



# Communication Challenges

## Being Curious, Cautious, & Courageous

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# How Can We Become Better at This?

- Let go of the past to be in the MOMENT
- Go with the other person's FLOW
- Be willing to try something new
- Be willing to learn something different
- Be willing to see it through another's eyes
- Be willing to fail & try again

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# Five Ways to Say "I Am Sorry!"

- I'm sorry, I was trying to help
- I'm sorry I made you feel (emotion) angry, irritated, frustrated, sad, isolated....
- I'm sorry I made you feel (intellectual capacity or relationship unequal) like a child, stupid, like an idiot...
- I'm sorry that happened (their perspective)
- I'm sorry, this is HARD! (for both of you)

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# How Do We Connect & Communicate?

- Five Major Ways to get Info IN and OUT



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## Understanding the world – FIVE Senses

- 1<sup>st</sup> – what you see
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – what you hear
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – what you feel/touch
- 4<sup>th</sup> – what you smell
- 5<sup>th</sup> – what you taste



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## Getting Info In – FIVE Senses

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Vision
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Hearing
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Touch
- temperature
- texture
- pressure
- movement
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Smells
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Tastes



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## Giving Information

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Show
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tell
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Touch
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Scents & Aromas
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Tastes



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## Connect

- 1<sup>st</sup> – let them see you – use props & demo
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – use a FEW words – match to 'show'
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – offer friendly touch then guide
- 4<sup>th</sup> – match then guide emotions to safety
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Know the person & use preferred name



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## Your Approach

- Use a consistent positive physical approach
- pause at edge of public space
- gesture & greet by name
- offer your hand & make eye contact
- approach slowly within visual range
- shake hands & maintain hand-under-hand
- move to the side
- get to eye level & respect intimate space
- wait for acknowledgement



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## THEN – Connect Emotionally

- Make a connection – new people
- Offer your name – "I'm (NAME) and you are..."
- Offer a shared background – "I'm from (place) and you're from..."
- Offer a positive personal comment – "You seem so..." or "I really appreciate that you..."

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## THEN – Get it GOING!

- Give SIMPLE & Short Info – "Let's sit... and talk"
- Offer concrete CHOICES – either/or - this or that
- Ask for HELP – "Could you help me..."
- Ask the person to TRY – "Could we try something?"
- Break the TASK DOWN to single steps at a time – "Step ONE is..."

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## Give SIMPLE INFO

- USE VISUAL combined VERBAL (gesture/point)
- "It's about time for..."
- "Let's go this way..."
- "Here are your socks..."
- DON'T ask questions you DON'T want to hear the answer to...
- Acknowledge the response/reaction to your info...
- LIMIT your words – Keep it SIMPLE
- WAIT!!!!

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## Having a Conversation

Connect

The more you KNOW, the better it will GO

Take it slow

Go with the Flow

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## To Connect...

- Use the PPA to get started – (if in person)
- Make a VISUAL connection
- Look interested
- Make a VERBAL connection
- Sound enthusiastic, keep responses short
- Make a PHYSICAL connection – if physically present
- Hold hand-under-hand, use flat open hand on forearm or knee

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## Connect

- ID common interest
- Say something nice about the person or their place
- Share something about yourself and encourage the person to share back
- Follow their lead – listen actively
- Use some of their words to keep the flow going
- Remember its the FIRST TIME! – expect repeats
- Use the phrase “Tell me ABOUT ...”

