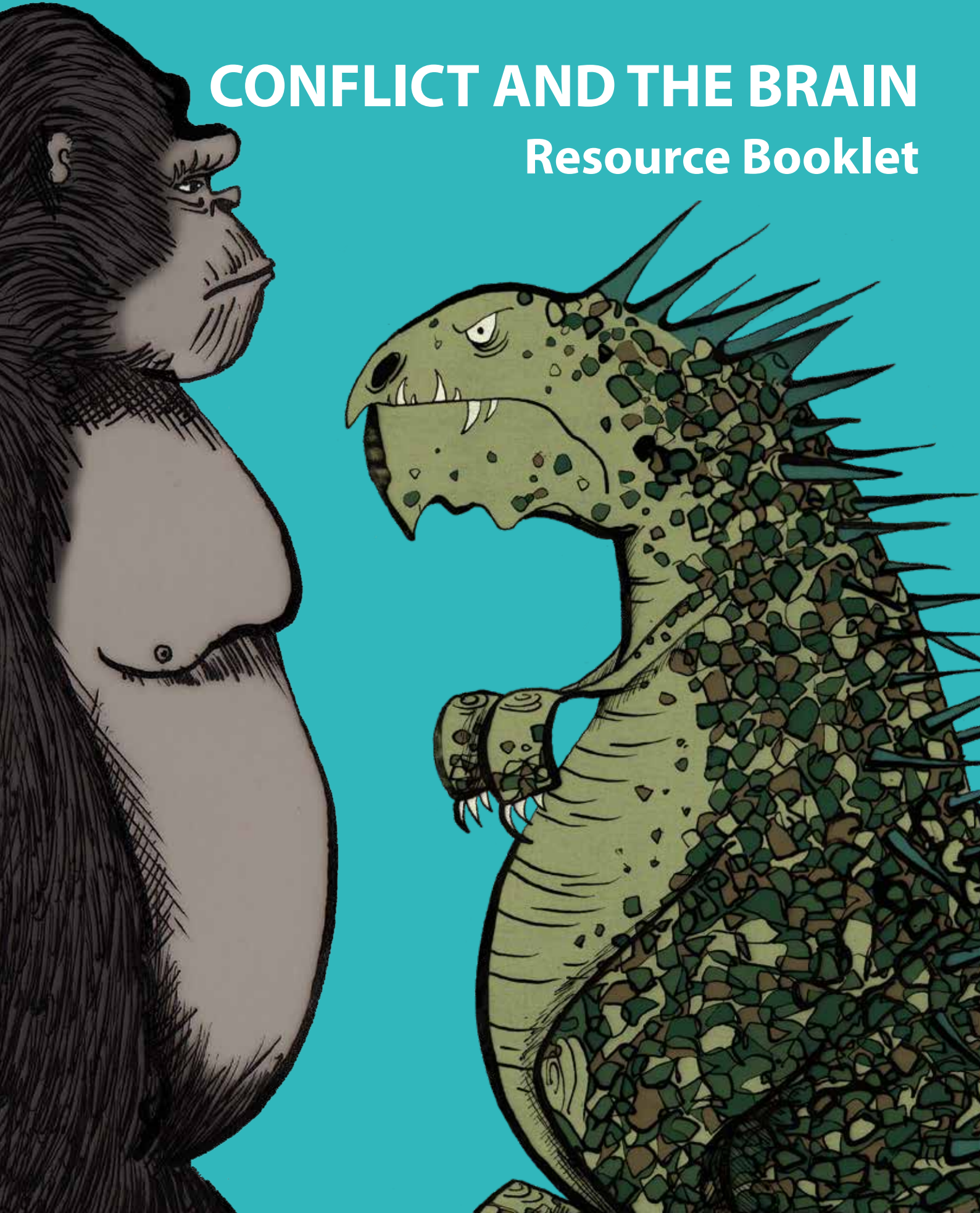


# CONFLICT AND THE BRAIN

## Resource Booklet



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# INTRO AND THANK YOU

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“We particularly wanted to illustrate the connections between our bodily energy and thinking mind and what role that plays in how we relate to one another [...] It’s the science of conflict and we hope to have created a resource that helps us all better understand why we feel and behave the way we do.”

Dr Sara Watkin  
SCCR Medical Advisor

Conflict and disagreements happen in all our lives for a myriad of reasons, often with minimal consequences, however sometimes the impact can be devastating and debilitating, with the propensity to affect our relationships, life chances, mental health and wellbeing.

Whilst we recognise the importance of relationships with others, we also know that the internet, digital technology and accessing information has changed the way we now learn, seek knowledge, information and advice. With thanks to **Scottish Government’s Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention and ALEC funding**, the Cyrenians’ Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) has built on our expertise to address the need for new and creative solutions to current problems. Working in collaboration with Dr Sara Watkin (Children and Adolescent Mental Health specialist) we have developed a series of new and innovative digital multi-media psychoeducational resources, animated films and workshops which are now readily accessible and freely available via the SCCR website:

**[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)**.

This booklet brings together, for the first time, our internationally popular quizzes **Monkey Vs Lizard** and **Keep The Heid**, as well as our interactive and digital **Meet your Emotional Homunculus and the Brain’s Amazing Drugs Cabinet**, with examples of how you might want to use these resources - in groups or one-to-one sessions, in the classroom or for running workshops.

The SCCR resources provide exciting opportunities to explore: mental health and wellbeing, conflict, family and social relationships combining as it does the science of brain chemistry and evolution. Our creative approach engages audiences with an understanding of conflict, the brain (neuroscience), child development, trauma, emotions, neurochemicals, actions and reactions and their impact on mental health and social cohesion.

Our sincere note of thanks must go to all of the organisations, agencies and individuals who have supported us and collaborated on these psychoeducational digital developments, as we strive to ensure families across Scotland are best placed to positively transform conflict and to form nurturing relationships.

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# OUR RESOURCES

“I’m hugely impressed by the quality of SCCR’s products, so I have no doubt at all that the new resources will be of real value to children and young people, parents and carers, and practitioners.”

Maree Todd MSP  
Minister for Children and  
Young People



## SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE

Scientific knowledge belongs to everyone!

Which is why the SCCR takes academic and professional knowledge and distils it down to create accessible, engaging and informative content with universal appeal.

By working across scientific and healthcare disciplines (Neurobiology, Evolutionary Biology Clinical Psychology and Childhood Trauma) as well as engaging artists, filmmakers and designers we deliver our original, innovative and multimedia work across digital platforms. This approach has allowed our work to be experienced and adopted by:

Young people, parents, carers, adoptive and kinships carers, schools, social workers, key workers, primary and secondary school teachers, education and health policy officers, NUS (National Union of Students), the criminal justice system, NHS Scotland amongst many others. In addition, this wide range of sectors find our resources applicable in not only their sphere of work but within their personal lives as well.

