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## Five Brain Systems Checklist

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

NAME:

DATE:

Please read this list of behaviors and rate yourself (or the person you are evaluating) on each behavior.  
Use the following scale and place the appropriate number next to each item.

0= NEVER 1= RARELY 2= OCCASIONALLY 3= FREQUENTLY 4= VERY FREQUENTLY

### Deep Limbic

Feelings of sadness/crying

Moodiness/negativity

Low energy

Irritability

Decreased interest in others

Feelings of hopelessness about the future

Feelings of helplessness or powerlessness

Feeling dissatisfied or bored

Excessive guilt/low self esteem

Suicidal feelings

Lower interest in things usually considered fun

Sleep changes (too much or too little)

Appetite changes (too much or too little)

Decreased interest in sex

Negative sensitivity to smells/odors

Poor concentration/forgetfulness

TOTAL:

### Basal Ganglia

Feelings of nervousness or anxiety

Panic attacks or tics/ Avoidance of public  
places for fear of having an anxiety attack

Symptoms of heightened muscle tension  
(headaches, sore muscles, hand tremor)

Periods of heart pounding, rapid heart rate, or  
chest pain

Periods of trouble breathing or feeling smothered

Periods of feeling dizzy, faint, or unsteady

Periods of nausea or abdominal upset

Periods of sweating, hot or cold flashes, cold hands

Tendency to predict the worst/conflict avoidance

Fear of dying or doing something crazy

Excessive fear of being judged or scrutinized by  
others, worry about what others think

Persistent phobias/Shyness or timidity

Low motivation/Excessive motivation

Poor handwriting

Quick startle/low threshold of embarrassment

Tendency to freeze in anxiety-provoking situations

TOTAL:

## Prefrontal Cortex

Inability to give close attention to details or avoid careless mistakes

Trouble sustaining attention in routine situations (home work, chores, paperwork, etc.)

Trouble listening/ Distractibility

Poor organization of time or space/ Inability to finish things, poor follow-through

Lack of clear goals or forward thinking

Difficulty expressing feelings or empathy

Excessive daydreaming or talking too little

Apathy or lack of motivation, boredom

A feeling of spaciness/ being "in a fog"

Restlessness or trouble sitting still, talking too much.

Difficulty remaining seated in situations where remaining seated is expected

Conflict seeking

Blurting out of answers before questions have been completed, difficulty awaiting turn

Interruption of or intrusion on others (e.g., butting into conversations or games)

Impulsivity (saying or doing things without thinking first)

Trouble learning from experience; tendency to make repetitive mistakes

TOTAL:

## Cingulate System

Excessive or senseless worrying

Being upset when things do not go your way

Being upset when things are out of place

Tendency to be oppositional or argumentative

Tendency to have repetitive negative thoughts

Tendency toward compulsive behaviors

Intense dislike of change

Tendency to hold grudges

Trouble shifting attention from subject to subject

Difficulties seeing options in situations

Tendency to hold on to own opinion and not listen to others

Tendency to get locked into a course of action, whether or not it is good

Being very upset unless things are done in a certain way

Perception by others that you worry too much

Tendency to say no without first thinking about questions

Tendency to predict negative outcomes

TOTAL:

## Temporal Lobe

Short fuse/periods of extreme irritability

Periods of rage with little provocation

Frequent misinterpretation of comments as negative when they are not

Irritability that tends to build, then explodes, then recedes; person often feels tired after a rage

Reading comprehension problems

Periods of spaciness or confusion

Periods of panic &/or fear for no specific reason

Visual or auditory changes, such as seeing shadows or hearing muffled sounds

Sensitivity or mild paranoia

Frequent periods of deja vu (feelings of being some where you have never been) or jamais vu (not recalling a familiar place or person)

Headaches or abdominal pain of uncertain origin

History of a head injury or family history of violence or explosiveness

Dark thoughts, such as suicidal or homicidal thoughts

Periods of forgetfulness

Memory problems

Preoccupation with moral or religious ideas

TOTAL:

COMPREHENSIVE TOTAL: