Introduction: Symptoms as Nervous System Signals

So you feel like your gut is a mess, maybe you're constipated, you can't move things the way you used to and your legs are not stopping at night. They're restless.

You've got pins and needles and it's really hard to explain all the symptoms going on. you brought it to your doctor's attention and there's just been no response that has moved.

the needle towards health. And so I want to talk about today a neurological thread that has been running through the course of your body that is associated with an organ's not being defective, but having everything to do with your brain interpreting a response to a threat.

So before we go any further, I want to bring in Psalm 139 verse 14, it says I am fearfully and wonderfully made and the Hebrew word for wonderfully is Pala.

It means to be set apart, marvelous, beyond extraordinary. wonderfully made doesn't mean malfunction free. It means intricate, responsive, built to communicate, innately made to heal.

So if you have a medical doctor that says, hey, I don't have an explanation for this, let's just give you this diagnosis and slap a label on it or give me this medicine.

it's not the same as your body going rogue. Every symptom has an explanation and a root cause to it. So let's get into it today. I'm going to walk you through four common physical symptoms that I see in my practice and community.

And we're going look at what actually happens underneath because understanding the root changes is how you're gonna start responding to some movement through your health.

Hi, I am Dr. Oliver and here at Rewire Revival We talk about neurology, so let's get into it. IBS, okay, you've heard of it, it's not just a gut problem.

But let start, irritable bowel syndrome. If you or someone you work with has it you know the layers.

IBS and Gut-Brain Dysregulation

It's just not physical discomfort, its an anxiety that's pulling you to the bathroom in not great hours. There's a shame that connected to it there's rewiring that needs to occur because your social life is being disrupted and there's symptoms that are beyond your control.

And so what's actually going on neurologically is that the IBS is not just a gut diagnosis. Like I said, it's an umbrella. There's usually a couple of things contributing to this.

First, there is a Gut Brain Signaling System. when it gets dysregulated specifically in the vagus nerve, that means there's this communication highway from your brain to your nervous system down to you digestive tract.

If the Vegas nerve isn't functioning well, you're either getting not enough neural innervation to the gut or you are getting inaccurate signaling. It's going back up to brain and it's trying to predict what's going on, it's not able to, predict it getting inaccurate signaling or not enough.

And so either way, the communication is off. Second, there can be some hypersensitivity in how the brain is actually interpreting what is going in the gut.

And so there's a part of the brain called the insular cortex, and it's our biggest sensory integration hub. And in some people, IBS, it amplifies every single signal that we get from the gut, And it flags it, puts a little receptor on it.

Hey, i'm a threat. So if the Gut might not yet be a threat or a problem, it's the interpretation in the looping from the brain to the gut and the interpretations of what the signaling actually means.

So the brains reads it, hey, oh, that's dangerous, or that is a thread. And so the body will then respond to this signaling instead of the actual root cause of whats going on.

Third, there can be a sympathetic dominance. And so when the nervous system is running in chronic stress, this fight, This flight, the spawn or this freeze, it directly affects your gut motility.

You get cramping, urgency, constipation. Your have this dependence upon this cycle that you've learned And so now your stress signaling is in this immediate response pattern that's literally changing your digestive function.

And four, the people with higher ACE scores through childhood adversity, complex trauma, we call a sensitized nervous system. And that just means you have hypervigilance, hypersensitivity, and your immune system is already active.

It's more hyperactive than usual. So it's activating this gut inflammation and it having these two separate conversations going on. The thing that I want to point out next is the shame layer of this.

Naming what it is, okay? There's this peeling back the layers of, you've got this problem going on in your body and the pain and it thinks that it's isolating you now from being able to participate in different social responsibilities.

And so there's correlation now between your gut issue and shame. and not just shame about having IBS but how it's actually living in the body and that thread that the nervous system is now interpreting and associating shame with the Ibs and I had a client who who started some new medication for the first time in five years and made it through the entire dinner with friends without having to apologize and for her gut doing what it's gonna do.

And she didn't have to interrupt herself to manage the reflex episode or excuse her for gas. She was emotional about it because she hadn't realized until that moment that, wow, there's shame that I'm carrying into every single meal, every situation.

And that stress is now or that shame is not a stress output. So that the chronic pain in the problem is the input the signaling and then the interpretation.

Now we're having this output of of this You know, the stress is weighing in on the shame output and now it's just feeding the cycle. And so now how you break that cycle, you know and it is not going to just be, medication is band-aid approach.

