

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY & MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

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Physiological, fight, flight, freeze responses

Release of adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine: The three major stress hormones.

Blunt pain response is compromised: If your sympathetic nervous system is triggered by combat or a collision, it's not uncommon to only feel your injuries once you've returned to safety and have had time to calm down. This is one reason that people in car accidents don't typically feel pain from their injuries until afterwards.

You're on edge: You're more aware and observant, and in response, you're looking and listening for things that could be dangerous. Your senses are heightened and you're keenly aware of what's going on around you.

Memories can be affected: Sometimes during stressful experiences, your memories of the event can be altered. Your memories can be very clear or vivid or they can be completely blacked out.

You're tense or trembling: Stress hormones are circulating throughout your body, so you might feel tense or twitchy, like your muscles are about to move at any given moment.

Your bladder might be affected: It's not uncommon to lose control of your bladder or bowels in a truly stressful or dangerous situation.

Tunnel Vision: Our eyes point slightly outward, our short-range vision is decreased, our pupils dilate to allow more light in, and our peripheral vision narrows. (The same effect can sometimes be observed with hearing.)

Heart rate: In fight or Flight, your heart beats faster to bring oxygen to your major muscles. During freezing, your heart rate might increase or decrease.

Lungs: Your breathing speeds up to deliver more oxygen to your blood. In the freeze response, you might hold your breath.

Blood: Blood thickens, which increases clotting factors. This prepares your body for injury.

Skin: Your skin might produce more sweat or get cold. You may look pale or have goosebumps.

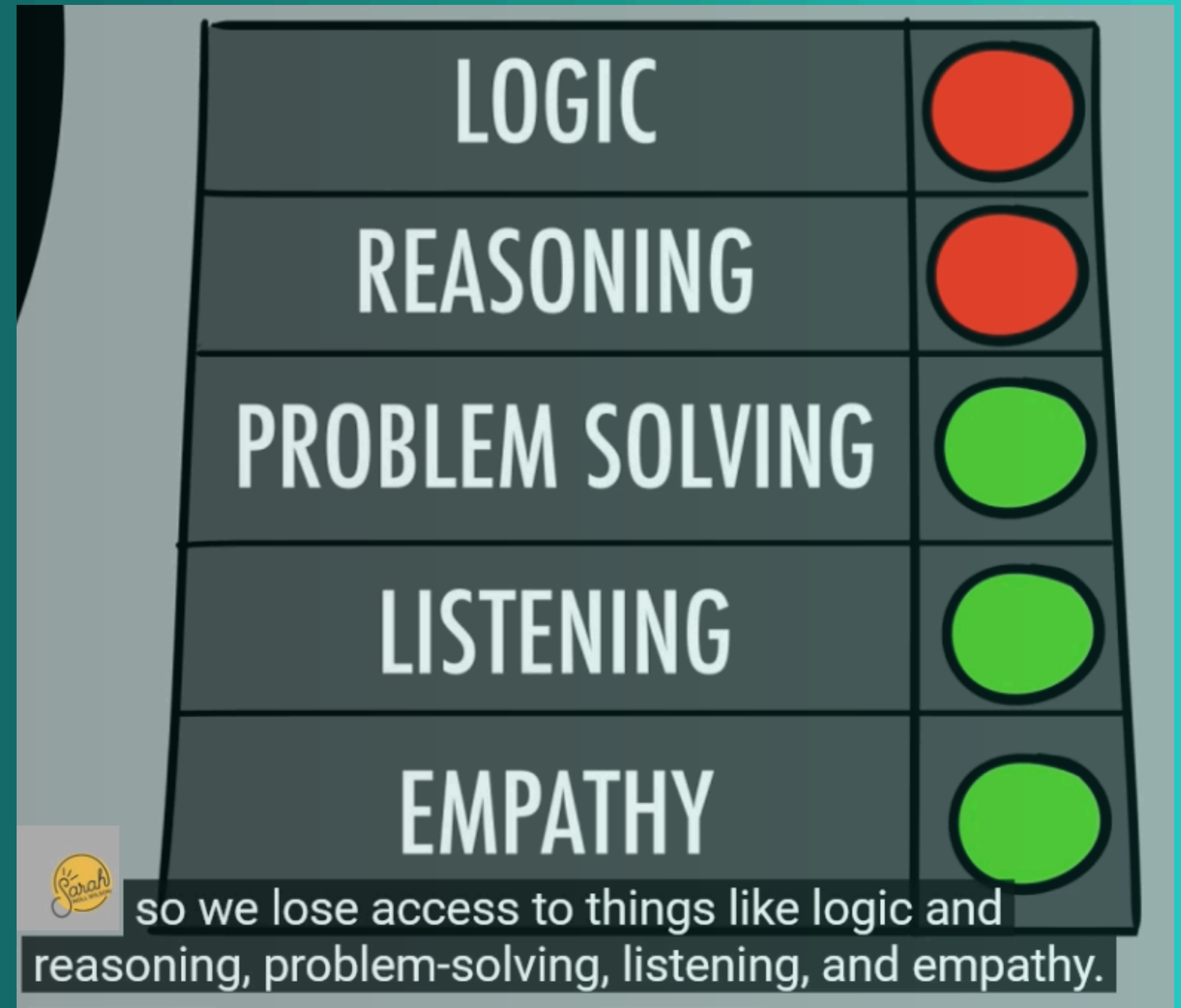
Hands and feet: As blood flow increases to your major muscles, your hands and feet might get cold.

