

Five Brain Systems checklist

Please read this list of behaviors and rate yourself (or the person you are evaluating) on each behavior listed. Use the following scale and place the appropriate number next to the item. Five or more symptoms marked 3 or 4 or a total of 20 or higher indicate a high likelihood of weakness with that brain system. A total between 10 and 20 indicates a possibility of an imbalance.

0= never
1= rarely
2= occasionally
3= frequently
4= very frequently

Deep Limbic

- 1. Feelings of sadness/crying
- 2. Moodiness/negativity
- 3. Low energy
- 4. Irritability
- 5. Decreased interest in others
- 6. Feelings of hopelessness about the future
- 7. Feelings of helplessness or powerlessness
- 8. Feeling dissatisfied or bored
- 9. Excessive guilt/low self esteem
- 10. Suicidal feelings
- 11. Lowered interest in things usually considered fun
- 12. Sleep changes (too much or too little)
- 13. Appetite changes (too much or too little)
- 14. Decreased interest in sex
- 15. Negative sensitivity to smells/odors
- 16. Poor concentration/forgetfulness

Total _____

Basal Ganglia

- 1. Feelings of nervousness or anxiety
- 2. Panic attacks or tics/ Avoidance of public places for fear of having an anxiety attack
- 3. Symptoms of heightened muscle tension (headaches, sore muscles, hand tremor)
- 4. Periods of heart pounding, rapid heart rate, or chest pain
- 5. Periods of trouble breathing or feeling smothered
- 6. Periods of feeling dizzy, faint, or unsteady on your feet
- 7. Periods of nausea or abdominal upset
- 8. Periods of sweating, hot or cold flashes, cold hands
- 9. Tendency to predict the worst/ Conflict avoidance
- 10. Fear of dying or doing something crazy
- 11. Excessive fear of being judged or scrutinized by others, worry about what others think
- 12. Persistent phobias/ Shyness or timidity
- 13. Low motivation/ Excessive motivation
- 14. Poor handwriting
- 15. Quick startle reaction/ Low threshold of embarrassment
- 16. Tendency to freeze in anxiety-provoking situations

Total _____

Prefrontal Cortex

- 1. Inability to give close attention to details or avoid careless mistakes
- 2. Trouble sustaining attention in routine situations (home work, chores, paperwork, etc.)
- 3. Trouble listening/ Distractibility
- 4. Poor organization of time or space/ Inability to finish things, poor follow-through
- 5. Lack of clear goals or forward thinking
- 6. Difficulty expressing feelings or empathy
- 7. Excessive daydreaming or talking too little
- 8. Apathy or lack of motivation, boredom
- 9. A feeling of spaciness or being "in a fog"
- 10. Restlessness or trouble sitting still, talking too much
- 11. Difficulty remaining seated in situations where remaining seated is expected
- 12. Conflict seeking
- 13. Blurting out of answers before questions have been completed, difficulty awaiting turn
- 14. Interruption of or intrusion on others (e.g., butting into conversations or games)
- 15. Impulsivity (saying or doing things without thinking first)
- 16. Trouble learning from experience; tendency to make repetitive mistakes

Total _____

Cingulate System

- 1. Excessive or senseless worrying
- 2. Being upset when things do not go your way
- 3. Being upset when things are out of place
- 4. Tendency to be oppositional or argumentative
- 5. Tendency to have repetitive negative thoughts
- 6. Tendency toward compulsive behaviors
- 7. Intense dislike of change
- 8. Tendency to hold grudges
- 9. Trouble shifting attention from subject to subject
- 10. Difficulties seeing options in situations
- 11. Tendency to hold on to own opinion and not listen to others
- 12. Tendency to get locked into a course of action, whether or not it is good
- 13. Being very upset unless things are done in a certain way
- 14. Perception by others that you worry too much
- 15. Tendency to say no without first thinking about questions
- 16. Tendency to predict negative outcomes

Total _____

Temporal Lobe

- 1. Short fuse or periods of extreme irritability
- 2. Periods of rage with little provocation
- 3. Frequent misinterpretation of comments as negative when they are not
- 4. Irritability that tends to build, then explodes, then recedes; person often feels tired after a rage
- 5. Periods of spaciness or confusion
- 6. Periods of panic and/or fear for no specific reason
- 7. Visual or auditory changes, such as seeing shadows or hearing muffled sounds
- 8. Frequent periods of déjà vu (feelings of being somewhere you have never been) or jamais vu (not recalling a familiar place or person)
- 9. Sensitivity or mild paranoia
- 10. Headaches or abdominal pain of uncertain origin
- 11. History of a head injury or family history of violence or explosiveness
- 12. Dark thoughts, such as suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- 13. Periods of forgetfulness
- 14. Memory problems
- 15. Reading comprehension problems
- 16. Preoccupation with moral or religious ideas

Total _____

Comprehensive Total: _____

*Adapted from and inspired by the work of Dr. Daniel Amen and his book [Change Your Brain, Change Your Life.](#)