**Dissociation**
- Altered state of consciousness
- Lowered capacity for integrating external & internal stimuli
- Hypoarousal State
- Flat affect
- Sense of disembodiment or fragmentation
- Disintegration of sensory input
- Right hemisphere activation, minimal left brain activity
- Right brain function impaired
- RH "felt self" cannot integrate
- Hypoarousal state
  - i.e. higher systems offline
- Right anterior insula deactivates

**Creative Flow**
- Altered state of consciousness
- Lowered capacity for integrating external stimuli
- Ability to hyper-focus attention
- Embodied experience
- Highly Productive
- Integrates sensory data via creative interpretation
- Primarily right hemisphere activation, minimal left brain activity
- Less prefrontal cortex activity
  - i.e. higher systems offline
- Extensive research not yet conducted

**Thesis**
Flow is a brain state using similar neurological structure and processes as dissociation to facilitate a period of intense creativity; since creativity is a powerful tool for psychological healing following trauma, it's possible that dissociative pathology within the brain of a traumatized individual inherently creates a framework that can be used to heal and integrate trauma via facilitation of creative flow states.

**Support for Thesis**

A.) Across populations, creativity & the creative process has been proven to play a role in recovery through meaning making, self expression/organization, and the capacity to integrate.

B.) Studies cited in my resources show that high creativity is statistically associated with both
1. Trauma Survivors
   - A population most likely to experience dissociation
2. Individuals who experience Flow.

C.) Based on A & B, I propose people who experience flow are more likely to experience dissociation, and vice versa. Since flow is creative, and creativity is healing, flow may be an outworking of the brain's own ability to move towards wholeness.

**Clinical Implications**
1. Honor the trauma survivor's ability to heal and integrate their sensory implicit memory via artistic and creative endeavors.
2. Provide psychoeducation about the benefits of creative expression & encourage clients to create routines that create an optimal environments for flow to occur.
3. Flow-Friendly Practices include:
   - Devoting time to doing art
   - Keeping supplies on hand
   - Adopting non-judgmental self talk,
   - Allowing free-association style creativity
References


