



The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.

Judith Lewis Herman, Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror

PTSD is a whole-body tragedy, an integral human event of enormous proportions with massive repercussions.

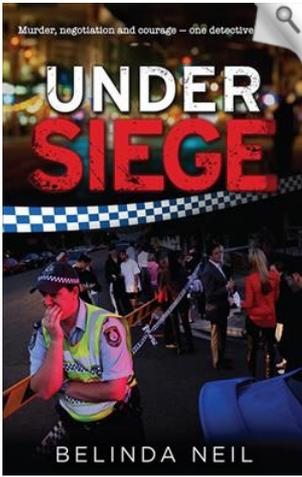
Susan Pease Banitt



PTSD and cerebellum exercise.

According to the Australian organisation beyondblue, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a particular set of reactions that can develop in people who have been through a traumatic event which threatened their life or safety, or that of others around them. This could be a car or other serious accident, physical or sexual assault, war or torture, or disasters such as bushfires or floods. As a result, the person experiences feelings of intense fear, helplessness or horror.¹ Although not everyone exposed to a traumatic event will develop PTSD, it is a debilitating condition that will affect 5- 10% of the general population at some point in their lives.²

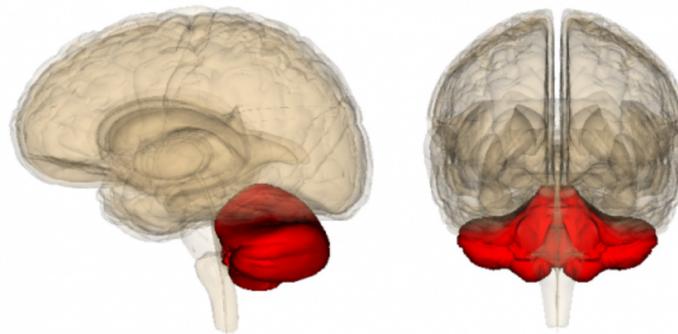
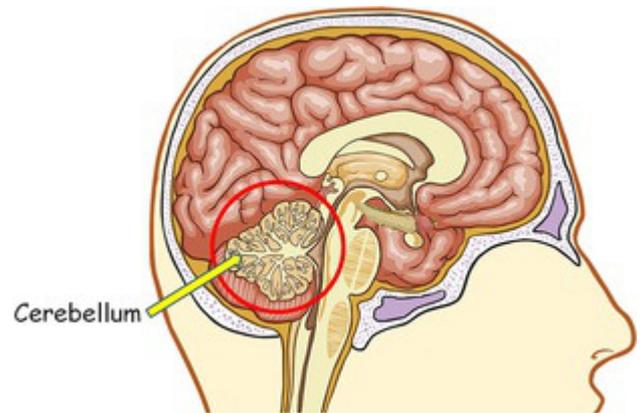
In our work, we often meet people who have been diagnosed with PTSD and are working with health professionals to cope with the condition. Now I have to say we are not specialists in this field and it's not our role to diagnose, but we are approached by those who are seeking additional help or have not received the result they want from mainstream treatments. Sometimes the trauma is very deep seated and goes back decades, or even into a past life. But I do not want to dwell on the negative aspects of PTSD or retell the horror stories we have heard from clients. I want to bring to your awareness the practise of cerebellum exercises to help manage and relieve symptoms of PTSD...plus other possible benefits.



I first became aware of the practise after reading the book *Under Siege* by Belinda Neil, originally published in 2014.³ Belinda entered the New South Wales police force at age 19. Belinda's police career included undercover work, homicide investigation and hostage negotiation, including counter terrorism. Understandably, the job took it's toll on Belinda who eventually developed all the signs of PTSD and the breakdown of her marriage. Belinda now speaks about her experiences and is a strong advocate of raising awareness about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I highly recommend Belinda's book, but warn you the content can be confronting as the crime scenes are described in graphic detail. My point is that here is a person who has been through it, so to speak, and is worth listening to.

So what is the cerebellum?

The cerebellum (Latin for "little brain") is a major feature of the hindbrain of all vertebrates. In humans, the cerebellum plays an important role in motor control, and it may also be involved in some cognitive functions such as attention and language as well as in regulating fear and pleasure responses,⁴ but its movement-related functions are the most solidly established. The human cerebellum does not initiate movement, but contributes to coordination, precision, and accurate timing. It receives input from sensory systems of the spinal cord and from other parts of the brain, and integrates these inputs to fine-tune motor activity.⁵ Cerebellar damage produces disorders in fine movement, equilibrium, posture, and motor learning in humans.⁵ Experts now believe that the cerebellum strongly influences our emotional states of mind. New evidence suggests that the cerebellum has structural and functional abnormalities in psychiatric disorders.⁶



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So why exercise the cerebellum?

In a nutshell, health professionals are achieving good results alleviating the symptoms of PTSD through simple repetitive exercises involving balance and co-ordination. For example, learning a new skill such as juggling, is one type of exercise being utilised. But it can be as simple as balancing on one leg with your eyes closed.

Even if you do not suffer from PTSD, this type of exercise can have benefits for anyone. It's not clear how or why this occurs as the cerebellum is not fully understood, but I suggest that exercising the cerebellum offers an opportunity to create new neural pathways. In the case of PTSD sufferers, perhaps this assists in repairing the old traumatised network that keeps looping around, recreating experiences of past events with all the physical and emotional sensations. For those of us not experiencing PTSD, perhaps it's simply a case of exercising the cerebellum to support a healthy brain and thereby a healthy emotional state?

My suggestion is get active and practise the cerebellum exercise as demonstrated by Belinda Neil. It's very simple and only takes five minutes twice a day. Chris and I have been doing it and we have nicknamed it the toe tapping exercise as we keep wobbling around needing to regain our balance. You will understand what I mean when you watch Belinda's YouTube demonstration and try it for yourself. So whether you have been diagnosed with PTSD or not, try exercising your brain in a different way, and let us know what changes for you.

Putative Cerebellum Exercise 1 for PTSD by Belinda Neil.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbTa9SUqrCU>

Further research into the use of Putative Cerebellum Exercises to help Manage and Relieve Symptoms of PTSD by Belinda Neil; 2 August 2015.

<http://www.belindaneil.com.au/docs/PutativeCerebellumExerciseStudy2015.pdf>

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