



INTRODUCTION: REVIEW LIZARD & WIZARD BRAIN

Today we are going to make a drawing that can help us calm down when we are feeling big emotions.

First, let's make sure we remember the difference between our Lizard Brain and our Wizard Brain. Can anyone tell me what the Lizard Brain does?

That's right! The Lizard Brain is the part of our brain that keeps us safe and deals with intense emotions like anger and fear.

Can anyone tell me what the Wizard Brain does?

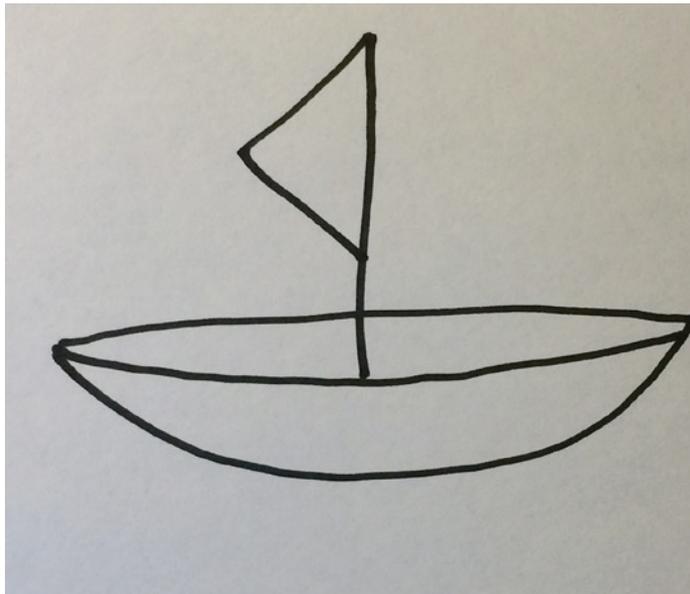
Correct! The Wizard Brain is the thinking part of our brain that helps us to make responsible choices, calm down, and control our actions.

Our drawing today is going to help us understand how our brain, our emotions, mindfulness, and coping skills are all related. Let's get started!

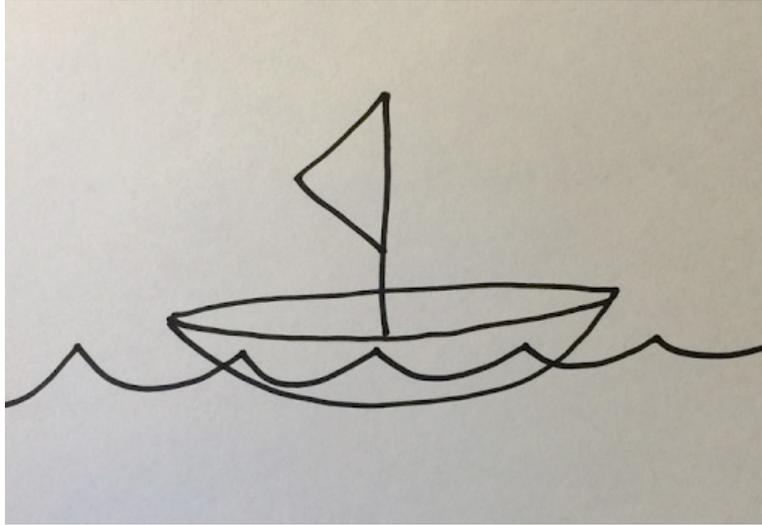


ACTIVITY: DROP YOUR ANCHOR

The first thing we will draw is a boat. We'll keep it really simple, just like this:



