




Positive Pandemic Parenting

River's Edge Counselling Centre

Andrea Thrall, MC
Registered Psychologist



Plan for today

- Introduction to the brain
- What do our brains like and how do they get it?
- How might the current pandemic impact our brains?
- Soothing each layer of the brain
- Resources

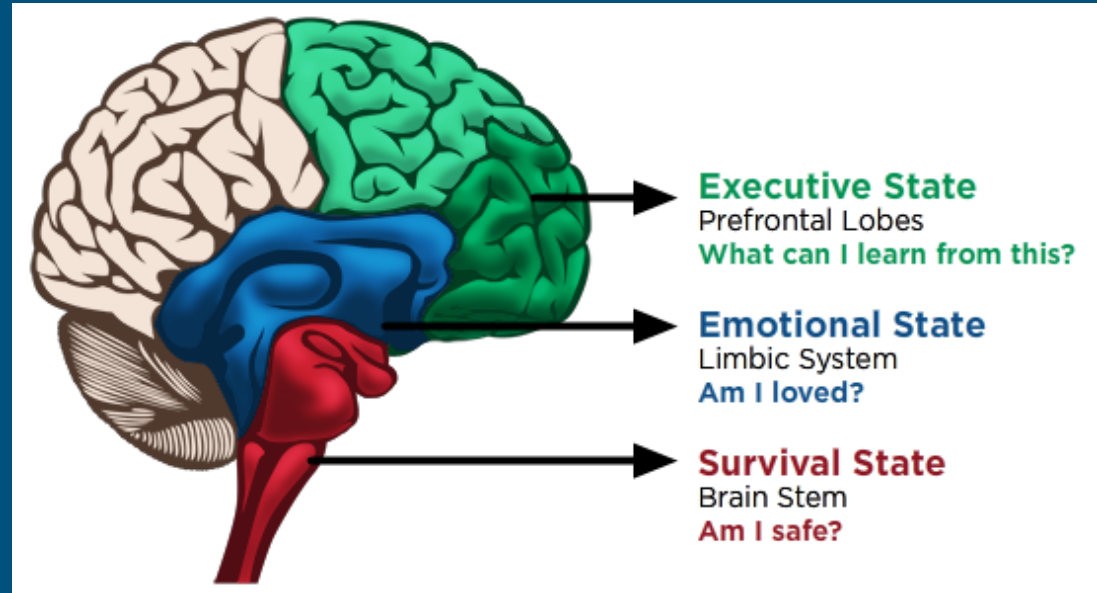
Introduction to the brain

Layers of the brain:

Thinking brain

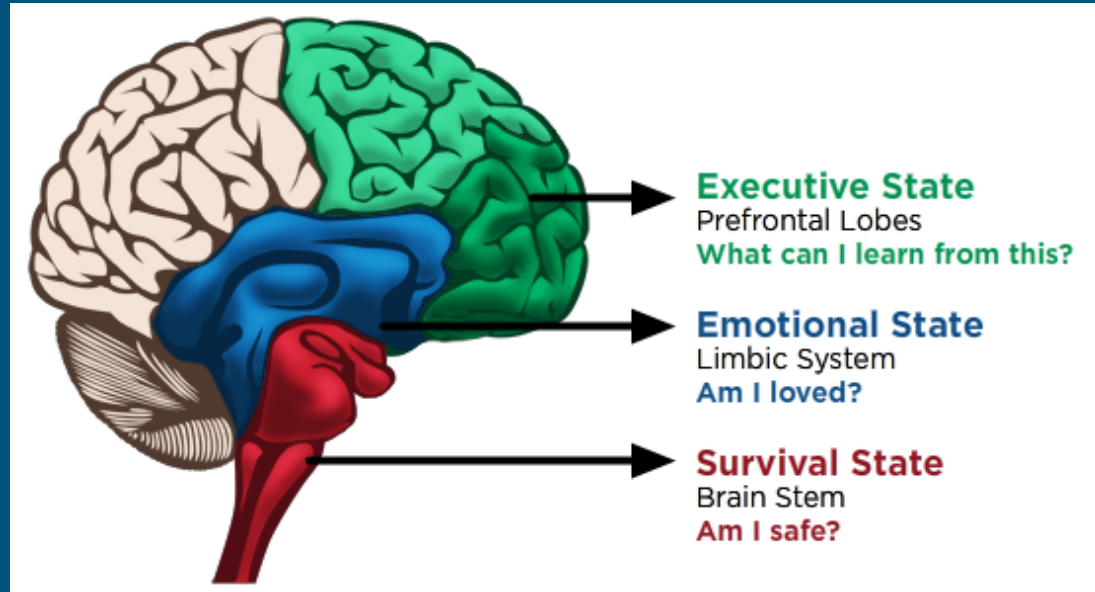
Relating brain

Lizard brain



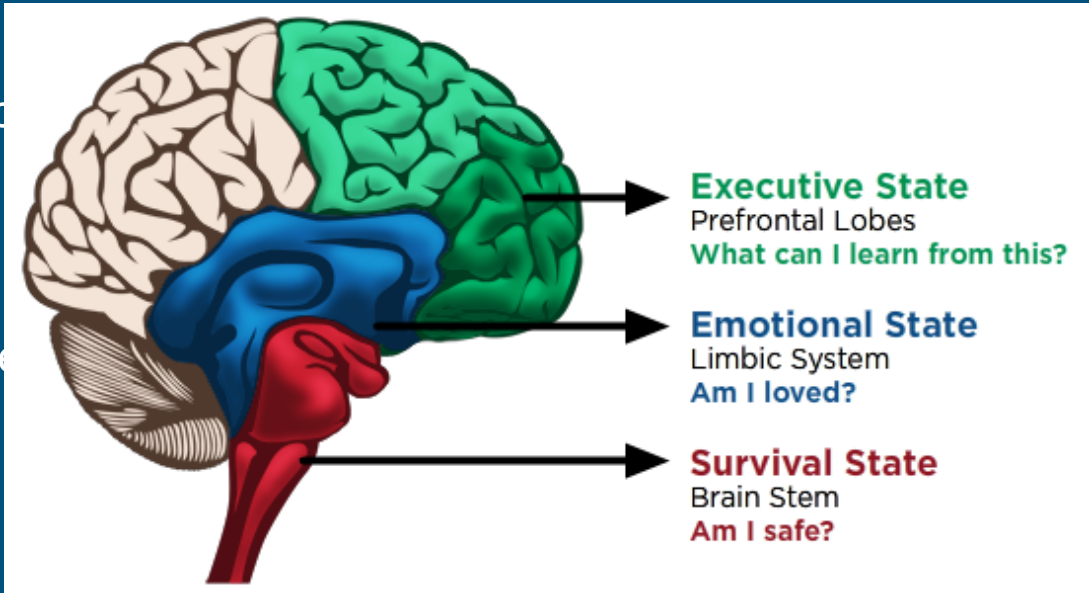
What does the brain like?

- Thinking brain:
Making predictions
- Relating brain:
Feeling connected
- Lizard brain:
Being safe



How do we get what we need?

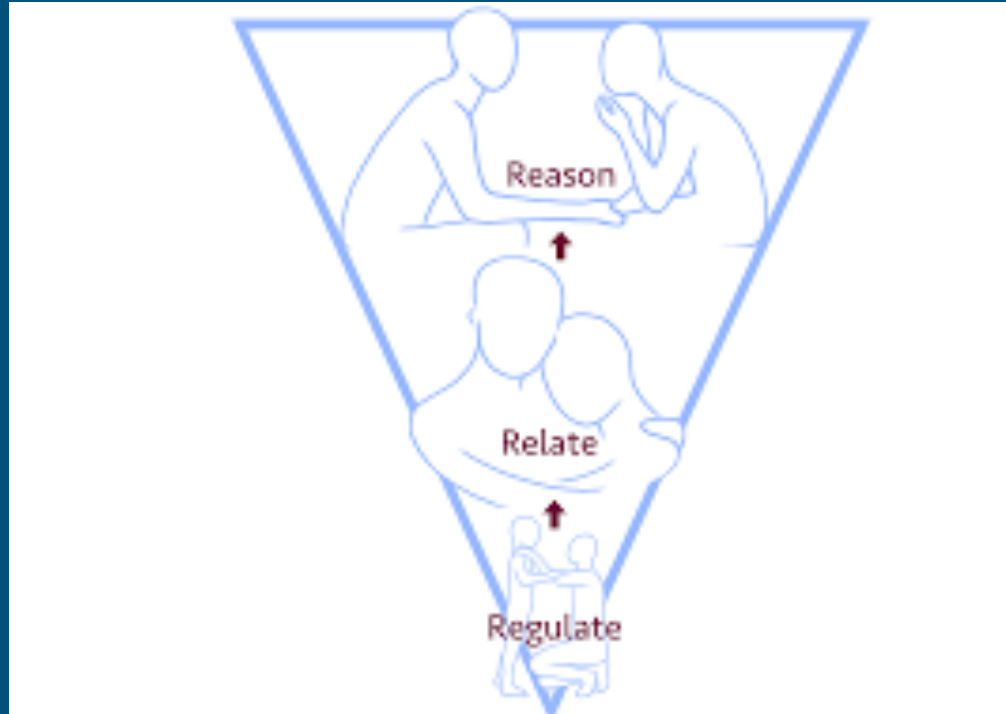
- Thinking brain:
Routine, consistency, stable structure
- Relating brain:
Harmony, closeness, feeling “seen”
- Lizard brain:
Freedom from danger



