

THE SCIENCE OF EMOTION

Part 1: Meet Your Brain

Do you know what the connection is between your brain and your feelings? Emotions are chemical responses sent from the brain in reaction to everyday experiences. This results in a range of different feelings. These parts of the brain play a role in how you experience emotions.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

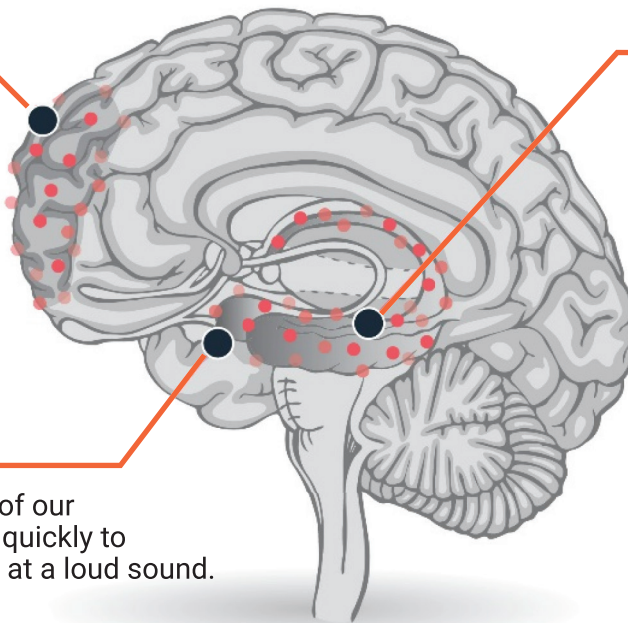
The prefrontal cortex helps us think, learn and process emotions so we can make smart decisions.

HIPPOCAMPUS

The hippocampus helps us remember. It stores all the things you learn in school plus memories and emotional experiences from your life.

AMYGDALA

The amygdala is in charge of our emotions. It helps us react quickly to danger, like when you jump at a loud sound.



So what happens when we experience strong emotions? It starts with the amygdala. Sometimes it can't tell the difference between a danger (like a ball coming at you) and everyday stressful events (like an upcoming test). When this happens and the amygdala takes over, the prefrontal cortex does not get the information it needs to do its job. This interferes with how the prefrontal cortex helps you think through a difficult feeling. It also interferes with how the hippocampus processes memories of past experiences where we may have successfully handled a similar feeling in a different situation. Learning strategies to help us manage strong emotions or keep calm can help our brains in these situations.

Part 2: Think About It

You have learned about the brain and its role in how we process emotions. Why is knowing this important to your mental health? Use the space below to write a reflection.







FEELINGS CHECK-IN



Part 1: How Do You Feel?

Choose a word from the list below that describes how you are feeling today, or write in your own word. Then use the prompts below to write about your feelings.






| EMOTION | RELATED FEELINGS |
|--|---|
|  ANGER | angry, annoyed, mad, grumpy, irritated |
|  FEAR | anxious, uncomfortable, worried, nervous, stressed |
|  SADNESS | sad, frustrated, unhappy, lonely, hurt, upset |
|  HAPPINESS | happy, proud, excited, calm, confident, comfortable |
| | |

- ▶ Today I'm feeling _____.
- ▶ I'm feeling this way because _____.
- ▶ I'll manage this feeling by _____.

Part 2: Feeling with Five Senses

Focus on the feeling you explored in Part 1 and write a poem about it. Fill in the blanks below to describe the feeling as if it were something you could smell, taste, touch, hear, and see. Be creative — use metaphors, similes, and imagery to describe your feeling.

Choose a feeling: _____

-  Smells like _____
-  Tastes like _____
-  Feels like _____
-  Sounds like _____
-  Looks like _____