



# Connected.

## All Parts of the Map.

Grounded in 20+ years of practice alongside neurodivergent students and staff.  
Neurodiversity and Wellbeing: Creating Caring Systems for Students and Staff

### The Integrated Coaching Map · NeuroPathways (2025)

#### Mind

When executive function systems are overloaded, distress comes before words. Reframing from disorder to difference is itself a wellbeing intervention, for students and for staff.

#### Body

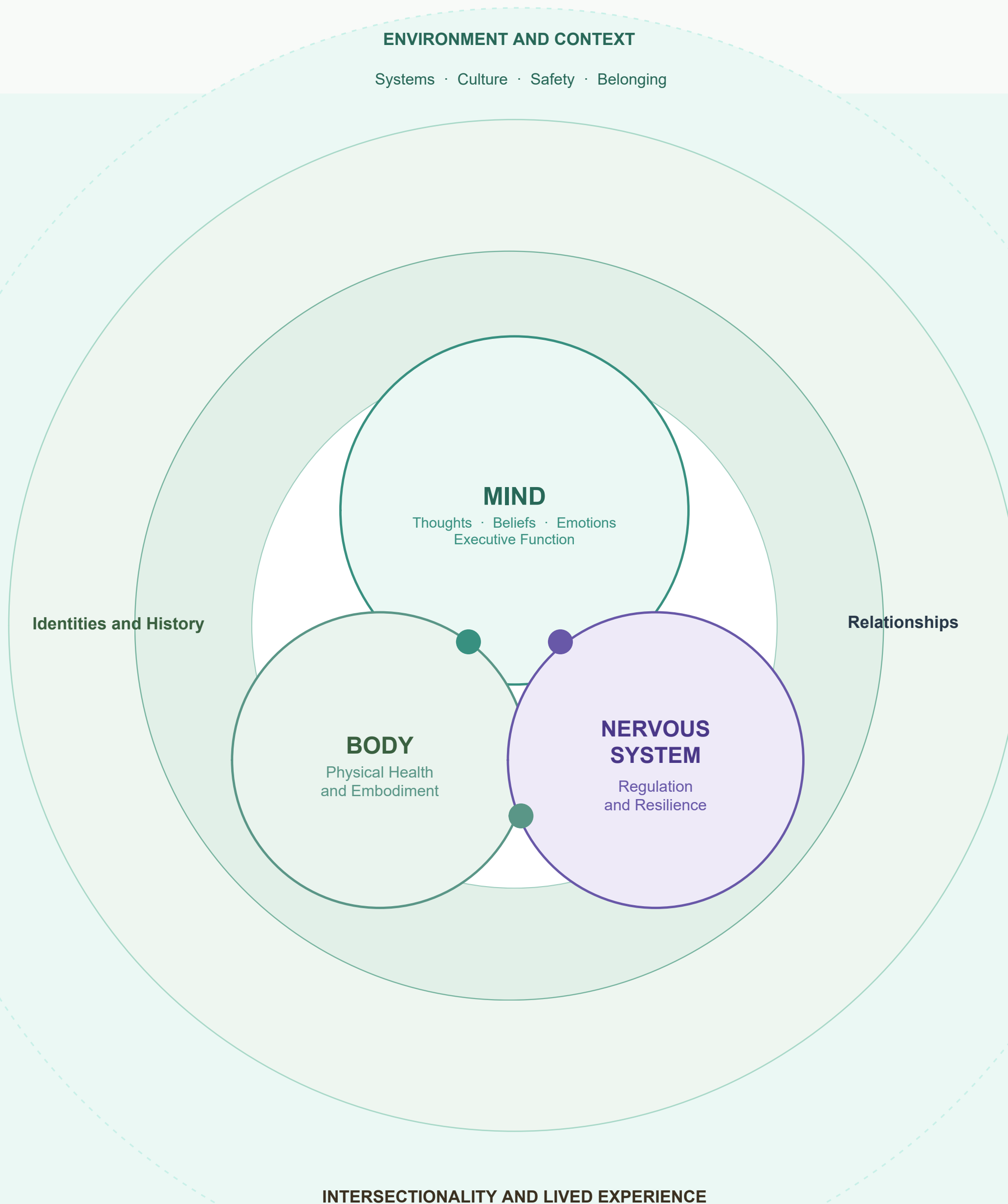
Bodies hold the wellbeing cost of academic environments, for students masking in lectures and for staff masking in meetings. Culturally-rooted grounding practices are legitimate regulation tools.

#### Nervous System

Porges's polyvagal theory identifies felt safety as the neurological prerequisite for wellbeing and learning. This applies equally to the student in the room and the practitioner supporting them.

#### Intersectionality

Drawing on Crenshaw's framework, identity, culture, and belonging are foundational to wellbeing, for students and staff alike. Race, gender, faith, and socioeconomic context all shape how support lands.



#### Staff Wellbeing

*is the precondition - not the reward*

An unregulated practitioner cannot co-regulate a student. This is neurological, not motivational. A university that invests in student wellbeing while ignoring staff nervous system conditions cannot function effectively.

#### The Neurodivergent Workforce

Many SpLD tutors and study skills practitioners are themselves neurodivergent, drawn to this work through lived experience. Systems that ask staff to mask while supporting others to unmask create an institutional contradiction the nervous system framework names directly.

#### The Relational Cost

Without nervous system support, practitioners absorb the stress states of those they support. Vicarious dysregulation, compassion fatigue, and burnout are not personal failures. They are systemic ones. Caring systems must care for those who do the caring.

PASSHE's 7 Principles® - metacognition, motivation, overlearning, modelling, little and often, multisensory, relevance - are most effective when this root system of regulation, safety, and belonging is also in place.

“ What would it mean for a university to be nervous-system-friendly not just for students, but for staff too? ”

The Integrated Coaching Map offers a starting point.

Neurodivergent experience is at the centre of this map. The caring systems it calls for benefit everyone in the institution.

### What this means for caring systems

#### From deficit to difference

The shift from deficit to difference is not just a language change. It is a systems change.

#### Staff as co-regulators

When tutors and advisors understand their own regulation, they become more attuned to the students they support. Staff wellbeing is the foundation of student wellbeing.

#### Energy-sustainable design

Energy-sustainable design is not about budget. It is about direction. Build systems around the full reality of what wellbeing requires. Start with people. Not with structures.

#### Culturally inclusive care

Caring systems must honour diverse ways of returning to safety, not assume that one neurotypical or culturally dominant model serves everyone.

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