

STOP

Welcome to  
**BODY BLAME**  
Reclaim your Life  
from Obesity and  
Emotional Eating.  
Successfully  
deal with a  
restricted  
protocol from  
EMDR Therapy.

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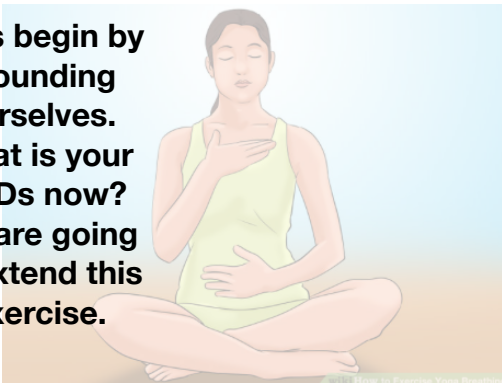


1

Welcome to the second session of my on-line course. Today we will look at how the brain is involved in emotional eating and how we can use that knowledge to overcome it.

# Session 2

**Let's begin by  
grounding  
ourselves.  
What is your  
SUDs now?  
We are going  
to extend this  
exercise.**

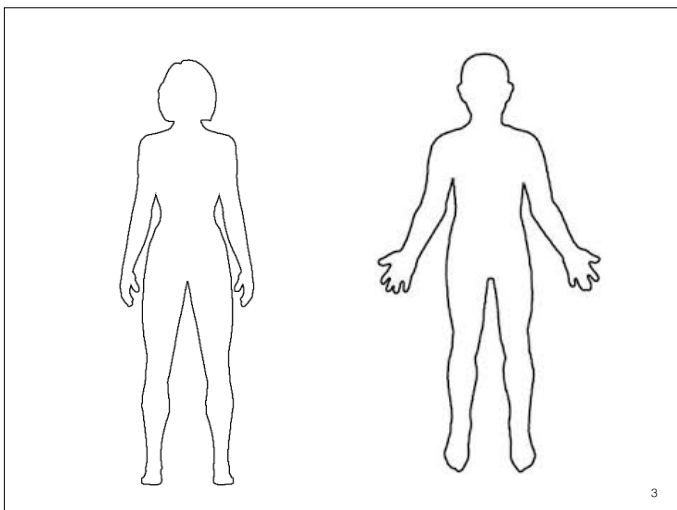


2

- Let's take a moment to calm our body down. Scan your body. From the top of your head down to your toes, just notice where there is any sense of tension. Note your Subjective Units of Disturbance score or SUDS out of a score of 10. 0 for relaxed and 10 for most distressed. SUDS = Deep slow gentle abdominal breathing.
- Close your eyes. Put your right hand on your abdomen, your left hand on your chest. Compare your hands to see which moves first, which moves more. As your breathing becomes more natural, you will notice your left hand on your chest stays relatively still, while your right hand on your abdomen moves first and further.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Count slowly 1,2,3,4. Slow down your breathing. Imagine you are inflating a balloon in your abdomen as you breathe in and deflating it as you breathe out.
- Take a little longer as you breathe out and pause at the end of each breath. If your mind is distracted, just notice the thought, and bring your attention back to you hands, back to your breathing. Let any thoughts turn into clouds and drift away.
- Note your SUDS after a few more breaths/minutes. If SUDS is greater than zero, identify where in your body you are feeling that distress or tension. What shape, colour, temperature would that feeling of distress in your body have? As you breathe in let your mind focus on that part of your body. As you breathe out let the tension go. Note your SUDS after a few more

