





YOUR BRAIN

Wellness Simplified

To establish **Mindfulness Self-Compassion** we need to understand how our brain functions and how it impacts our behaviour and the things that we do on a daily basis. This has everything to do with our brain wellness and stabilizing our nervous system.

This knowledge is very important to get introduced to kids in early childhood as it will continue to benefit them throughout adulthood.

Knowing your brain means, knowing:

-  Why you're able to recollect information?
-  Why you get scared sometimes and fearful of trying new things?
-  What are stress reactions?
-  How to regulate and regain agency?

YOUR BRAIN



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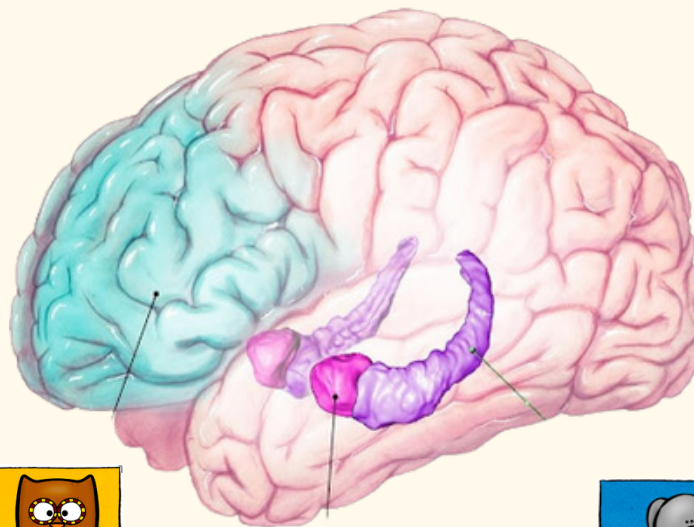
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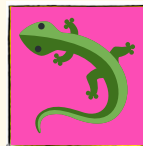
Wellness Simplified

Let's get introduced to our brain.

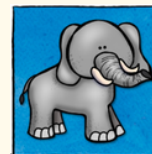
When teaching brain function and parts in early childhood, we need to get creative and playful so that kids are able to feel intrigued and interested in learning & able to retain information. Hence, we use the characters analogy **E.G 'WISE OWL'** and fun play as it is inevitably a memorable way to recall the names of the brain parts and its functions.



Your **prefrontal cortex** is your wise owl 🦉 (smart brain) it helps you think before you act & make wise decisions.



Your **Amygdala** the fearful lizard (protection brain) senses possible danger and keeps you safe.



Your **hippocampus** - the memorable elephant is your memory saving brain 🧠 It helps you learn and store memories.

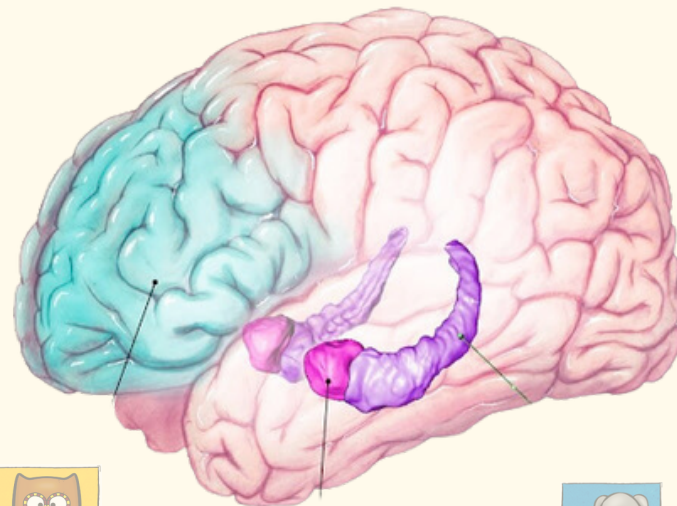
YOUR BRAIN

Fade Away

Now, gradually start **fading away the characters** once your child is engaged and keep repeating the brain part names without the analogy of characters. You might think: “but they are are **Big Words! for my toddler**”. Kids are capable of remarkable vocabulary retention - all studies found that a toddler’s vocabulary & linguistics starts from the early 5. Even if they are unable to repeat the words at first, the mere action of listening will help them retain the information and accelerate their vocabulary later-on.

Second language acquisition skills and vocabulary building **peak at or before age of 6"**

-Dr Karyn Purvis - Founder of Institute Child Development TX Unuversity



**Prefrontal
cortex**



Amygdala



Hippocampus

YOUR BRAIN

Prompts

Poke Kids' Interest and Introduce It All Through Play.



Please don't be discouraged if your precious little ones seems uninterested at first, that is very normal. That's why we come up with different kind of games and visual aids that not only appealing for the child, but they are also interactive, as well. Interaction allows the child to be part of the learning process - they're able to stick brain parts, mix and match and do much more while having fun & learning.