We believe this is because **science is objective, factual, proven, evidenced, and applies to everyone**. Scientific knowledge does not follow a ‘deficit-model’ and therefore **removes stigma** from the discussion about conflict, anger, mental health and trauma. This **interdisciplinary approach** allows us to **reach across sectors and communities**; science and kindness help us to tackle the issues that single disciplines and practices cannot reach.

Science, because it applies to everyone, is universally relevant: all humans are mammals and have brains. We are all evolved from the same biological and genetic ancestry as reptiles, mammals and primates and physically, mentally and socially we continue to carry this biological inheritance within our bodies and brains connected by the central nervous system.



## UNIVERSALLY RELEVANT

For all mammals, including us humans, during development - infancy, early childhood, adolescence and late adolescence - biology often dictates our actions and reactions in order for us to **learn to survive**, be **socialised** and **self-sufficient** in adulthood.

Increasingly scientific disciplines are emerging such as Interpersonal Neurobiology which recognise that **emotions play an integral, evolutionary role in survival, learning, resilience** and the development of the uniquely human brain.

This scientific approach to talking about our feelings, emotions and relationships therefore avoids problem-focussed or judgement-based readings of ourselves as humans (or social mammals), helps us to understand ourselves at a physical, psychological and emotional level and improves our relationships with our fellow humans (social mammals).

We are each and all a product of nature *and* nurture; we are capable of learning and developing throughout our life times.

## GO FOR IT!

No previous knowledge of science is required to run these sessions!

**Designed for the 'non-expert'** to prompt helpful discussions about different emotional responses all of which are equally valid (and which have a basis in scientific knowledge) these resources provide opportunities for discussion and engagement.

This includes the willingness to think through appropriate, open-ended questions and engaging our own active listening skills; **a little thought and preparation will** go a long way to **ensure meaningful engagement and shared learning**.

As some of the discussion may bring up emotions for participants in the group, we suggest that you **plan some time for group reflection at the close of the session**. This can be as simple as asking everyone how they're feeling before they leave the session and suggesting an informal one-to-one session for anyone who is particularly affected or needs support.

If you require further information about the science behind our emotions and feelings, conflict styles and relationships then please feel free to contact us at: [sccr@cyrenians.scot](mailto:sccr@cyrenians.scot)

## DIGITALLY ACCESSIBLE

Our approach takes science, art and psychological practice and makes these resources relevant, universally accessible and engaging to the largest possible audience by:

**#1** Taking complex concepts and simplifying them through a narrative and visual journey. Developing and creating multimedia digital resources hosted on our innovative and interactive website

**#2** Commissioning bespoke illustrations and artwork created specifically for each development and design brings to life the complexity of concepts through a series of visual images

**#3** Creating films and animations to explain and illustrate brain activity and emotional responses in which specialists deliver scientific ideas in clear (jargon-free) language with graphics designed to appeal to multiple audiences

**#4** Developing events and workshops for young people, parents, carers and professionals to enhance understanding of the concepts at work in the science of brain chemistry and its applications

**#5** Integrating digitally available resources packs as part of the interactive quizzes and activities (including our educational posters) free to download and easy to use to enhance additional knowledge and understanding



# THE SCIENCE BIT

## #MONKEYVSLIZARD

Are you more Monkey brain or Lizard brain?

Discover the science behind the evolution and development of the brain to better understand our many different responses to conflict.



## SURVIVE OR THRIVE?

Are you feeling more Monkey brain or Lizard brain today? Or maybe a little bit of both? And what does it all mean?

'**Monkey Vs Lizard**' is a digital resource designed to allow us to begin to think about the ways in which we manage conflicts and arguments in family life and which part of the brain we tend to use more of when in a conflict situation; our **reactive lizard** brain or our **reflective monkey** brain.

Since birth we've develop learned behaviours where we associate 'good' or 'bad' experiences. This is a necessary part of human evolution and is how our brains have adapted to allow us to stay away from danger and to want the things that keep us alive as individuals and surviving as a species.

The parts of our brain evolved at different times in human evolution. The rear, **Reptilian** (and early mammal) brain developed early to keep us **alert to danger, ready to attack or flee from a perceived threat**. Constantly focused on feeding all of our desires (food, reproduction and fighting) this led to ensuring our future survival as a species and that we stayed at the top of the food chain.

While this part of the brain is still central to our instinctive actions and reactions, the more recently evolved **Mammalian** brain (at the front) builds on the feeding, reproducing and fighting priorities of the Lizard brain by adding further, smarter behaviour.

After all thanks to the automated Lizard brain large mammals (including humans) rose to the top of the food chain, there are plenty of us, fewer predators and enough food to go around.

The Mammalian monkey brain therefore evolved along more sophisticated lines of survival; we seem **better protected** and **safer** (and so live longer) in larger groups so **caring, nurturing** and **bonding** are important; it's more efficient if we share food and resources so thinking and planning become more important and necessary for survival.

# CONFLICT AND THE BRAIN

So how do these different parts of the brain work together in us humans?

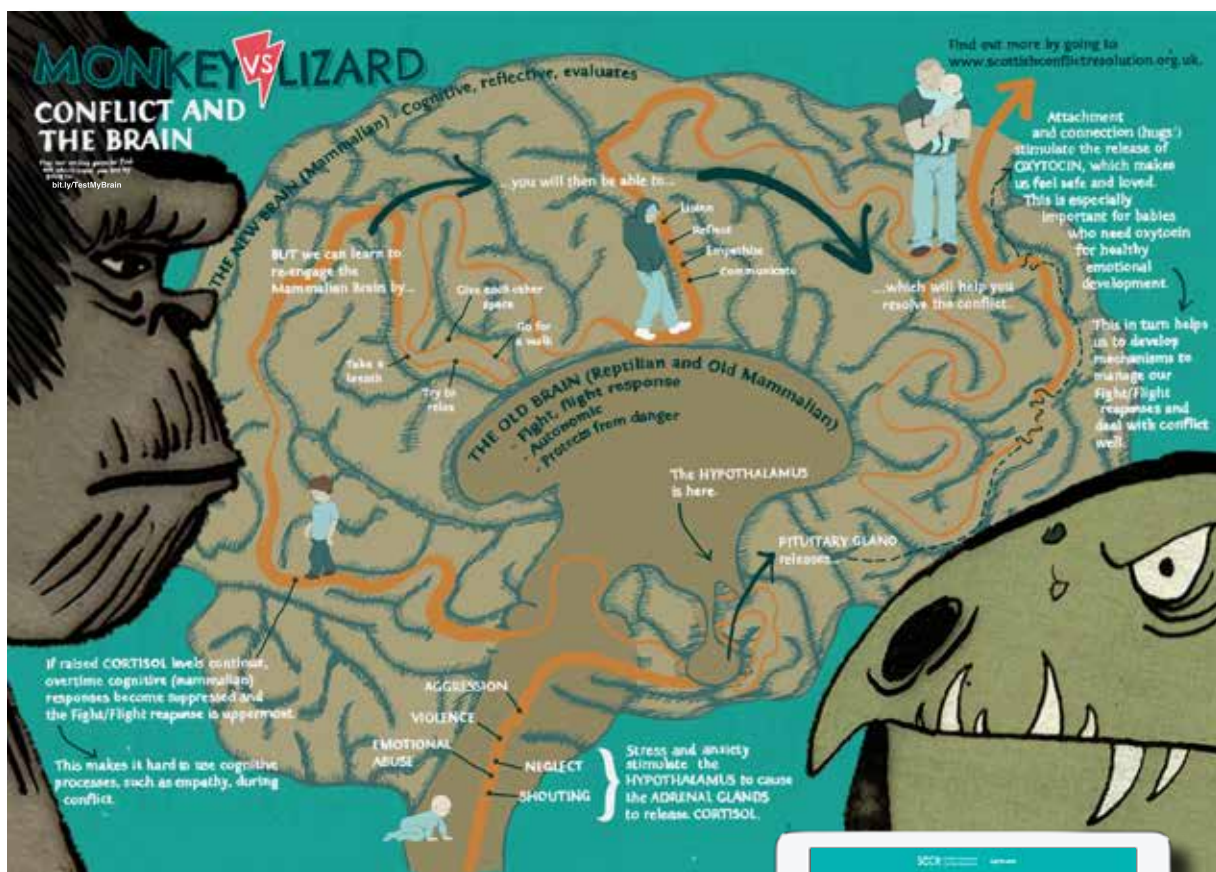
We know that certain parts of our environment are more treacherous than others so we begin to learn from experience, using memory and consciously repeating what works and avoiding what doesn't.