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## CONNECT

- Make an Emotional Connection
- *If words aren't working well*
  - Use props or objects
  - Consider PARALLEL engagement at first
    - Look at the 'thing', be interested, share it over....
  - Talk less, wait longer, take turns , COVER don't confront when you aren't getting the words, enjoy the exchange
  - Use automatic speech and social patterns to start interactions
- Keep it short – Emphasize the VISUAL

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## Do's

- Go with the FLOW
- Use SUPPORTIVE communication techniques
- Use objects and the environment
- Give examples
- Use gestures and pointing
- Acknowledge & accept emotions
- Use empathy & Validation
- Use familiar phrases or known interests
- Respect 'values' and 'beliefs' – avoid the negative

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## DON'Ts

- Try to CONTROL the FLOW
- Give up – pushing your point of view
- Do not correct errors – offer acknowledgement back
- Offer info if asked, monitoring the emotional state
- Try to STOP the FLOW
- Don't reject topics
- Don't try to redirect the conversation UNTIL you are well connected
- Keep VISUAL cues positive

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## To Communicate... When the other person is distressed

- First - CONNECT
- Then - Use Supportive Communication
- Finally – Move together to NEW or Back OFF

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## To Communicate...

### Be a Detective

Try to figure out WHAT is being communicated

- Words
- Thoughts
- Actions
- Needs
- Beliefs

### NOT a Judge

DON'T assume or presume

DON'T discount me because of HOW I deliver the message

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## Top TEN 'UNMET NEEDS'!

### Unmet Physical Needs

- Hungry or Thirsty
- Tired or Over-energized
- Elimination – need to/did
- Temperature – too hot/cold
- IN PAIN!!!
  - Joints - skeleton
  - Creases or folds
  - Surface-surface contacts
  - Systems – head/heart/gut/bladder
  - Old injury/pain sites

### Unmet Emotional Needs

- Angry
- Sad
- Lonely
- Scared
- BORED

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## Personality Traits

Who are you?

- Introvert-Extrovert
- Lots of Details – Big Picture only
- Logical – Emotional
- Planning ahead – Being in the moment



Who is the person you are trying to help?

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## First – How You...

- Come to decisions...
- Get re-energized
- Feel about 'boundaries' and 'space'

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## Introvert - Extrovert

### Introvert

Likes to be alone  
Likes to think it out  
Likes personal space  
Needs alone time  
Private  
Shares little  
Decides on own after thinking it through

### Extrovert

Thinks out loud  
Talks it out  
Seeks out people  
Shares a lot  
Not good with boundaries  
Gets opinions before 'deciding'

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## Second – How do you...

- Like to get information
- Like to do things
- Decide whether to do something
- Approach an unfamiliar task

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## Details – Big Picture

### Details

Needs to know HOW  
Specifics of what to do  
Wants detailed info – to do it 'RIGHT'  
Likes doing the familiar and routine  
Likes a check list – follows it  
Likes to DO it

### Big Picture

Needs to know WHY  
Likes to 'fly by the seat...'  
Likes to hear the big plan  
Likes to try out new and different ways of doing things  
Likes to experiment  
Likes to TALK it out first

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## Third – What makes 'sense'?

- How do you 'judge' things?
- How do you decide if things are 'OK'?
- What matters most to you?
- What DRIVES your behavior and actions?

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## Logical - Emotional

### Logical

Head First  
Fair  
Reasonable  
Rational  
Likes to discuss differences of opinion  
How other people 'behave'

### Emotional

Heart First  
Nice  
Kind  
Empathetic  
Prefers to avoid disagreements  
How other people 'feel'

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## Fourth – How You...

- Use time
- Feel about TIME – the future versus now
- Plan ahead versus like surprises
- Feel about KNOWING what is expected
- Feel about 'deadlines'
- Feel about making decisions

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## Planning Ahead – In the Moment

### Planning Ahead

Aware of the future  
Sets priorities - plans  
Likes routines  
Likes a schedule  
Likes to do things as planned  
Decide & move on!  
Needs to be in CONTROL

### In the Moment

Being flexible  
Go with NOW issues  
Not forward thinking  
Running late  
Putting 'other' things off  
Consider options....  
GO WITH THE FLOW

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Some 'stuff' we think/feel people do on purpose

is really just 'WHO' they are

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## Which is BETTER?

There is no BETTER  
Just Different...  
Just Ranges...

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## What About Others?