It takes **400 repetitions** to create a new synapse in the brain, unless it is done with **PLAY**. In which case it takes **10-20 repetitions**”

-Dr Karyn Purvis



Instigate a Conversation Afterwards

- * **After a fun outing, ask your child if they had fun and what was the most memorable part of that outing for them?**

Then emphasize that thanks to their hippocampus part of the brain they are able to recall and keep happy memories they had with mama and papa.

This is a great way to teach your child brain wellness as well as to help them cultivate gratitude as well.

- * **if you went out to playground and your child was fearful of trying the swing for the first time or fearful of friendly furry pet.**

You can let them know that is ok to feel uncertain about new things

- thanks to our Amygdala the protection brain trying to keep us safe. And it is ok to try new things with caution especially that mama here with you to help you & answer your questions.

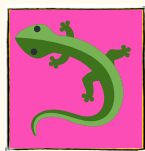
The Amygdala sometimes is tricky and it needs more answers to feel safe. Encourage your child to ask as many questions. The more you answer, the more irrational fears fade away. Then you can gently take their hands & demonstrate to them petting the pet or going into the swing yourself.



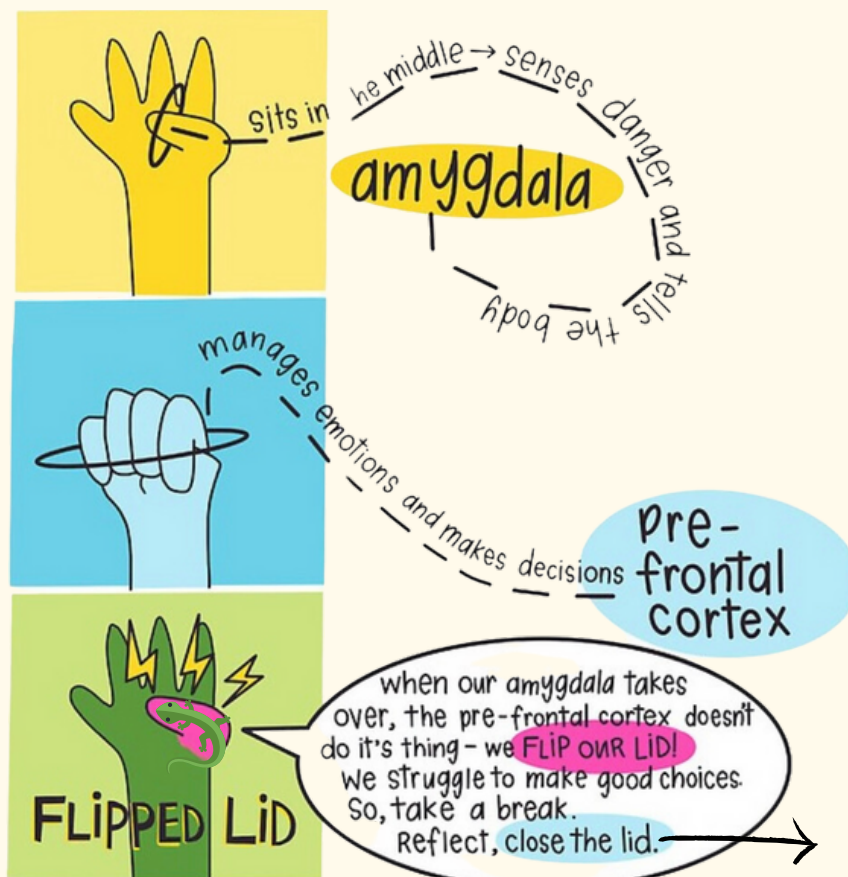
YOUR BRAIN

Don't Flip Your Lid

Hand Model of The Brain



Amygdala



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YOUR BRAIN

Don't Flip Your Lid

When our lid is off we go into sympathetic state (irregulated nervous system) and it can take different forms:

- * **Fight:** In kids it can take form of tantruming, or using their hands in a non kind way. In adults it is no different it can take form of yelling, screaming and aggression.
- * **Flight:** When the child wants to run to escape the situation. It can also take form of procrastination, distraction, and avoidant of perceived threats.
- * **Freeze:** When the child is unable to utter words even if they're verbal, distancing, non responsive. Appear 'spacey' or unable to pay attention, scan the room with their eyes.
- * **Fawn:** Fawn usually is an accumulative response, when we can't fight off or escape a threat, we sometimes have the instinct to comply, appease them, or do anything to make the person less angry or to soothe the situation.

Helpful Tactics

To get into parasympathetic state (regulated nervous system)


READ MORE



Lids we created in class.

