

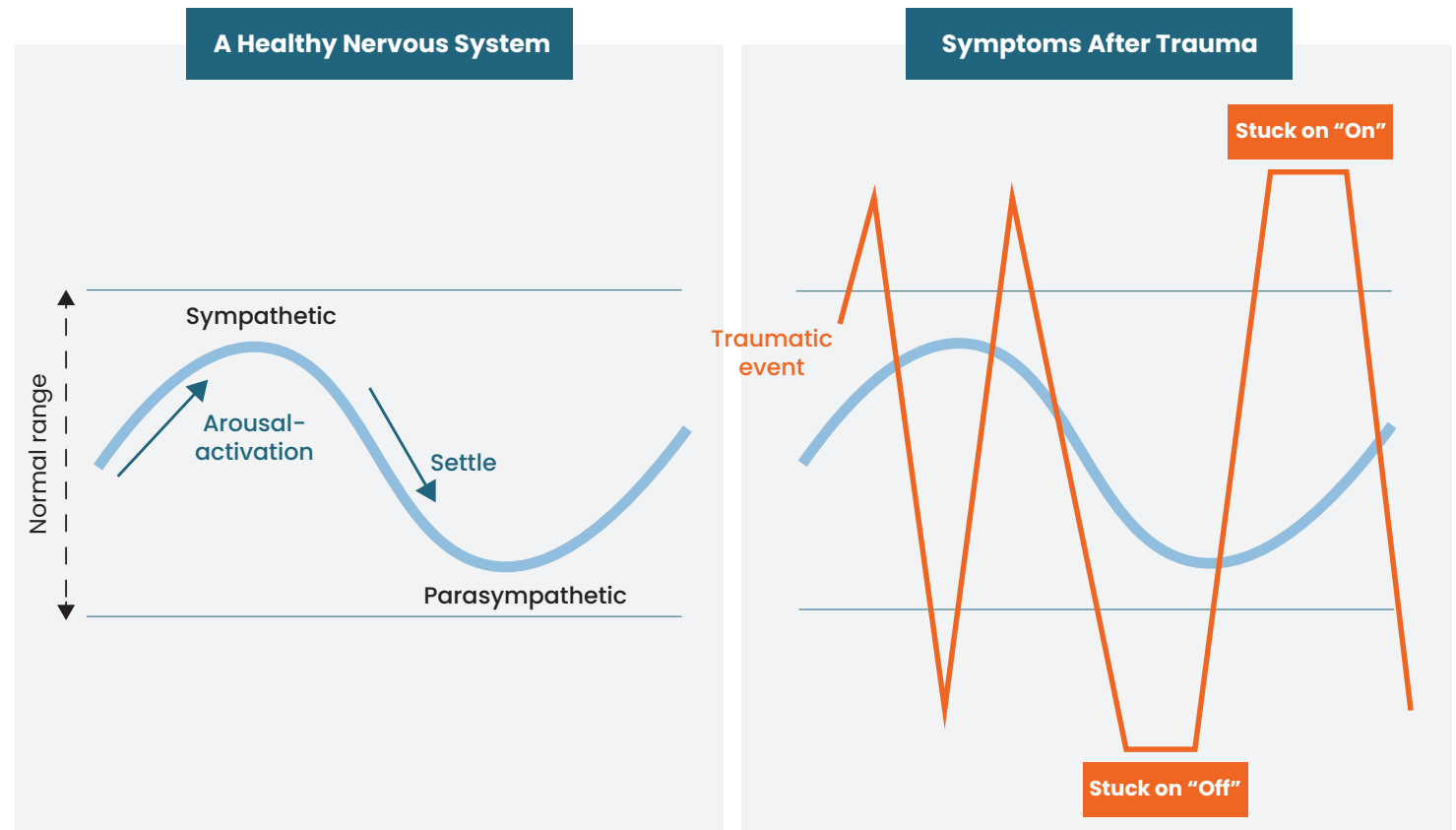
Trauma-Informed Care

The effects of trauma on the nervous system

On the left: This diagram shows a normal daily rhythm of our nervous system: our alert system rises for challenges (sympathetic nervous system) and then settles back to baseline (parasympathetic nervous system).

On the right: After trauma, these ups and downs can swing and/or get stuck **ON** (panic, anger, racing thoughts, poor sleep) or **OFF** (numb, shut down, flat, disconnected).

These are survival responses, the body's automatic *protect-me* settings.



When you know how your nervous system works, you can spot your state and nudge back toward your window of tolerance.

- At times when you're stuck "ON", you might try things like loosening big muscles (e.g. jaw/shoulders) with a quick stretch, dim lights/reduce noise, slow your breathing, or take a slow walk.
- If you're stuck "OFF", you might use strategies like standing up and moving (brisk walk, stairs), brighten light/fresh air, sip a warm drink, play upbeat music, or talk to a supportive person.