

HEALING

Brains are built to heal.

The brain is **neuroplastic**. With support, the filing system unlocks, the alarm recalibrates, and the Wise Boss comes back online.



New connections growing



With the right support...
Therapy that feels collaborative, clear, and human.

- EMDR & Trauma-Focused Therapy**
Helps the filing clerk re-label memories as "past, not present"
- Safe Therapeutic Relationship**
A regulated nervous system helps regulate yours — connection is neurobiologically healing
- Body-Based & Somatic Work**
Completing the survival response the body never had the chance to finish

A structured, trauma-aware approach that moves at your pace and makes expectations transparent.

You do not need to have everything figured out before reaching out. If past experiences left you feeling dismissed, overwhelmed, or unsure if therapy could help, this is a space for a different kind of conversation.

"The goal of trauma treatment is to be **'here'** instead of **'there'** — to bring the traumatic past into a past distinguishable from the present."
— van der Kolk (2001)

Siegel (1999) · Shapiro (2001) · Hobson (2025)

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Understanding what happens in your brain during trauma.

This leaflet uses simple illustrations to explain what actually happens in the brain when we experience something traumatic — and why our reactions make complete sense.

Trauma responses are not weakness. They are the nervous system doing exactly what it was designed to do — often just stuck at full volume, long after the danger has passed.

The good news? **Brains can heal.** New pathways can form. With the right support, the past can finally feel like the past.

GET IN TOUCH
WEBSITE
www.calmcornerapp.com

REFERENCES

Hobson, J. (2025). *An introduction to psychological trauma*. The Grove Practice.

van der Kolk, B.A. (1994, 2014). *The body keeps the score*. Harvard Review / Allen Lane.

Siegel, D.J. (1999). *The developing mind*. Guilford Press.

Porges, S.W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory*. W.W. Norton.

Shapiro, F. (2001). *EMDR: Basic principles & protocols*. Guilford Press.

A VISUAL GUIDE

Your Brain on Trauma

What actually happens inside — and why your reactions make complete sense.

- A SIX-STEP GUIDE
- 1 · Meet the Brain Team

2 · The Alarm Fires

3 · The Wise Boss Goes Offline

4 · Memory Chaos

5 · When It Gets Stuck

6 · Pathways to Healing



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Three regions. One important story.

-  **Amygdala — "The Alarm Bell"**
Detects danger and fires the emergency response — instantly, automatically, no questions asked.
-  **Hippocampus — "The Filing Clerk"**
Tags memories with time and context so they can be stored as past events, not present threats.
-  **Prefrontal Cortex — "The Wise Boss"**
Handles reason, perspective and meaning-making. Keeps everything calm and in context.

When life is going well, these three work **together** — noticing danger, making sense of it, and filing everything safely away.

Instantly. Automatically. No questions asked.



The amygdala detects danger — real, perceived, or a memory from the past — and floods the body with emergency signals. **No pause. No analysis. Just survival.**

"Danger! Everyone to their stations!"

Stress hormones released:

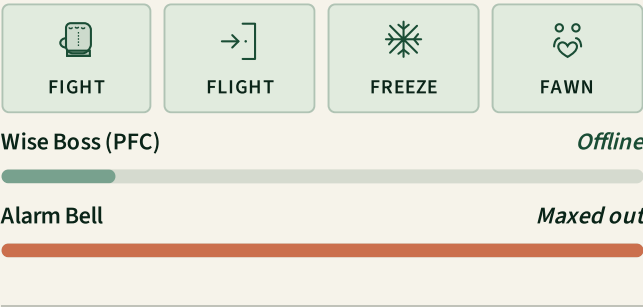
Adrenaline	Heart races, muscles flood with blood
Cortisol	Energy surges — and blocks the filing clerk
Noradrenaline	Hyper-vigilant, scanning for threat



The body diverts blood to survival circuits. Reason, meaning-making, perspective — **switched off.**

When the Wise Boss goes quiet...

- **Reason fades** — logic feels out of reach.
- **Words fail** — speech goes offline.
- **Time collapses** — past and present blur.
- **Empathy narrows** — connection is harder to feel.
- **Impulses take over** — fight, flight, freeze or fawn.
- **Choice disappears** — things happen to you.



The filing clerk can't cope.



Cortisol **blocks the hippocampus**. Memories can't be tagged "past event — done." They remain as raw, unresolved fragments.



No timestamp. No "this is over."

The alarm keeps ringing — even when the danger is long gone.



Stuck in the loop

When trauma isn't fully processed, memory fragments stay **frozen** in the nervous system. Any sensory trigger — a smell, sound, or place — can re-fire the alarm, making the brain respond as though the danger is happening *right now*.

"Why do I keep reacting like this? The danger isn't even here anymore..."

This is not weakness. It is a **stuck filing system** — and with the right support, it can be gently unlocked.

What this can look like:

- ⚡ **Flashbacks** — reliving, not just remembering
- 🌙 **Sleep disturbance** and nightmares
- 🙅 **Avoiding** people, places, or feelings
- 🏃 **Heart racing**, tension, shallow breathing
- 🔌 Feeling **numb**, shut down, or disconnected
- 👁️ **Hypervigilance**, irritability, startle response
- 🚫 Difficulty **trusting** others or feeling safe

In PTSD: the amygdala enlarges; hippocampus and prefrontal cortex physically shrink.