



Hoopment and

Hoopmunication

at Work



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With much gratitude to all the individuals who provide support to other individuals, so that we may all receive, as we give...And appreciation for remembering to give to ourselves: self-care.

More books by the author:

The Pressure Rainbow (2014)

Your Body is a Spaceship! (2014)

*Exploring Movement Through
Hoopment* (2018)

Hoopmunication (2018)

They are available in print & pdf
format via the
blurb.com bookstore.

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Hoopment and Hoopmunication at Work

Simple Self-Care and
Visual Communication

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Hoopment: the practice of mindfully allowing mini-hoops to gently guide our bodies, intuitively, through space.

Hoopmunication:
a non-verbal system that communicates perceived pressure/stress via colors; and the need for space/proximity via hoop diameter.



32x 36in OR 8x 26in + 8x 32in + 8x 38in + 8x 48in



Our Tools: Mini-Hoops

Our "guides" are made out of HDPE or poly-pro tubing, 1/2-inch diameter; connected with 3/8th-inch diameter tubing.

Bulk material is inexpensive, with 100-feet of tubing yielding approximately 32 hoops of equal size; or 32 hoops in 4 different diameters.

Each hoop is easily joined by using heat to expand the ends of the hoop (heating pad/blow dryer/space heater/hot water); and cold to contract the 3-4 inch length connector pieces.

The hoops are wrapped with duct tape and electrical tape for grip and weight.

Hoop-making may be:

- a fun team-building project
- an educational project for teens & older children
- a mindfulness meditation practice
- an affordable way to support self-care, anywhere

Hoopment at Work

Our mini-hoops are easily used.

Start with one, grasped in both hands, and move it around.

Stretch with it, in every direction imaginable--but gently--mindfully--so we don't push ourselves beyond what is comfortable for our connective tissues.

We can use our hoops to bring our hands behind our backs and open our chests; tight pectoral muscles directly contribute to neck, shoulder, and back tension.

Simply passing the hoop to ourselves, mid-waist, from front to back, may help ease shoulder tension; and may easily be accomplished at a standing desk; even while on a call, with a headset.

Non-smokers often fail to take breaks; Hoopment breaks are an excellent way to increase systemic blood-flow via gentle movement, and counter repetitive movement-related tension.

We always want to maintain our hoop(s) within our sphere.

Our sphere is the space we take up when we stretch out our arms, with hoops in hand--the far ends of the hoops represent the edge of the sphere, in all directions.

That shows us the amount of space we require to move freely; recognizing our space needs, and respecting the spheres of others, is important--especially in regard to working with others.

When we draw the hoop(s) in toward our bodies (centers), we are contracting; when we extend out from our centers, we are expanding.

As we expand and contract with the hoops, in every direction imaginable, we are gently mobilizing our connective tissues, lubricating our joints, and reminding our bodies that they can do other motions (than just the repetitive work/play movements).

A more mobile body results in less tension; less tension=less pressure on our nerves; less nerve pressure=less pain. Self-care is a must.

To ensure we maintain our hoop(s) within our spheres, we want to keep a hold of them--not a tight grip--a loose grip, so the hoop may move, but not go flying out of our hands.

Hooping is when the **hoop** moves around us, i.e. a limb; or our waist like a big hula hoop.

Hoopment is when **we** move around the hoop.

By maintaining a hold of the hoop as we move it around our bodies, the hoop guides us to move through space in a circular motion, following the same planes (vertical, diagonal, horizontal) as the hoop is moving through--in essence, mobilizing our bodies in a way that our connective tissues 'prefer' to move.

The gentle movements and stretching help our bodies move fluids; oxygen is carried through our bloodstream. Getting enough oxygen to our tissues is necessary for accurate nerve communication.

Lack of oxygen may result in tension, due to danger signals--*perhaps warning the body that O2 levels are low*...so our perception seeks out the dangers to validate our nervous system response. *Often it finds *something* for sure.*

Perception is important.

How we interpret the data that our nervous systems are processing, affects how we interact with the people around us.

In work environments, we often have to interact with a variety of personalities, with just as varied conditioning--resulting in an assortment of communication styles and cognitive diversity.

When there are high levels of tension in our bodies, whether due to unpleasant stress or pleasant excitement, our tissues experience compression--which, over time, reduces circulation. Lack of circulation=lack of oxygen.

Sustained levels of high tension may result in bodily discomfort, as nerves that run through tissues are compressed, and send danger signals; which directs our perception to seek out the "problem(s)," outside of ourselves.