- Life long patterns...
- Introvert versus Extrovert
- Detail versus Big Picture
- Thinker versus Feeler
- Plan versus Go with the Flow

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**Extrovert – needing others & to talk it out**

or

**Introvert – needing space & to think it through**

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**Big Picture – the PLAN - the possible – need to know WHY**

or

**Details – just the FACTS – the familiar – need to know HOW**

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**Emotions Rule – Feelers – others’ feelings aware - peacemakers**

or

**Fairness Rules – Thinkers – others’ behavior aware- justice seekers**

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**Future Oriented –  
Plan Ahead – decide & move on**

or

**Now Oriented –  
Go with the Flow – explore options**

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### **Personal Preferences Matter**

#### **Learning Styles**

**Brain Dominance**

**Environmental features**

**Circadian rhythms**

**Spontaneous Reactions to Surprises & Threats**

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### **Environmental Preferences**

- Four F's for You
- What features of an environment provide you a sense of:
  - Friendliness – I am liked here, I am wanted here
  - Familiarity – I am comfortable and at ease in this place
  - Functionality – I know what I am to do here
  - Forgiveness – I can make mistakes and errors and it will be OK
- Four S's for You
- What features matter for you – what do you like and dislike:
  - Spaces (intimate, personal, public)
  - Sensations (sights, sounds, feels, smells, tastes)
  - Surfaces (sit, stand, work on, rest on, walk on)
  - Social (groups, activities, roles, expectations)

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## Circadian Rhythms

- What is your natural rhythm?
  - Early bird, night owl (predator/prey), deer
  - What happens if you are 'off'?
- How do you re-charge - rest and restore?
  - What options do you use and prefer?
  - What is the best frequency, intensity, duration for them?
  - How do you 'know' when you are 'great, OK, low, out of gas'?
- How & When do you like to be PRODUCTIVE?
- How and When do you like to PLAY – HAVE FUN?
- How and When do you like to TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF?

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## Awareness of GEM State

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## Progression of Dementia

- What State is Each Person In At the Moment?

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### Now for the GEMS...

- Sapphires
- Diamonds
- Emeralds
- Ambers
- Rubies
- Pearls



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### Now for the GEMS...

- Sapphires – True Blue – Slower BUT Fine - Flexible
- Diamonds – Repeats & Routines, Faceted & Rigid –Can Cut
- Emeralds – Going – More Vague – Flaws present - Episodes
- Ambers – In the moment – Sensations – pleasure/pain
- Rubies – Stop & Go – Big Movements – rhythm & strength
- Pearls – Hidden in a Shell – Immobile – reflexes - layered



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## Signals for Going Diamond?

- From all we have done so far, how can you recognize when you are 'going DIAMOND'
  - changing from a Sapphire to a Diamond
  - Needing to PAUSE and step back
  - Call a time out
  - Recognize you need HELP
- How will you USE this info to help yourself as a communicator - interactor?

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## With Dementia What Makes 'SITUATIONS' Happen?

- SIX pieces...
- **The person & who they have been**
  - Personality, preferences & history
- **Other medical conditions & sensory status & meds**
- **The type & level of cognitive impairment ... NOW**
- **Me - US - How we choose to engage -**
  - **Approach, behaviors, words, actions, & reactions**
- The environment – setting, sound, sights
- The whole day... how things fit together

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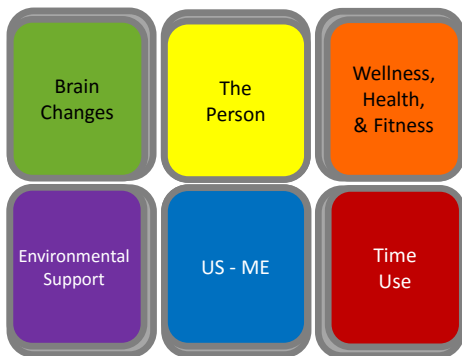
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### When Interacting What Makes 'SITUATIONS' Happen?

