

## Lesson Plan

### A Brain House - The Upstairs and Downstairs Brain

#### Objectives:

- To teach students how the brain functions
- To lay strong foundations for emotional intelligence
- To encourage emotion expression
- To teach emotion regulation and coping mechanisms

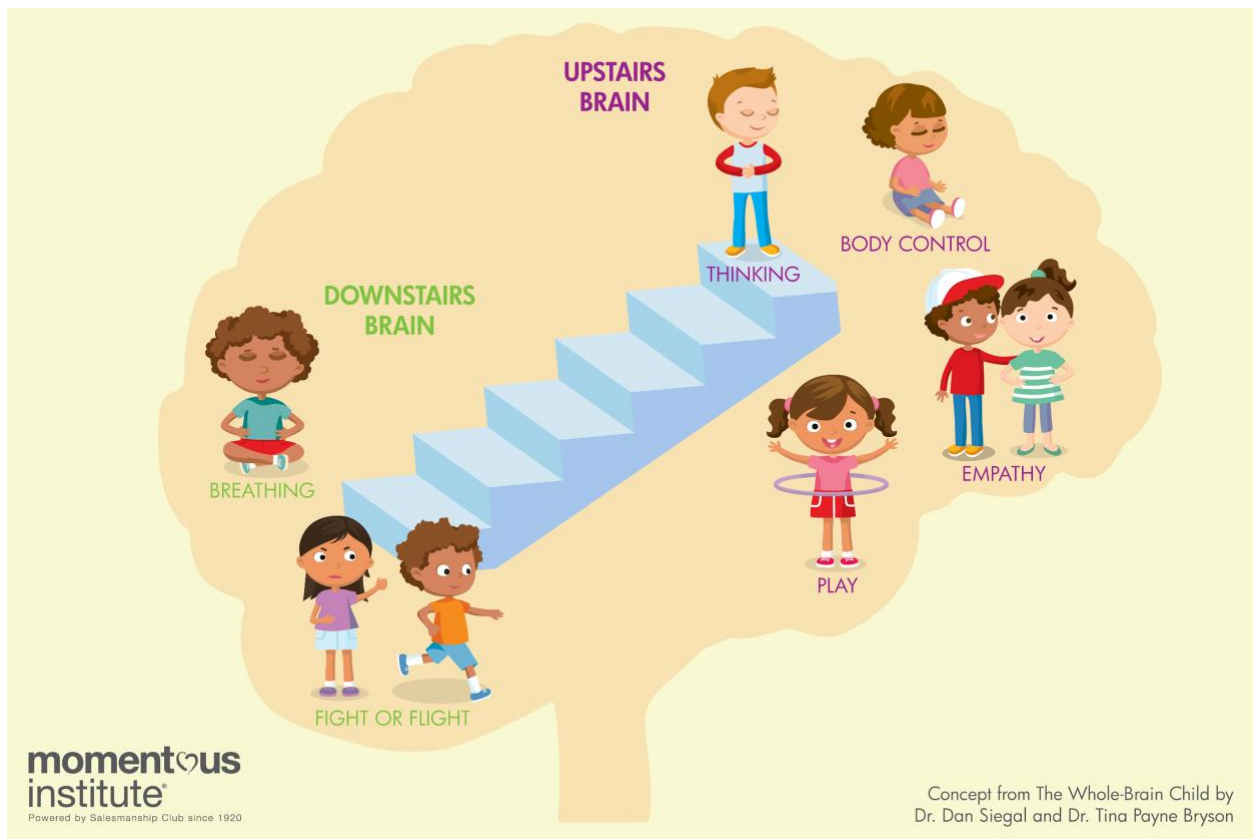
#### Resources:

- A4 blank sheets for each student or
- A4 sheets with brain templates
- Colouring pens
- Upstairs Brain Characters; Calming Charlotte, Problem Solving Patrick, Creative Craig, Flexible Fiona
- Downstairs Brain Characters; Alerting Alice, Frightened Felix, Bossy Ben

#### Lesson Plan:

- Explain to students that sometimes our brains can become overwhelmed with feelings of fear, sadness, anger etc. and when this happens, it can be confusing
- Tell students that their brains are like a house, with a upstairs and a downstairs,
- Tell them stories of who lives in the house
- You can use different characters to explain different emotions - characters who live upstairs and ones who live downstairs
- Explain to them that the upstairs characters are thinkers, problem solvers, planners, emotion regulators, creatives, flexible and empathic types
- For example; Calming Charlotte, Problem Solving Patrick, Creative Craig, Flexible Fiona.
- Then explain that the downstairs characters are feelers. They are focused on keeping us safe and our needs are met. They're in charge for our survival, looking out for danger and preping us for fight.
- For example; Alerting Alice, Frightened Felix and Bossy Ben.
- Then explain that our brains work at its best when the upstairs and the downstairs work together by carrying messages up and down the stairs.
- Tell them that sometimes Alerting Alice sees danger and Frightened Felix panics then Bossy Ben prepares you to fight. This is when the downstairs brain takes over i.e. "flips the lid" on the upstairs brain.
- Explain to them that when this happens the downstairs and upstairs brain aren't working together anymore.

- Tell students that flipping our lids keeps us safe from dangers but sometimes we need the upstairs characters; Problem Solving Patrick and Calming Charlotte to help us.
- For example; when throwing a tantrum in the toy shop
- Ask children to brainstorm ways on how Problem Solving Patrick and Calming Charlotte can help Bossy Ben calm down - e.g. breathing exercises, time off, coloring etc.



**Movie:**

As a reward for taking part in the activity, you can get them to watch Inside Out



**Reference:**

Bryson, D., Siegel, D., & Payne Bryson, T. (2012). *Whole-Brain Child 12 Proven Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. London: Constable & Robinson