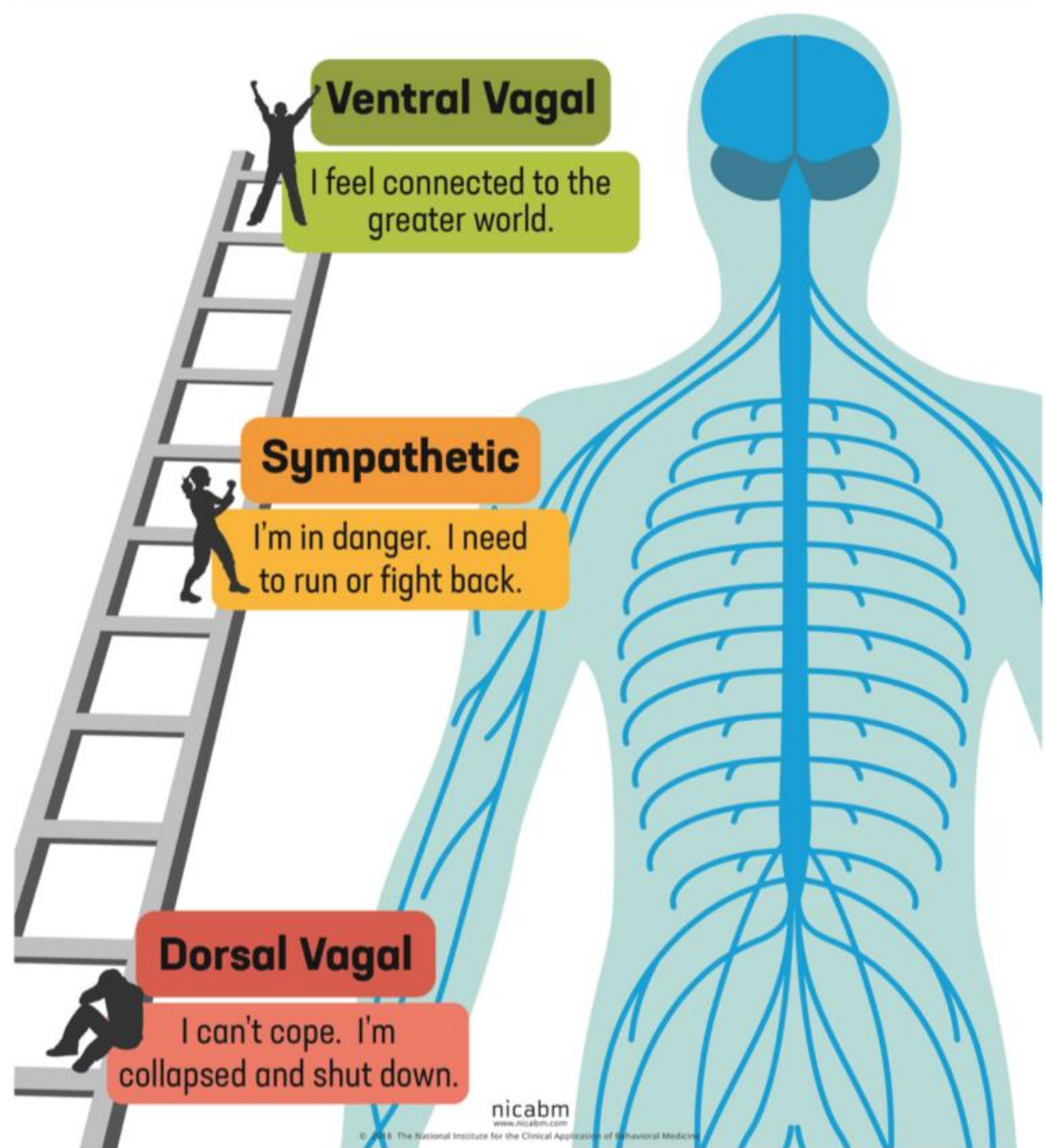
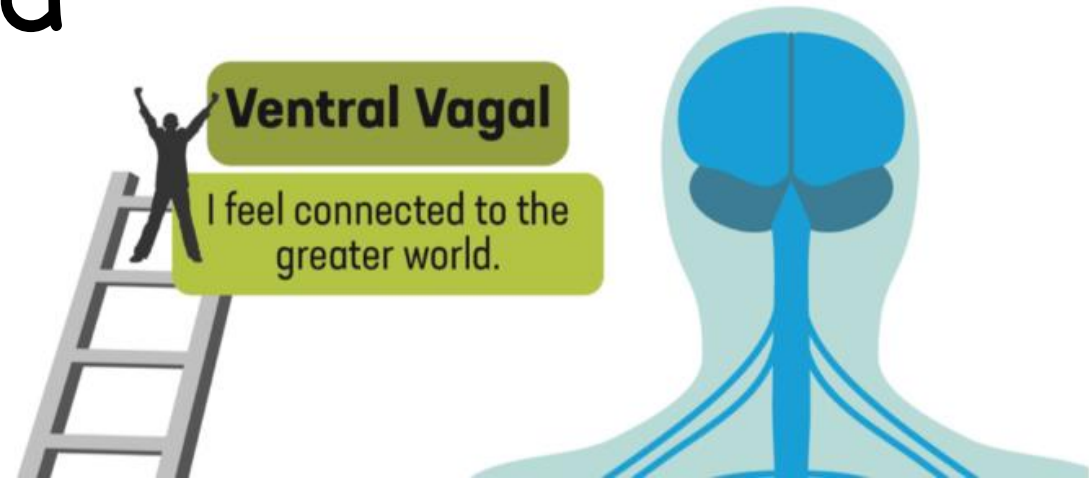


Stress and your nervous system



Polyvagal Theory: The Autonomic Ladder
Understanding the Nervous System
Adapted from Deb Dana, LCSW

Calm and Connected



Ventral vagal (parasympathetic state):
Feeling relaxed, slower heart beat, wanting to connect with others, feeling connected with ourselves, clear thinking, less illnesses, feeling safe

Mobilisation



Sympathetic state (fight or flight): faster heart beat, sweaty palms, feeling anxious/over loaded, negative self-talk, problems sleeping, digestive symptoms (such as IBS), difficulty relaxing, muscle tension, frequent illnesses, feeling irritable

Immobilisation



Dorsal vagal (freeze/ shutdown): withdrawn from others, lack of energy, feeling numb, alone, frozen, hopeless, collapsed

Achieve balance by being aware of where you are on the ladder, and using tools such as self-compassion to move back to a calm, connected state.

