





Hippocampus

Within the Limbic

System, the Hippocampus is



Responsible for regulating unconscious vitals, such as breathing, heartbeat, and sleep. During a traumatic event, the Reptilian Complex is overflowed with stress hormones and may dictate a physical reaction in an attempt to protect you. Responsible for thinking, problem solving, and decision making. During a traumatic event, the Neocortex shuts down to focus energy on systems vital for survival.

Responsible for emotions, memory, and signaling pleasure or danger. During a traumatic event, the Limbic System overrides the conscious thought systems in an attempt to protect you.

If the Limbic System sends a signal of danger, the body works to pump stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol to better equip you for survival. Without logical reasoning, one or more of the 4 trauma responses may occur:

FIGHT - FLIGHT - FREEZE - FAWN





- Problems with sleep (Insomnia, nightmares, fatigue)
- Digestion and chronic pain (nausea, IBS, migraines)
- Hypervigilance and paranoia (racing heartbeat, edginess, agitation, sweating)
- Irritability, mood swings, & anger
- Chronic health conditions related to stress
- Shock, denial, confusion, fear, and worry
- Difficulty with concentration and memory
- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Ruminating negative thoughts, flashbacks
- Feeling sad/numb or hopeless
- Mental illness (anxiety, PTSD, depression)
- Difficulty trusting others and forming relationships
- Development of an eating disorder and/or substance addiction
- Suicidality & self-harm
- Withdrawal/isolation & avoidance
- Desensitized risk radar: internet exploitation; intimate partner violence; multiple sexual partners; STIs; unintended or adolescent pregnancy
- Difficulty enjoying sex or intimacy

primarily responsible for memory storage. During a traumatic event, it temporarily stops storing memories and focuses on pumping cortisol through the body. This is why many people who experience trauma do not have linear accounts of what happened.

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Still, our body is keeping score, even if we aren't aware of it. This is why a sudden smell, sound, colour, person, or place may trigger an adverse reaction. It is hard for our Amygdala to differentiate



real versus perceived danger, so the reaction may feel like the trauma is happening all over again, causing people to dive into a trauma response.



If our bodies are constantly in a state of survival such as with childhood sexual abuse our alarm system can

become jammed, and leave us stuck in a state of distress, causing severe mental health impacts.

**Normal Range**