

Brain Wise Parenting

Westbrook Youth and Family Services, Inc.

What Just Happened?

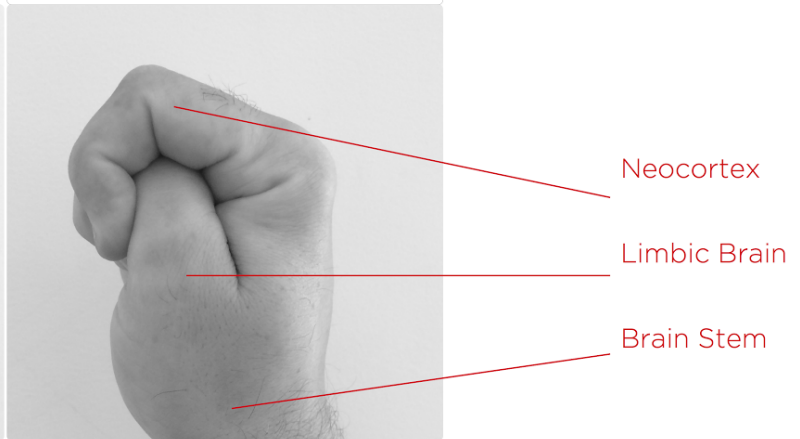
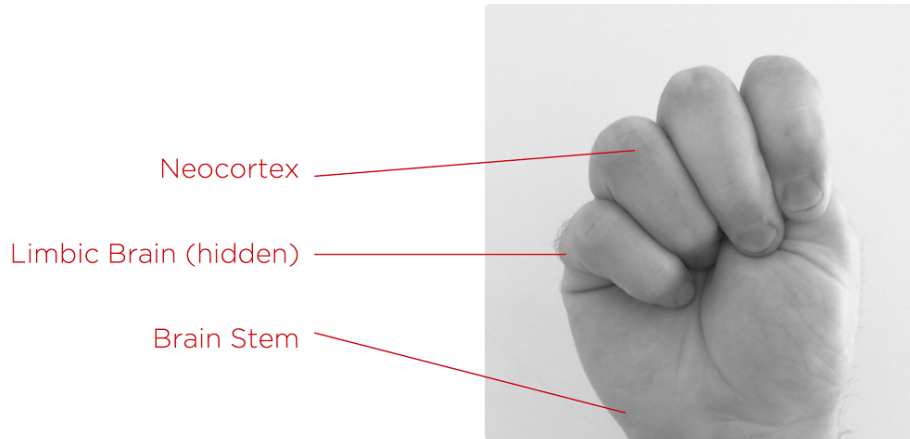
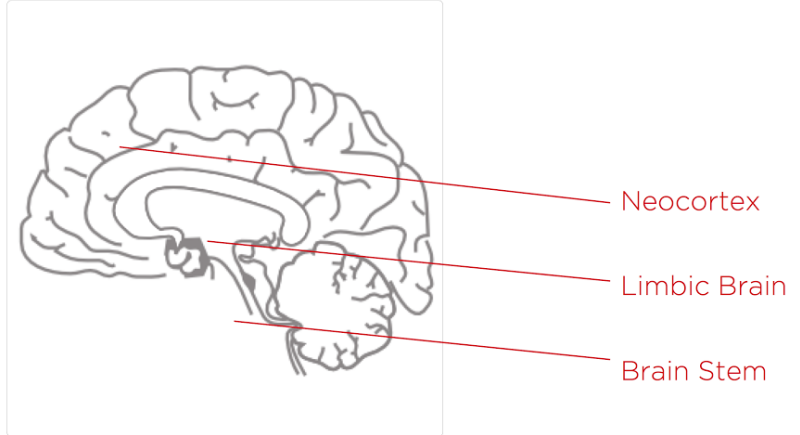
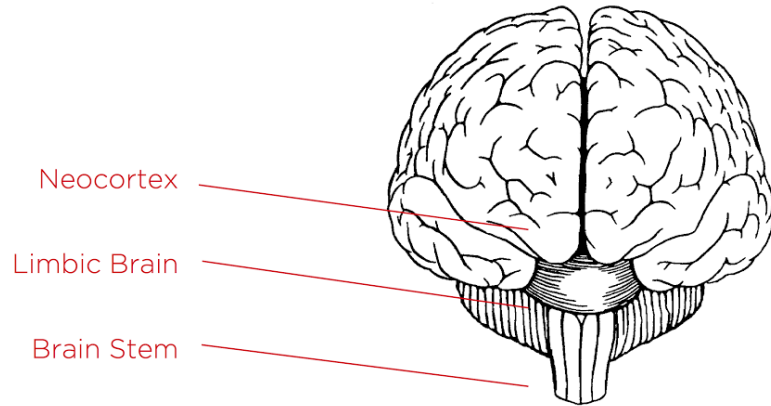
The Physiology of Fight or Flight

