### **The Science Behind Glimmers and Mental Health**

Glimmers are **small, positive sensory cues** that activate the **parasympathetic nervous system**, helping individuals feel safe and connected. The concept was introduced by **Deb Dana**, a clinical social worker specializing in **polyvagal theory**, which explains how the nervous system regulates emotional states.

#### **Glimmers vs. Triggers: A Neurological Perspective**

* **Triggers** activate the **sympathetic nervous system**, leading to **stress responses** such as anxiety or hypervigilance.
* **Glimmers**, on the other hand, engage the **vagus nerve**, promoting **calmness and emotional regulation**.

For individuals with **trauma histories or heightened stress responses**, glimmers serve as **micro-moments of relief**, helping to **counterbalance negative emotional states**.

### **Glimmers in Trauma Recovery**

Research suggests that **vulnerable populations**, such as those experiencing **PTSD, anxiety disorders, or chronic stress**, benefit significantly from **intentional exposure to glimmers**. These moments help:

* **Reduce hypervigilance** by signaling safety.
* **Encourage emotional resilience** through repeated positive reinforcement.
* **Strengthen neural pathways** associated with **hope and optimism**.

### **Practical Applications for Vulnerable Individuals**

Psychologists recommend **actively seeking out glimmers** to support mental health. Some effective strategies include:

* **Mindfulness practices**—noticing small joys in daily life.
* **Personalized sensory cues**—such as familiar scents, comforting textures, or soothing visuals.
* **Environmental adjustments**—creating spaces that evoke **safety and warmth**.

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