

The Four Part Brain

The Person who has Received Love and Safety

General Directions

Your group of four is one person, one brain. Decide on a name for yourself.

Decide among you which will be:

- The lower brain, that manages the body
- The alarm system
- The emotional brain
- The logical, verbal part of the brain

You will enter the room with arms linked as one connected person.

The Logical brain will introduce yourself, saying “Hi, I’m (insert name you have chosen)”

The lower brain, that manages the body: you make statements like “I’m hungry” and “I’m thirsty” and “I’m tired” You clap in a steady, quiet rhythmic beat. The beat is a little faster when something exciting happens, but then returns to normal. You express satisfaction when your needs are met. When asked what you need, you talk about a regular schedule, having your needs met, enough food, etc.

The alarm system: You are nervous when you enter the room. When you get close to someone, you wonder if they are safe. If something moves or makes a noise, you jump. You listen to the other parts of the brain, and your fears are soothed by what they tell you. If something dangerous does happen, you become the leader. When asked what you need, you talk about safety, help, calm.

The emotional brain: You like some things and don’t like others. You are attracted to the pastry and to some people. Others make you uneasy. You feel happy when your needs are met. You are angry if someone bothers you. You listen to the other parts of the body, and your reactions are influenced by what they tell you. When asked what you need, you talk about love, pleasure, the senses.

The logical, verbal brain: You are the leader, the organizer. You evaluate the world around you and make decisions. You coordinate the other parts of the brain. You compare current events with past experiences. You are influenced by the other parts of the brain but not ruled by them. However, if something dangerous happens you check out and let the alarm system take over. When asked what you need, you talk about learning, recognition, skills, stimulation.

The Person who has Received Neglect, Abuse and Attachment Disruptions

General Directions

Your group of four is one person, one brain. Decide on a name for yourself.

Decide among you which will be:

- The lower brain, that manages the body
- The alarm system
- The emotional brain
- The logical, verbal part of the brain

You will enter the room with arms linked as one connected person.

The Logical brain will introduce yourself, saying “Hi, I’m (insert name you have chosen)”

The lower brain, that manages the body: you make statements like “I’m hungry” and “I’m thirsty” and “I’m tired” You clap in a jangled, uneven beat that is sometimes loud, sometimes soft. When your needs are met, you still want more. You jerk the other parts around. When asked what you need, you talk about needing fun rhythmic physical activity to help you feel less jangled.

The alarm system: You are the loudest part of this brain. You are scared when you enter the room. When you get close to someone, you assume they will hurt you and you try to pull the others away. If something moves or makes a noise, you jump high. You cannot hear the other parts of the brain. If something dangerous does happen, you become the leader and over react to assure safety. When asked what you need, you talk about karate lessons, a weapon, locked doors; then, reluctantly, safety.

The emotional brain: You adore some things and hate others. You are attracted to the pastry and need to eat several of them. You are very attracted to some people. Others make you frightened. You never feel that your needs have been met. You are very angry if someone bothers you. You can barely hear the other parts of the body. When asked what you need, you talk about love, love and more love, people who are trustworthy, and lots to eat.

The logical, verbal brain: You are weak and can’t get the attention of the rest of the brain. You evaluate the world around you but find it hard to make decisions. You compare current events with past experiences and conclude that the world is dangerous. You are over ruled by the other parts of the brain. If something dangerous happens you leave altogether and let the alarm system take over. When asked what you need, you talk about needing more strength and skills.

People in the room

One person asks: "I kind of like you. Do you want to go out to lunch?"

One person says: "I want to talk with you about some concerns about your work."

One person says: "I've heard a storm is coming. There may be tornado warnings."

One person stands up and says: "I just received a tornado warning for this area on my phone. We have to seek shelter!"

Later, audience members ask brain parts what they need.



Building Brains

What to Do

1. Use repetitive, rhythmic activities such as peek a boo, hand-clapping activities, tossing a tennis ball back and forth, throwing wadded up paper in a garbage can repeatedly like shooting baskets, throwing a ball against the wall, making up songs, rocking, batting a balloon back and forth or developing a beat by drumming on handy objects such as furniture.
2. Provide rewarding, pleasurable activities done with other people.
3. Create narratives (stories, memories, time lines, books, drawings) of the client's and family's life.
4. Engage in attuned interactions, in which your attention is on the client's and conversation goes back and forth, and you stay connected to his or her mood.
5. Offer activity groups that build skills and provide fun.
6. If you know how incorporate yoga, meditation, and mindfulness.
7. Play a game with the client, establish a back-and-forth movement between yourself and the client.
8. Support the client to be successful in the game, play at their level.
9. Laugh.
10. Incorporate moments of mindfulness in discussions.
11. Use music, games and play to facilitate transition.
12. Notice any client who is having difficulty and engage them in a contest or song or beat.
13. Help client develop awareness of own emotions and their stages and develop tactics for each stage.
14. Teach grounding techniques using the five senses to come back to the present.