

# FOPPI Acronym

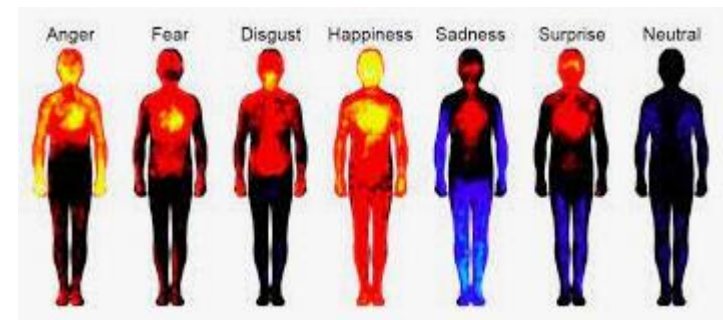
## Focus **O**verreact **P**essimism **P**ackage **I**naccurate

### Module Goals

This module provides you with:

- The reasons why FOPPI was developed
- Additional information connected with FOPPI.
- A brief description of each element of FOPPI.
- Information on other modules that FOPPI connects with and supports.

Ultimately this module should provide enough information for you to determine if and how FOPPI might be of use to you personally and/or in your work with clients.



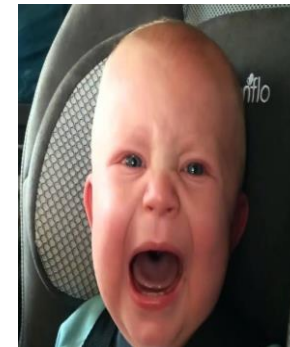
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### Why was it developed?

The FOPPI acronym offers a memorable non technical way for us to think about what happens when we become increasingly triggered in reaction to a physical and/or attachment related threat.

Improving our self awareness of when and how we trigger supports our capacity to activate resources that can help us reduce the intensity and/or duration of discomfort we experience.



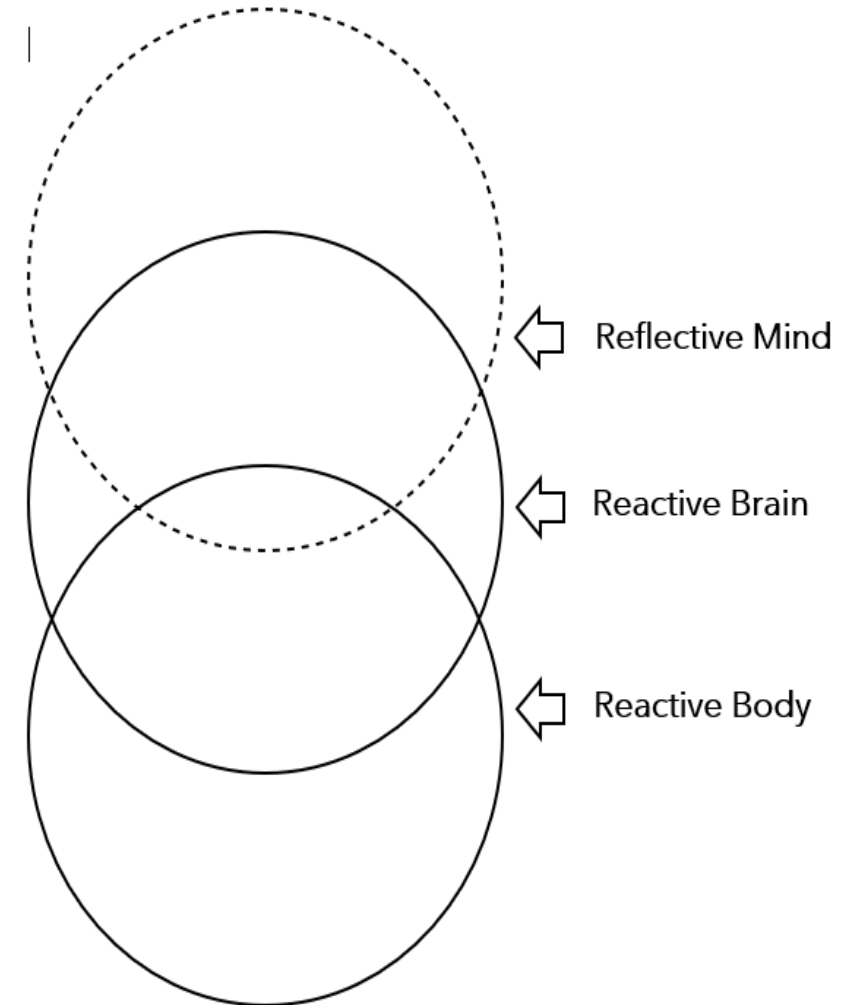
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### Background: Our Survival System