Tension, combined with tissues adhered to each other from repetitive motion, often results in bodily discomfort--which leads to more tension, as the body armors itself for protection from an external attacker.

Often, it is our thoughts *alone* setting off protective mode.

Hoopment may help the body reset and clear the mind.

Paired with conscious breathing, Hoopment is an effective meditative exercise.

It may be practiced while seated.

It may be practiced while standing.

It may be practiced while lying down.

It may be practiced indoors or outdoors.

It requires minimal space (small sphere vs. large sphere practice).

It may be practiced while walking; increasing the benefit of the walk by adding upper body and destabilizing movements.

It may be practiced for as little as a few seconds, to a few minutes...even hours, without injury.

It may help clear the mind, being a thoughtless, yet mindful meditation--requiring presence.

It may help prevent workplace injuries and burnout, via providing varied, gentle movement, that is stimulating, fun, and simple.

It may be practiced practically anywhere there is space for our spheres, where movement is welcome; any time it may be respectfully appropriate.

Hoopment may be practiced independently, or in groups.

Group Hoopment can be useful as a team-building exercise, and may help increase the sense of community culture in the workplace.

Mini-hoops may also be used for self-massage; and for 'touch-less' partner massages (using the hoops as massage tools, consensual tapotement to the upper back).

Fostering self-care in the workplace may help ensure longevity of both lives and careers.

Hoopment is self-care that is simple, practical, and affordable; and requires minimal guidance.

Video guidance is available at TheHoopment.us.

Corporate Self-Care workshops are available, in Texas; (up to) 4 people learn how make the hoops, as well as how to guide their co-workers through a basic self-care routine.

More information available at TeachingFamilyMassage.com.

Hoopmunication at Work

The simplest way to apply Hoopmunication is to express the need for distance/proximity, via hoop diameter.

The XL-size hoop (48 inches) indicates "Do not disturb."

If a person leaves their workstation wearing the XL-size hoop, it means, "Leave me alone; I may still be working," minimizing the risk of an interrupted train of thought--and thus reducing interpersonal friction.

The Large-size hoop (38 inches) expresses the need for space (sphere to sphere okay; do not intersect spheres), while still welcoming interaction.

The Medium-size hoop (32 inches) indicates that interaction is welcome, as well as proximity; spheres may intersect, but not merge.

The Small-size hoop expresses that respectful physical contact (merging) is permitted, such as a hand-shake or a pat on the back.

If the Small-size hoop is not present, hands-off!
Keep your center to your self.

A simple Hoopmunication hoop set does not require specific colors; any colorful duct tape will do, along with electrical tape for added weight.

To express the perception of pressure on our bodies, we add in the Pressure Rainbow.

The Pressure Rainbow is a gage, that ranges from Blue to Red, representing increasing levels of perceived pressure.

To our nervous systems and our bodies, pressure is pressure is pressure. Processing pressure requires resources.

Whether it is deemed "negative" stress because it is unpleasant/undesired or "positive" stress because it is pleasant/preferable, it still amounts to pressure.

If we are **very** excited, happy, thrilled--our resources are still taxed; similarly to when we are feeling anxious, frustrated, or angry.

To express how much pressure our bodies are registering--which may also be observed via breath and heart rates--we associate Blue with very low perceived pressure; and Red with very high perceived pressure.

The Pressure Rainbow

Originally, the Pressure Rainbow was devised as a communication tool, to assist with expressing perceived pressure during a massage session; to better understand how the client's body is receiving pressure, each session.

It was clear that the same gage could be used to communicate perceived internal/emotional pressure.

Increase pressure, and our heart and breath rates increase.

When we reach an elevated enough level, our protective modes engage; shifting our perception to look for potential threats.

Cardio-vascular exercise is an excellent way to condition our bodies to pressure; by choosing to elevate our heart and breath rates via an activity in a safe environment.

We notice our conditioning improving, as we have to work harder to maintain an elevated heart rate; and our recovery times get shorter.

When our bodies are not given an opportunity for physical release of tension, we stay in a state of emergency; eventually we feel like poop.

We call that the Brown zone--our spaceships are rusted, stuck, immobile--which means we need maintenance.

Self-care and clear communication help prevent the Brown zone.

Clearly expressing our needs and boundaries results in more efficient use of bio-available resources, via preventing unnecessary anxiety that may be depleting to our immune systems.

There are a finite amount of energetic resources available to our systems.

