

# Rewired to Relate – overview

As humans, we have great capacity for relating, connecting and collaborating. And we can create harmonious, collaborative relationships. But we also have great capacity for being competitive and critical which leads to conflict and strife.

Why does this happen?

Knowing how the limbic system works as the source of our emotions can be helpful.

## Brain training for working well with others



### The limbic system – your emotional brain

The limbic system is much stronger and faster than the rational part of our brain and it highly influences our actions, ready to react because of an inner feeling of threat or reward.



It generates dopamine, a feel-good brain chemical, to nudge us towards things it feels are good for survival. This is what creates **wants and needs**, such as our need to belong and feel safe with others.



It also produces adrenaline and cortisol to get us out of a situation quickly, when it perceives we are in danger. This creates the fight, flight, freeze responses that create **anger and other emotions**.

## The Be SAFE & Certain model

The limbic system is constantly monitoring social reactions looking for potential threats. The model identifies these social elements:

**B**elonging, **S**tatus, **A**utonomy, **F**airness, **E**xpectations, **C**ertainty



**Belonging:** a sense of being in it together



**Fairness:** a sense that there is fairness and justice between people



**Status:** understanding one's position and feeling relevant



**Expectations:** imagining positive outcomes and possibilities



**Autonomy:** having a sense of independence and freedom



**Certainty:** having clarity and knowing what's going to happen

## Manage emotions; relate more

Managing your emotions in order to relate more is all about using your personal resources to best effect: your brain, body, energy, mental sharpness, your emotions and especially your brain's prefrontal cortex (PFC). The PFC is the key to doing your best work and managing your emotional needs.

Build your awareness of what costs you energy, where you get more energy and then design your day in a way that optimises your brain's resources.

### Brain-care, well-being and the prefrontal cortex



The PFC is like the battery pack of the brain. When fully charged and focused, it has many functions including problem solving; focusing attention; weighing up situations; collaborating with others and tackling the task in hand as opposed to looking for quicker, less demanding solutions.



The PFC tires out easily and can only do one thing at a time. As it carries out its many functions during a day, each takes a little bit of its energy. If you are low on sleep, hungry, in pain, distracted, worried about world events or going through big changes at home or at work, you will be less able to manage your emotions.



Recognise when your brain is tired and organise your day around your energy flow. Counteract this by prioritising brain care – get a good night's sleep, good nutrition and regular exercise. Take breaks from technology, news and drama, go for a walk, eat a healthy snack, practise mindfulness.

### The ABC of mindfulness

**ABC** is a simple to use mindfulness technique you can use to gain control of emotional reactions and put your PFC back in charge. You can use it before a meeting or stressful situation to keep yourself grounded and calm.



#### Be Aware

Take a moment to notice what is happening in your brain and body. This will begin to reduce the limbic system's influences



#### Breathe

Breathe to flush out stress chemicals so you can more easily observe events with a non-judgemental and objective perspective.



#### Choose

Once you have stepped back from the situation and your reactions, you can choose how you want to respond.