

Lesson 3 So, What's in a Brain?

Tip

The teacher might wish to watch and review 'Why do We Lose Control of our Emotions?' before showing it to the class. The teacher may also wish to read 'How to Teach Your Kids about the Brain' at

www.mindful.org/how-to-teach-your-kids-about-the-brain/



To help pupils begin to develop emotional intelligence



Begin to understand the characteristics of the thinking and emotional sides of the brain

Begin to recognise emotional triggers
Explore ideas for managing emotions



Lesson Support Resource 2
The Brain House

Lesson Support Resource 3
The Trigger Tree

Youtube clip
'Why do We Lose Control of our Emotions?'
by Kids Want to Know

Post it Notes and Pens



Activity 1: 10 minutes

Activity 2: 15 minutes

Activity 3: 35 minutes

Links to Pupil Learning Framework

Cultivating Skills and Values to acquire:

- Emotional Literacy
- Metacognition
- A Growth Mindset: attitudes and dispositions



Activity 1

- Display Lesson Support Resource 2 'The Brain House' on a powerpoint slide
- Explain that during this activity pupils will be thinking about how our brains work
- Whilst referring to 'The Brain House' resource, invite pupils to think about their brains as a house with an upstairs and a downstairs
- Explain that the upstairs can be thought of as our 'Thinking Brain' and the downstairs as our 'Feeling Brain'
- Explain that the upstairs and downstairs are both very important. We need our 'Thinking Brain' to help us solve problems, plan and to act logically and rationally. We need our 'Feeling Brain' to help us sense danger, keep us safe and to make sure we have our needs met
- Explain that our 'Thinking Brain' and 'Feeling Brain' can communicate well through strong 'Communication Stairs'. This helps us process thoughts and feelings without becoming too overwhelmed. But sometimes, our 'Feeling Brain' can be so strong that it blocks the 'Communication Stairs'. This usually happens when we have very strong emotions of sadness, anger or fear. Reassure pupils that this is perfectly normal for everyone and that it happens to us all

Discussion Prompts

- Can you think of any other strong emotions that might block our 'Communication Stairs'?
- How might these emotions make us feel?
- How might these emotions make us act?

Discussion Prompts

- Can you think of anything else we might need our 'Thinking Brain' to do?
- Can you think of anything else we might need our 'Feeling Brain' to do?

Activity 2

- Explain to pupils that we all have different triggers or situations which set off the strong emotions that block our 'Communication Stairs'. For example, some people might have triggers or situations linked to school work which set off emotions of anger. Other people might have triggers or situations linked to out-of-school activities. Triggers can even be linked to seeing a spider, or even just thinking about a spider. There are many different triggers which can set off the strong emotions which block the 'Communication Stairs'
- Explain to the pupils that they are going to watch a short clip which explains more about how the brain works when triggers or situations set off strong emotions inside us. Play 'Why Do We Lose Control of our Emotions?'
- After the clip, ask pupils their initial thoughts

Discussion Prompts

- What do you think of the clip?
- Are there any parts you do not understand? (If necessary, parts of the clip can be played again)
- Do you think it is possible to get really good at recognising when your own emotions are about to bubble up?
- Do you think it is possible to learn to manage the situations or triggers which might set off your emotions?

Activity 3

- Explain to pupils that they are going to look more closely at situations or triggers which might set off strong emotions
- Divide the class into small groups of five and distribute post-it notes to each group
- Ask them to write down as many triggers or situations they can think of which might set off strong emotions in a person and cause them to 'flip out'. Reassure the pupils that the triggers and situations do not have to be personal to them. They just have to imagine as many as possible
- When each group is finished, invite them to share the triggers or situations with the class
- Ask each group to agree on one trigger or situation they would like to explore further. It can be a trigger or situation that they have heard from one of the other groups, or it can be one they came up with in their own group
- Once they have decided, distribute Lesson Support Resource 3 'The Trigger Tree' (one per group)
- Instruct them to complete the 'Trigger Tree'
- When each group has completed their 'Trigger Tree', ask them to swap their tree with another group
- Invite each group to imagine they are 'Trigger Tree' doctors. They will review the tree of another group and offer key advice

Prompts

- Can you think of anything that might help this person manage the trigger or situation?
- Is there anything the person can do to help himself/herself recognise that their emotions are beginning to reach boiling point?
- What might the person be able to do to help himself/herself feel better?
- Each group can then be invited to share their advice to the whole class

Prompts

- You must write the trigger or situation in the allocated box
- You must identify the key feelings and emotions that might bubble up because of the situation/trigger. There is an allocated box for this
- Then, you should then identify how the feelings and emotions might influence how the person thinks and acts. You have a box for this
- Finally, you have a box to write down some of the body sensations the person might experience. For example, butterflies in their tummy, sweaty palms, or racing heart