The new brain (mammalian) is **cognitive, reflective** and **evaluates and reasons**; the old brain (reptilian and old mammalian) is **autonomic**, responsible for our **Fight or Flight** response and **protects us from danger**.

Attachment and connection (**hugs!**) stimulate the release of **Oxytocin** which makes us feel safe and loved. This is especially important for babies as we need oxytocin for healthy emotional development.

This in turn helps us to develop mechanisms to manage our **Fight or Flight** responses and deal with conflict well.

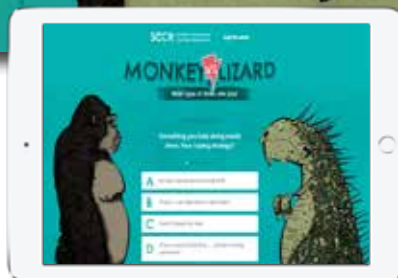
Stress and anxiety stimulate the **hypothalamus** and the **adrenal glands** to release **Cortisol** which can lead to aggression, violence, emotional abuse, neglect and shouting.



If raised **Cortisol** levels continue, over time cognitive (mammalian) responses become suppressed and the **Fight or Flight** response dominates. This makes it hard to use cognitive processes such as empathy, during a conflict situation.

But there are many ways we can learn to re-engage with the mammalian brain e.g. by **taking a deep breath**, **giving each other space** or **going for a walk**.

We are then able to listen, reflect, empathise and communicate our needs which helps us to resolve conflict.



Go online and take the quiz and find out how everyday relationships can be affected by our Monkey and Lizard brains and discover how you do conflict.

[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)

# Conflict and the Brain 1

## Preparation

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings, participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

You will need to ensure that:

- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

This activity should take 45-60 minutes (not including set up time).

Monkey Vs Lizard is a light-hearted and engaging way to begin to think about the way in which we manage conflict in family life, and depending on the results, offers different tips and suggestions on improving our conflict management techniques.

This activity helps people understand which part of the brain they tend to use when faced with a difficult situation; the reactive reptilian brain (the Lizard), the reflective mammalian brain (the Monkey) or a bit of both.

## The learning bit...

- How to manage the negative impact of conflict in positive ways.
- Do you think about how you react? (Are you reflective or reactive?) Understanding the difference between our automatic or instinctive and learned responses.
- How to manage our responses and reactions and understand the responses and reactions of others.
- Introduction to Conflict and the Brain, Oxytocin, Cortisol, empathy, stress and anxiety.

## Don't forget...

It's important to remember that no quiz result is solely 'good' or 'bad'. It all depends on the situation you're currently in. But by learning how to connect more with our monkey brain we can then learn to listen, reflect, emphasise and communicate which can help us resolve conflict and improve relationships.



For details on how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see pages 23-24.



# Are you more Monkey or Lizard?



Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



You may also like:

#KeepTheHeid and #CranialCocktail

## Activity

### Getting started (15-20 min)

1. Google SCCR or go to [www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)
2. Select Brainy Stuff from the menu bar.
3. Select #MonkeyVsLizard.
4. Click on 'Take the Quiz' - this has 10 questions and done individually will take around 5 minutes.

### Are you Lord of the Lizards or a Monkey Genius? (15-20 min)

5. Share and discuss your results.

- What does your result suggest about how you think about how you react?
- How do you manage your responses?
- How might you manage your responses in similar situations?
- If you were having a good or bad day do you think your results might change. Why?

### Conflict and the Brain (15-20 min)

6. Click on the 'Learn more' button to find out more about conflict and the brain.



# Conflict and the Brain 2

## Preparation

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings, participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

You will need to ensure that:

- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

This activity should take 60-90 minutes (not including set up time).

Monkey Vs Lizard is a light-hearted and engaging way to begin to think about the way in which we manage conflict in family life, and depending on the results, offers different tips and suggestions on improving our conflict management techniques.

This activity helps people understand which part of the brain they tend to use when faced with a difficult situation; the reactive reptilian brain (the Lizard) or the reflective mammalian brain (the Monkey).

## The learning bit...

- How to manage the negative impact of conflict in positive ways.
- Understanding the difference between our automatic or instinctive and learned responses.
- How to manage our responses and reactions and to understand the responses and reactions of others.
- Introduction to Conflict and the Brain, Oxytocin, Cortisol, empathy, stress and anxiety.
- Awareness of the changes in brain development through childhood and adolescence that affect how we deal with conflict.

## Don't forget...

It's important to remember that no quiz result is solely 'good' or 'bad'. It all depends on the situation you're currently in. But by learning how to connect more with our monkey brain we can then learn to listen, reflect, emphasise and communicate which can help us resolve conflict and improve relationships.



For details of how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see pages 23-24.



# Childhood experiences and conflict

## Getting Started

1. Google SCCR or go to [www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)
  2. Select Brainy Stuff from the menu bar.
  3. Select #MonkeyVsLizard.
  4. Click on 'Take the Quiz'
- (This has 10 questions and done individually will take around 5 minutes.)

Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



You may also like:

#KeepTheHeid and #CranialCocktail

## Activity

### Discussion (15-20 min)

5. Take the online quiz in groups of two or three. Discuss each of your responses to the quiz questions.
6. How do you think you react in each situation? How do others in the group think you might react? How might another react?
7. What are your reasons for acting the way you do? How would you act differently or prefer to act? What feelings come up to provoke your reactions?

### Conflict and the Brain (15-20 min)

8. Click on the 'Learn more' button to find out more about conflict and the brain.
9. Use the poster to explore how our reptilian and mammalian brains are formed from childhood and what we can do to balance out our reactions and responses throughout our lifetimes.
10. You may want to consider some of the main changes that occur in childhood to affect how we deal with conflict: how we deal with emotional intensity, the need for connection to family and friends, the need for new experiences and exploring our creativity.



# THE SCIENCE BIT

## #KEEPTHEHEID

Do you tend to flip your lid?  
Or can you keep the heid?

Discover the science behind how we act and react to better understand how we react or respond to conflict.

‘Keep The Heid’ is a digital resource designed to help us recognise what happens internally when anger takes hold of us.

By exploring the science of flipping our lid we can recognise how to engage our thinking and emotional brain and what we can do to help keep them regulated.

## ANGER AND THE BRAIN

What makes us blow our big top or flip our lids? And how can we keep the heid?

This scientific understanding of the part of the brain that controls our sensory perceptions and reactions allows us to understand an aspect of ourselves that cultural and scientific depictions have sometimes overlooked – **human emotion**.

Understanding our brains and bodies in a way that considers the **importance of emotions**, experience and memory can help us make sense of our place in the world, our relationships and our potential for development.

We now understand that the mapping of the brain-body relationship in terms of our perceiving senses and reactive or reflexive actions is interpreted and mediated through emotion.

Emotions are a product of the brain-body connection; they make us uniquely human as well as determining how we perceive stimuli and react.

Emotions give humans the capacity to remember, store memories as good or bad and therefore to learn from our experiences from the moment we are born. Our emotional brain is as **unique** and **individual** as our fingerprints and our genes, but unlike these our emotional brain changes and develops over our lifetime; understanding this allows us to have greater control over how this happens, and exercise greater choices when something goes wrong.

This scientific approach to talking about our feelings, emotions and relationships avoids problem-focussed or judgement-based readings of ourselves as humans and helps us to understand ourselves at a physical, psychological and emotional level and **improves our relationships** with our fellow humans.

We are each and all a product of **nature** and **nurture**; we are capable of learning and developing throughout our life times.



Dr. Dan Siegel - The science of  
"Flipping Your Lid"



Pre-frontal Cortex  
The Thinking Brain processes perceptions and  
logical reasoning.



Brain Stem and Limbic Area  
The Emotional Brain controls your emotions.

The Thinking Brain

regulates

The Emotional Brain

## THE CIRCUS OF LIFE

Life can be a bit like a circus - you never know what's around the corner and it can take its toll, especially on relationships. Relationships can feel like a bit of a balancing act... and no one wants to fall off the tightrope.

We often second-guess each other but there is always another side to things.

So why do some things make us '**blow our top**' and '**flip our lid**'?

Sometimes very strong emotions such as **anger** can take hold of us. Yet, anger is often the reaction covering up other emotions – **feeling unheard, lonely, sad** or **unloved**.

## WHY DO WE FLIP OUR LIDS WHEN WE GET ANGRY?

Our brain plays a vital role in whether we have an automatic reaction or are able to manage our response to a difficult situation.

**Dr. Dan Siegel** explains the science of "**Flipping Your Lid**". The **Pre-frontal Cortex** (primate and late mammalian brain region) is the **thinking** part of the brain processing our perceptions and logical reasoning. The **Brain Stem** and **Limbic Area** (reptile and early mammalian brain region) is the **emotional** part of the brain and controls our emotions.

When things are going well in our relationships the Thinking Brain regulates the Emotional Brain.

When someone "**pushes our buttons**" the connections between the Thinking Brain and the Emotional Brain start to go...

If they become completely disconnected it's like we "**flip our lids**".

When we "**flip our lids**" we are no longer responding in a controlled way - we have lost the connection to the thinking part of our brain. This can make communication tricky!

It can take us anywhere between **20-30 minutes** to bring ourselves back to a balanced state and begin to use our Thinking Brain again.



# Flipping your lid

## Preparation

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings, participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

**You will need to ensure that:**

- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

**This activity should take 45-60 minutes (not including set up time).**

“Relationships can feel like a bit of a balancing act sometimes... and no one wants to fall off the tightrope.”

This activity explores the science behind our actions and reactions and asks us to consider when ‘the bomb goes off’ what’s more important: being “right” or rescuing the relationship?

Based on Dan Siegel’s ‘Flip Your Lid’ model of the brain, this activity uses circus characters to help people think about their reactions and responses to conflict.



## The learning bit...

- How to manage the negative impact of conflict in positive ways.
- How do you act in conflict? Do you Flip your Lid or Keep the Heid?
- Understanding anger and how the brain responds to conflict.
- Introduction to the Thinking Brain and the Emotional Brain, anger, stress and anxiety.

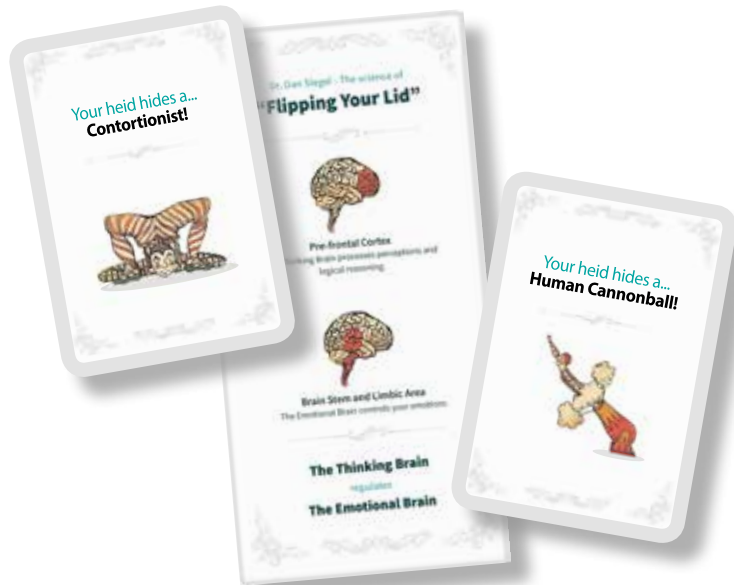
For details of how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see pages 23-24.

## Don't forget...

It's important to remember that no quiz result is solely 'good' or 'bad'. It all depends on the situation you're currently in. By recognising the importance of our Thinking and Emotional Brain, and how when we flip our lid we are no longer responding in a controlled way (which can make relationships tricky), we can learn how to keep the heid instead of blowing our top.



