The ACTIVATED Brain

Communicating Well during Stressful Times
Who We Are

Youth Catalytics, established in 1981, grew out of the belief that strong organizations create healthy communities, and healthy communities create healthy youth. We bring training, research, evaluation, fund development, and best practices to youth-serving organizations and professionals, making them stronger and better at what they do. Our clients and partners include multi-service agencies, schools, communities, government systems, universities and foundations from Maine to Hawaii.

www.youthcatalytics.org
Disclaimer

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Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Adolescent Health.
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Director of Training

Cindy trains around North America on positive adolescent brain development, youth engagement, LGBTQ topics, and other topics. She has extensive experience in both managing and evaluating programs and large grant-funded projects and delivering innovative services to young people.
Stand (or raise your hand) if you ever …

- said something that was misinterpreted
- talk to people when they are stressed
- expressed information or opinions that were different from someone else’s
- talked to someone during challenging times and didn’t get your point across
- attended a training on brain based presentation
What will you learn today?

**PARTICIPANTS WILL …**

- Use the brain Activation Scale to identify level of emotional activation in others
- Explore brain-based presentation practices designed to increase transfer of learning and ‘sticky’ communication
- Practice short mindfulness techniques you may use to calm your audience’s emotional states
Agenda

• Brief review of typical brain development
• Brief review of the impact of stress and trauma history on brain functions
• Explore the use of the activation scale
• Explore brain-based mindfulness and presentation practices
Activation Scale

- Terror
- Fear
- Alarm
- Alert
- Calm

High Activation

Low Activation
Brain Activation

CORTICAL
Alert State
Abstract Thought
Concrete Thought
Affiliation
Attachment
Sexual Behavior
Emotional Reactivity

LIMBIC
Alarm State
Motor Regulation
“Arousal”
Appetite/Satiety

MIDBRAIN
Fear State
Sleep

BRAIN STEM
Terror State
Blood Pressure
Heart Rate
Body Temperature
Hyperarousal

• Vigilance – What’s going on?

• Resistance – You can’t make me!

• Defiance – I won't!

• Aggression – I’ll fight!
Dissociation

• Vigilance – What’s going on?

• Avoidance – Please don’t notice me.

• Compliance – I will do anything, just leave me alone

• Dissociation – I’m not here!
Activation Process

Working with your table mates….

1. ID potential triggers in our messages
2. What behavior might you see in listeners
3. Answer: How might we tailor our message to decrease activation?

You have 5 – 8 minutes.
Messages that trigger activation

- Counter to one’s values
- Threaten
- Dictate, undermine authority
- Different from common beliefs
- Reflect opposing views
- Lack clarity
- Lack empathy
- Deliver bad news

Bomb with lit fuse
Overview of Brain Functions

1. Palace Guard
2. WIIFM?
3. The Mail Carrier
4. Brooklyn Bridge
5. Mover & Shaker
6. Learning to Drive

Amygdala
Hypothalamus
Hippocampus
Corpus Callosum
Cerebellum
Frontal Lobes
“So, what?”
This is what the world will look like if your audience does what you want them to do.

**Corpus Callosum and Frontal Lobes**

**VALUE**
Make your audience nod back at you in agreement

**Hypothalamus**

**ASK**
What one, specific thing do you want them to do?

**Frontal Lobes**

**BARRIER**
(Overcome the Barrier)
Your response when your audience says, “Yeah, but…”

**Amygdala and Hypothalamus**

**Brain in the Message Box**
Anatomy of a Sticky Message

- **Senses**
- **Thalamus**
- **Hypothalamus**
- **Hippocampus**
- **Amygdala**
- **Short-Term Memory**
- **Long-Term Memory**
What do you perceive?
Engage the Senses!

- Create visually attractive materials
- Use music
- Provide textures
- Cater to pleasant smells
- Stimulate taste
- Short movie clips
Amygdala
Stories Describe Challenges
Soothe the Amygdala

• Breathe
• Welcome
• Quickly encourage comfort
• Provide the agenda
• Clarify breaks
• Housekeeping
• Arouse the Amygdala with CURiosity!
While safety is KEY, CURIOSITY is precious!
Based on what you know about the brain, what is the best time of year for learning?
Nudge a Neighbor!

June through August when the hours of daylight are the longest!
Finding RELEVANCE

- Answer WIIFM in objectives
- Create presentation from audience’s perspective
- Connect info to work
- Maintain a physically comfortable environment
Hippocampus

Short-Term Memory

Eating a Cookie

Amygdala
Hypothalamus

Long-Term Memory
Creating Powerful Memories

• How do you create powerful memories?
• Novelty
• Engages multiple senses
• Using interactive approaches
• Strong emotions
Corpus Callosum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEFT HEMISPHERE</th>
<th>RIGHT HEMISPHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Motor activity on right side of the body</td>
<td>• Motor activity on left side of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language</td>
<td>• Spatial manipulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Detail</td>
<td>• Holistic perception (&quot;Gist&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequence</td>
<td>• Face Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Logical thought based on language</td>
<td>• Interpersonal and emotional processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Memory creation</td>
<td>• Memory retrieval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicating to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

**LEFT HEMISPHERE** ↔ **RIGHT HEMISPHERE**

- Research
- Opportunities to create plans
- Opportunities to strategize
- Opportunities to place things in order

- *Stories* and metaphor
- Images
- Opportunities to use creativity and imagination, to recognize patterns,
- Opportunities to fit your information into a larger whole
When the bum is numb, so is the BRAIN!
Prime (5) -> Move (2) -> Content (12) -> Move (2) -> Content (12) -> Review (5)

50 mins.
Won’t You be My Neighbor?!

• Pick a new neighbor
• Tell your neighbors 2 or 3 movement related things you could do in your conversations with decision makers.
• Pick an original to share with the whole group!
Easy Movement Enhancements

• Walking meetings
• Hand manipulatives
• Turning and talking
• Bending and writing
• Rolling head and shoulders
• Stretching
• Cerebellum activity
• Wiggling arms and legs
• “Dominant Eye”
• “Stand if you’ve ever…”
Accessing the EXECUTIVE Functions

• Guess one of the frontal lobes’ favorite activities….
• PREDICTING or guessing!
• Provide time for reflection
• This can be incorporated into the training commitment and meeting follow-ups
THE YEAR IN NEWS from ECHELON INSIGHTS

What America talked about in 2014, as viewed through 184.5 million Twitter mentions.
Embedded in Report Design

The Solar Annual Report
Capture the Whole Brain

A  UPPER LEFT

Left Mode Thinking Processes

LOGICAL
ANALYTICAL
FACT BASED
QUANTITATIVE

B  LOWER LEFT

Limbic Mode Thinking Processes

ORGANIZED
SEQUENTIAL
PLANNED
DETAILED

C  LOWER RIGHT

D  UPPER RIGHT

Cerebral Mode Thinking Processes

HOLISTIC
INTUITIVE
INTEGRATING
SYNTHESIZING

INTERPERSONAL
FEELING BASED
KINESTHETIC
EMOTIONAL
One Final Note
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