- SIX pieces...
- **The person & who they have been**
  - Personality, preferences & history
- Health, wellness, fitness issues/stressors (body, brain, emotions, and spirit) – fluids, fuel, other factors/meds
- The level of cognitive ability ... NOW
- **US – ME – the One who is TRYING to Connect or Communicate**
- **Approach, behaviors, words, actions, & reactions**
- The environment – 4 Fs & 4 Ss
- The whole day... how things fit together - balance

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### Understanding How Brains Change Understanding How to Help (or Hinder) Healthy Brain Change

We have the Power to Help Brains Change with  
Our Coaching Skill and Support

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## Understanding How a *Brain Changes*:

When the unexpected happens  
or there is an unmet need

Learning to respond and not to react

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## Understanding & Responding to: Challenges, Unexpected Behaviors, and Unmet Needs

- What is happening?
- Why is it happening?
- What helps? What makes it worse?
- How can we prevent it from happening in the first place?
- If it happens again, what can we do to make it better?

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## Why Is Life So Difficult for ALL Involved?

MANY abilities are affected

- Thoughts - Words
- Actions - Feelings

It is variable

- Moment to moment
- Morning to night
- Day to day
- Person to person
- Place to place

Some changes are predictable BUT complicated

- Specific brain parts
- Typical interaction between body & brain
- Some abilities are preserved



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## We Have Two Brains



- Cortical – the Neo-Cortex**
- **Thinking Brain**
  - Discriminating & Curious
  - This part of the brain separates us from animals; it allows us to think logically, delay gratification, and see from others' perspectives
- Reflexive – the Limbic System & RAC System**
- **Primitive Brain – home of the amygdala**
  - Survival – Fight/flight/fright
  - Want things NOW – immediate gratification

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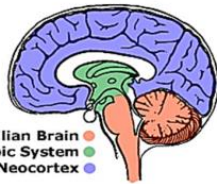
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## The Evolution-Designed Brain



- Primitive Brain  
Survival Brain  
Keep Me Safe and Satisfied**
- Thinking Brain  
Thriving Brain  
I am Engaged & Curious  
My basic needs have been met and I am satisfied and safe**

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## Neo-Cortex & 4 + 1

- Frontal – prefrontal cortex Executive Control Center(6 functions) –last developed
- Impulse control – consider alternatives and consequences – delay gratification for later/more valued
- Thinking thru – being logical-reasonable-rationale to reach a conclusion/decision (how varies)
- Decision making – from 'this or that' to selecting from among 5-8 options
- Motivation and doing and completion – initiate – sequence thru – terminate – *transition*
- Self awareness – sense of self and abilities compared to task and situation – seek help appropriately
- Able to see another's point of view and negotiate
- Temporal (both do hearing) both are associated with auditory processing
- Left – Formal language – skilled – 3 primary areas
  - vocabulary, comprehension, speech production
- Right – associated language Rhythm & forbidden words (4 + 1)
  - Rhythm – social chit chat, rhythm of speech (giving & getting , ?), music/poetry/prayer, automatic rhythmic movement
  - Forbidden words (swearing (vulgarity and blasphemy, sex talk, racial/cultural slur, ugly words)

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## Neo Cortex (continued)

- Sensory-Motor Cortex (Parietal and part of the Frontal Cortex)
- Sensation & perception - dual wiring (safety & discrimination) map of your body
  - Receptors - mechanoreceptors, thermoreceptors, pain receptors, and proprioceptors (touch, temperature, pain, pressure, vibration) - hard/soft, rough/smooth, sharp/dull, stretch/rotate, vibrate/still, hot/cold - pain receptors - mechanical/thermal/chemical immediate pain or internal monitors for injuries discomfort (protect/guard), Proprioceptors - position of self and stuff on or related to self - in/out - comfort seeker
  - Some are fast some are slow responders - some are reactors and some are responders
  - Kinesthesia - muscle feedback
  - Smell (olfactory) & taste (gustatory) - safety, survival, and pleasure
    - Smell - Olfactory (far/near sense, chemical-taste-smell, ortho-nasal stim/retro-nasal stim,
    - Taste - five (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, savory (umami) - pleasure versus danger, preferred versus 'needed'
- Movement Out - combination of:
  - excitation and relaxation, planning and executing, modifying and repeating, completing, transitioning, sequencing
  - Modulated - influenced by the cerebellum as well
  - Overridden by primitive avoidance reactions - flinch, blink, withdraw,
- Connected thru the Corpus Callosum (the wiring) - linkages and feedback systems

