

La Saarvel Zhalii

(The Beautiful Human Brain)



Understanding Your Brain and How to Cope
with Big Emotions and Behaviors

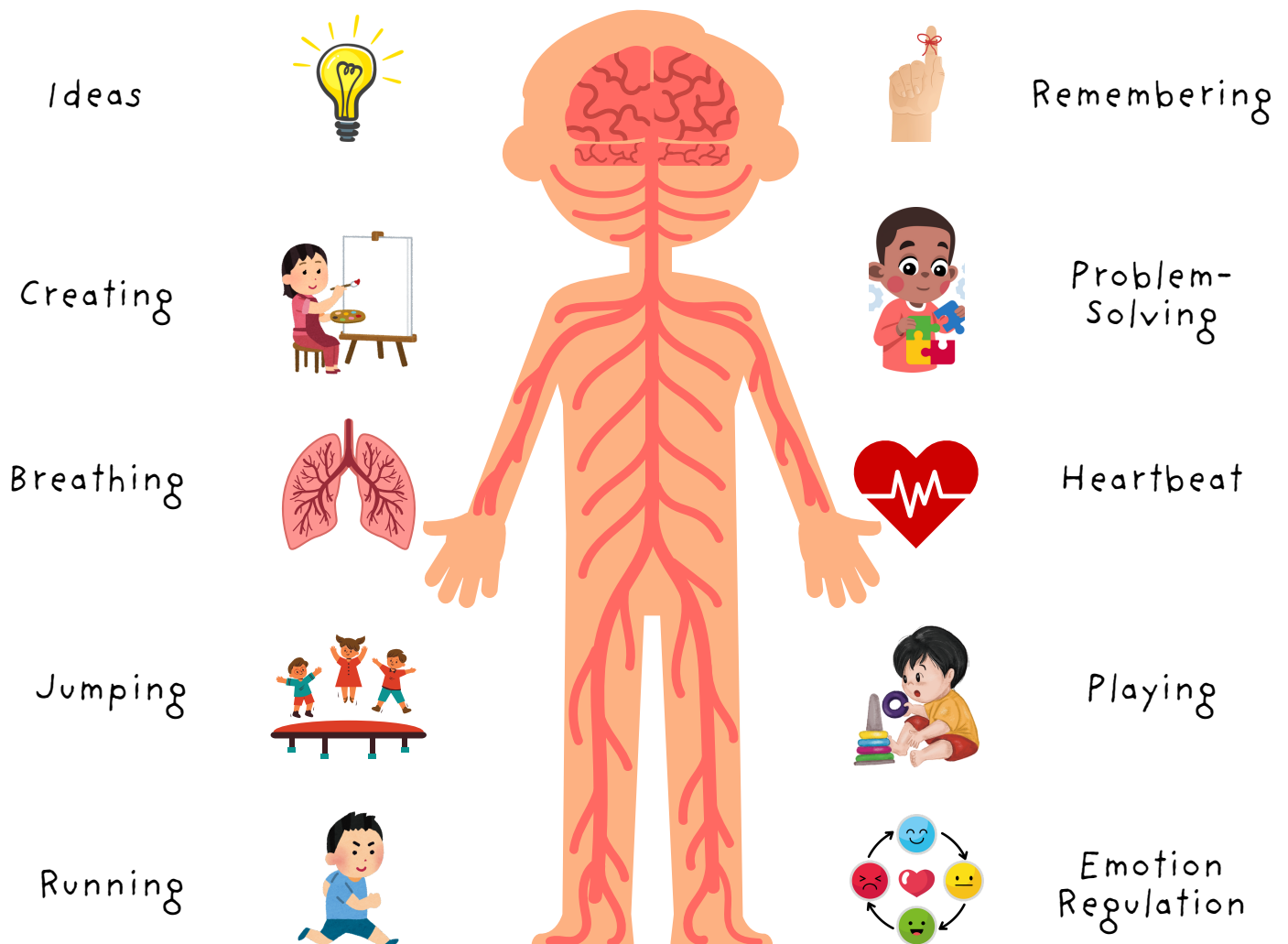


Lii Michif Otipemisiwak
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Our brain does so many amazing things for us! In fact, the brain not only is in charge of all of the essential functions that we need to be alive, but the brain and nervous system are behind everything we do too! They are the most important organ and system in our body.

