

## BUILDER SERIES: THE BRAIN PT 1 “OVERVIEW”

### ***Basic Facts about the Amygdala (“Amanda the Amygdala”)***

She is our body guard, also known as our “car alarm”

She is mature at birth

May not grow in size, but becomes powerful with traumatized

Amanda cannot tell the difference between physical and emotional danger and so she sends an alarm for both. She also cannot tell true danger from false alarms nor the difference between big danger vs small danger.

The Amygdala is what teaches babies that their world is or is not safe.

### ***Overview of the 3 main parts of the brain:***

#### **Prefrontal Cortex (“The Computer”)**

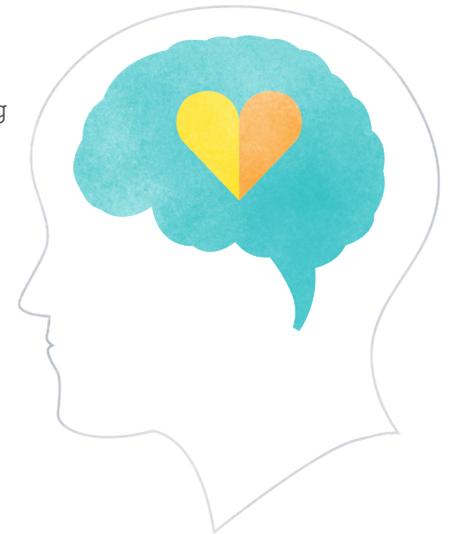
- Logical part of our brain
- Controls Problem Solving, Impulse Control, and Decision Making

#### **Midbrain (“The Puppy Brain”)**

- Emotional brain
- Where our guilt lives
- Always looks for connection, attachment, and attunement

#### **Brainstem (“The Reptile Brain”)**

- Physical State: Fight, Flight, or Freeze
- When in this part of the brain, you cannot access memories
- This is the only part of the brain that CAN'T learn



When we get triggered, our amygdala goes off, and we “flip our lid.” When this happened, the prefrontal cortex shutdown and the amygdala takes charge. The amygdala proceeds to turn on our brainstem and we go into fight, flight, or freeze. We go into survival mode. This can look like: Screaming, shutting down, slamming downs, running away, etc.



## What to do when someone's lid is flipped:

1. Utilize grounding techniques. Use concrete details to help the prefrontal cortex regulate. Example: "It's Thursday. You are in the classroom. You are wearing a red shirt. You wore your favorite pair of shoes today. We just finished math and are about to go to recess."
2. Use the phrase, "You're safe." This helps calm the amygdala down and allow the prefrontal cortex to turn back on. Make sure the body language and tone you use are also demonstrating safety.
3. Reflect, Observe, and Track their behavior. Say the things you see, hang with them during this time and don't abandon them. Abandoning kids and putting them in the hallway or sending them to time-out often reiterates that they are not, in fact, safe.

OUR ULTIMATE GOAL WHEN A KID IS UPSET IS NOT TO  
TEACH THEM DURING MOMENT. OUR JOB IS TO HELP THEM  
REGULATE AND TEACH THEM THAT THEY ARE SAFE WITH YOU.



KIDS WITH TRAUMA FLIP THEIR LIDS FASTER DUE TO BEING  
IN A CONSTANT STATE OF SEEKING FOR SAFETY.

*\*This information is a compilation of Grow and Guide Kids, Becky Bailey, Dan Siegel, and Tina Bryson.*