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## More Neo-Cortex

- Occipital Cortex - vision - 2 eyes - complex wiring & integrated into most other areas
- Fields - central sight & peripheral awareness - left/right & up/down (quadrants)
- Functions - scanning/tracking/recognizing, targeting/focusing, ignoring, reading, object-use, judging (weight, texture, temperature, danger, familiarity, function, forms, black & white/color, object recognition, accommodation (light/dark, near/far),
- Linkages - visual motor, visual perceptual, visual spatial, visual-vestibular...
- (Cerebellum - balance and coordination center - *auto-pilot with practice*)
- Vestibular sensation combined with motor strip combined with visual processing combined with rhythmic movements, sequences
- Skilled repetitive actions - automated - can block more primitive actions... kicks in!
- 'Does its thing' and there is not ACTIVE THINKING, but it is SKILLED
- is a CORE must to build NEW skills - (involved in drills for skills when movement is PART of what needs to be learned)

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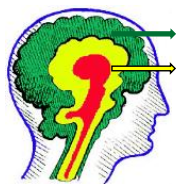
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## For an In-Control, Non-Stressed, Mature Brain...



the NEO-CORTEX leads & directs

the LIMBIC SYSTEM runs the engine

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## With an In-Control, Non-Stressed, Mature Brain...

I am responsive – not reactive  
I figure it out  
I use effective coping strategies  
I manage my stressors  
I balance my needs **with** the needs of **others**  
I balance my life & time  
I am engaged, curious, and find joy in what I do & where I am

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## With my In-Control, Non-Stressed, Mature Brain...

I am responsive – not reactive  
I figure it out  
I use effective coping strategies  
I manage my stressors  
I balance my needs **with** the needs of **others**  
I balance my life & time  
I am engaged, curious, and find joy in what I do & where I am

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## It's all about our **AMYGDALA**

- The Amygdala:
- Part of our **Limbic System**
- Threat perceiver
- Pleasure Seeker
- Part of the *engine* controlled by the Neo-Cortex
- Two parts – left and right
  - Left Amygdala –
  - Right Amygdala –



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## Mature Brain - Left Amygdala OFF

### Frontal-Pre-frontal in charge

- Can delay gratification
- Can be logical & reasonable
- Can consider options- reach decisions
- Can initiate-sequence-terminate & transition
- Can be self-aware & compare
- Can see other's perspective

### Language skill area active

- Vocabulary intact
- Comprehension fine
- Speech production & Articulation fine

### Core Engine Running well

- BP, RR, BS normal
- Reactive to pain
- Aware of hunger, thirst, elimination, pain & sleep needs

### All senses alert & curious

- Discrimination & protective

### Movement & actions smooth and skilled

- Motor memories & praxis

### Personality Traits present BUT modulated by environmental awareness

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## Mature Brain - Right Amygdala OK

### Frontal-Pre-frontal in charge

- Can delay gratification
- Can use goals to tolerate now
- Can consider options-reach decisions that support long-term joy
- Can initiate, get it done, and move on - to get to the goal
- Is self-aware & meets needs
- Integrates other's perspective

### Language skill area active

- Uses words & silence to get to the goal
- Uses incoming info to 'get it'
- Uses tone, volume, rhythm to get desired outcome

### Core Engine Running well

- Notices increases or decreases and compensates -
  - Increased BP/RR/HR - slow down/decrease activity
  - Decreased BS - eat complex carb. & protein snack
  - Increased BS - exercise
- Notices & deals with pain - discontinue activity take a pain med
- Take care of hunger, thirst, elimination, pain & sleep needs - within reasonable time & place

