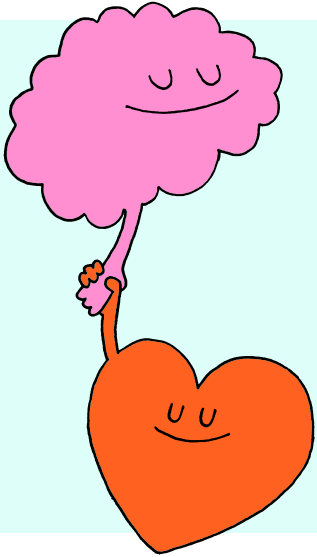


# Amygdala and Stress Response



THE AMYGDALA IS A COLLECTION OF NEURONS IN THE BRAIN THAT RESPOND TO THREATS, INCLUDING STRESS. THE TRICKY THING IS THAT SAME SYSTEM GETS TURNED ON, AND CAN STAY ON, THROUGHOUT EXTENDED PERIODS OF UNCERTAINTY.

THE BRAIN USES IMPULSES TO SEND SIGNALS TO OTHER PARTS OF THE BODY. STRESS CAN CAUSE THE HEART TO BEAT FASTER, BREATH TO SPEED UP AND MUSCLES TO GET TIGHT AND TENSE. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT LAUGHTER RELEASES DOPAMINE, WHICH CAN LIFT YOUR MOOD AND REDUCE STRESS.

## Discussion Questions

**1.** Can you think of a time recently when you've shared a deep belly laugh with a friend or loved one?

**2.** What changes did you notice in your body? How did you feel afterwards?

# Take Action

**1.** Take a few deep breaths. Deep breathing helps calm the amygdala so you can think clearly.

**2.** Make time for the things that make you laugh! It could be your favourite movie, cute animal photos or anything else you like.

**3.** We get by with a little help from our friends. FaceTime a friend or call a family member.

**4.** What is one thing you can try doing the next time you're feeling nervous or stressed? How can you remind yourself to do this?