What Our Brain Does



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The Brain is Behind Everything

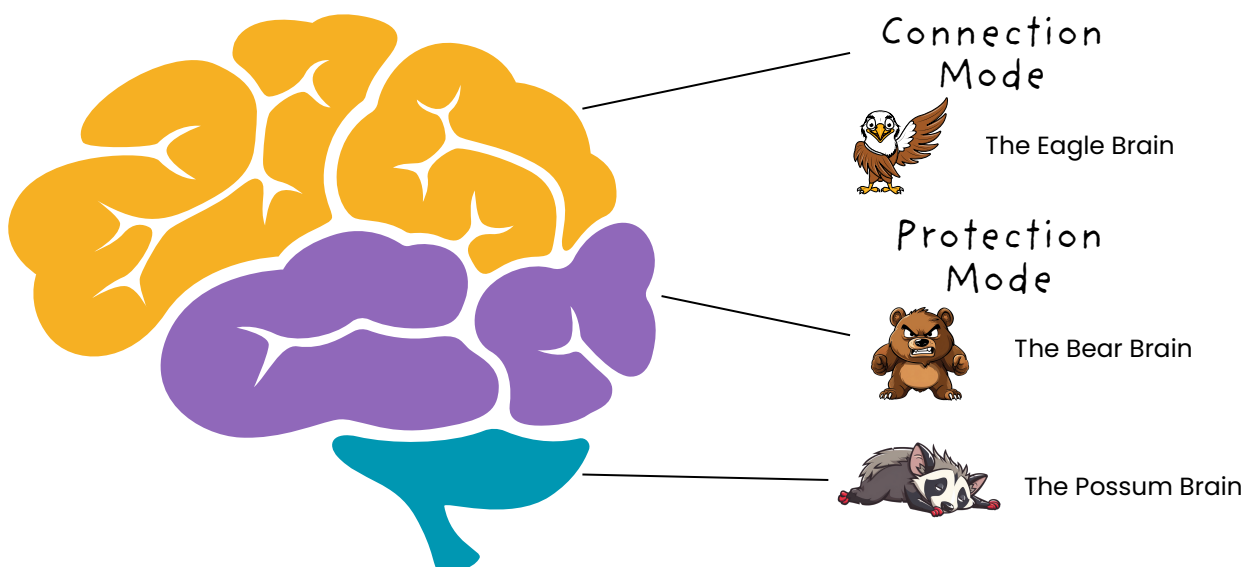
Your brain is behind everything from breathing, heart rate, remembering, walking, painting and doing math. Nothing happens in our body without the brain being involved and that includes how we feel and behave as well.

When you feel an emotion like sadness or anger, your brain is telling you how you feel on the inside, and your behaviour will show those feelings to others on the outside. So, really, your behaviour is just a way for your brain to show others what is happening inside you.

To get a clearer understanding of how your brain works, think of it as having two modes: connection or protection. So that means when it comes to your behaviour, your brain is either working in connection mode or protection mode, and the behaviours that result from each mode are very different.

When your brain is in connection mode, you feel safe inside, happy and playful. You are able to cooperate, be creative and problem-solve. Protection mode is essentially the opposite of connection mode, but it has two different ways of working. When your brain is in protection mode, you don't feel safe, and you might feel angry or scared. You might want to argue with family or hide in your room. You probably won't be able to cooperate, think of new ideas, or problem-solve.

When you are feeling safe and happy you are working from the eagle brain. The eagle brain is wise, regulated and connected. When you are feeling angry or afraid and have a lot of energy that might make you yell, hit or break things, you are working from the bear brain. The bear brain is protective, fearful or dysregulated. The third way your brain works is through the possum brain. Like the bear brain, the possum brain will take charge when you feel afraid, but instead of yelling, hitting or breaking things, you want to hide away from what you are feeling.



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How Eagle, Bear and Possum Brain Work Together

Each of the three brains serves an important purpose in our survival. When we are in danger or think we are in danger, our bear and possum brains activate to protect us, while our eagle brain takes a nap. The problem is, most of the time, we are not in as much danger as our bear and possum brains think we are. Sometimes we have big feelings about something because our protection brain is working and our connection brain is sleeping.