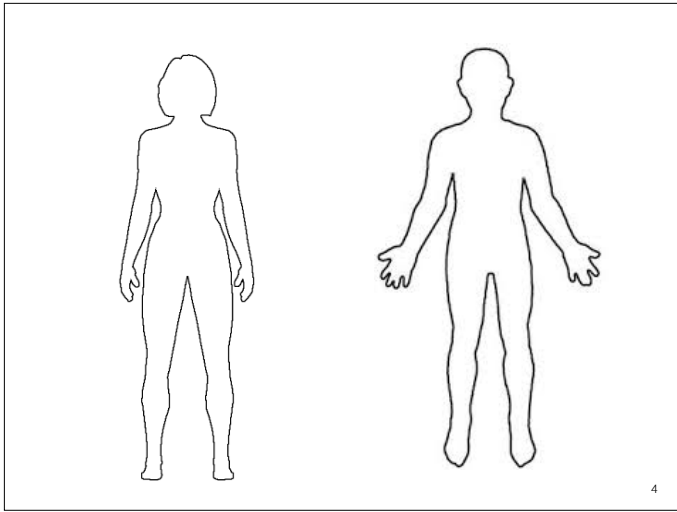
breaths/minutes.

- If your SUDS is greater than zero, identify where in your body you are feeling a state of relaxation. There may only be a tiny part of your body that is relaxed, a spot on your head, a finger .... What shape, colour, temperature would that feeling of relaxation in your body have? Now remember the tense parts of your body. As you breathe in let your mind focus on the tense parts of your body you noted before. As you breathe out let your mind focus on the relaxed parts of your body. Let your mind swing like a pendulum between the two areas, between the two colours, two feelings, two shapes, two temperatures. Pendulate between them. Note your SUDS =



3

Colour in the temperature, draw the shape of where you are relaxed



4

Colour in the temperature, draw the shape of where you are tense.

**A reminder**  
 This course is designed to be educational and address the emotional eating prevalent among the majority of adults. This course is not suitable for children or anyone under the age of 18. By engaging in this course, you are attesting to being over 18 and should the material destabilise your mental health, you are accepting the responsibility to inform Carolyn and seek professional help outside of this course. This course is not suitable nor recommended for people either diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, or with a weight below normal and a BMI less than 18.5.

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This course is educational and is not designed to replace individual therapy.

**Session 2**

Breathing, SUDS  
 The Brain and EMDR  
 Emotional Eating ?  
 Emotional Eating Cycle?

**This is not a weight loss programme.**

6

This is not a weight loss programme. It is about emotional eating. When you no longer eat for emotional reasons you can then eat solely for your physical needs.

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL EATING REALLY?

- ✓ Impulse Control Disorders:
  - failure to resist impulse, drive or temptation to perform an act that is harmful to the person or others.
- ✓ Specifically we are considering **emotional eating**.
- ✓ The function of emotional eating is to deal with emotions at a subconscious level so that the conscious mind is unaware of what the emotions are.

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I could not identify it until I stopped emotionally eating and ceased being engaged in all the distracting paraphernalia of dieting. I no longer wanted to eat my comfort foods, as they no longer gave me the comfort they had once given me. I could now recognise that prior to doing this work, I would have gone to the pantry or engaged in things to distract and avoid eating, such as select an item from a list of things I could do that I had prepared for just such a time. So drinking an ice-cold tumbler of water, cleaning a cupboard, sorting a sock drawer or any of a hundred things I had written would have been given priority to eating. It was not possible beforehand to actually notice the triggering belief. Number of cook books, dieting, exercise?

8



The Brain

8

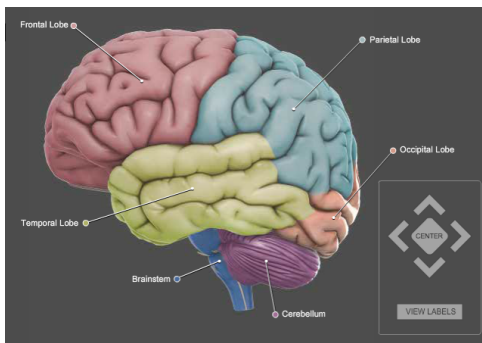
This little echidna came to visit me in my front garden on a busy street in Canberra in 2016.





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## THE BRAIN



10

Note the pink area, the neocortex, where we think, talk to our friends, analyse, work. Let's talk about the fight/flight response. To examine this we need to look at the amygdala.