1

Notice when the lid is about to flip off

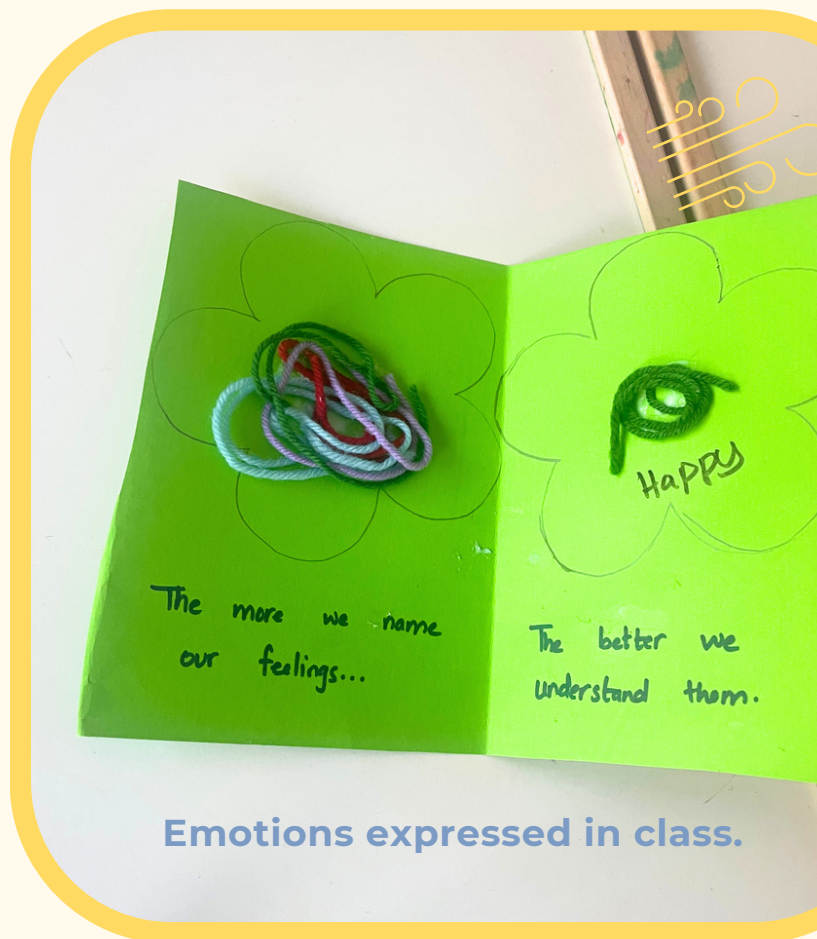
Getting into the habit of noticing when things physically and emotionally feels different. And communicating our emotions and how we feel gives us agency over our reaction. And it is very empowering for the child to have the language to express how they feel -- it gives them a sense of control - that control helps them manage emotions better.

And it helps them catch themselves before they react.

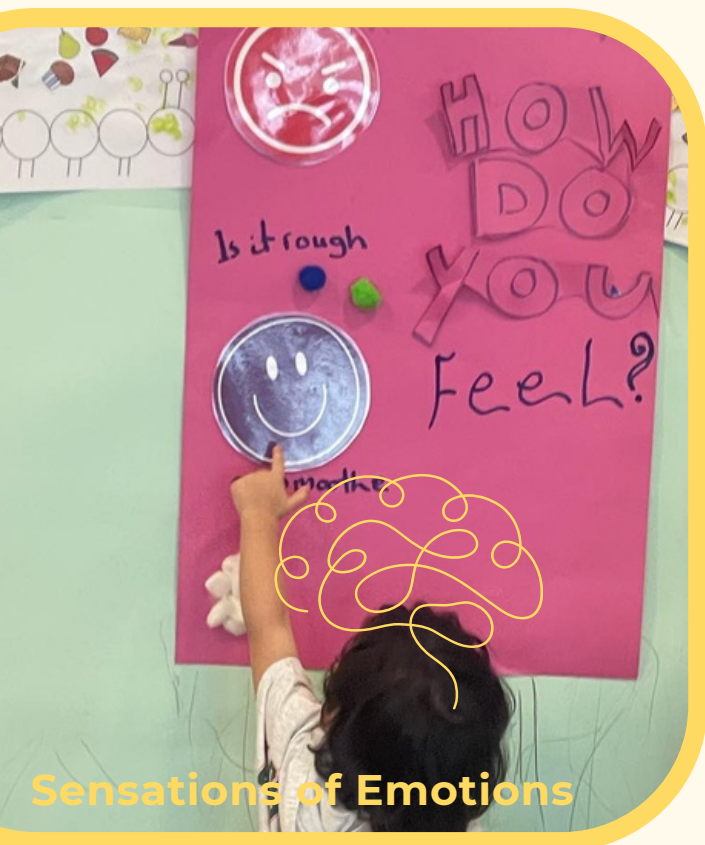
it is an important practice to notice when things are off and catching them before they happen.