Amygdala Hijack

We lose access to:

- Logic
- Reasoning
- Problem Solving
- Listening
- Empathy

when we're in a state of fight, flight or freeze!



During an amygdala hijack, the nervous system's response to signals from the amygdala, the reptilian part of the brain, is enhanced, while activity in the cerebral cortex, the reasoning part of the brain, decreases.



A Psychological Hazard, therefore, is anything that results in a fight, flight, or freeze response when there is no imminent physical danger.



- Blaming*
- Shaming*
- Criticism*
- Ignoring*

* When these result in the release of adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine in one, or more, people exposed to the behaviour.

Common Defensive Responses | Psychological Hazards

FIGHT

- Sarcasm
- Active and Passive Aggression
- Blaming
- Projection of Judgements
- Bullying
- Criticism
- Ignoring Physical & Emotional Boundaries

FLIGHT

- Walking/Running Away
- Deceiving
- Avoiding
- Cancelling Appointments
- Lying
- Hiding
- Ghosting
- No-Showing
- Abandoning
- Escape Into Fantasy

FREEZE

- Ignoring
- Fawning (sometimes in its own category)
- Self Numbing (Alcohol, drugs, overwork, sex, games, books, etc.)
- Appearing to act normally while emotionally vacant
- Collapsing into deep sleep
- Dissociating
- Leaving Body
- Immobilization

When a person is triggered into a fight, flight, or freeze response, in the absence of any imminent physical threat, that person is psychologically UNSAFE.



A environment is psychologically UNSAFE when people in that space are triggered into fight, flight, or freeze responses, in the absence of any imminent physical danger.

If a person is not responding to physical pain, what kind of pain are they responding to?



Learning about disconnection trauma from the Still Face Experiment

CONNECT vs. DISCONNECT



CONNECT vs. DISCONNECT

The pain and trauma associated with involuntary disconnection persists throughout a person's life, trapped inside their cellular memory.

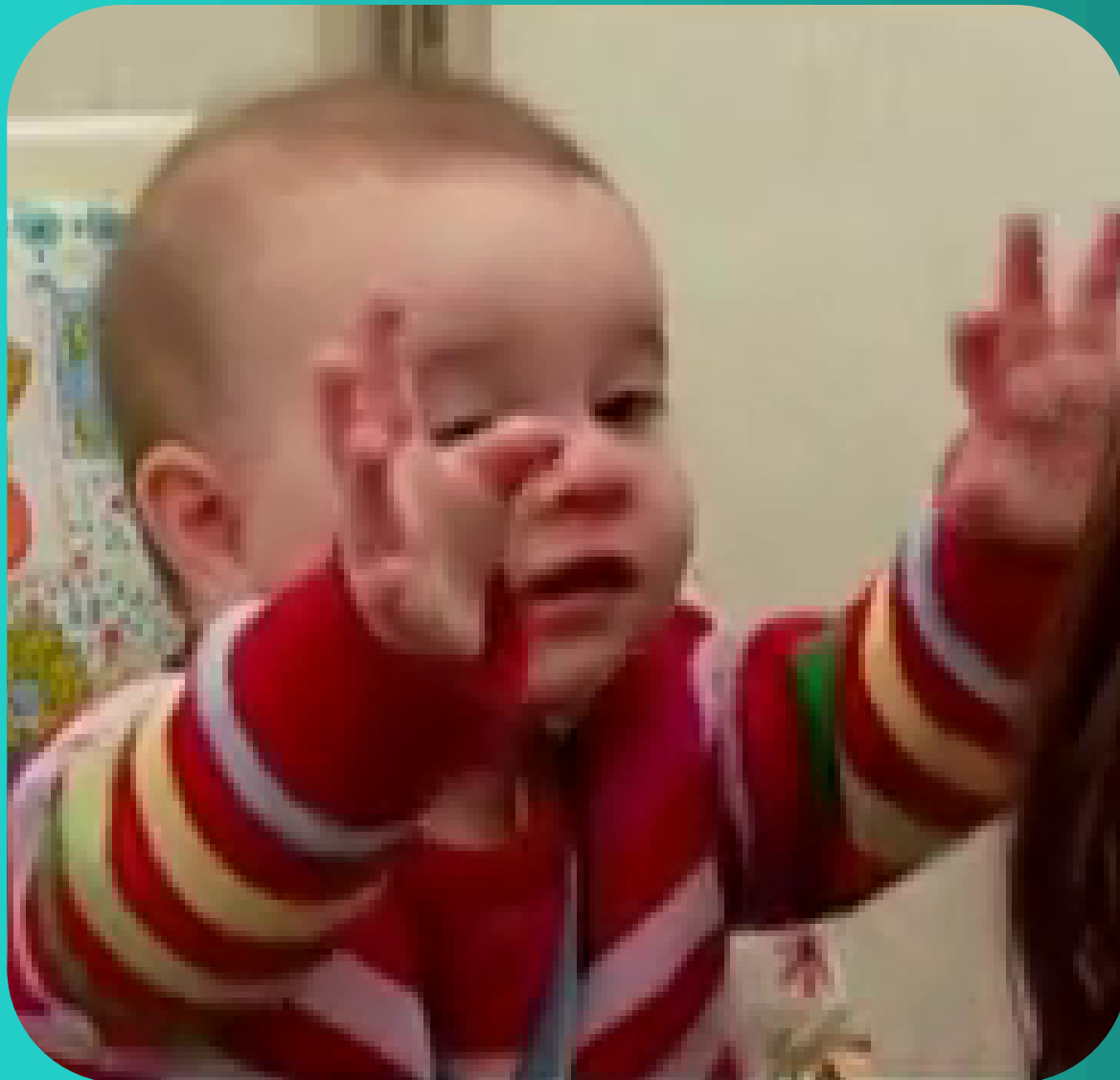
The vast majority of us continue to be vulnerable to disconnectedness.

