



## LESSON 3: Who's the Boss?

Learning about the triune brain model & how our brain processes information to enable us to react or choose a thoughtful response

### Student Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Students will create a personal mission statement
- Students will identify the parts of the brain and how they function
- Students will learn and demonstrate the brain hand model
- Students will recognize the importance of breathing as a way to reduce anxiety when fearful or in a challenging situation
- Students will practice focused awareness and identify the benefits of its use
- Students will learn and use the Rest and Relax skill and understand its purpose and benefit

### CSED/ SE L Model Standards

#### CSED

- Performance Character
- Intellectual Character

#### BHI

- Meaning & Purpose
- Positive Impacts

#### SEL

#### NCSHE



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Self-Awareness</li><li>➤ Self-Management</li><li>➤ Responsible Decision Making</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ 1.8.2</li><li>➤ 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4</li></ul>
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## Lesson Summary

Our brains are the most important organ in our body as they are in charge of our organ functions to our thoughts and memories to our movement and how we interpret and respond in situations! In today's lesson we're going to learn about some of the most important parts of the brain, and what their functions are. The oldest part of our brain is called the limbic system. This part in the back of our head, keeps our bodies functioning without our having to think about it. Our mammalian brain, located in the center and on either side behind our ears, is where our emotions and memory occur. This is also where our amygdala is, our fear center. Our reactions can come from this place and happen without much thought as this is our brain's way of keeping us from feeling pain. Our "Human brain," or prefrontal cortex is located behind our forehead. This is our executive functioning center that helps us plan, predict, and use language. This is where our logic and reasoning reside as well. We make our thoughtful responses, or Heroic Choices from our prefrontal cortex. I don't know about you, but I'd like to be making most of my choices from my logic and reasoning center! Learning how to help these parts work together is the key to keeping calm, cool and collected.

## Educator Prep

- For more in-depth understanding of how our brains and bodies respond to fear, watch this video about the neuroscience behind the program



- Watch the video on Okinaga breathing before teaching the lesson so that you have some familiarity with it.
- Watch the other videos in the lesson beforehand so that you are familiar with them as well
- Here are some other videos that can be helpful in understanding how to deal with your emotions:
  - [Your Brain is a Smartphone](https://safesha.re/hig) Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions (https://safesha.re/hig)
  - [Vagus Nerve](https://chooselovemovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/The-Vagus-Nerve.pdf) (https://chooselovemovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/The-Vagus-Nerve.pdf)
- You will be breaking the class into small groups. Try to be mindful of the students you choose to put into different groups.

### You may like these videos

- As an additional resource, watch leading researcher Dr. Dan Siegel discuss the brain. [Dr Daniel Siegel presenting a Hand Model of the Brain](https://safesha.re/hih) (https://safesha.re/hih)
- [Brain & amygdala hand model explains how thoughts & emotions fuel anxiety](https://safesha.re/hii) (https://safesha.re/hii)

## Lesson

## Agenda

1. **Focused Awareness: 10 - 15 minutes**
2. **Discussion: 5-10 minutes**
3. **Activity: 15 minutes**



4. Choose Love Journal Prompt: 5 minutes
5. Call to Action: 3 - 5 Minutes

## Focused Awareness

Cue Focused Awareness: [Okinaga Breathing slide](#)

**“Today we are going to learn about Okinaga: the breathing practice which involves deep, prolonged exhalations from the abdomen through the mouth, and controlled inhalations through the nose. This type of breathing comes from Japan and is meant to cultivate the psycho-physical attributes that are necessary for the capacity to experience life in the present or to live in the martial way. If you have ever done martial arts, you may have heard of this practice.”**

**“Let’s watch this video which explains how to do Okinaga.”**

Cue video: [Okinaga breathing exercise](#)

**“Let’s try this practice together. First get comfortable. Now breathe in for 15 seconds, then breathe out for 15 seconds. Make sure you are breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to open the back of your throat as you do this. Fill up your stomach and your diaphragm with air. Try not to gasp at the end of the exhale. Try to stay calm and relaxed.”**

**“Now we will do the same thing, but we will do 20 seconds in and 20 seconds out.”**

**“Now we will extend our breathing to 25 seconds in and 25 seconds out.”**



**“In martial arts, people work at breathing for up to 50 seconds in and 50 seconds out! This is something you can work up to.”**

**“Practicing Okinaga helps you to let go of the past and stay in the present moment. You can practice this type of breathing any time you are feeling overwhelmed.”**

## Discussion

### Cue Talking about Fear slide

**“Today we’re going to talk more about how our brains, hearts, and bodies work together to help us to choose courage, do the right thing, and to make positive choices. We’ll get a better understanding of the parts of the brain and their functions. And we’ll also see what happens to our brains when we feel scared, anxious, or overwhelmed.”**

**“Has anyone ever been in a situation where they felt scared to do something?”**

Share your own personal example, describing the situation including what you were doing, feeling, and thinking. Allow a few students to share their examples. Normalize fear as a natural response and thank them for showing courage by sharing.