If the protective system is engaged, then our self-repair system is suppressed. This is how our ancestors survived, from caves to trees to huts; it provides our bodies with the energy needed to fight or flight.

Once the action is done, our nervous system disengages from protective mode; restoring resources to our immune systems.

It is easier to communicate clearly in the Blue-Green, Green, & Green-Gold zones; partly because our nervous systems are taking in data objectively, vs. actively seeking a problem, as they do in the Yellow, Orange, & Red zones.

The Pressure Rainbow spectrum, for work purposes, ranges from Blue to Red.

For self-awareness purposes, it ranges from Dark Blue to Brown.

Dark Blue is when we are asleep. Our bodies are in deep restoration mode, rebuilding and repairing while there is the maximum amount of resources available.

Blue we are awake, but very restive; our heart rates and breath rates are slow and low. If we speak, our volume is soft, the timbre is deep...because we are relaxed/not engaging.

As we transition to Blue-Green, our heart and breath rates are picking up; we are engaging more...getting more blood flow to our brains...more alert and perhaps more talkative, yet super mellow.

The Green zone feels alert and present. It is a pleasant state; data is interpreted objectively.

The Green-Gold zone feels like building excitement; we feel super charged, as we are building toward the active challenge state of Gold. We may be in a planning/development stage, when we feel Green-Gold.

The Gold zone is the chosen challenge zone.

Chosen challenges are important, because they push our bodies to experience increased pressure loads, in a "safe" (chosen/consensual) environment.

Chosen challenges condition us to better cope with random obstacles that we stumble across in life. Chosen challenges train us to recover quickly in high pressure situations, so we may more quickly get our wits about ourselves, and more readily be of service if we are needed.

The Gold zone feels like, "WhooooooooHooo!" It feels awesome; it fuels us to accomplish what we set out to do; and it is unsustainable over extended periods--because our resources will be depleted. Rest (Blue) is important for balance.

If we are in the Gold zone for too long, our bodies will escalate into Yellow, warning us that something needs to change. "Chill, buddy!"

Learning to recognize Yellow is important; because the more pressure our bodies perceive, the longer the recovery time. Catching ourselves in yellow saves energy; and our perspectives may be more objective than in Orange/Red.

Think in terms of 1-10 within each zone; catching ourselves at Yellow 2/3...by the time we reach Yellow 5, our bodies will protectively escalate more rapidly toward Orange.

The Orange zone is the early stage of fight/flight; increased heart and breath rates, combined with connective tissue constriction, signal that we must seek out the source of danger.

That can look and feel different from person to person. Some people lash out/attack; some people go within, to the point of self-recrimination.

Ultimately, our nervous systems and bodies do not feel safe. Unless we do what is necessary (express a boundary, remove ourselves from the space, DO THE THING), our nervous systems will escalate into the Red Zone.

That's when some of us "blow our tops" and are literally red in the face; others may go fully non-verbal (selective mutism) and lose their ability to express through words--frustrating all around.

Either way, the Red zone is not useful in a workplace environment; and is preferably avoided. Self-care, self-awareness, and communication help prevent the Red zone.

If we stay in the Red zone for prolonged periods without making the necessary change, we end up in the Brown zone...living at Yellow/Orange elevated HR/BP...not able to rest well due to our engaged protective systems not allowing us to deeply disengage, and redirect resources toward repair...which may result in discomforts/illness.

We have to be honest with ourselves, as soon as we register that we are in the Brown zone; seek assistance from friends, family, or body workers, who help you experience Green, Blue-Green, and Blue. Returning to Green-Gold...a sweet spot.

Sometimes it takes a bit before we register that we are stuck, and need help. That's okay.

The practice of recognizing where we are on the color spectrum helps us to modify as needed, helping to maintain our nervous systems in objective, cooperative, and collaborative states.

Because we are unique individuals with varied conditioning, our self-care tool boxes will be different from each other's. Knowing what works best for ourselves is important; honoring the limits of our bandwidths; respecting the limits and methods of others.

Sometimes, we may learn from each other; objectively observing the tools/coping strategies around us, in action.

Discerning what works for us and what doesn't; and allowing for that which works for others.

The more balanced we feel, the more we enjoy what we are doing, whatever it may be; and the more clearly we can communicate our needs.

The Pressure Rainbow at Work

In combination with the hoop sizes, the colors communicate perceived pressure.

If the hoop is XL, and Blue, we know that individual is calm, but does not want to be disturbed.

