

Which mode is my brain in?

A self-check tool based on the Brain Smart® framework

The Brain Smart® framework teaches us that the brain works in two key modes. When we recognise which mode we are in, we can begin to shift our response. Use this card to check in with yourself.

THREAT MODE

The brain is sounding the alarm

- Heart racing or pounding
- Tight chest, shallow breathing
- Feeling angry, scared or panicked
- Mind racing or going blank
- Worst-case-scenario thinking
- Wanting to run away or lash out
- Feeling frozen or shut down
- Hard to think or concentrate

Your brain is trying to protect you.

SMART MODE

The brain is calm and in control

- Breathing feels steady and easy
- Thinking clearly and logically
- Able to solve problems calmly
- Feeling curious or creative
- Open to other perspectives
- Able to plan and take action
- Feeling grounded and present
- Responding rather than reacting

You are the boss of your brain.

If you are in Threat Mode, try this:

STOP

Notice that your alarm system has been triggered.

BREATHE

In for 4. Hold for 4. Out for 6. Repeat twice.

OBSERVE

Find three things around you that are okay right now.

ASK

Is this a real threat, or is my brain telling me a story?