



# A Positive Start CIC

A Positive Start CIC,  
8 Sandbed, Hawick,  
TD9 0HE  
Scottish Borders  
T. 01450 367422  
E. [info@apositivestart.org.uk](mailto:info@apositivestart.org.uk)

## My Nervous System Story: A Trauma Timeline Map

“My body remembers what my mind forgot.”

### 1. Early Years (0–5) — Foundations of Safety

Prompts:

- Were there any early medical emergencies, separations, or losses?
- Can you recall (or were you told about) moments of distress, fear, or confusion?
- Was there comfort available?

Example: A child was hospitalised at age 3 after a choking incident. Though they survived, they became fearful of eating and cried often without clear cause. Parents told them to 'toughen up.'

### 2. Childhood (6–12) — Body Responses Emerge

Prompts:

- When did your body start “talking” through symptoms?
- Were these responses understood, ignored, or punished?
- Did your symptoms have a pattern (e.g. linked to stress)?

Example: A child began experiencing chronic stomach aches and bedwetting at school age. Teachers labelled them as disruptive. Symptoms worsened after a parent's separation.

### 3. Teenage Years (13–19) — Coping & Shutdown

Prompts:

- Did you withdraw, people-please, act out, or try to stay invisible?
- Were you labelled “too sensitive,” “difficult,” or “dramatic”?
- Did you try to “get on with it” even while struggling?

Example: A teenager became hyper-independent, avoided asking for help, and was often told they were 'mature for their age.' Internally, they felt anxious and disconnected.



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## 4. Adulthood (20+) — Patterns, Triggers, & Realisations

Prompts:

- How did early trauma affect your adult relationships, health, or choices?
- What did your body try to tell you as an adult?
- When did you begin to connect these patterns to earlier life?

Example: An adult developed chronic fatigue and panic attacks. They realised that stress triggered digestive issues and emotional shutdown, linking it to childhood patterns.

## 5. The Healing Path — Regulation & Recover

### The Vagus Nerve & Trauma Healing Guide

“Regulation is not a luxury — it’s the foundation for healing.

#### What is the Vagus Nerve?

The Vagus nerve is the longest nerve in your body, connecting your brain to your heart, lungs, gut, and more. It plays a key role in regulating your nervous system — helping you feel calm, safe, and connected

#### Why It Matters in Trauma

When we experience trauma, especially in childhood, our vagus nerve can become dysregulated. This can lead to chronic states of fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. Our body stays in survival mode, even when the threat is gone.

#### Signs of Nervous System Dysregulation

- Chronic anxiety or panic
  - Digestive issues (like IBS)
  - Fatigue or emotional numbness



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- Migraines or headaches
- Difficulty connecting with others
- Feeling unsafe even in safe environments

## Supporting the Vagus Nerve

These gentle practices help stimulate the vagus nerve and support healing:

- Deep belly breathing (especially long exhales)
- Singing, humming, or chanting
- Splashing cold water on your face
- Gentle movement (like yoga, stretching, or walking)
- Laughter and crying (both help release stored energy)
- Safe connection with others — co-regulation
- Laying on your back with feet up (legs on a chair or wall)

## Try This: Simple Vagus Practice

### **Breath Anchor:**

Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts, hold for 2, and breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6–8 counts. Repeat for a few minutes and notice any shifts.

### **Humming Pause:**

Hum your favourite tune for 30 seconds. Notice the vibration in your chest and throat. This directly stimulates your vagus nerve.

### **Reflection**