2 Naming emotions gives agency

Having a conversation and introducing our little ones to **the big spectrum of feelings**, and how each feeling has a distinctive sensation it gives children the language for what they are experiencing and helps them understand emotions better.



Emotions expressed in class.



Sensations of Emotions

3 Each emotion has a sensation

Here is a list of words to help you have a conversation with your child - describing the sensations they feel in and around their body.

LOCATION of the sensation e.g. 'like how before school your tummy hurts' this might be because of feeling worried or scared.

SIZE or intensity of the sensation. Is it big or small? 'Do you feel your hand start turning into fists?'

TEXTURE is it soft or rough?

TEMPERATURE does it make you hot or cold?

WEIGHT is it heavy, light, gentle or loaded? Do you feel it on your chest or shoulder like it is weighing you down.

PACE is it fast, slow or it flows

VIBRATION is it shaky, throbbing, tingling, or is it calm.

PAIN is it sharp, dull, strong, sore, numb, or just uncomfortable.

Giving children the ability to put feelings into words is very important! empowering them with the right tools. To be aware, patient, and empathetic.





4 Breathe to close lid down

Make breathing a habit in restfulness. So that it can be easily accessed when needed in a difficult time. Practicing breathing at home at resting/fun/playing times rewires the brain and gives access to the child to use the method easily when they are experiencing a difficult situation or emotion.

Here we made a fun **pinwheel breathing exercise**

To help regulate our friend the lizard when he is spiraling out of control so that he is able to use his rational brain **PFC**.



Hand Model of The Brain

Don't Flip Your Lid



Helpful Tip For Brain Wellness

Limit Screen Time

Limit screen time to an absolute minimum (Kids under 5 should have less than 1 hour of screen time per day) -American Pediatrics Association. Screens in general have an opposite effect to what we consolidate in mindfulness and has opposite effect to brain wellness. **It gets a child over-stimulated, bored, decrease focus and attention.**

Risks of Screen Time

- Stunted brain development.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Exposure to advertisements.
- Eye-strains headaches.
- Distributed sleep.
- Less socialization.
- Inability to focus.
- Induced stimulus.



According to the American Association of Pediatrics:

- 0-24 months** Should not have access to screen time unless video calling a family member.
- 2-5 years** should have less than 1 hour of screen time per day.
- 5+ years** should have limited 1 to 2 hours under supervision.

Helpful Resources



- **Brodovsky, B., & Kiernan, K. (2017). How to talk to children about fight, flight and freeze**
- **Naish, S. (2018). The a-z of therapeutic parenting**
- **Tips for Staff and Advocates Working With Children: Washington, DC. Integrating Trauma-Informed Practice To Promote Wellbeing in Children.**



ABOUT LAMA AHMED

Mindfulness | Facilitator | Educator

Certified Mental Health First Aider



Emotional Intelligence Facilitator by SkillPath.

Trained in **Trauma Informed Practice** by TCTSY
JRI in MA Boston.

Lama has engaged in a **disciplined personal mindfulness practice for over 8 years** and transformed her knowledge through **Mindful Leader®** to businesses in which she trained hundreds of Professors, faculty members, CEOs and business executives. Lama is trained in Mindfulness Self Compassion, Mindfulness of Emotions and Stress-Reduction **MBSR**.



BROWN



ABOUT LAMA AHMED

Mindfulness | Facilitator | Educator

Lama is a Communication Specialist by profession, trained in **Mindfulness of Emotions** directly under Suvas Vajracharya – Chair, Founder, and WELLKIND's executive board of directors. Lama is trained in **Mindfulness- Based Stress Reduction - MBSR** from Brown University NY. A program by Dr. John Kabat Zen. Lama is trained in **Trauma Informed Practice** and has 20h of training Trauma Center TCTSY + 20 supervised hours – from Justice Resource Institute- JRI in MA Boston (Trained under the supervision of the EU division with Esther VD Sande – Somatic Psychotherapist – EMDR Clinician). And **Emotional Intelligence Facilitator** by SkillPath a program by Daniel Goleman, Ph.D. Lama is a **Registered Yoga Teacher** certified with Yoga Alliance organization.

Lama created **Mindful Leader**® based on her diverse background working with a vast community of adults in leadership roles, young adults in the workforce, and the knowledge gathered from using different scientific evidence-based disciplines. With an intent to create program that is effective, applicable to our region, and most importantly empowering (doesn't require individuals to be co-dependent but rather independently know how to use the tools they have at their disposal with the liberty to shape them as they see fits. Part of which is **Mindful Happy Childhood**® Curriculum that was created after working 4 years with children with focus on the early years and mindfulness.