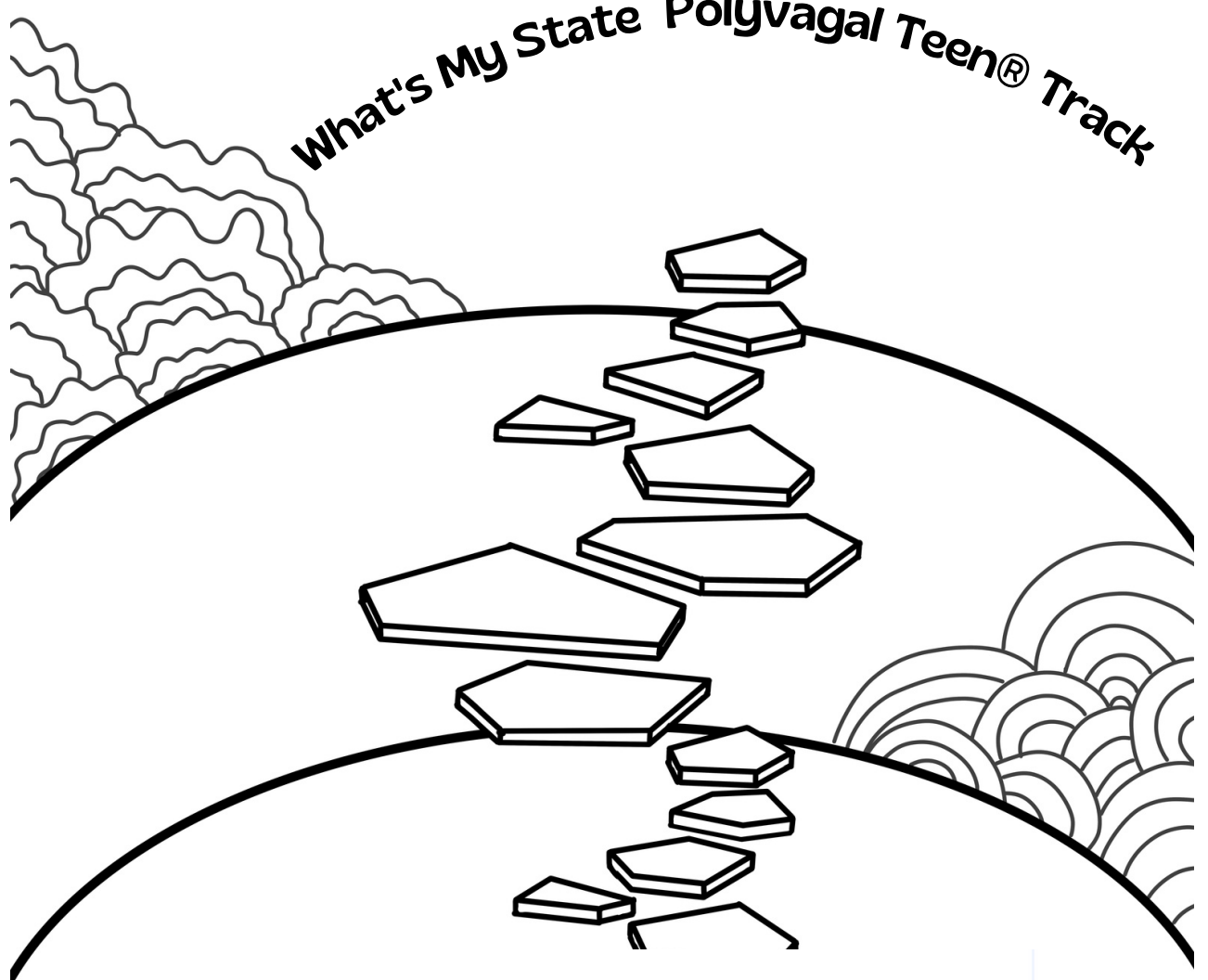


# What's My State Polyvagal Teen® Track



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YOUR GUIDE**

# The Polyvagal Teen® Track

The Polyvagal teen track is used to help identify the different states and emphasise how it is perfectly normal throughout the day to move through the different states not just through to a completely different states but also through different depths of the states.

