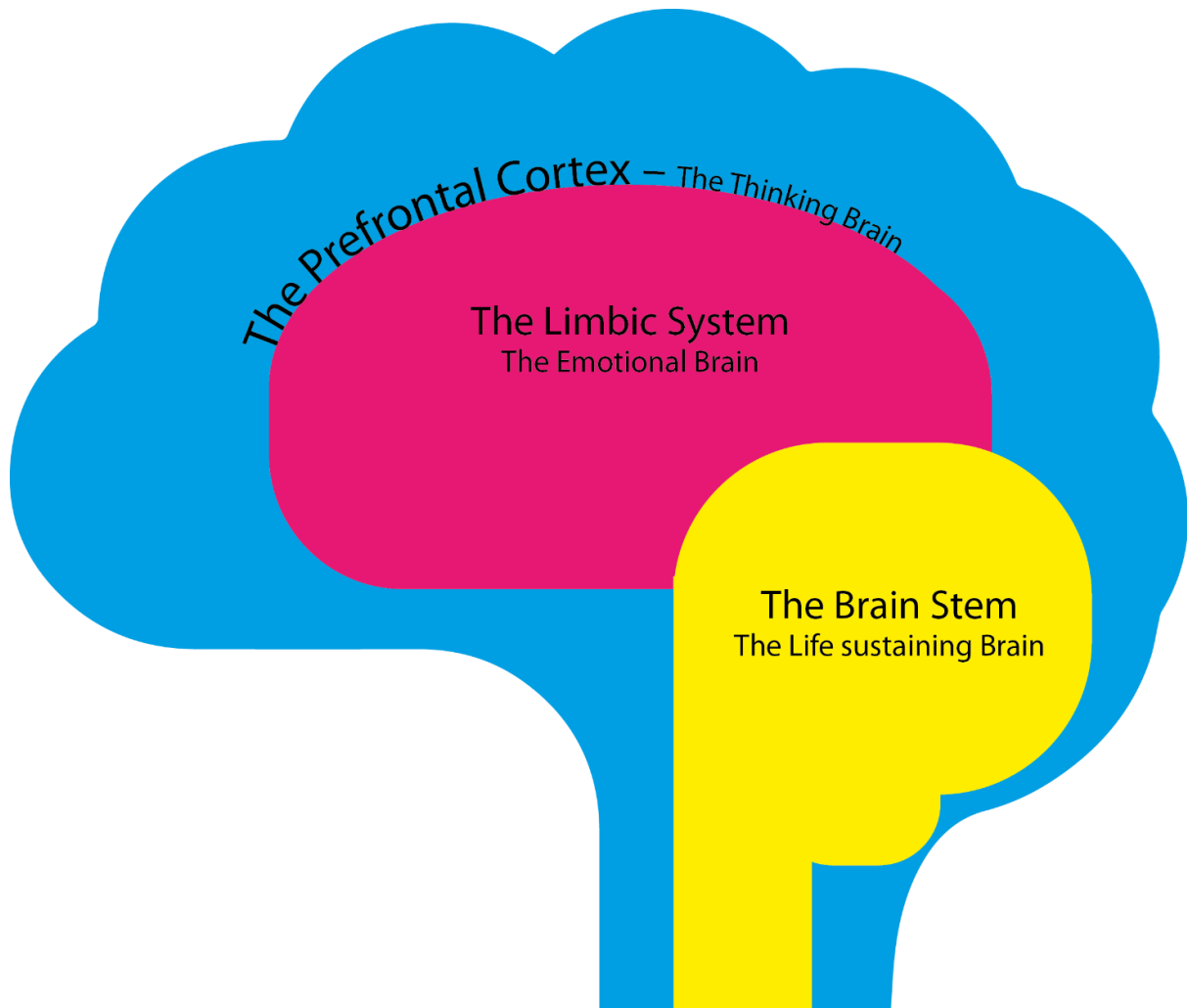


The Three-Part Brain

The three-part model of the brain can help us to better understand ourselves and apply findings from neurobiological research to everyday life.



1. The Brain Stem – The Life Sustaining Brain

Our brain stem grows in the womb and controls our automatic functions such as breathing, heart rate and instinctive responses. It links sensory input with life-sustaining responses (e.g., blinking). This area is continually ready to respond to threat throughout our life span.

2. The Limbic System – The Emotional Brain

This system includes many of our non-verbal and feeling memories including information about our relationships. This is where 'gut feelings' and traumatic memories are stored. This system initiates the 'Fight or Flight' response, which follows a pathway via the brain stem, through the autonomic nervous system to ready our body for action towards escaping danger.

3. The Prefrontal Cortex – The Thinking Brain

The prefrontal cortex is evolutionary the youngest and is described as the 'thinking brain' and it is involved in problem-solving, reasoning, flexible thinking, creativity, language, and memory for facts and events amongst many other functions. This area is vital in establishing and sustaining relationships with others and helps stop us from saying and doing things that may hurt or humiliate others.