What we know is happening...

Welcome to Middle School!



Dan Siegel's handy brain anatomy model



Triune Brain

Limbic system

- Amygdala
 - First alert system (Good/bad...Danger/safe)
- Hippocampus
 - Memory
- Hypothalamus
 - Neuroendocrine system -neurotransmitters

Triune Brain

Cerebral Cortex (Neocortex)

- Vision, Coordination, Language, Movement, Sensation Perception, Meaning-making

Prefrontal Cortex

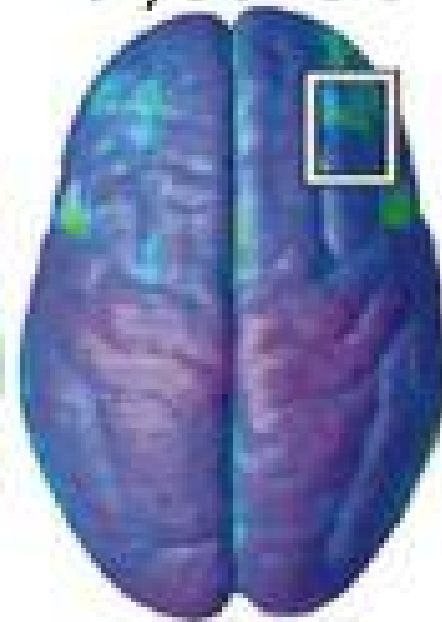
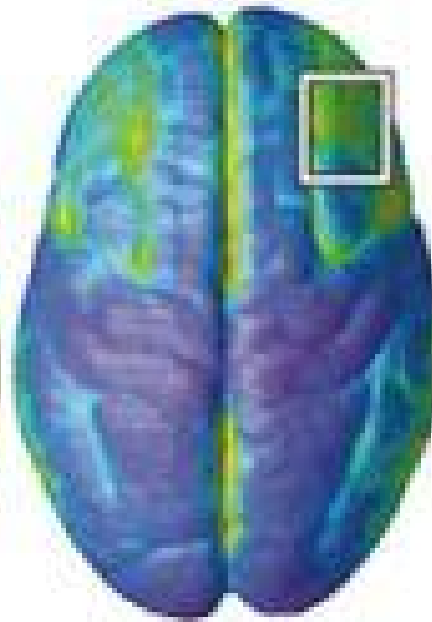
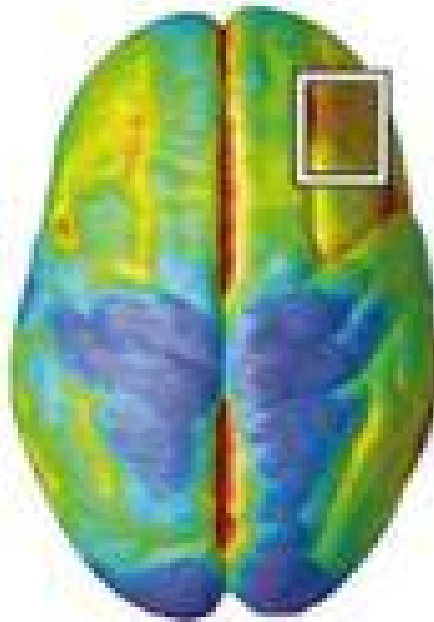
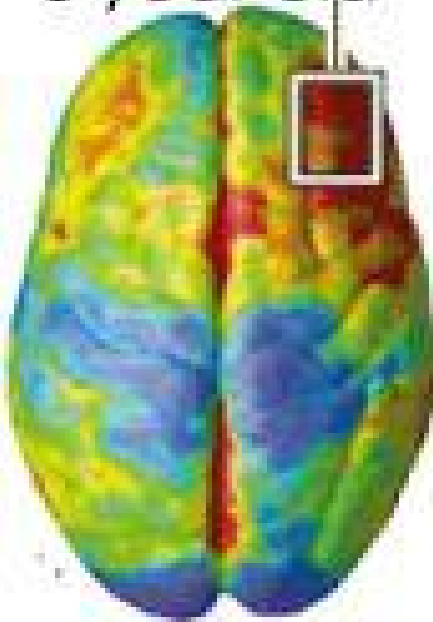
- Concentration, organization, reasoning, judgement, decision-making, creativity, personality, abstract thinking.....