We humans are constantly stimulated by internal and external factors that cause us to dip in and out of the different states along the Polyvagal Teen® track. Sometimes we can jog comfortably weaving in and out of the different states. Sometimes we might crawl or walk through one state to another.

There's times the brakes are off and we can sprint through different states as quick as a flash or other times we can get stuck in one state and stay there longer than is needed or helpful. These different states impact our thoughts emotions and behaviours in different ways - to understand yourself better and to help build stronger relationships it is helpful to explore how your state can impact your different experiences and behaviours.

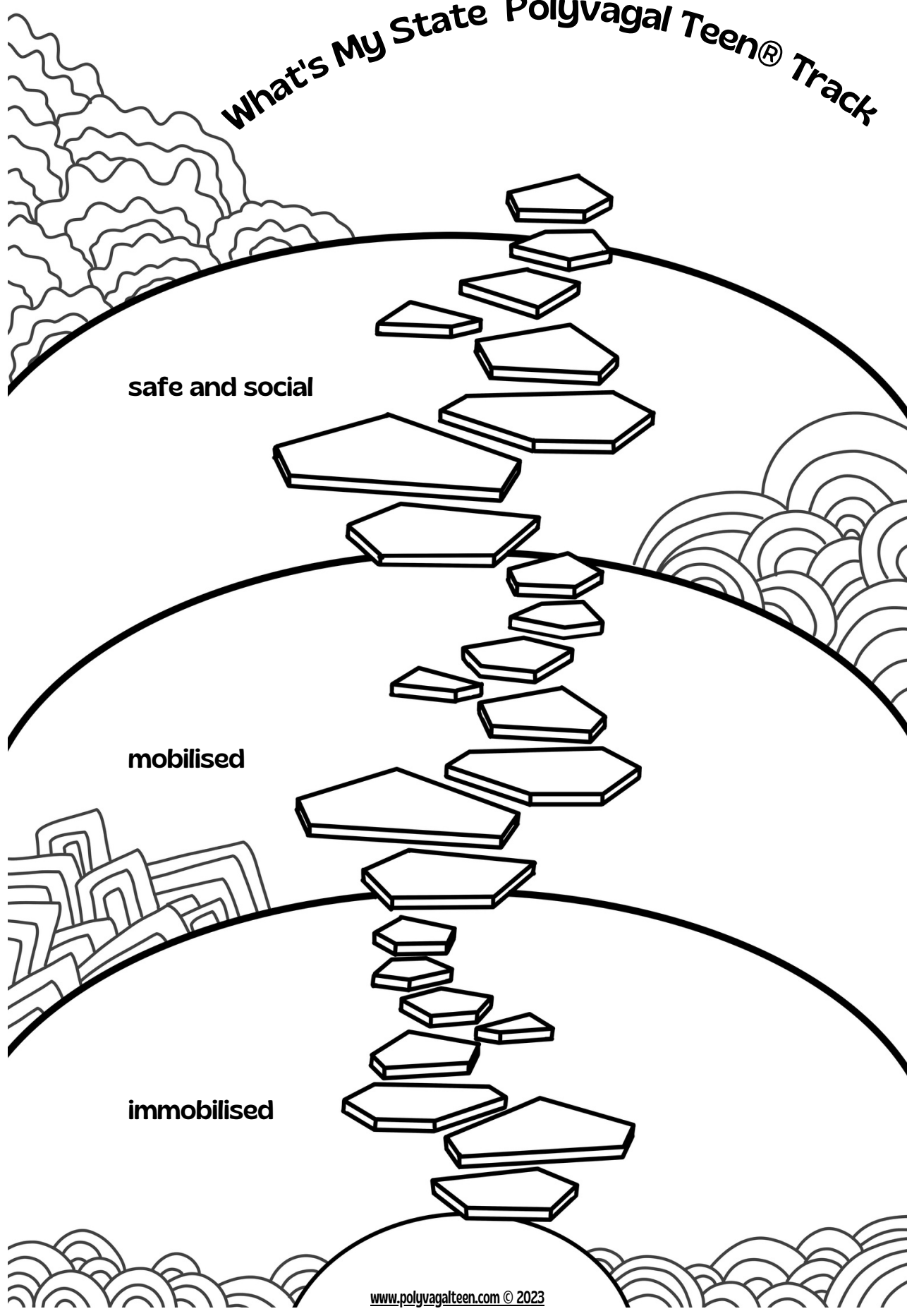
An example I often use to help explain is the "frenemy" - Friendships can easily turn into frenemies, leaving you shifting between different states of connection. In a safe and social state, you may feel comfortable trusting the person and feel relaxed around them. This may show in your behaviour, your thoughts or be as subtle as showing in your tone of voice or body language.

