.

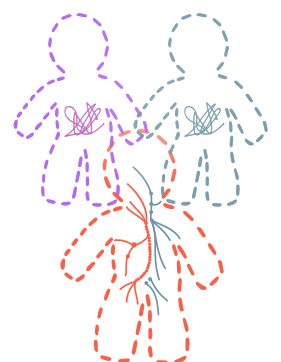
In this way, the environment immediately around our body can be a source of bodily stress, or it can support us to heal. A healing environment is an environment that provides conditions that support our body's natural ability to heal itself.

Conditions of a healing environment

First, a healing environment has to meet basic needs like nutritious food, clean air and water, safety, and shelter. These things are really important. When they are missing, the body naturally stores the effects of stress.

Second, a healing environment needs to have spaces where we can be active and rest. This can also be missing. We might live in an urban area without nice places to exercise. If we must work long hours to pay the bills, the time left each day to fully relax the body and enter physiological rest, is reduced.

We are social animals, and this comes with another set of conditions that are requirements for healing. We need social cohesion and opportunities for meaningful activity.



If any of these conditions is missing, as human beings, we may struggle to flourish. The body might communicate this struggle to us, through symptoms.

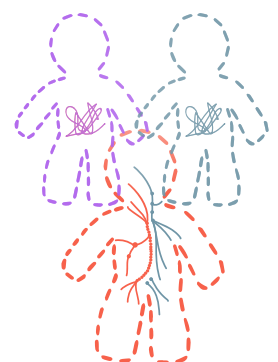
If you have symptoms, take a pause and ask yourself, are any of these conditions missing from the places you spend most of your time?

Nature

We all depend on things like food, clean air, water, diverse ecosystems, and predictable weather. But because of pollution and damage to nature, things are changing fast. Even though we're dependent on nature, sometimes it feels easier to disconnect.

However, disconnecting comes with its own problems. For most of human evolution, we spent almost all our time surrounded by natural sights, sounds and smells. It is no surprise that our physiology has developed a way of responding to natural spaces. There is now good evidence that the functioning of the brain, autonomic nervous system, endocrine and immune systems are all improved by spending time in places where there is a good diversity of plants and animals.

Unlike trees, humans can move and do things. This means we can make our environment better for healing. For example we can bring plants into our homes and balconies. Even better, we can spend time in local green and wild spaces. Spending time in nature is also a great way to connect with other people.



Healing relationships

Besides having healing conditions in our physical environment, we all need a social environment where we feel safe, respected, understood, and valued.

When we feel unwell, it is easy to grow isolated from friends and family. Lack of energy or embarrassment about symptoms can make us feel like withdrawing into ourself. However, at this time, having the right people around us is especially important.

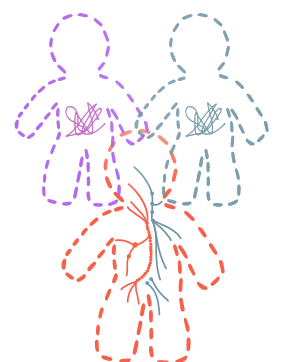
We might need to ask others for help so we can rest and get better. We often benefit from the perspective and advice of healthcare professionals and other people we trust. Practically, recovery might require changes to our surroundings, that we cannot bring about by ourselves.

Sometimes, there are people around us who don't support our goals. Being with them can keep us stuck in old patterns that could be maintaining symptoms. If this sounds familiar, working on communicating what you need and setting boundaries could be necessary for recovery.

When looking for ways to feel better, it is always worth looking around. Symptoms can draw you into a struggle with your body. When we have symptoms, we might only blame our bodies or minds.

This can lead you to overlook things around you that may be keeping you unwell, or resources that could help you heal.

Working on the balance in your surroundings and relationships can be the key step to get the body back into balance.



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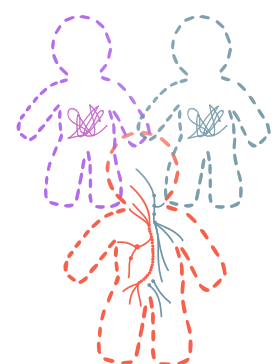
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