The goal is not to make the bear and possum brains go away. Instead, we want to make our eagle brain stronger so we can feel safer and more connected to the world around us. When the eagle brain is strong, we are better able to cope with the ups and downs of life because we are able to stay in our connection brain more often, and all three of our brains can work together.

When we strengthen our eagle brain, we are making ourselves better at noticing when we are upset or scared and learning different ways to deal with our big feelings. We will encounter something that upsets us or scares us, but our eagle brain will notice that we need help and will wrap their big wings around us, making us feel safe and bringing all three brains together in connection. The stronger our eagle brain is, the bigger its wings are and the bigger window of tolerance becomes. A big window of tolerance means we have more ability to adapt to life's challenges.

When the eagle brain is weak or small, its wings can't wrap around the bear and possum brains to help them feel safe. In that case, the window of tolerance is smaller, making it more likely that we will shift into our bear or possum brain and get stuck there. Without the safety of the eagle brain, our behaviour will reflect the big feelings of the bear and possum brain. We might yell, hit, lie, break things, swear, run away or freeze up because we feel threatened or in danger.

We can strengthen our eagle brain by practicing regulation in two ways: co-regulation and self-regulation. Co-regulation is when we borrow the eagle brain of someone who feels safe and trustworthy. Self-regulation happens when you become aware that you're not in your eagle brain and use a learned regulation skill to bring your eagle brain back.



"I am in
Danger!"



"It's okay, you are safe."



"I don't know
what to do."

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Co-Regulation - Borrow the Eagle Brain of a Safe Person

The first step of co-regulation is identifying who is a safe person. A safe person is someone who...



Loves and accepts you as you are.



Listens with Empathy



Doesn't Try to Change the Way You Feel



Apologizes When They Hurt You



Is Patient and Kind



Helps You Grow

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Regulation Strategies to Strengthen the Eagle Brain

There are six different categories of activities that can help strengthen your eagle brain and regulate your nervous system.



Body Movement:

Stretching
Pushing or lifting
Wall push-ups
Scribble drawings
Animal poses



Bi-Lateral Integration:

Swinging
Rocking
Stomp & roar
Clap & tap your legs
Butterfly taps



Repetitive Sounds:

Drumming
Humming
Singing
Silly voices
Animal noises



Grounding Exercises:

5 Senses Activity
Strong roots
Heart hug
Legs in air



Breathing Practice:

Blow bubbles
Box breathing
Cookie breathing
Stomp stomp blow



Energy Releasing:

Shake and dance
Squeeze a pillow
Grow like a tree
Butterfly stretch

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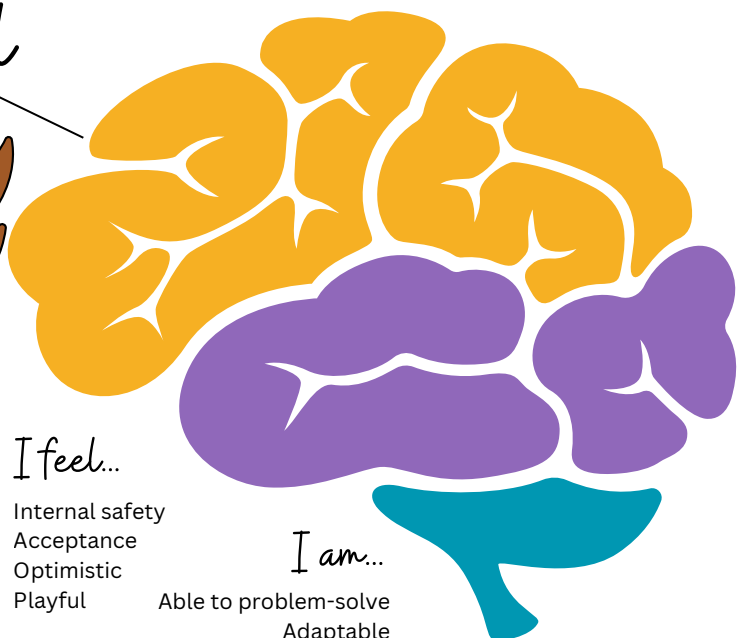
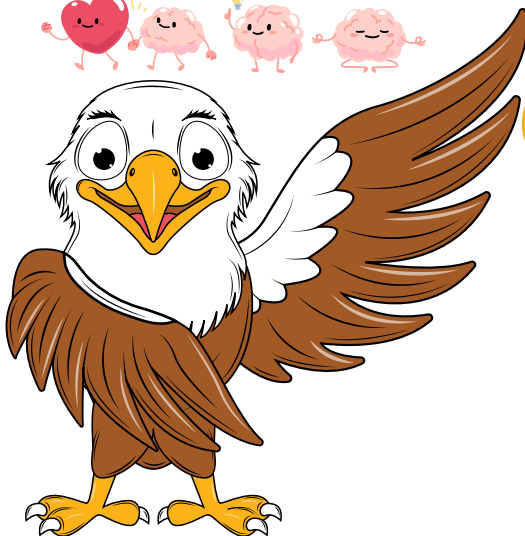
La Saarvel l'Aegl - The Eagle Brain