# Are you a contortionist or a cannonball?



Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



You may also like:

#MonkeyVsLizard and #CranialCocktail

## Activity

### Getting started (15-20 min)

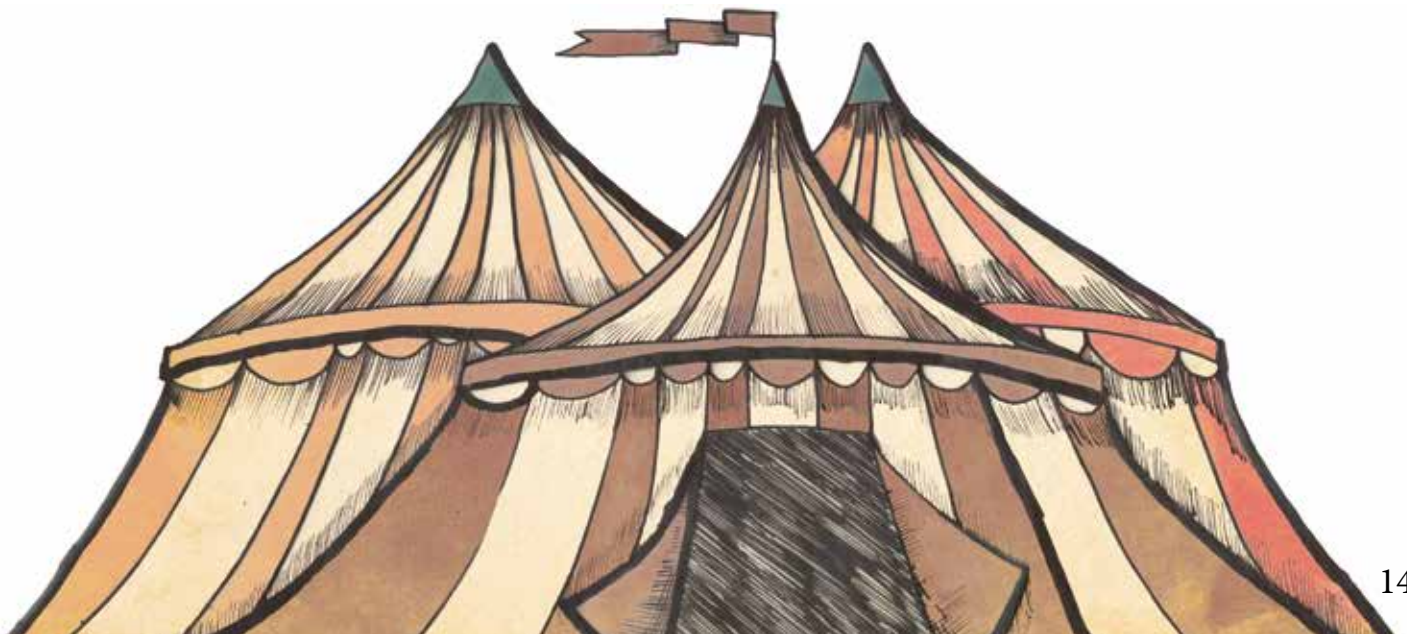
1. Google SCCR or go to [www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)
2. Select Brainy Stuff from the menu bar
3. Select #KeepTheHeid
4. Click on 'Take the Quiz' - this has 10 questions and done individually will take around 5 minutes.

### Are you a controlled contortionist or a human cannonball? (15-20 min)

5. Share and discuss your results.
6. Give it another go and see if you get a different result imagining you're having a good or a bad day.

### Flipping your Lid (15-20 min)

7. Click on the 'Learn more' button to find out more about anger and the brain.



# Seeing things differently

## Preparation

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings, participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

You will need to ensure that:

- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

This activity should take 60 minutes (not including set up time).

"Relationships can feel like a bit of a balancing act sometimes... and no one wants to fall off the tightrope."

This activity explores the science behind our reactions and reactions and asks us to consider when 'the bomb goes off' what's more important: being "right" or rescuing the relationship?

Based on Dan Siegel's 'Flip Your Lid' model of the brain, this activity uses circus characters to help people think about their reactions and responses to conflict.



For details of how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see pages 23-24.

## The learning bit...

- How to manage the negative impact of conflict in positive ways.
- How do you act in conflict? Do you Flip your Lid or Keep the Heid?
- Understanding anger and how the brain responds to conflict.
- Introduction to the Thinking Brain and the Emotional Brain, anger, stress and anxiety.
- Seeing things from a different perspective.
- Recognising situations that can lead us to flip our lids.

## Don't forget...

It's important to remember that no quiz result is solely 'good' or 'bad'. It all depends on the situation you're currently in. By recognising the importance of our Thinking and Emotional Brain, and how when we flip our lid we are no longer responding in a controlled way which can make relationships tricky, we can learn how to keep the heid instead of blowing our big top.



# Are you a contortionist or a cannonball?

## Getting Started

Getting started (15-20 min)

1. Google SCCR or go to [www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk)
2. Select Brainy Stuff from the menu bar
3. Select #KeepTheHeid
4. Click on 'Take the Quiz' - this has 10 questions and done individually will take around 5 minutes.

## Activity

Groupwork (15-20 min)

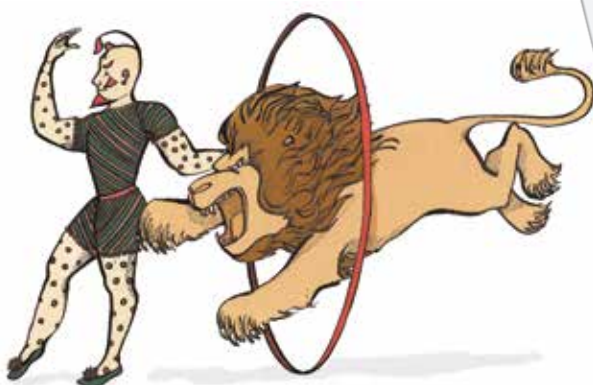
5. Take the online quiz in groups of two or three. Discuss each of your response to the quiz questions.
6. How do you think you act or react in each situation? How do others in the group think you might act or react? How might someone else react?
7. What are your reasons for acting the way you do? How would you act differently or prefer to act? What feelings come up to provoke your reactions?

Seeing things differently (15-20 min)

8. Click on the 'Learn more' button to find out more about how anger affects different parts of the brain.
9. What situations might cause you to 'flip your lid'? How can you manage your feelings to help Keep The Heid in conflict?



Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



You may also like:

[#MonkeyVsLizard](#) and [#CranialCocktail](#)

# THE SCIENCE BIT

## #CRANIALCOCKTAIL

Explore the science of emotions and discover how your cranial cocktail can affect how you feel in different emotional states.