5 year old

Pre-teen

Teen

20 year old



Red/yellow:
Less mature



Blue/purple:
More mature

Parent: Where's your homework?

Middle Schooler (pulls 7 pieces of crumpled paper from backpack):
I don't know. It's here somewhere. Just leave me alone!

INSIDE THE BRAIN

- ★ Stress hormone/
Limbic system
- ★ Overwhelmed
working memory
- ★ Can't describe
emotional state

How to Help

1. Don't Panic

- a. What's going on inside your head?
- b. Regulate your emotions (if we can't, they can't)

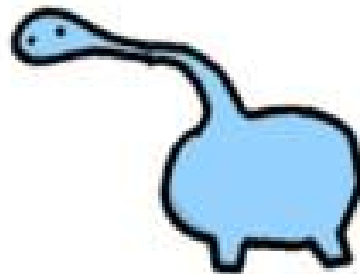
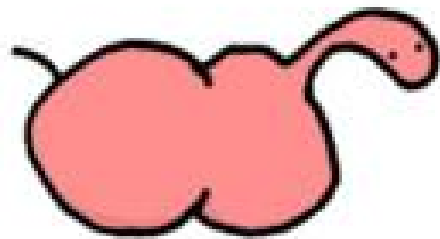
2. Help Connect Neural Regions

- a. NAME the emotion
- b. NOTICE the body (Stressed Hungry Tired)

3. Teach and Model Good PFC Skills

- a. POSITIVE self talk (not panicked self-talk)
- b. PLAN of action (one step at a time)
- c. Tools that help: LISTS, PLANNERS, REMINDER APPS

SEROTONIN & DOPAMINE



Technically, the only two things
you enjoy

Parent: Put down your phone

Middle Schooler
(Frantically checking
Instagram likes): *Just
a minute...*

INSIDE THE BRAIN

- ★ Dopamine rush
- ★ Mini-addiction
- ★ Logical brain
overpowered

Coming soon...

Join me at a TBD

PTO Meeting

to learn how more about
the Middle School Brain and Technology

Brain Under Construction

★ Beautiful Engine...Not Hooked Up

- Repetition makes fast connections
- Use it or lose it (Pruning)

★ Emotion Driven

- Immediate gratification (dopamine driven)
- Less good at planning, delayed gratification

★ SH*T Happens

- Stressed, Hungry, Tired

The good news: PRIMED FOR LEARNING

Sources

Being a Brain-Wise Therapist by Bonnie Badenoch

The Teenage Brain by Frances E. Jensen, MD

The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt

The Tell-Tale Brain by V.S. Ramachandran

The Whole-Brain Child by Daniel J. Siegel, MD

Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me & Cheryl to the Mall by Anthony E. Wolf

Reviews of educational apps and websites: **CommonSense Media**

[Commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org)