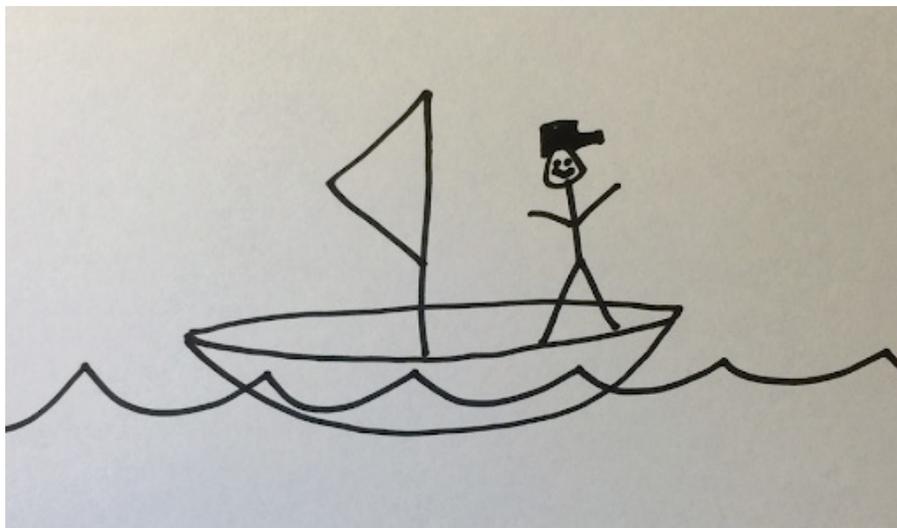
This boat is a lot like our lizard-brain. It keeps us afloat, but without any direction or someone to steer the ship it can easily go off course and get tossed around by the waves. Speaking of waves, let's add some to our drawing.



If the boat is like our lizard-brain, then the waves are a lot like our emotions. Imagine that your mind is floating on an ocean of emotions; sometimes the sea is very calm and peaceful, sometimes it can be a little wavy, and sometimes there are BIG storms that really rock your boat. Just like real waves in the ocean, it is important to remember that these emotions come and go and are always changing.

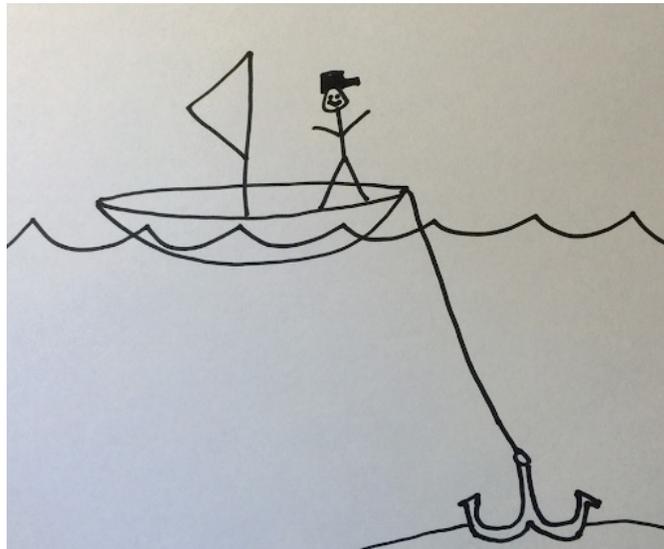
If our emotions are like ocean waves – sometimes calm, sometimes stormy – then we will definitely need someone to steer our boat. Does anyone know what we call someone who is in charge of a boat?

Yes – we need a captain!