## LET'S GET EMOTIONAL

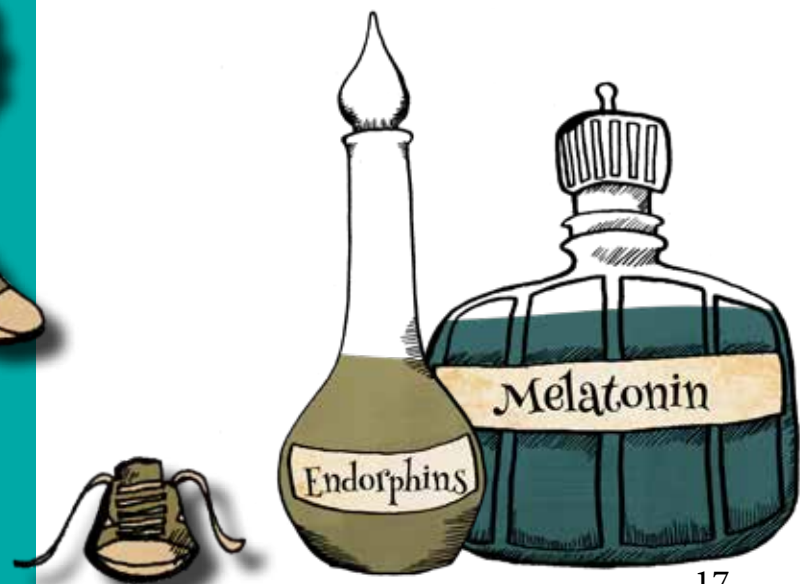
Ever get the feeling your body has a mind of its own? Some days you can't get out of bed and on others you're so excited you can't get to sleep!

The emotional part of our brain is like a **vinyl record** that has grooves scratched into it over our lifetime with a map of how we **learn to connect** with the world around us. It creates a response in our bodies, in response to a situation or stimulus causing us to act and react in a certain way and uses **brain chemicals** (neurotransmitters) to effect these changes based on our **experience** (from early childhood to earlier this morning).

Memory, learning, everything from simple activities such as learning to walk, playing a musical instrument, learning to use a games console or keyboard are all possible because the **emotional brain stores information** about stimuli and the best reaction, and over time uses emotion – good or bad, pleasure or pain, risk and reward to build up experience which acts as a blueprint or template for how we behave. The way the layout of a race track forces the drivers to drive at different speeds in different gears around bends.

The good news is that the way our brain uses emotion to operate – or causes us to act and react – can change!

If we can understand what's happening in our brains and minds, in our bodies and how we feel then we can re learn (reprogramme or retrain the brain) to respond and react differently – like owners of a race track can redesign and reshape the track so that fewer accidents happen at certain bends.





## THE SCIENCE OF EMOTIONS

The **cortical homunculus** is a 'map' of our body, on the brain made of a pattern of nerve centres that link to the different parts of our body and make them work.

This part of the brain receives signals from the body through our senses of **touch**, **taste**, **smell**, **sight** and **hearing**, and sends signals back to the body to act or react in a certain way.

But human beings are more complex than this. We are not machines or robots. Because we also have an **emotional homunculus** which has the capacity to remember, to store memories as good or bad and therefore to learn from our experiences from the moment we are born.

Our **emotional homunculus** is the part of the brain that uses **experience**, **memory** and **emotion** to create an emotional state in which we act and react in ways that in the past have worked to keep us physically and emotionally safe, ensuring our survival and the survival of the species.

In spite of being unique our emotional homunculi share some states (for example **Rest and Digest** and **Fight or Flight**), especially in our relationships with others and in conflict situations.

But how does it do this? It uses the **Brain's Amazing Drugs Cabinet**...

## THE BRAIN'S AMAZING DRUGS CABINET

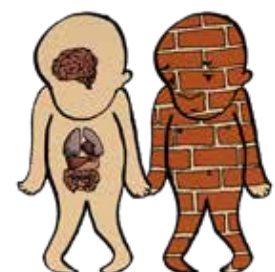
The brain has evolved using different types of chemicals to send signals and transmit messages, which cause a reaction by stimulating or suppressing certain parts of the brain to provoke a specific response or reaction.

### Welcome to the Brain's Amazing Drugs Cabinet!

It's full of really powerful chemicals that we produce naturally and which are better and more powerful than anything you can buy in a pharmacy. They can **improve your mood and emotions**, **don't have serious side-effects**, are **free** and **we regulate them**!

Based on all our experiences from early childhood to earlier this morning, our emotional homunculus decides how to respond to external stimuli and which drugs to release to manage the situation in which we find ourselves.

The state of our emotional homunculus determines what chemicals are released into the blood stream for our **safety** and **survival** depending on previous experiences or triggers.



# The state you're in...

## Preparation

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Click 'Watch the video' at:

[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus)  
Scroll down and watch the animations.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

You will need to ensure that:

- you have access to a projection screen,
- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

This activity should take 60-80 minutes (not including set up time).

All of our emotions related to conflict arise from the biological connection between our bodies, brains and memories.

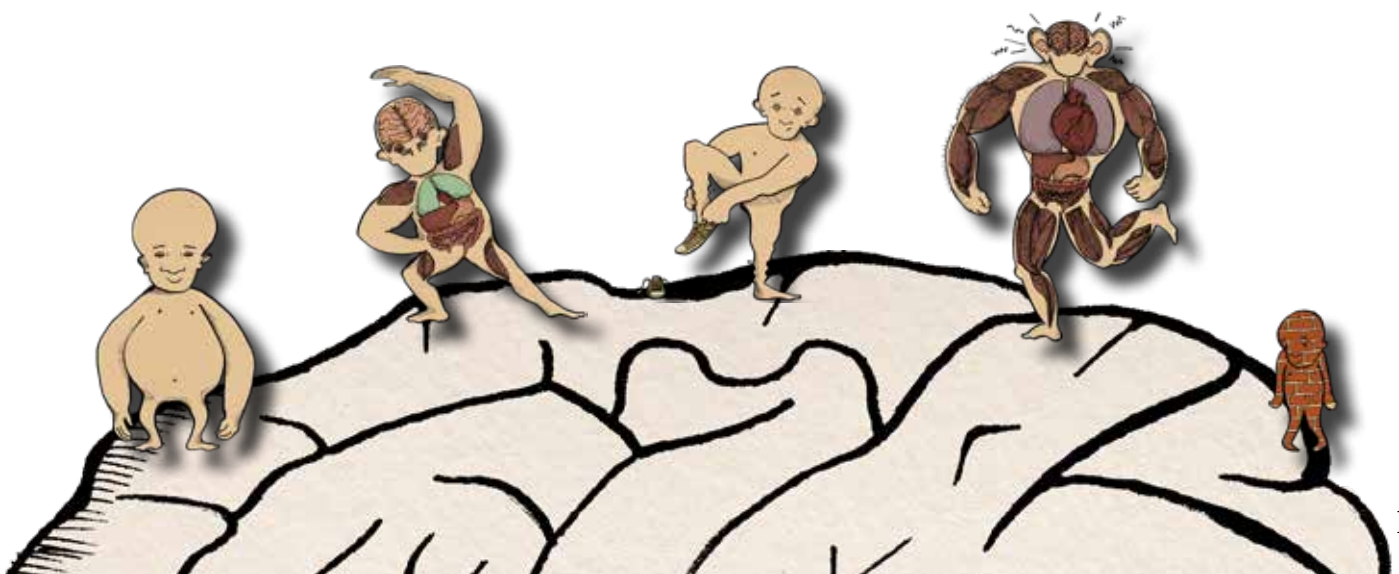
In learning to observe what we're feeling in our bodies and being aware of how our brains are perceiving these feelings, we can begin to understand our own emotional states and those of others.

