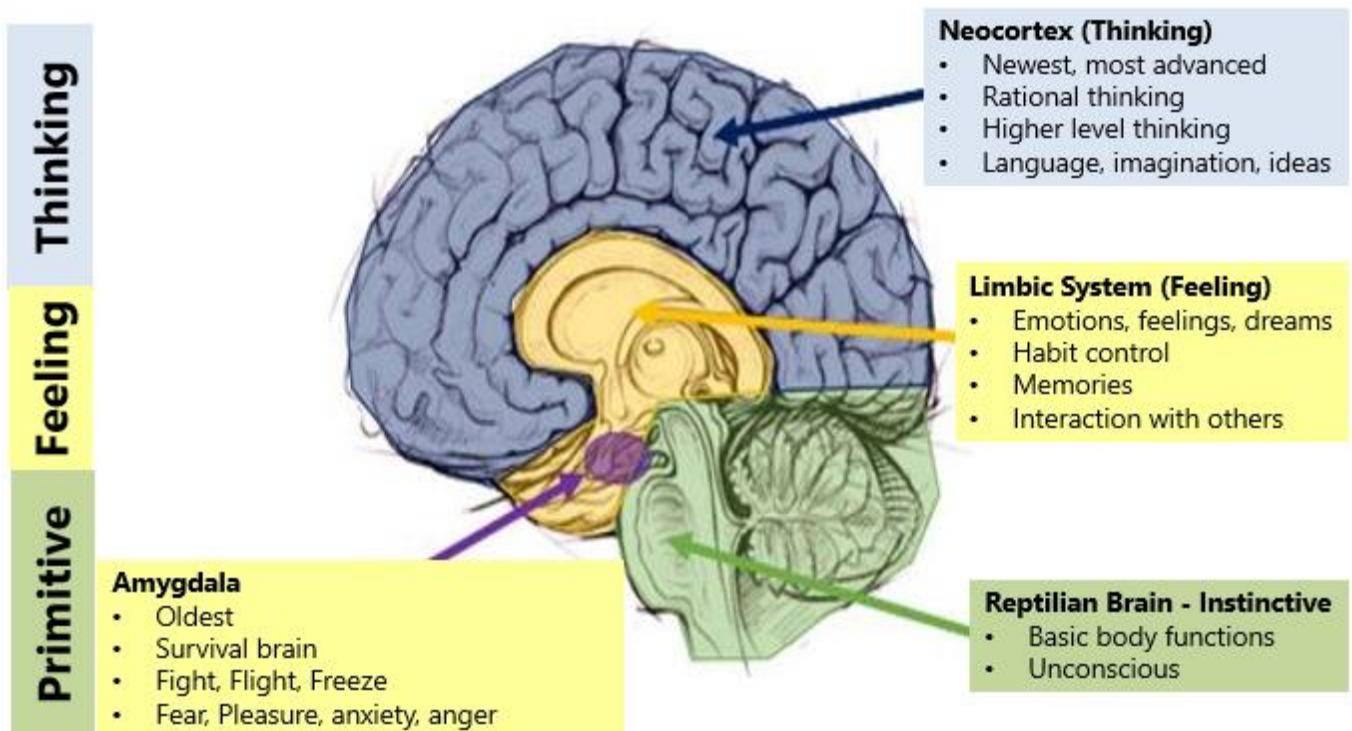


The Brain and Emotional Regulation

Why is this important?

- In order to understand emotional regulation, how it effects how we feel and behave, and therefore our ability to learn, we first must understand the structure of the brain and the function of each part.

Our amazing 3 part brain



The brain, emotions, and our ability to engage in learning

- The brain, our emotions, and our ability to regulate our emotions has a profound effect on our ability to think rationally and engage in learning.
- If we are dysregulated, we essentially can't think, reason, or learn.
- This has implications for us personally and how we behave ourselves, but also how we understand, and respond to, distressed or challenging behaviour in others.
- Bruce Perry provides us with a model, or Sequence of Engagement, to use when dealing with dysregulation in others, that is sympathetic to how the brain works. In his model he shows we should help, or give the person time, to regulate their emotions, we should try to relate to them by validating their feelings (not their actions), and only then try to reason with them.
- We often jump to the 'reasoning' part too soon when the person isn't able to engage in reasoning.
- You can find out more about Bruce Perry's model in the 'Sequence of Engagement – 3 R's plus 1' learning module.