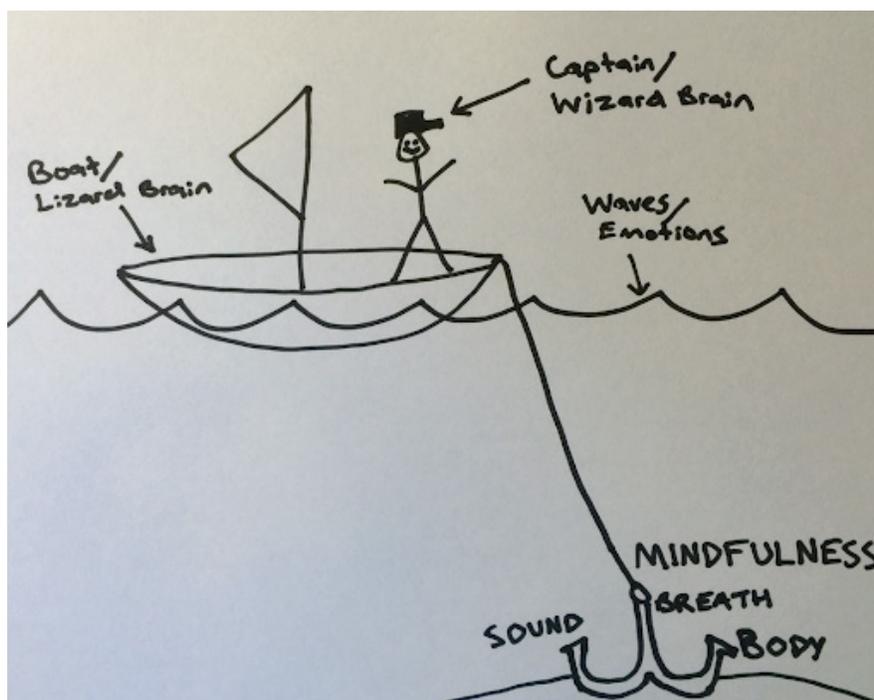
The captain of our boat represents our Wizard Brain; she decides what to do, which direction the ship will go, and how to keep the ship going in stormy waters. Without a captain, our boat would surely sink!

Now that we have our boat, our captain, and the waves, there is one thing we are missing. Does anyone know what captains use to keep their boat in one place? We need an anchor!



When the waves get too rough, a smart captain knows when to drop the anchor to keep the boat from going too far off course or sinking. The anchor represents our mindfulness skills. When our emotions (waves) start to feel really stormy and out of control we can use our Wizard Brain (captain) to decide to 'drop our anchor' by using mindfulness.

Let's label our drawing so we don't forget, and then we will practice dropping our anchors.



Now that we understand how all of the pieces of how our drawing fit together, we are going to practice ‘dropping our anchors.’ When it comes to mindfulness, there are three anchors we can use: mindful breathing, mindful body, and mindful listening. In any situation, if we can remember to pause, breathe, listen, and feel into our body it will help us to keep our boat from sinking. Let’s try it!

Guide a brief mindfulness practice in “Dropping Your Anchor.” Use the script below as a starting point, or decide on your own language to help students connect with the experience.

Close your eyes and remember a time when you felt a difficult emotion that really rocked your boat. Imagine this emotion as a wave on the ocean, tossing your boat around and throwing you off course. Notice what it feels like in your body and any thoughts or memories that come to mind when you feel this emotion.

With your eyes still closed, use your Wizard Brain (captain) to decide to drop your anchor. There are three simple steps to dropping your anchor:

1. First, take 1-3 deep breaths, noticing how each breath relaxes your body.
2. Second, listen to the sounds around you, still with your eyes closed.
3. Third, do a quick body scan to notice any tension or stress still in your body.

Continue to breathe deeply until you can feel the stress and tension in your body beginning to relax. That’s it! All it takes to drop your anchor is to breathe, listen, and notice how your body feels. You can use this anytime you start to feel overwhelmed by your emotions. Try it one more time on your own – when I say “Drop your anchor,” I want you to pause, take a deep breath, listen, and notice how your body feels.

Ready? Drop your anchor!

Allow some time for students to practice dropping their anchors.

As time allows, facilitate a discussion about other ways students can drop their anchor.

Any coping skill that grounds you in the present moment is a form of ‘dropping your anchor.’

Brainstorm ideas with your students, keeping the focus on skills that can be used at any time and encouraging students to write their own list in their journals.