10

## AMYGDALA

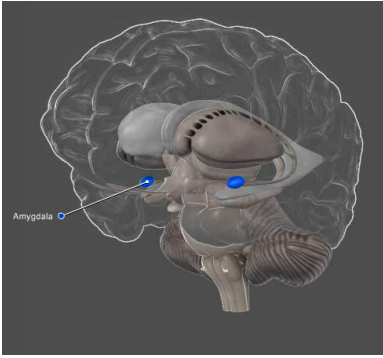


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The amygdala is an almond-shaped set of neurons located deep in the brain's medial temporal lobe. Shown to play a key role in the processing of emotions, the amygdala forms part of the limbic system. 40 times a second the amygdala scans the information that is coming into the brain through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the sense of touch, and taste. This is happening out of your conscious awareness. This is important. In normal circumstances, you are not consciously aware of how the brain is continuously scanning your environment. The information goes to the amygdala by a faster route than it goes to the pre-frontal cortex. This means also that the information is not as detailed.

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## Sgt. Amy G. Dala



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Think of the amygdala as Sgt Amy G. Dala, on guard duty. She is challenging everything that comes into the camp with one question. Will this be a danger to me? No nuances here.



## FIGHT/FLIGHT

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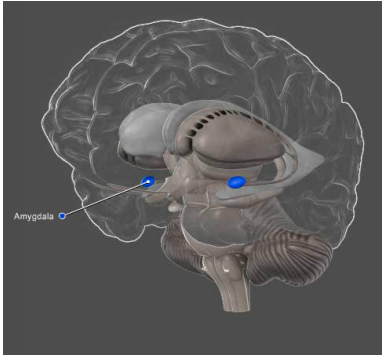
Is that smoke from a bushfire or is it from the chiminee on the patio?



14

Is that a snake or a stick?

## Sgt. Amy G Dala



15

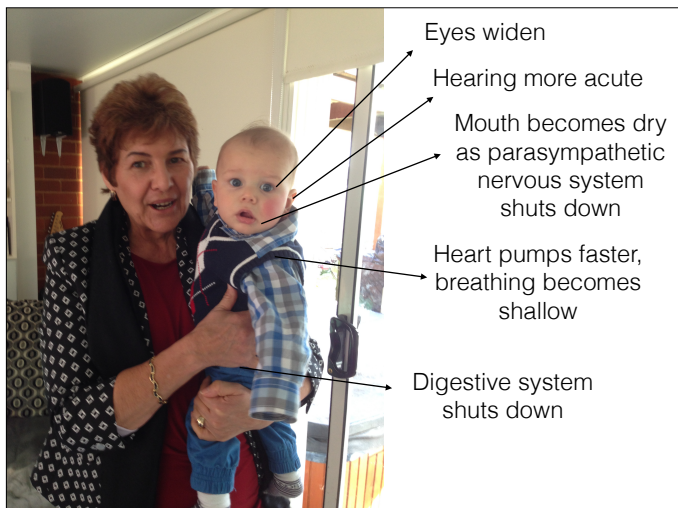
If Sgt Amy G. Dala decides there is danger, she blows the whistle, releases the troops. Adrenalin and cortisol, the stress hormones, are released to ready the body for the danger, so you can run or fight. This happens before any information reaches the pre-frontal cortex. Sgt Amy responds before you know what is happening. You do not know why you reacted. Can you think of a time when you reacted first before you realised the danger, jumping out of the way of a car, jumping back from a snake across the footpath, only seeing it afterwards. This makes perfect sense in evolutionary terms.

## Fight, flight or freeze



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Five thousand years ago when we were living in caves, the slightest sense there was a cave bear allowed our ancestors to grab their spears and kill the cave bear or run out the mouth of the cave. Getting the body ready to respond was more important than being sure there was danger. So what do the stress hormones do?