### All senses alert & curious

- Discrimination & protective active to achieve

### Movement & actions smooth and skilled

- Motor memories & praxis used well to fulfill wants of self and others

### Practices/drills for the GOAL

- Personality Traits direct patterns to achieve the GOAL & Wants
- Can work toward a 'goal' while meeting preferences & wants within 'acceptable boundaries'

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**DANGER!**  
**Left Amygdala turns**  
**ON**  
**and.....**  
**Fight, Flight, Fright**

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**Mature Brain - Left Amygdala ON**

**Frontal-Prefrontal loses it**

- Can't wait
- Can't be logical & reasonable
- Can't consider options or reach decisions
- Can't correctly initiate/sequence/terminate & transition
- Can't be self-aware & compare
- Can't see other's perspective

**Language skill area failing**

- Vocabulary impaired
- Missing meaning or intent
- Misunderstands
- Speech pressured, may stutter
- May go silent
- Repeats message over and over

**Core Engine Runs HOT**

- BP, RR, BS elevated
- Feels NO pain or INTENSE pain
- Either – dumps or HOLDS
- Hyper-vigilant
- No hunger or thirst – mouth dry
- Stops digesting food
- Not exhaling completely

**Senses in Protective Mode**

- Tunnel vision, scanning for threat, disorganized
- Search for source of sounds
- Trying to find the danger
- Unaware of body contact
- Suspicious & over-reactive

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**Mature Brain - Left Amygdala ON**

**Movement & actions STRONG & FAST – NOT SKILLED**

- Fright – FROZEN, HIDE
- Flight – race, pace, away
- Fight – hurt or control

**Personality Traits EXTREME**

- Introvert/Extrovert - **Needs it**
- How to/ Why to - **Demands it**
- Head First/Heart First – **Requires it**
- Plans/Go with Flow – **Must Have it**

**Hippocampus Impaired**

- **Memory & Learning Impaired**
  - Can't DO NEW!!!
  - Old triggers - 'NOW'
  - Won't remember the 'facts', just the 'feelings'
  - Confabulation will fill in blanks
- **Way Finding Impaired**
  - Seeking familiar – safety
  - Everything looks WRONG
  - Impulsive or Stuck
- **Time Awareness Poor**
  - Time passes too fast or too slow
  - Loses day/night & rhythm of day
  - Can have an episodic memory

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**I'm 'HURTING'**  
**I Need RELIEF**  
**Right Amygdala turns ON**  
**and.....**  
**I NEED IT NOW!!!**

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### Mature stressed Brain - Right Amygdala ON

**Frontal-Pre-frontal OUT**

- I need it NOW
- I cannot tolerate delays
- I grab what I NEED
- I use whatever is needed to get to the immediate relief!
- Self-absorbed

**Language skill area active to get what is NEEDED**

- Uses words & silence to get to the NEED met
- Uses incoming info in order to get the NEED met
- Uses tone, volume, rhythm to get desired NEED met

**Core Engine is running too HOT or in Trouble**

- BP, RR, HR - fast
- BS - dropping - seeks to rev it back up QUICK
- FEELS pain - NEEDS it to STOP - catch up
- NEEDS immediate relief from distress - takes action to get relief - may hide it from others

**Senses on HIGH alert to get NEEDS met**

- Discrimination & protective working to meet NEED

**Movement & actions focused on getting NEED met**

- Motor memories & praxis - hyper-intense
- Repeats negative COPING - gets stuck

**Personality Traits direct patterns to achieve NEEDS**

- Focused on getting NEEDS met NOW!

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### So Let's Look at Challenging Situations & Options

**What Makes it Better? (using your mature brain to respond)**

**What makes it Worse? (letting your primitive brain take over)**

**For You? (Knowing Yourself - holding yourself accountable)**

**For the Other? (Figuring that Person Out!- *being a chameleon*)**

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**When There are Challenges or Surprises!!!  
Watch out for those Amygdala**

- With Conversations
- With Feedback
- With Partners
- With Supporters

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*Changing the  
Culture of Dementia Care  
One Mind at a Time*

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