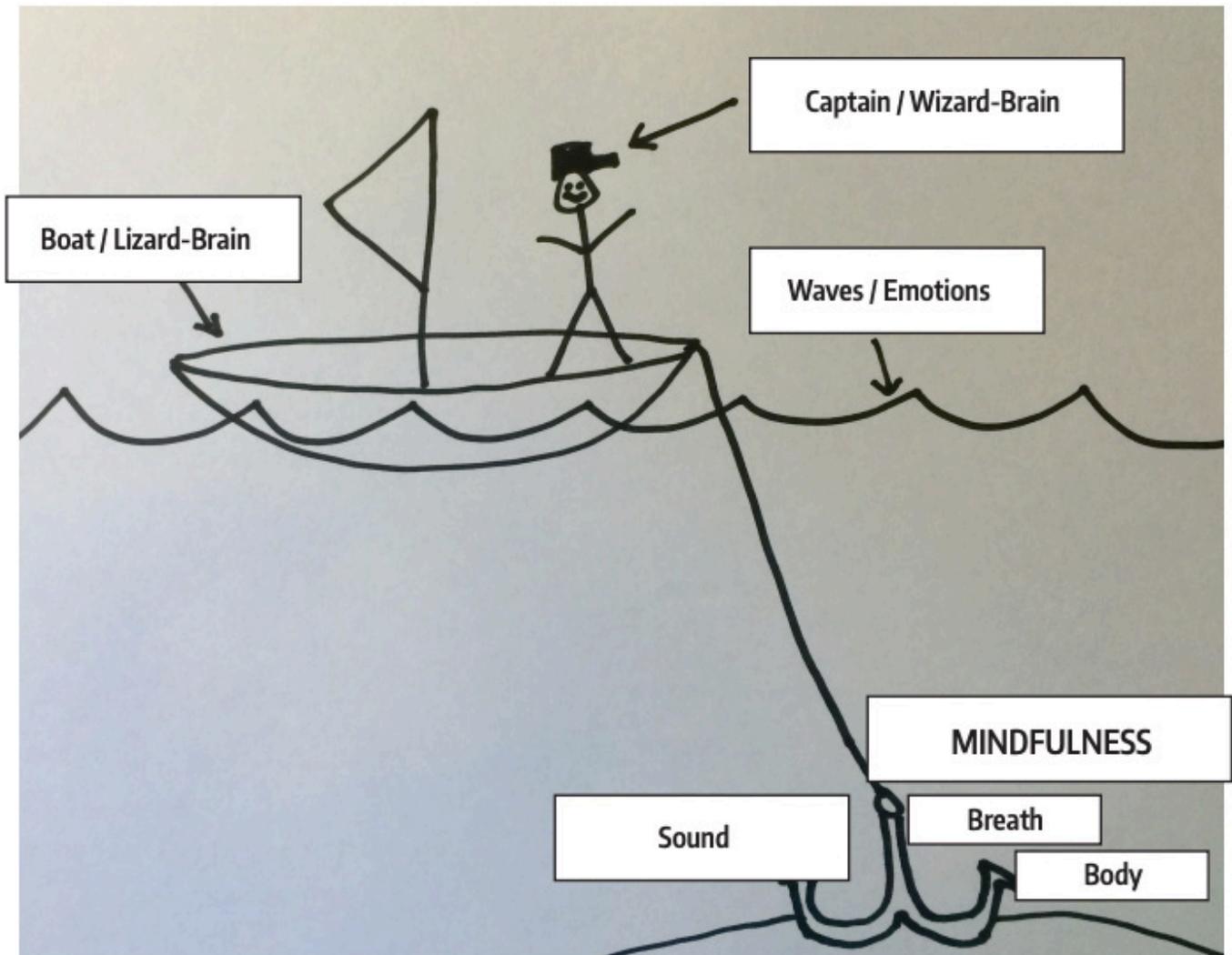
I am going to use the phrase “Drop Your Anchor” as a reminder whenever I notice that you seem overwhelmed or that your lizard-brain is taking over. Whenever I say “drop your anchor,” that is your reminder to take a deep breath and use your mindfulness skills and coping skills to calm down.

Remember: it is up to you (the captain) to decide when to drop your anchor. Ships are made to explore and travel the ocean, so we can’t stay anchored all of the time. When we use our Wizard Brain, however, we know that our anchor is always available. We can always pause, breathe, listen, and notice our body.



CLOSING REFLECTION

In your journal, reflect on the what it means to “drop your anchor.” Ware some examples of different “waves” (emotions) you often feel? Are they big or small waves?



How to drop your anchor:

Pause. Stop what you're doing and take a break.

Take 1 – 3 deep breaths

Listen to the sounds around you

Notice how your body feels.