Eagles are considered to be sacred messengers connecting the earthly realm and the spirit world. They are wise, strong and courageous leaders. When la Saarvel l'Aegl wraps its beautiful big wings around you, you will feel safe and centred, so you can think clearly, adapt to change and cooperate with others. When la saarvel l'aegl is active, you might feel curious, present, engaged in learning, focused, relaxed, happy, and able to communicate and understand the feelings of others.

What turns on my eagle brain?

What does my eagle brain feel like?

La Saarvel l'Aegl
Connected. Wise. Regulated



I feel...

Internal safety
Acceptance
Optimistic
Playful

I am...

Able to problem-solve
Adaptable
Attuned

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La Saarvel aen Noor - The Bear Brain

The strength of a bear is associated with warrior-like qualities, and bears are considered to be protective, guiding spirits. When your bear brain is turned on, you might feel like you are in danger! You might be angry, impulsive, anxious, tense or like you want to run away. Your heart might be beating really fast, and you might feel panicked or overwhelmed. Sometimes, the bear brain makes you say things you don't mean, hit the people you love or break things.

What turns on my bear brain?

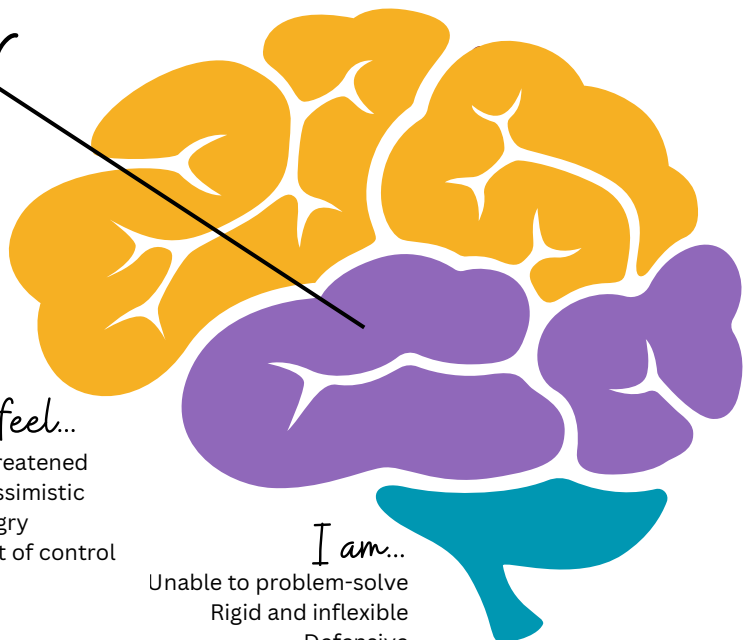
What does my bear brain feel like?

La Saarvel aen Noor
Protective. Fearful. Dysregulated.



I feel...
Threatened
Pessimistic
Angry
Out of control

I am...
Unable to problem-solve
Rigid and inflexible
Defensive



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La Saarvel aen Possum - The Possum Brain

Possums are considered to be resourceful and intelligent. They seem to know when to hide and when it's safe to move forward. Possums are believed to be here to take care of the world's children through means other than fighting. Possums embody peaceful transitions and conflict avoidance. When your possum brain is turned on you might feel stuck, frozen, hopeless or even numb. You want to avoid situations that are scary or stressful so you shut down your brain completely.

What turns on my possum brain?

What does my possum brain feel like?

La Saarvel aen Possum

Shutdown. Frozen. Overwhelmed.



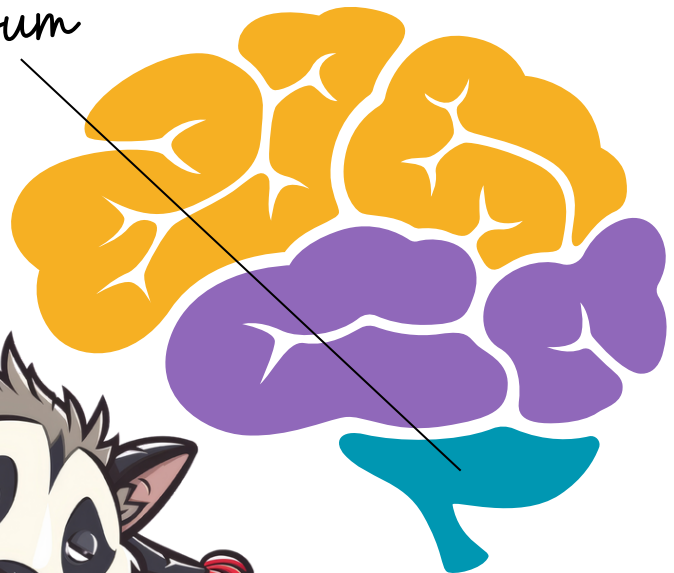
I feel...

Terrified
Withdrawn
Powerless



I am...

Stuck in fear
Unable to process
Just trying to survive



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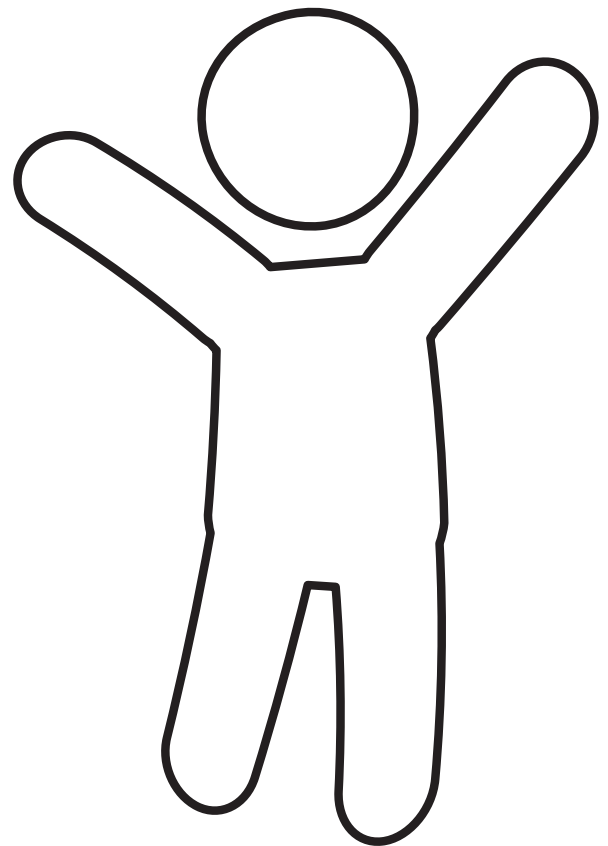
La Saarvel aen Noor - The Bear Brain

Now let's put all of what we've learned together. In the bubbles below, write or draw about your bear brain and plan the ways you will bring your eagle brain back.

What turns on my bear brain?

A large, empty orange rounded rectangle intended for a child to write or draw their response to the question.

How my bear brain feels in my body.



How I will bring my eagle brain back.

A large, empty orange rounded rectangle intended for a child to write or draw their response to the question.

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La Saarvel aen Possum - The Possum Brain

Now let's put all of what we've learned together. In the bubbles below, write or draw about your bear brain and plan the ways you will bring your eagle brain back.

What turns on my
possum brain?

A large, empty, rounded rectangle with an orange background, intended for the user to write or draw their response to the question about what turns on their possum brain.

How my possum brain
feels in my body.

How I will bring my eagle
brain back.

A large, empty, rounded rectangle with an orange background, intended for the user to write or draw their response to the question about how they will bring their eagle brain back.