



## Neuroanatomy 101: Your Brain on Anxiety

When you feel anxious, two important parts of your brain are working together:

Amygdala (Survival Brain)	Frontal Cortex (Thinking Brain)
Detects possible danger	Helps you reflect, plan, and decide
Triggers fight, flight, or freeze	Calms the amygdala when overactive
Works fast, sometimes sets false alarms	Goes offline when anxiety is very high

### Nervous System Link

- When the **amygdala** sounds the alarm, your **sympathetic nervous system** activates (fight, flight, or freeze). - When the **frontal cortex** regains control, your body can shift back into the **parasympathetic nervous system** (rest & digest).

### How CBT Helps

**1. Top-Down Tools (Accessing Frontal Cortex):** - Identifying and challenging catastrophic thoughts - Practicing balanced thinking patterns **2. Bottom-Up Tools (Calming Amygdala/Body):** - Breathing exercises, PMR, grounding - Exposure practice to retrain the alarm system