**“How did your body let you know that you were feeling fear?”**

Examples include: heart racing, body tense, eyes wide, upset stomach, trouble breathing, sweating, feeling hot, jittery, trouble focusing, etc”

**“Everybody has fear and that’s not a bad thing. In fact, fear is a really important feeling. It is how we respond to real or perceived physical or emotional danger, threat, pain, evil, harm, or unfavorable situations. Fear can be a distressing and powerful emotion. It is really vital because it’s like an alarm inside us that alerts us to potential danger. If we**



**didn't have or experience fear, we wouldn't be able to protect ourselves from real threat or harm. But as I mentioned before, sometimes we are fearful of something that is perceived, something that isn't real, something that is imagined or exaggerated, or something that is really not a true threat or harm to us. While fear can call and move us to action when it's necessary, fear can also paralyze us and interfere with our ability to have a happy, healthy, productive life."**

**"There are many reasons why we sometimes choose not to act courageously. We might not know how to help, we might not feel safe, we might think someone will laugh at us, etc. Some degree of fear is always present when we act courageously. Courage is not the absence of fear- it's a choice- it's choosing to act even if you're afraid. Fear, like every emotion, is normal and important. Our brains send our bodies signals about fear to keep us safe and protect us from danger. This signal can be to alert us to physical, mental and emotional pain. Three parts of our brains work together in these instances. To better understand fear, let's see what happens to our brains when we feel afraid. Let's learn about the three parts of the brain: the reptilian, the mammalian, and the human brain."**

### **Cue Fear is Necessary slide**

**"Fear is necessary, but we need to have a healthy and realistic level of fear. In our caveman days we needed fear to survive. It kept us aware of all of the dangers around us. In today's world we do not need this constant fear. We must make sure we are aware of our feelings of fear. We need to acknowledge our fear and figure out if it's coming from something that is a real danger, or something we've created, imagined, or exaggerated. It's important to have ways to address our fear so that it's helpful and not harmful to us. We need to stop and think through our fear, evaluate where it's coming from and if it's a true call to action or perhaps an invitation to be courageous, a time to ask for help, or a time to let it go because it's not serving us in any way."**



**“In future lessons, we will talk about a few ways to calm down when we are anxious, nervous, afraid or uncertain.”**

**Cue How the Brain Works slide**

**“It is important to understand how our brains work so that we can better understand why we react and think like we do. Let’s watch a video about the brain. We will discuss it afterwards.”**

**Cue Video:** [The Brain for Kids](#)

**“What do you think about this video? What did you learn about your brains?”**

**Cue The Amygdala slide**

**“Now we are going to learn about a very important part of our brain...the Amygdala. Pay attention to the video. We will discuss the Amygdala afterwards.”**

**Cue Video:** [Fight, Flight or Freeze](#)

**“What did you learn about the Amygdala? Who can tell me why the amygdala is important?”**

Allow for discussion

## **Activity**

**Cue: Activity: Numbat or Human Brain slide**

**“I’m going to break you into small groups and then give you different scenarios. You are going to decide whether we should use the Numbat or Human parts of our brain. You can take turns reading the scenarios. Decide as a group which brain you should use and why. Talk about what you would do in each situation.”**



These scenarios are available to print at the end of this lesson.

- *You are home and see flames coming out of your building.*
- *As usual, your sister is taking too long in the bathroom in the morning.*
- *You loaned a friend your favorite book; now he can't find it.*
- *You grab the handle of a pan on the stove before you realize it's very hot.*
- *You are swimming and you see a shark swimming toward you.*
- *You are trying out for a team or performance and you don't get chosen.*
- *Someone throws food at you in the cafeteria.*
- *You are riding your bike down the street when you see a speeding car coming right at you.*

Give students time to discuss the scenarios.

**“Okay. How did this activity go? Does anyone have anything they want to share? Let’s go through each one and figure out what brain you should use.”**

## Choose Love Journal

**Cue Choose Love Journal: Parts of our Brains slide**

**“Take out your Choose Love Journals and open up to the next blank page. Today we are going to be writing about times we used different parts of our brains. Take a few moments to think about times you may have immediately reacted instead of taking the time to pause in the Choice Moment and reflect on the situation to think through possible responses. Write about these reactive times and how you could have used the Choice Moment to thoughtfully respond in a more positive, productive way.”**

Give students 3 - 5 minutes to write.

**“Would anyone like to share anything they wrote?”**





Allow for sharing.

## Call to Action (Lessons to Life)

### Cue Call to Action slide

- *Teach family members or friends about the lizard brain, the numbat brain and the human brain and what the functions of each part are.*
- *Make a social media post about the different parts of the brain and act out how each part functions.*
- *Keep a journal and write about various situations you have been in when you needed to stop and think rather than react. Write about the ways this helped you make better choices.*
- *Be aware of the different parts of your brain throughout the day. Be mindful of when you need to react and when you should stop and think.*
- *Do the “future me” activity with your friends. Share the advice your future self would give your current self.*



## ***Scenarios:***

- ***You are home and see flames coming out of your building.***
- ***As usual, your sister is taking too long in the bathroom in the morning.***
- ***You loaned a friend your favorite book; now he can't find it.***
- ***You grab the handle of a pan on the stove before you realize it's very hot.***
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