This activity helps us to understand why we react in a certain way when we are in different emotional states.

## The learning bit...

- Recognising emotional states in ourselves and others
- Understanding the importance of the brain-body connection
- Understanding the affects of brain chemicals on our actions and reactions
- Reflecting on our feelings and reactions

For details of how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see our page 23-24.



# Understanding emotions and feelings



Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



You may also like:

#KeepTheHeid and #MonkeyVsLizard

## Activity

### Getting started (10-15 min)

1. Play one of the three animations
2. Discuss the emotional states that the characters are experiencing.

### The state you're in... (15-20 min)

3. Go to:

[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus)

and go through the carousel discussing each of the emotional states.

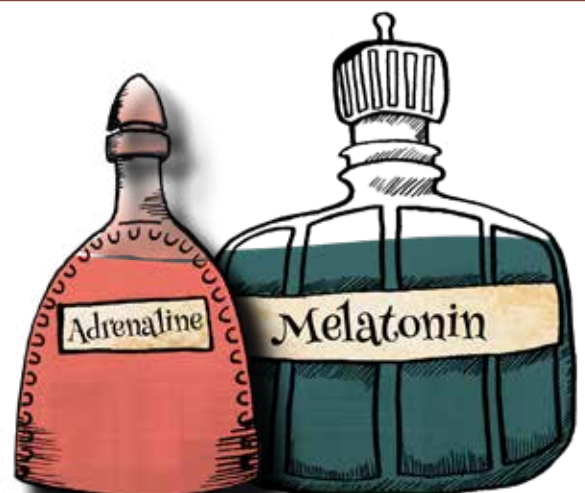
4. Scroll down to discover how the body is experiencing each emotional state.

### Cranial Cocktail (15-20 min)

5. Discuss the Brain Drugs that are active in each emotional state. How do they change between the emotional states?

### Conquering conflict (15-20 min)

6. Discuss how to manage each of the states by being aware of our brain and body connection.
7. Click on the 'Learn more' button to find out more about conflict and the brain.



# Cranial Cocktail

## Preparation

This activity can be used as a follow-on activity from **The state you're in... Understanding feelings and emotions.**

We find that the activities work best if you familiarise yourself with the digital resources.

Click 'Watch the video' at:

[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus)

Scroll down and watch the animations.

Keep in mind that when discussing emotions and feelings, participants may need a trusted person to talk to.

You will need to ensure that:

- you have access to a projection screen,
- you have access to WiFi,
- participants have access to a digital device (or are able to share).

This activity should take 60-70 minutes (not including set up time).

All of our emotions related to conflict arise from the biological connection between our bodies, brains and memories.

In learning to observe what we're feeling in our bodies and being aware of how our brains are perceiving these feelings, we can begin to understand how to use our bodies and thoughts to rebalance our emotions.

This activity helps us to bring awareness to our bodies and learn how the body and brain work together to create or change our emotional states.

## The learning bit...

- Recognising the connection between feelings in our bodies and brains
- Understanding the importance of the brain-body connection
- Understanding the affects of brain chemicals on our mental and physical health.
- Learning awareness of our emotional states through our awareness of our physical feelings.

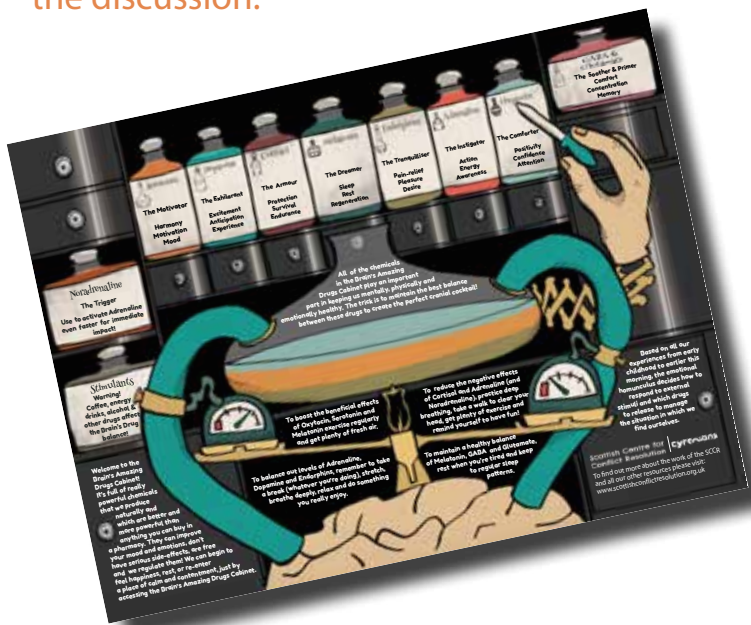
For details of how these resources help to deliver a number of national outcomes see pages 23-24.



# Physical feelings and emotional feelings



Find more resources online to help develop the discussion.



## Further activity suggestions

Discuss ways you might use your body to shake up your cranial cocktail and rebalance your state of mind.

Explore the Brain's Amazing Drugs Cabinet for more Brain Drugs. and discover how to recalibrate your emotional state.



## Activity

## Getting started (10-15 min)

1. Go to:

[www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus](http://www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk/homunculus)

2. How you are feeling physically? Discuss with the group. What does your body tell you about how you're feeling emotionally?

## Physical Feelings (20-25 min)

3. Scroll down the webpage to discover how the body experiences each emotional state.

The internal organs in each emotional state are represented by their size in relation to what is happening physically in our bodies.

You can also guide the conversation by asking how people are feeling in their stomachs or gut, in their hearts or where their 'heads are at'.