How might the pandemic impact our brains?

- Thinking brain:
schools closed, working from home, stores closed, previous routines greatly disrupted
- Relating brain:
social distancing practices, lack of social contact with extended supports, potential conflict at home due to “cabin fever”
- Lizard brain:
threat of contracting a harmful virus, triggered by media / conversation about the pandemic

So now what? Soothe from the bottom up

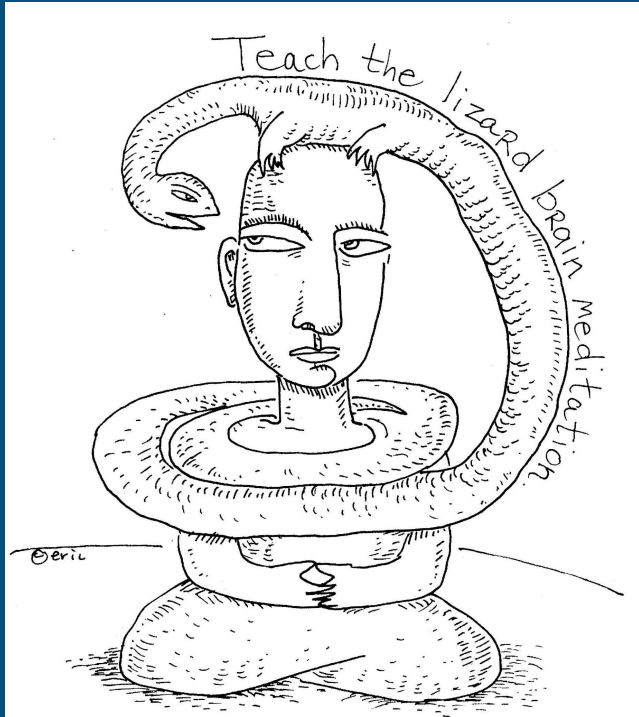


Soothing the Lizard brain

- Limit the amount of information provided to children
(see Lindsey's webinar)
- Where possible, reduce media exposure
- Practice physiological soothing
(belly breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided meditation)



Soothing the Lizard brain continued



- Draw attention to feelings of safety and security
- Communicate calm through voice and facial expressions
- Practice self soothing
(see Kristeen's, Grant's webinars on mindfulness and dealing with anxiety)

Soothing the Relating brain



- Relationship comes first (connect then redirect; long term relational goals / short term behavioral goals / prioritize family time where possible)
- PACE parenting (playful, accepting, curious, empathic)
- Normalize conflict and plan ahead
(see Ramona's webinar for couples)
- Regular contact with family and friends via phone / video calls
(see Cynthia's, Teddie's, Shaheen and Selena's webinars on connection)

Soothing the Thinking brain



- Create and post a daily schedule, include time for play, school, rest, family time (see Rhonda's webinar on reading with kids)
- Consider developing weekly plans
- Take turns for work and parenting responsibilities

Soothing the Thinking brain continued

- Maintain consistent bedtimes and meal times
- Consistent space for school focus
- Realistic expectations
(see Christine's webinars on daily strategies and creating a family manifesto)



Helping your child through difficult emotions

- Name it to tame it
- Cultivate body awareness
- Use emotion faces
- Regulate, relate, reason
- Self soothing toolkit
- Calm down space
- Journaling / drawing feelings
- Feelings books / stories

Resources

Apps

[Mind yeti](#)

[Calm](#)

[Headspace](#)

[Breathe](#)

[Breathe Kids](#)

[Simple habit](#)

[Mindshift](#)

Videos

[Just breathe](#)

[Sesame Street Belly](#)

[Breathing](#)

[Hand model of the brain](#)

Books

[The Whole Brained Child](#)
(Dan Siegel)

[Brainstorm](#)
(Dan Siegel)

[Connected Parenting](#)
(Jennifer Kolari)