

Five Brain Systems checklist

*Based on and interpreted from the work of Dr. Daniel Amen and his book
Change Your Brain, Change Your Life

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.

Name: _____ Date: _____

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

Deep Limbic

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

Basal Ganglia

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Feelings of nervousness or anxiety | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Periods of sweating, hot or cold flashes, cold hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Panic attacks or tics/ Avoidance of public places for fear of having an anxiety attack | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Tendency to predict the worst/conflict avoidance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Symptoms of heightened muscle tension (headaches, sore muscles, hand tremor) | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of dying or doing something crazy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Periods of heart pounding, rapid heart rate, or chest pain | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive fear of being judged or scrutinized by others, worry about what others think |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Periods of trouble breathing or feeling smothered | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent phobias/Shyness or timidity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Periods of feeling dizzy, faint, or unsteady on your feet | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Low motivation/Excessive motivation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Periods of nausea or abdominal upset | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Poor handwriting |
| | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Quick startle/low threshold of embarrassment |
| | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> 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/ 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/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 &/or fear for no specific reason
- 7. Visual or auditory changes, such as seeing shadows or hearing muffled sounds
- 8. Frequent periods of deja 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: _____