## Cranial Cocktail (20-25 min)

4. Scroll down to Cranial Cocktail to get a description of what's happening to our bodies in the state we're in.

5. Which drugs from the Brain's Amazing Drugs Cabinet are affecting our physical and emotional states?

6. What are the reasons that your Brain's Amazing Drugs Cabinet might be releasing these particular drugs?

### You may also like:

## #KeepTheHeid and #MonkeyVsLizard

# MAPPING OUR RESOURCE OUTCOMES

## Scotland's National Performance Framework

Purpose, Values and National Outcomes

### Children and Young People

*We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential*

#### National Indicators

- Child social and physical development
- Child wellbeing and happiness
- Children have positive relationships
- Quality of children's services

### Communities

*We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe*

#### National Indicators

- Loneliness
- Social capital

### Education

*We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society*

#### National Indicators

- Confidence of children and young people
- Resilience of children and young people
- Engagement in extra-curricular activities
- Young people's participation
- Work place learning

### Health

*We are healthy and active*

#### National Indicators

- Mental wellbeing
- Health risk behaviours
- Physical activity
- Work related ill health
- Quality of care experience

## THE CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our resources are recognised as helping to deliver the following outcomes in **mental, emotional and physical wellbeing** at early, first, second, third and fourth levels.

- I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

**HWB 0-01a / HWB 1-01a / HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a / HWB 4-01a**

- I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them.

**HWB 0-02a / HWB 1-02a / HWB 2-02a / HWB 3-02a / HWB 4-02a**

- I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

**HWB 0-03a / HWB 1-03a / HWB 2-03a / HWB 3-03a / HWB 4-03a**

- I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.

**HWB 0-04a / HWB 1-04a / HWB 2-04a / HWB 3-04a / HWB 4-04a**

- I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.

**HWB 0-05a / HWB 1-05a / HWB 2-05a / HWB 3-05a / HWB 4-05a**

- I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.

**HWB 0-06a / HWB 1-06a / HWB 2-06a / HWB 3-06a / HWB 4-06a**

- I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss.

**HWB 0-07a / HWB 1-07a / HWB 2-07a / HWB 3-07a / HWB 4-07a**

- I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.

**HWB 0-08a / HWB 1-08a / HWB 2-08a / HWB 3-08a / HWB 4-08a**

- As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.

**HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09a**

- I value the opportunities I am given to make friends and be part of a group in a range of situations.

**HWB 0-14a / HWB 1-14a / HWB 2-14a / HWB 3-14a / HWB 4-14a**

- I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health.

**HWB 0-15a / HWB 1-15a / HWB 2-15a / HWB 3-15a / HWB 4-15a**

## GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD GIRFEC AND SHANARRI

In promoting and enhancing the following life skills in young people these resources help to lay the foundation for the Scottish Government's commitment to **Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)** and positively affect a young person's wellbeing measurable by the related **SHANARRI** indicators.

- Increase understanding of anger and anxiety
- Increase capacity to form positive relationships
- Increase ability to communicate wants and needs
- Improve learning, understanding and self-knowledge
- Improve listening skills and increase confidence in communication
- Increase ability to learn from challenges and awareness of continued learning
- Develop emotional literacy
- Increased understanding of how conflict can affect relationships and how to respond to conflict
- Increase confidence and self-esteem through awareness of increasing emotional intelligence and resilience.

**Healthy** Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices.

**Achieving** Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

**Nurtured** Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or where not possible, in a suitable care setting.

**Respected** Having the opportunity, along with parents and carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.

**Responsible** Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.

**Included** Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

## MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2017-2027

The **Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027)**, identifies prevention and early intervention as key to minimising the prevalence and incidence of poor mental health. Our resources have been designed as psychoeducational to ease discussions about the brain and emotional responses to stress and conflict; they support delivery of the following Actions of the Strategy:

### Prevention and Early Intervention

**Action 1:** Review Personal and Social Education (PSE), the role of pastoral guidance in local authority schools, and services for counselling for children and young people.

**Action 2:** Roll out mental health training for those who support young people in educational settings.

**Action 5:** Ensure the care pathway includes mental and emotional health and wellbeing, for young people on the edges of, and in, secure care.

**Action 6:** Determine and implement the additional support needed for practitioners assessing and managing complex needs among children who present a high risk to themselves or others.

**Action 7:** Support an increase in support for the mental health needs of young offenders, including on issues such as trauma and bereavement.

*Improved support at tiers 1 and 2 could have the potential to tackle such issues earlier and stem the flow of referrals to the more intensive tiers 3 and 4.*

**Action 8:** Work with partners to develop systems and multi-agency pathways that work in a co-ordinated way to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

### Access to treatment and joined up accessible services

**Action 17:** Fund improved provision of services to treat child and adolescent mental health problems.

**Action 25:** Develop more accessible psychological self-help resources and support national rollout of computerised CBT with NHS 24, by 2018.

### Rights, information use, and planning

**Action 35:** Work with key stakeholders to better understand Mental Health Officer capacity and demand, and to consider how pressures might be alleviated.

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Ending Rough Sleeping in Scotland (2018): **PDF**

Health and Homelessness in Scotland(2018): **PDF**

Cyrenians Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) is a national resource centre promoting and supporting best practice in mediation, family conflict resolution and early intervention work with a particular focus around young people and families. Our award-winning digital resources, free training and events improve understanding of conflict and emotional needs, to transform relationships and lives.

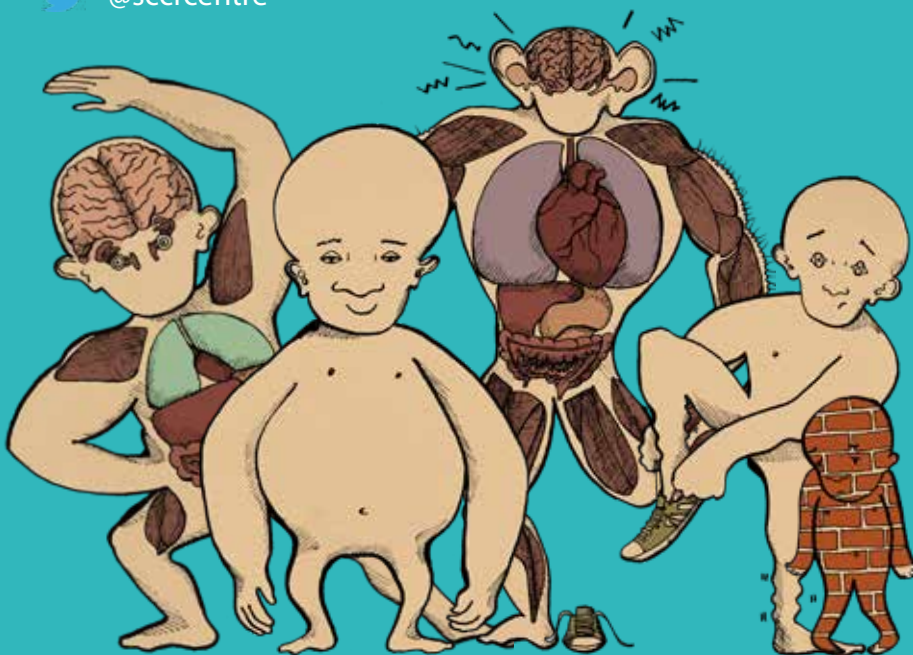
## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

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📘 sccrcentre

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