The Reflective Mind and Reactive Brain/Body model describes our most fundamental interacting capabilities evolved to keep us alive in a dangerous ancient world:

- A **Reactive Brain** capacity that generates a continuous stream of interacting emotions, thoughts and memories connected to what is going on within and external to us.
- A **Reactive Body** capacity that interacts with and influences our reactive brain, generating sensations which in turn influence our emotions, thoughts and recall of memories from moment to moment.
- A **Reflective Mind** capacity that questions, balances and influences what the Reactive Brain and Body generate on a continuous basis. This reflective capacity is volatile and diminishes rapidly when we trigger and our reactive capacity becomes dominant, driving increasingly compulsive survival orientated FOPPI like behaviours.



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### Background: Attachment Related Threat

If threat from perhaps an animal, person or object is noticed our bodies trigger into fight/flight or hide/freeze states.

Our survival system also continuously monitors the strength and predictability of our connection (attachment) to family members, friends, close work colleagues, financial/job security.

If our reactive brain/body system senses a reduction in strength or predictability of our attachment then we will also trigger into fight/flight and/or hide freeze states which drives what happens within us and how we react to those around us.



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### Example: Triggering in the context of FOPPI?

A commuter just misses their regular train home and experiences mild irritation but calms quickly as a host of resources they already have, such as reminding themselves the next train will be along shortly, prevents their survival system from triggering and generating intense discomfort.

The experience of arguing is likely to be more intense for some couples. Conflict in the office can be very disturbing for some people. The aftermath of an accident, abuse and violence can be very destabilising generating PTSD for some people.

Unlike the commuter, those who experience more intense triggering will find their emotions, thoughts, sensations and behaviours change causing heightened levels of discomfort that negatively impact their and perhaps others' quality of life.



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**Imagine it is 100,000 years ago.**

You are a teenager gathering berries by yourself in the woods and come to a small clearing. On the other side there are bushes bearing your favourite berries.

But the bush is moving from side to side even though there is no wind, also the birds have gone quiet.

Your Reactive Brain notices the movement and strange silence and immediately triggers along with your Reactive Body in a sequence and a manner described by the acronym FOPPI:



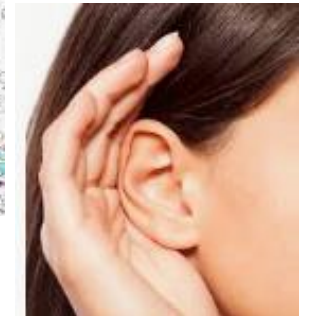
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### F for Focus

Your Reflective Mind starts to shut down and you no longer pay attention to the fruit on the bush but instead your Reactive Brain focuses on the movement and whether you can sense any sign of danger within, or in the vicinity of the bush. Even your field of vision and hearing narrows onto the bush.

Your emotions change to perhaps fear, anxiety or isolation and loneliness. Your styles of thinking become fixed, narrow, repetitive, connected memories are recalled, sensations become more intense, behaviours change.



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### **O** is for **Overreact**

Your survival chances are reduced by delaying preparations such as charging your muscles up for fight/flight or deactivating them for hide or freeze until the danger has been 100% confirmed i.e., the predator actually exists and has come out from behind the bush and is charging towards you.

Reacting to potential threat, real or imagined, immediately causes your Reflective Mind to start to shut down and your Reactive Brain to generate electrical and chemical signals that prepare the Reactive Body for fight/flight or hide/freeze even though no threat has actually been seen. The changes in your Reactive Body are picked up by other parts of your Reactive Brain which cause them to trigger fuelling your trigger cycle.





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**F**ocus **O**verreact **P**essimism **P**ackage **I**naccurate

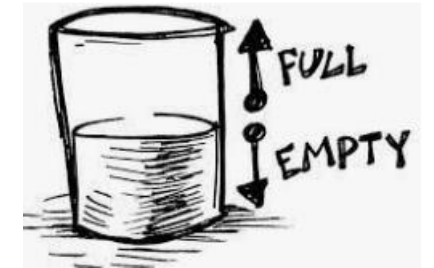
## The first P is for Pessimism

There are far more prey animals (deer, antelope etc) than predators (wolves, lions etc) in the wild.

Yet your triggering Reactive Brain generates thoughts that predict a dangerous predator is causing the bush to move. Not only that but it is probably large and hungry. The chance of getting your DNA into the next generation goes up by preparing for the worst outcome.