Information Note

Emotional regulation, feelings, and behaviour

- Emotional regulation is the ability to recognise, manage, and respond to our emotions.
- When we don't know how to regulate our emotions, we can become emotionally overwhelmed, and this can impact the way we relate to ourselves, others, and the world in general.
- Emotional regulation is an important tool for **mental well-being** and protects our **relationships** with others.
- Emotional regulation impacts how we behave.
- When we **ARE** emotionally regulated we can:
 - feel balanced and in control of our reactions
 - manage stress
 - listen to others and are aware of their needs
 - express our needs in constructive ways
 - act appropriately in a range of situations
 - stay calm during challenging situations
 - don't take things personally
 - protect important connections/relationships
- When we **ARE NOT** emotionally regulated we may:
 - feel off kilter and out of control
 - feel stressed
 - are unable to listen or think
 - express our needs in destructive ways
 - act inappropriately
 - lose our cool
 - take things personally
 - damage relationships or connections
- Dan Siegal talks about naming it to tame it. Naming our emotions helps us manage our emotions.
- **Remember** many learners have a very limited understanding of their emotions and a limited language of feelings. This may be something they need to learn.
- Emotional regulation is something that we can learn and get better at over time. It's part of our emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence

- Emotional regulation is **a skill we can learn** and is part of our emotional intelligence (EQ)
- EQ is our ability to learn about ourselves and use that knowledge to understand and relate to others
- Emotional intelligence (EQ) is essential for good **mental health and healthy relationships**
- It may be even more important than IQ because it is linked to our happiness
- Emotional intelligence has 5 key components:
 - **Self-awareness** - you can see your own patterns of behaviours and motives. You know how your emotions and actions impact those around you. You can [name your own emotions](#) when they come up and understand why they're there. You can also recognize your triggers, identify your strengths, and see your own limitations. Associated with humility.
 - **Self-regulation** - If you can self-regulate, your emotional reactions are in proportion to the given circumstances. You know how to pause, as needed, and control your impulses. You think before you act and consider the consequences. It also means you know how to ease tension, manage conflict, cope with difficult scenarios, and adapt to changes in your environment. It's all about bringing out the part of yourself that helps [manage emotions](#).

Information Note

- **Motivation** - If you're intrinsically motivated, you have a thirst for personal development. You're highly driven to succeed, whatever your version of success looks like. You're inspired to accomplish goals because it helps you grow as a person, rather than doing it for outside rewards like money, fame, status, or recognition.
- **Empathy** - If you're [empathic](#), you're a healthy level of self-interested — but not self-centered. In conversations, you can understand where someone is coming from. You can “walk a mile in their shoes,” so to speak. Even if the exact scenario hasn't happened to you, you can draw on your life experience to imagine how it may feel and be compassionate about what they're going through. You're slow to judge others and possess the awareness that we're all just doing the best we can with the circumstances we've been given. When we know better, we do better.
- **Social Skills** - If you've developed your social skills, you're adept at working in teams. You're aware of others and their needs in a conversation or conflict resolution. You're welcoming in conversation, using [active listening](#), eye contact, verbal communication skills, and open body language. You know how to develop a rapport with others or express leadership, if the occasion calls for it.
- Improving any of these components can potentially increase our happiness!!!
- These should be taught through the '[Responsibility of All](#)' part of the Health and Wellbeing Curriculum or as part of a bespoke Social Emotional Learning Programme

Challenges to emotional regulation

- We all deal with emotions in different ways and have different capacities to deal with strong emotions. The way we deal with emotions may, in part, have to do with how we were brought up, particularly if we faced **adverse experiences** during our childhood or **trauma**.
- Developmentally, when an infant or child does not have their emotions responded to, validated, or explained by a caregiver, parts of the brain [limbic and cortex] don't learn to talk to each other, emotional information continues to be overwhelming as the child gets older and emotional dysregulation occurs.
- So emotional regulation isn't simple, our ability to regulate our emotions will depend on our experiences, how our brain has developed, and it will therefore be different for everyone.

Additional helpful resources and information

- Other related Modules on Sequence of Engagement – 3 R's plus 1, Window of Tolerance, Attunement, & Relational Approaches
- Name your emotions: <https://www.healthline.com/health/list-of-emotions>
- Managing Emotions: <https://psychcentral.com/health/ways-to-manage-your-emotions>
- Empathy: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/how-to-really-empathize-with-someone#1>
- Active Listening: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening>
- Responsibility of All: <https://education.gov.scot/media/1hddrq2l/responsibility-of-all-hwb-lit-numeracy-across-learning.pdf>