However, this can quickly shift when something subtle changes in their behavior or tone. This can activate an immediate feeling of threat that can lead to a mobilisation state where your emotions become more intense and your behavior shifts in response. You may snap at the person or become frustrated, or you may have critical thoughts emerging and as pulling back as it doesn't feel "safe". I call this the "back and forth dance of safety and rejection"

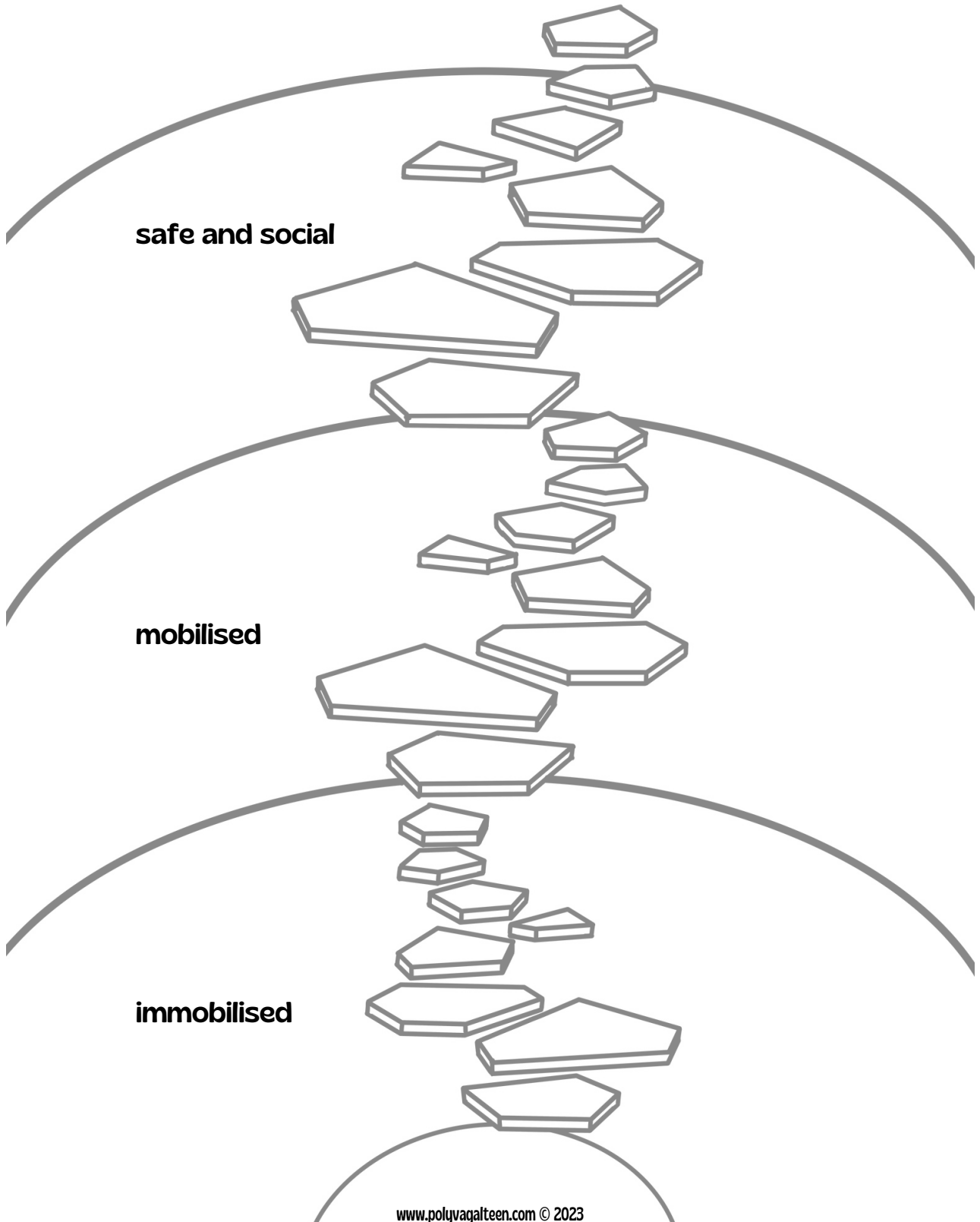
It doesn't mean that the relationship is over as it can quickly shift back into a safe and social space with the next positive encounter.