If the hoop represents the Gold zone (good luck finding gold tape, black tape with yellow trim works well enough--busy bee!), we know the individual is actively working on a project, and if the hoop size invites proximity, to keep the subject matter related to the project at hand.

If the hoop represents the Green zone, and invites proximity, it is an invitation to be social and speak of subject matters not necessarily related to the current task, or work-centric at all.

If the hoop is Yellow, Orange, or Red, we know the individual is experiencing higher pressure; and may either need space, or assistance, based on hoop size.

If the hoop is XL, then interaction is NOT preferred; but we can provide support by checking in with ourselves, and dialing down to Blue-Green when in proximity to the Yellow/Orange/Red person--this may help reduce perceived pressure.

Reducing perceived pressure is important, because we can be affected by each other's emotional/pressure/energetic states.

If we are at Yellow levels of happy excitement (SQUEE!), we may overwhelm someone who is already in the Orange zone, and push them into Red, regardless of our "positive" energy and "good intentions." It may result in the "squee bubble" bursting...which may not be enjoyable for either individual to experience.

If we see someone expressing that they are under pressure, they need us to self-regulate into a calmer state, which may help their nervous systems self-regulate, in response.

It also lets us know that whatever facial expressions or body language that we may be reading IS NOT INTENDED FOR US nor directed at us; which may help reduce workplace friction (because we are human, and sometimes we unintentionally take s**t personally).

If someone is under pressure and expressing the need for assistance, then the co-workers who have the available bandwidth to be of assistance, know where to effectively direct their resources.

Varied hoop sizes also support our Hoopment practice; different sizes move us differently.

Self-Care Changes Everything.

Period.

Our bodies/vessels require us to maintain them, for them to operate and function comfortably.

When our bodies are not comfortable, we experience neurological tension; which shifts our perspective to look for "wrong," thus validating the tension and maintaining it.

We cannot communicate clearly when we are uncomfortable, because it is difficult to stay objective--discomfort triggers self-protection, and unfortunately, objectivity gets tossed out as survival takes over.

We are fortunate to live in an era and place where we are safer than we have ever been--but our primitive protective systems have not yet caught up. We'll get there.

Self-awareness, and mindfulness of breath, is important, so that that we may remind our bodies that we are safe, despite whatever non-preferable thing is happening.

And make the necessary changes. Period.

Non-Verbal Communication IS.

Non-verbal communication is happening all the time--and unfortunately, often misinterpreted.

Hoopmunication may help cut down on misinterpreted facial expressions and body language, through providing a visual form of communication that expresses where we are, at the moment, regarding pressure.

While we each experience and process the different pressure zones subjectively/individually, we can be compassionate towards/recognize what the color/size is expressing, and respond appropriately/supportively.

The practice of holding space for others, by consciously bringing ourselves into the Blue/Green zone, is also a meditative practice that supports our mental and physical well-being.

The more aware we are of how our bodies are using their resources, the more wisely we may put our resources to use; discerning more easily what direction to navigate towards, as we journey through our respective life voyages.

Together.

For more resources:

TheHoopment.us

ThePressureRainbow.com

TeachingFamilyMassage.com

Follow "thehoopment" on Instagram
for videos and inspiration

*Margarita is available for Corporate
Self-Care workshops; she also offers a
"Service Series" of Hoopment workshops,
to put self-care tools and skills in the
hands of people who help others.*

**We must take care of ourselves, if we are
to be of service to others.**

*Plus, these tools may assist those you are
of service to, while helping you help them.*

About the Author:



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Margarita has been a practicing massage therapist since 2003, predominantly providing at-home service and education.

She has practiced Flow Arts since 2005, which influenced her journey toward sharing Hoopment as a therapeutic self-care practice.

A shoulder injury in 2016 was remedied via gentle manipulation guided by a smaller diameter hoop--resulting in all-around increased body mobility; which encouraged her to integrate Hoopment into her therapy offerings--and provide Wellness Partnerships.

Sharing self-care with others, helps to support her self-care practice.

Grateful to be of service. Grateful to be here.

*Thank you for all
you do to take care
of YOU.*

*Thank you for being
supportive when you
have the bandwidth
to provide support.*

*Thank you for
expressing your
boundaries.*

*Thank you for
sharing yourself.*

*****IDKU but ILY*****

Additional Tools and Strategies:

Massage school changed my life. It was undoubtedly clear that our perceptions and nervous systems are interlocked; and learning about neuroplasticity taught me that we can change our brains.