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The pupils of the eyes widen, to give better peripheral vision. This makes it pretty difficult if you have to be reading or concentrating on something close. The hearing becomes more acute, to allow you to hear anything sneaking up on you. So annoying that the kids become noisier when you are stressed. The breathing becomes more shallow. The hair on your neck stands up, the palms become sweaty. The heart starts beating faster, pumping the large muscles full of blood and energy, to allow you to run or fight. The parasympathetic nervous system is switched off as the brain shuts down maintenance, to allow the greatest amount of energy to be available in an emergency. The digestive system is shut down. This means the mouth becomes dry, the stomach stops digesting

food resulting in butterflies. If it continues, you have to evacuate the bladder and bowel. The immune system shuts down, which accounts for why we often pick up things like colds when we are stressed. Something to consider very carefully given the recent history of bushfires and COVID -19. Or if you are lucky mum will come and rescue you from grandma.

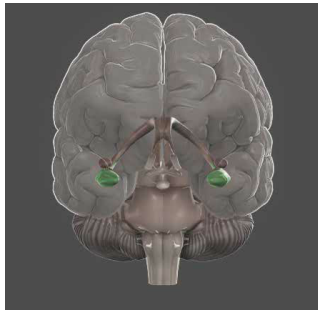
18



Every time Sgt Amy decides there is danger, imagine she takes a photo. The photo includes what you are seeing, hearing, thinking, what you are saying to yourself, your emotions and what your body is feeling. She keeps that memory. Think of the 7 billion people on the planet. Every one of us has the same instinct of fight/flight, but what is fearful in Africa is not relevant here. We need to individualise our programming, and keep our own history. Sgt Amy has been on-line, taking photos since a month before you were born. However, early photos may not have many details, but may only just retain the way the body felt. The body remembers. So when Sgt Amy is scanning for danger, she is comparing it with her photo album. Anytime one aspect of the memory, of the photo recurring, Sgt Amy will send out the troops. Perhaps you were scared of a dog when you were three, you may become quite phobic about dogs, but Sgt Amy doesn't put a date stamp on the photos, and she does not know that the chihuahua that jumped at you when you were three, isn't really any danger to you now you are an adult and 180 cms tall.



## HIPPOCAMPUS

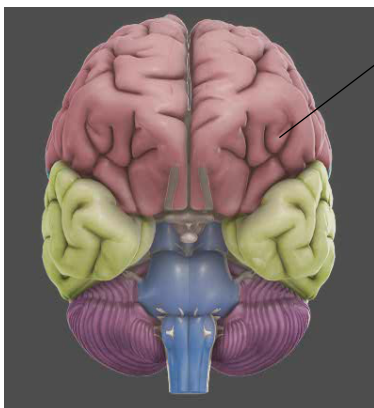


19

19

Sgt Amy doesn't keep photos of everything that happens to you, only ones that have strong emotions. With trauma that means fear, but also love and joy are recorded. However, most memories are processed by another part of the brain called the hippocampus. You know that 7 times 9 equals 63, but unless there was some powerful emotion connected to learning that, such as if you were caned, or were given outstanding praise, you probably have no idea when you exactly learned it, or where, or what you were wearing, or how hot the day was. It is suggested that the hippocampus doesn't come on line until about the age of four, so you don't have narrative memory until then. At night the memories of the day are processed during sleep, during Rapid Eye Movement when we are dreaming. Experiments have shown that interrupting dreamers prevents people from being able to remember what they learned the previous day, though interrupting sleep the same number of times when people are not dreaming does not stop people from remembering what they learned. With interruptions, it's the timing that matters. So we can utilise this natural means of processing memories using eye movements as in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) therapy.