It's got to have the nervous system has to happen new input to reinterpret and interrupt that looping. of the well-myelinated pathways where it's learned that stress is going to be the output.

But now we have to disrupt so that we can have a different output and we start seeing some change. And that happens when we meet the nervous system in safety.

Not just believing it, not having a mindset about it but the neuroscience of what changes these symptoms. And so when we're working with IBS from a nervous system perspective, we are not just trying to fix the gut.

We are working on the entire system, the holistic whole body, every system. how it's creating safety around this interoception, which is the body's internal sense of safety.

And when we can rebuild the vagus nerve function in very incremental doses that is good for your bio-individual physiology, we then address the anxiety and shame layers that are present.

Beyond that, build this overall capacity so that the nervous system isn't running on threat all the time. Then we get into neuropathy, okay? The neuopathy around this is just the Nervous System's numbness, the tingling, burning, pins and needles.

It can come from chronic stress, it can from diabetes, from injury. It's one of those symptoms that allopathic medicine often looks at and says, well, the nerve is damaged or you need to go to a specialist for that.

And there's not much else we can do. But here's what I want you to hold on. Here's my perspective is that Even when the peripheral nerves are damaged, the brain can still learn to interpret the signals that remain.

Neuropathy and Sensory Remapping

So we can't always reverse the pathology, but we CAN make the brains smarter towards building a new input. And when we do that, we interrupt the loop for the same kind of output.

Really awesome. And so I want to share a little case with you because it demonstrates this importance of what I'm talking about. And I was teaching a class as I do often in the rewire lab.

During one of the breaks, the student said, hey, he was really skeptical about it at first. He said hey I have peripheral neuropathy all the way up to the tibial plateau and it means that the toes, feet, ankles, and lower legs were completely numb.

And he asked like, what do I do? I'm noticing some things. I try to do the pencil pushups where you hold the pen and you do conversions for the eyes and things like that and doing the vision training that we do.

And so as he was bringing the Pen closer and closer to keep it in focus, we did it about three times and mid step afterwards, he's like I can feel my feet now.

And it was so great for him to put that connection between the vision training, even though, you know, sometimes you look at the feet and you're like, oh, we need to fix the feat.

But there's other systems at play with why the feats are having that issue. So the shin, the ankle, and the foot, were then functioning. He had sensitivities back with one drill.

And it's this neurological explanation that results from the neuro drills we do in my program. And I just love sharing that because it happens because you can give your brain clear signaling and the brain is craving clear interpretation, clear cues from in doing the neuro drill, we cleared up the static, the noise, all the extras interpretations, and we're able to then help the brain interpret accurately the predictions.

And so I love bringing it home to this Hebrew word called Kharash. And it means being made new. And in Lamentations 3.23, it says, your mercies are new every morning.

They're not rebuilt from scratch. they're made in the middle of that moment. That's a perfect picture of neuroplasticity. grow new nerves, but we're growing new neural pathways that can then say, Hey, let me look at this again.

Let me reinterpret this. And so this approach to neuropathy is, you know, whether how to, like I said before, out of chronic stress or injury or whatever the problem is.

you want to make sure that you work first on body mapping, on that sensory remapping, the hand and the foot, and vision and foot. The gentle vibrations, sensory input, light pressure, textures, ranges of safety that our body can then give our brain this reinterpretation to be more accurate.

And so then through that you have joint mobility and range of motion and this proprioceptive signaling to the brain that gives you a clear map of where you are in space.

And through that, now you're touching all different kinds of things, you are touching balance and vestibular work. And so the brain is this integrated system that you don't always fix the feet by working on the feed.

And for this stress-inducing neuropathy specifically, which is more common than people realize, you're also looking at the autonomic nervous system. You're regulating the thalamus, the amygdala, at brainstem.

you creating safety. And because when the body is in this high threat state, The nervous will then produce all kinds of unusual sensory outputs. including neuropathy.

And so as a practitioner, I work with clients to on their sharp inputs and their intense temperatures and working further away from the heart and then gradually working towards the And now there's this, you know, when you're working with restless leg syndrome, that crawling, uncomfortable, I have to move my legs feeling, the shows are right when they're trying to fall asleep.

It's maddening. who have it know what I'm talking about and explain to someone, they're like, what are you saying? And they don't understand. But there's a few neurological things that contribute to Restless Leg Syndrome.

Sensory dysregulation is one, and dopamine imbalance is another. And this autonomic over-activation And so we can look at things like inhibition neurotools to calm down all the signaling.