I, like many humans, grew up in an opinionated household--thoughts/ideas/beliefs that, when challenged, may stir up the nervous system into protective mode, unnecessarily.

False alarms, socio-culturally programmed into us: via home culture, school culture, town culture, state culture, national culture....

I recognized how the false alarms were potentially setting off the body-pain-feedback loop...maintaining my vessel engaged in a state of alarm; and increasing my ambivalence toward others.

I came up with a checklist to help me become aware of, and process, the false alarms, and "toss the excess baggage off my vessel," because it's not mine; so then I may more accurately navigate through space.

Learning to recognize the Yellow zone is helpful--I call it "the Yellow Flag of Frustration."

I attempt to catch myself at Yellow 2 or 3, and then I ask myself a series of questions:

1. Am I safe?

-If NOT, then do what must be done: express a boundary; remove myself from the situation; or both. Once the "thing" is done, my nervous system restores to Green or Blue-Green pressure levels.

-If YES, then it is likely that what has set off my nervous system is a thought--very likely an opinion. I observe what opinion set me off, and then I ask myself:

2. Is it TRUE?

-I accept that I do not know for certain what is *really* happening in any situation that does not directly involve me, as an outside observer. When I remember that I don't know, I can more easily release whatever judgment arose within me.

3. Is it Mine?

-I acknowledge that some opinions are not mine. I disagree with them, yet I still think them; and when someone/something outside of myself

triggers the thoughts, it "makes me feel" bad. I direct the blame for my uncomfortable feelings at the person/thing that triggered the thought, which also feels uncomfortable--because *nothing is wrong*.

-Accepting that I don't agree with the opinion, and it is not mine, I can acknowledge that I don't believe that opinion, so it won't set off false alarms in the future. Not my monkey.

*I acknowledge that just because someone/ something is not how I would prefer it to be, does not mean that it is wrong; nor does it threaten my own preferences; therefore, I may allow *whatever* to be what it is--and navigate through life calmly.*

Whatever it is, it's usually temporary, anyhow.

Sometimes, the baggage sneaks back in; the more we practice recognizing the Yellow Flag of Frustration, and processing the unnecessary pressure, the easier it becomes to toss it--and not get set off by the same false alarms in the future.

Another 2 questions: **Am I okay with this?** and **Why am I okay with this?** Both questions help me consciously recognize that I *am* okay, so that my nervous system may more readily return to a less engaged state.

On the Subject of Positive & Negative:

Often we may hear people throwing around the phrases, "Don't be so negative!" or, "Think positive thoughts." I was wrapped up (and torn apart) by the duality (good/bad, right/wrong) and judgments surrounding the terminology.

Words are important.

They may be perceived as the programming language that our nervous systems use to help navigate us through our lives.

Because the terminology "negative/positive" has emotional/judgment values assigned to them, vs. being quantitative states or terms pertaining to electrical concepts, I practice consciously shifting my programming language.

What individuals interpret to be pleasant and preferable, or unpleasant and not preferable, varies from person to person--what creates a pressure increase/decrease in one vessel may not have an effect on another vessel, or as much of an effect...we can be so different.

We do not live in a black & white world.

Everything and everyone is on some spectrum or other; and we come from different backgrounds and conditioning...as well as being unique individuals.

So, rather than say "negative," I now say unpleasant or not preferable.

Rather than say "positive," I now say pleasant or preferable.

When I use the term "preference," I acknowledge that, while I may PREFER something/someone to be *whatever* I would prefer it to be, I am still OKAY if *whatever* is NOT my preference, because there is no actual threat/danger to me.

Just because I find something unpleasant or disagrees with my perception of what is preferable, does not mean that anything is "wrong"--it simply means that I am temporarily being exposed to something different than what I would usually choose to be around.

Since it is a temporary experience, I know that I can handle it; why, I might even enjoy it, if I allow myself to find pleasant aspects that I enjoy.

*Whatever it is, my exposure to it is voluntary. I may remove myself at any time. **It is my choice.***

Simple Self-Care and Clear Communication Easily Applied

Hoopment is the practice of allowing mini-hoops to gently guide our bodies through space; helping us to maintain a comfortable range of motion-- and countering the repetitive motions required by our respective jobs.

Moving with hoops helps us check-in with our bodies, while warming and mobilizing connective tissues; it may also serve as a moving meditation, supporting our minds.

Hoopmunication combines hoop diameter and color to express the need for space/proximity, as well as how much pressure is being perceived.

It may help minimize inter-human friction and increase mental focus.