## BRAIN



Hijacked to find the cave bear = worry

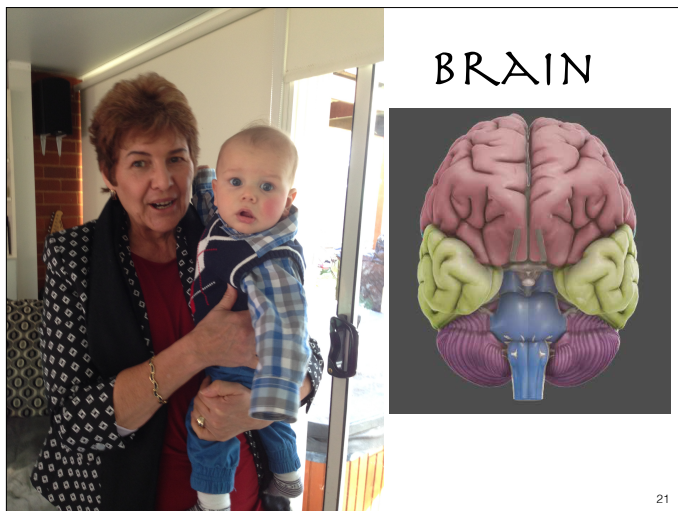
*Breathe*

20

20

When the amygdala is activated, she is in charge. The pre-frontal cortex is hijacked to find the danger. As long as the body is activated for combat, it is sending feedback to the amygdala that it is ready to fight or flee. Your brain is excellent at finding things to worry about. If there is no cave bear or lion, to fight or flee from, your brain will identify problems in your relationships, or at work, or with finances. You will worry about each for a while, bring down your level of distress a bit, and that is rewarding, so you will keep

worrying. With eye movements, we can process the photos so they can no longer be triggers. With relaxation and grounding techniques we can change the feedback to the amygdala from where the body is on alert, so the pre-frontal cortex stops being hijacked and you can again think. This is why it is important to take control of your breathing, as it interrupts the feedback loop.



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We also have a freeze response. Stephen Porges' polyvagal theory describes the three different branches of the autonomic nervous system that evolved. The really ancient one, is death feigning or immobilisation. This system allows the possum to drop down and play dead when attacked by coyotes. The possum goes limp, and the coyotes leave it as it is no longer any fun. Then the possum shakes itself off, trembling all over and runs off. Then we have a fight or flight system, a mobilisation system. Finally, with mammals, we have the social engagement system. So at first we freeze. If you look at little children being handed over to a someone they don't know very well, I think you will see this. Always the danger with grandchildren you haven't seen for a while. Grandma cuddles may not be all that welcome by baby and I prefer a re-familiarisation but sometimes mums hand over their precious child very readily to mothers-in-law and want to take a photo. If you are too little or too powerless to run away or hitting out isn't a good

idea and will make you more unsafe you might be stuck in that immobilisation. The brain is overwhelmed with emotions and we cannot process it at all and we can shut down. Survivors of trauma describe an inability to move, a numbness of the body and functionally disappearing. This is the way we protect ourselves. We often refer to this as dissociation.

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## EMOTIONAL EATING - THE CYCLE

Over eating      Overweight      Dieting  
Control      Stable/normal weight      Exercise

23

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24

# EMOTIONAL EATING - THE CYCLE

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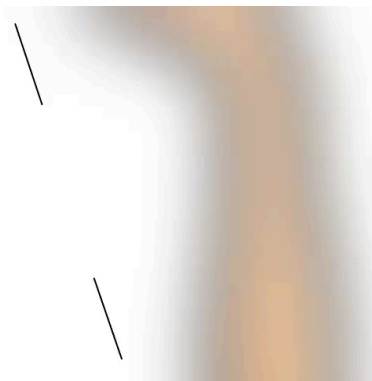
*Comment made in evaluation: I found the fitting of food into an addiction model thought provoking and especially (that) control measures are as much a part of the problem as excess eating.*

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When did you last download some tips on losing weight?  
Are you on a diet for weight loss?  
How many diets for weight loss have you used?  
How successful have they been?  
How much weight have you lost over the years?  
Do you weigh yourself frequently? How often?  
Do you like photos of yourself?  
Do you prefer shopping for clothes on-line so you don't have to try them on in a shop?  
What other things do you do that show you have a preoccupation with weight loss?  
Do you remember when you first worried about your weight?  
How many times have you joined a gym?  
Do you have a pedometer?  
What other preoccupations have you noticed?  
Recognise that pre-occupation with exercise is part of the pattern of emotional eating, just a different phase.  
How many times have you gone on a weight loss diet?

25

# SGT AMY'S PANTRY



✓ The function of emotional eating is to deal with emotions at a subconscious level so that the conscious mind is unaware of what the emotions are. 25

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What is your  
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Now you  
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