## **"moving through the different states"**

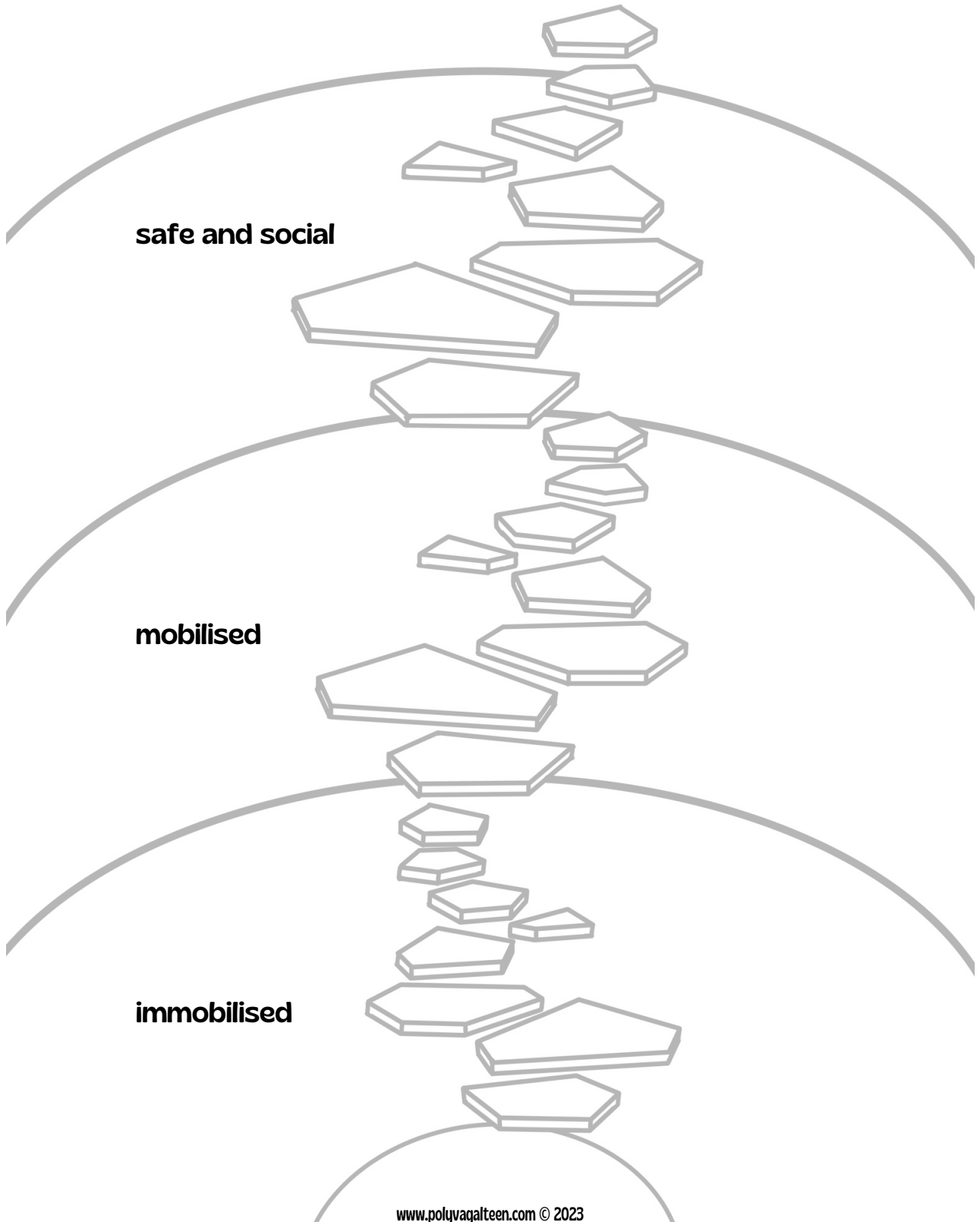
# What's My State Polyvagal Teen® Track



# What's My State Polyvagal Teen® Track



# What's My State Polyvagal Teen® Track



This worksheet is designed to help you better understand the differences between safe & social, mobilise and immobilise states. Each section provides questions and reflections to guide your understanding.

### **Safe & Social State Questions:**

- What does feeling safe feel like for me?
- How do I recognize when I am in a state of safety?
- What behaviors do I exhibit when feeling safe?

#### Reflections:

- When feeling safe, I can...
- In this state, my emotions are...
- When feeling secure, my behavior changes because...

### **Mobilise State Questions:**

- What does mobilise look like for me?
- How can I tell if I'm entering a mobilised state?
- How does this state differ from others?

#### Reflections:

- When mobilized, my body usually feels like ....
- My emotions become more intense and amplified in this state ....
- My behavior naturally leans towards ....

### **Immobilise State Questions:**

- What does social immobilize look like for me?
- How can I tell if I'm in this state?
- What behaviors do I exhibit when social immobilized?

#### Reflections:

- When socially immobilised, I may notice myself ...
- In this state, my emotions often feel like...
- When socially immobile, my behavior changes because of...

## Ways Of Working With The Polyvagal Teen Track®.

- Identify and colour in the different states along the Polyvagal Teen® track. Adding doodles or words that come up for you.
- Create a collage using the worksheet & any arts and crafts materials you have - cut out magazines tir different textures to illustrate your experience of sensations.
- You could also highlight how quickly or slowly you may move between different connection states throughout your hour, day or week.
- The track can be used to place - figures, buttons, stones or anything to represent a challenge, a situation, a relationship, a person or place. - the position on the track can be explored further. Group or family dynamics can be explored this way. placing different figures to represent friendships. relationships with people, places or "things".
- Traveling along the track by physically moving the pieces provides a sense of autonomy and helps one to experience that "energy can be shifted" and "states can be changed". The act of allowing someone to move through their states can be profoundly impactful.
- By placing figures on the track, one can explore any obstacles and challenges they encounter that may affect their emotional state or prevent them from moving forward. Through exercising how to remove these obstacles, physically moving the figures off the track can help emphasize this sense of movement.



An example of The Polyvagal Teen® Track used with figures to represent my journey of states during a challenging situation

## Some ideas for reflection

- Reflect on how your state can impact your thoughts, emotions and behaviours.
- What state do you need to be in right now? What state do you want to be in right now? Do they match? If they don't - how is it for you to have this mismatch?
- Are there any state you have been unable to move out of? Been stuck there longer than is helpful? Is this ok for you or do you want something to change?
- Consider ways to respond when you feel like you are being pulled between different states e.g. when shifting from a safe to mobilisation state or vice versa.
- Explore real relationships by thinking about friends who may be "frenemies" and how this relationship can lead to shifts in your states - consider what are the circumstances and the subtle signs that lead to this shift . Take time to reflect on it so that you can better engage with these people.
- Explore any other challenges in the same way that may come up for you.