That's why the cultivation of psychological safe environments is so crucial, and so uncomfortable for us to discuss.

FORCE | POWER | LEVERAGE



Now that you know about the pain affecting a majority of people when they experience involuntary isolation:
Take a second look at this list because
every one of these defensive responses **IS DISCONNECTIVE**



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**CONNECT vs.
DISCONNECT**

Blaming is DISCONNECTIVE
Lying is DISCONNECTIVE
Ignoring is DISCONNECTIVE



It's the **DISCONNECTIVENESS**
that triggers a Fight, Flight or
Freeze reaction !

INTERNAL DRIVERS responsible for disrespectful behaviour, harassment, violence, and interpersonal conflict

The role played by what Carl Jung referred to as the SHADOW

Exposure to one's Shadow triggers fight, flight or freeze.

The character traits on a the Blue background are typically Shadow and therefore rejected, suppressed and buried .

👍 Capable
👍 Brilliant
👍 Competent
👍 Agreeable
👍 Responsive
👍 Calm
👍 Valuable
👍 Correct

👎 Useless
👎 Idiot
👎 Incompetent
👎 Argumentative
👎 Disobedient
👎 Crazy
👎 Worthless
👎 Wrong

👍 Measured
👍 Kind
👍 Considerate
👍 Sensitive
👍 Gentle
👍 Forgiving
👍 Constructive
👍 Calm

👎 Ruthless
👎 Cruel
👎 Inconsiderate
👎 Bully
👎 Violent
👎 Vengeful
👎 Destructive
👎 Anxious

Ones on the Yellow background are typically encouraged and accepted.

A person's sensitivity to variations in race, gender, and cultural differences, as well as their reactions to these variations, is a response to Shadow.

**CONNECT vs.
DISCONNECT**

THE REASON A PERSON DOES SOMETHING IS TO SHIFT FROM A STATE OF HIGHER DISCOMFORT TO A STATE OF COMFORT / LOWER DISCOMFORT – PHILIP’S RULE

1	HUNGRY	EAT	FULL	14		SUBMIT A COMPLAINT	
2	TIRED	REST	AWAKE	15		PROVIDE FIRST AID	
3	LONELY	CONTACT A FRIEND	LESS LONELY	16		CHEAT ON PARTNER	
4	SAD		HAPPY	17		IGNORE A TEAM MEMBER	
5	INVISIBLE		SEEN	18			APPRECIATED
6	DIRTY	WASH	CLEAN	19	JUDGED		
7	UPSET			20			
8		COMPLAIN		21			
9		CHEAT		22			
10		BULLY		23			
11		SEEK ROMANTIC PARTNER		24			
12			LOVABLE	25			
13		END A RELATIONSHIP		26			

CONNECT vs. DISCONNECT