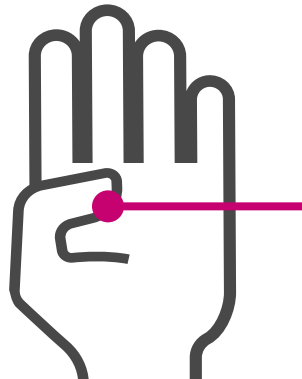


Brain Connection



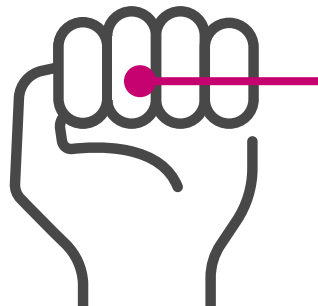
The brain is a powerful tool. Using Mindful and Strength-based practices is an intentional way to keep the brain connected and working in harmony. How does your brain help you?

When all the parts of the brain are working in harmony, emotions and behaviors are expressed in helpful ways. Let's use the hand to show how this is done.



DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN - AMYGDALA

- Alarm center of our big emotions like anger, fear and frustration
- Senses danger
- Interprets the world through five senses
- Triggers Flight, Fight, and Freeze



UPSTAIRS BRAIN - PREFRONTAL CORTEX

- Protects Amygdala
- Allows good choices
- Allows clear thinking
- Manages emotions
- Helps you ask for help



“FLIPPING OUR LID”

- The downstairs brain and the upstairs brain aren't working together
- Can't think clearly
- Not managing emotions well



CONNECTED BRAIN

- Brain working together in harmony
- Making wise decisions
- Using feelings and thinking clearly

Try this:

The next time you start to feel worried, angry, stressed, scared or overwhelmed say, “I’m about to ‘flip my lid’, I need a break.” Knowing when you are about to “flip your lid,” allows you to reconnect the brain by using coping strategies. Once you are calm, you can talk about your feelings and needs.

Concept credit: Daniel J. Siegel, M.D.; Brain Hand Model

Let's build our skills!



I can use the strength of _____ the next time I feel like I'm going to "flip my lid" to ask for a break.

I can use the strength of _____ the next time my "lid is flipped" to reconnect the upstairs brain with the downstairs brain.

How else can I use my strengths to manage my needs and emotions?

I can practice a few mindful strategies every day to work on my brain connection. These are three mindful practices I know or want to try:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



I can be intentional by:

- Learning more about my brain and how it works
- Learning how my brain responds to stress
- Asking for help when I need it
- Asking for a break when I notice I'm about to "flip my lid"
- Understanding warning signs before my "lid is flipped"
- Taking a deep breath before a stressful situation
- Completing a fun activity before I face a challenge

Other: _____



Family Follow up:

- Encourage "I feel" statements
- Practice and encourage mindful strategies together
- Congratulate each other when feelings are communicated in helpful ways
- Identify triggers, warning signs, and take breaks, before the "lid is flipped"
- Use the hand brain model to let others know when you need help
- Hang this up at home as a reminder