## **Using The Polyvagal Teen Track® to Develop Your Somatic Experience**

A person's "somatic experience" is the state or quality of being aware of one's body, its sensations and environment through the five senses. It generally refers to a person's conscious awareness and experience of their physical body, including posture, movement and internal physical processes such as digestion and respiration.

A person with internal somatic experience is often referred to as an "interoceptive" or a "body-aware" individual. An interoceptive uses their body's sensations and signals to better understand their emotions, reactions and behaviour. They have a heightened awareness of their physical environment and the effect it has on them, enabling them to interact more effectively with the external world.

Peter Levine developed Somatic Experiencing® a body-centered approach to treating PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) that, rather than focusing only on thoughts or emotions associated with a traumatic event, expands to include the natural bodily (somatic) responses.

The Polyvagal Teen Track® can support you to explore your somatic experience, helping you to be more mindful of your body, become aware of emotions and physical sensations, develop emotional intelligence and ultimately build better relationships with yourself, others, and the environment.

# Using The Polyvagal Teen Track® to Develop Your Somatic Experience

## Somatic Experience Worksheet

- **What is somatic experience?** Somatic experience is the state or quality of being aware of one's body, its sensations and environment through the eight senses. It refers to a person's conscious and unconscious awareness and experience of their physical body, including posture, movement and internal physical processes such as digestion and respiration.
- **Who is an interoceptive or body-aware individual?** An interoceptive is a person with internal somatic experience; they use their body's sensations and signals to better understand their emotions, reactions and behaviour. They have a heightened awareness of their physical environment and the effect it has on them, enabling them to interact more effectively with the external world.
- **What is Somatic Experiencing®?** Somatic Experiencing® was developed by Peter Levine, it is a body-centered approach to treating PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) that rather than focusing only on thoughts or emotions associated with a traumatic event, expands to include the natural bodily (somatic) responses.
- **What can The Polyvagal Teen Track® do for you?** The Polyvagal Teen Track® helps you explore your somatic experience so that you can become mindful of your body, become aware of emotions and physical sensations, develop emotional intelligence and ultimately build better relationships with yourself, others, and the environment.

# Worksheet on Exploring Friendships and Their Emotional Impact

## Introduction

The What's Your State card deck can be used to explore friendships and group relationships.

Friendships can play an important role in our lives - especially for teenagers, impacting our emotional state both positively and negatively. This worksheet will help you explore the relationships in your life, identify any areas of concern, and manage any possible negative impacts.

## Questions to Ask Yourself

- How does spending time with my friends make me feel? Do I feel better or worse after being around them?
- Are my friendships based around shared values?
- Does this person show genuine respect for my opinions and feelings?
- Is this person a good listener? Do they understand where I'm coming from?
- Do we often find ourselves competing with each other instead of encouraging each other?
- Are there any times when I feel like this person is trying to manipulate me or getting something out of us?
- Do they provide the support and encouragement that I need when things aren't going well or when I'm feeling down?
- Am I comfortable enough with them to open up about my feelings without fear of judgement or criticism?

## Reflection: What's Next?

Think about how you answered the questions above and assess what type of relationship you have with your friends. If it's more likely that some friendships are not helpful or beneficial for your emotional wellbeing, decide what steps you need to take to protect yourself from their influence and behaviors that might be toxic or unhelpful for your growth or sanity even.

**the metaphor of the "track"  
to describe the hierarchy of  
states in Polyvagal theory  
was created by  
Yasmin Shaheen-Zaffar -  
creator of Polyvagal Teen®  
BACP Registered counsellor  
in the U.K**

**it would be amazing & polite  
if you are able to credit her  
in any resources or training  
you provide when using this  
metaphor.**