We can also look Gaba. So Gava is like the brakes, right? So dopamine, think of it as like dopamine is foot to the gas puddle and Gawa is now the brake.

so, we're driving this excitability and this motivations activation and then Gapa comes in and it's like, wait, pause. And so it inhibits these neurotransmitters that tell the system, okay, we're safe.

You can wind down now. And the restless leg very often comes from this GABA deficiency. Because the brake isn't working well enough, the systems can't shift into genuine rest, especially when you're trying to fall asleep and down-regulate.

Sometimes there's also this sleep-related dopamine spikes, it creates this excitability in the spinal cord itself. It's actually how restless leg syndrome gets generated.

And so there's this related phenomenon called myco, I don't know how to say this, mycoclinic jerks. So you have this big muscle twitches that happens right when you're falling asleep.

And you swear you suddenly lurch when you're stepping off a curve or something like that. And so that happens when the brain is starting to sleep, but the muscles haven't caught up yet.

The muscles are then activating, even when their brain going off of offline and getting the system more into parasympathetic before bed is going to help this movement toward rest and digest.

reduce those symptoms. So practically, here's what I like to work on with my clients and versus leg syndrome is the sensory mapping this gentle proprioception right before bed.

It's not an exercise. it's Not stimulating. is just a quiet awareness in this body mapping. I join that in with a long exhale, sometimes a psychological sigh.

Restless Legs, Sleep, and Downregulation

It's just this activating this parasympathetic system to start applying the brakes. And you can also implement a wind down practice. Maybe you have a washing of the face and all your oil that you put on, journaling, reading God's word, listening to soft music.

And so whatever helps clear that cognitive load for the day is gonna help that wind-down. Then also emotional

processing. If there's something that maybe specifically wound you up that day, and you haven't yet processed it, that unprocessed stress is a sympathetic driver.

So some things you could do is you can take a note, take note on your phone, taking note in your journal and just write it down and say, I'm going to process this tomorrow, but right now I am going If all else fails, I would suggest as a functional medicine doctor to take GABA.

It's an oral supplement. You can take it. I have some links in my store. And it's worth exploring for sure. To get into that wind down practice of whatever yours looks like, I want to share this scripture with you too because Psalm 4a is so powerful and it says, I will lie down in peace and sleep.

And so when you have Rex's leg syndrome or IBS or things like that, oh man, it sure doesn't feel like peace when But as you start working with your systems in your body, not against, to introduce these new safety signaling and these body mapping and this driving parasympathetic, you'll be able to then discover that piece is ready and available for you.

I love sharing that encouragement with every one of my clients that this is worth aiming for. This is what, what is it costing you to not discover this, to pick up these neuro skills.

And so this neurological process, it is discoverable. It is for you. There's this even with neck pain, this over mobilization of the cervical spine where vertebrae suddenly shift.

There's nerve roots in the spinal column, the muscles kicked in, kick in and now there's this protective mechanism going on and there is tightening and bracing.

Now you have all this fluid going on and you difficulty with lymphatic drainage and there's now this brain fog and shoulder pain and now you're starting to see how there is, it's not dramatic but it is a very visible and accurate awakening that the body is connected and inside nervous system training we can Discover the keys to unlocking.

Hey, do this pelvic tilt because it's going to help this other area. Do this diaphragm breathing, get the rib cage moving, Get the pressure off the neck.

And so As a practitioner, I'm able to develop this blueprint for your physiology that is based on the symptoms and the rehab areas that we need to work on and start discovering what areas are awake and are ready.

Neck Pain, Safety, and Whole-Body Rewiring

Let's move that needle first and starting introducing slowly at your pace these areas They're frantically looking for safety because the body is made to protect you, to keep you alive.

But would you have these IBS and restless leg syndrome and this neuropathy and the neck won't cooperate and gut won' cooperate. Now you can't sleep, right?

Now, you've all these different outputs that the nervous system is carrying every day. And it's doing its best job to provide you what it has been trained to do.

And sometimes what has being trained do is unhelpful. When we can rewire that and introduce building safety in a different way and building capacity and learning to work with the system to end how the body is chronically fighting against itself perhaps.

now we can uncover true wellness at the root. And it's a beautiful experience. We have assessment tools where you can see with your own eyes and your feeling in your in own body how this shifts and it is incredible.

I hope this landed for you. Please stay tuned for our next episodes. Thank you, Dr. Oliver here.