In the ancient world that worst outcome was a predator, a natural hazard or detachment from the family/tribe.

Today, for most of us the type of danger that triggers our survival system is actual or possible detachment from the family/tribe in the modern context.



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### The Second P is for Package

In the ancient world it was of little use focusing on the threat and being pessimistic about it unless your body was prepared to react rapidly to what was going to come out from behind that bush.

If adrenaline only starts to flood your system once you see the predator then you've lost precious seconds to get your body charged up ready to fight / flight or freezing to avoid detection.

Each second lost, each metre closer the predator gets to you before your whole package (Focus, Overreaction, Pessimism) is triggered, the lower your chances of survival and getting your DNA into the next generation.

We are all the descedents of humans who triggerred in this way.



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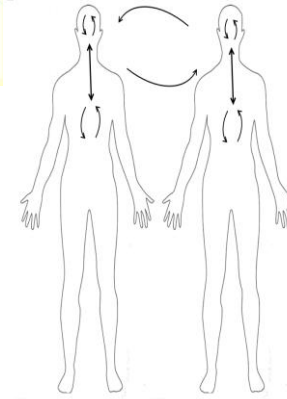
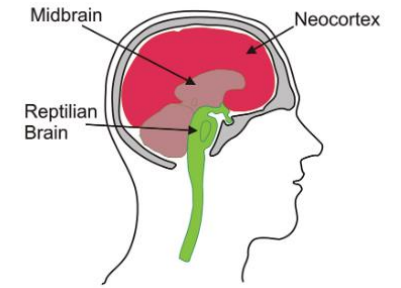
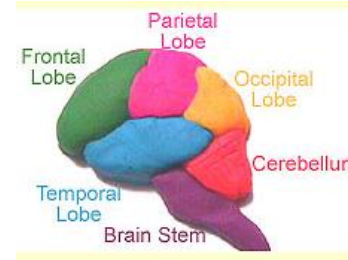
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### The I is for Inaccurate

Waiting to be certain that there is a genuine threat behind that bush is not a winning strategy as it means we have less time to prepare for a potential attack.

We can prepare to fight, run away, hide, or freeze many times but only be eaten once which means our DNA will definitely not get into the next generation.

In the modern world attachment related threat still triggers our survival system into fight/flight and/or hide/freeze states which drive behaviours that often make matters more uncomfortable for us and/or those around us.



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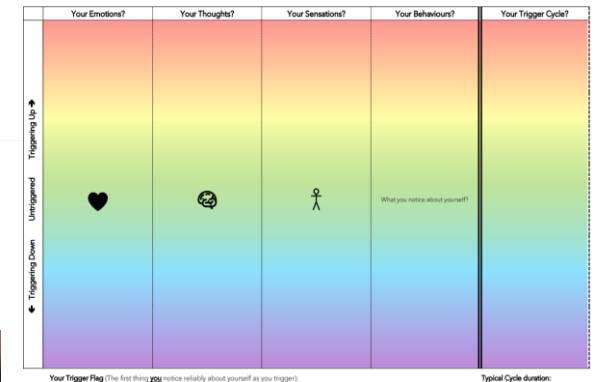
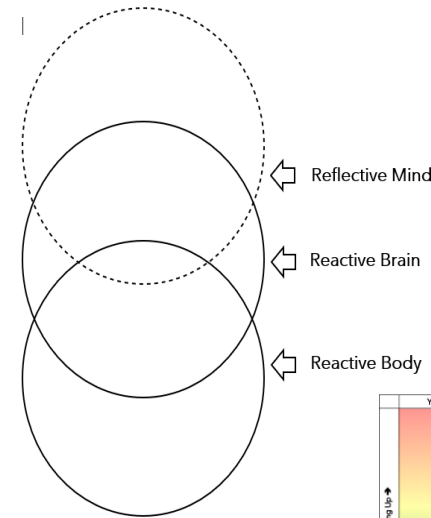
### Related Trigger Orientated Therapy Modules

**Reflective Mind and Reactive Brain Body Model:** This provides additional information on that psychoeducational model.

**Short Introduction to the Rainbow Map :** A rapid way to determine if and how the Rainbow Map generates a more detailed awareness of how our system changes when we trigger..

**Interactive Introduction to the Rainbow Map:** A more comprehensive introduction to the Rainbow Map made interactive through a participant reading each slide and asking Andrew Thomas questions and/or reflecting on the slide means to them.

**Avoidance Theory:** Another interactive module for those who like digging deeper in terms of the concepts that have influenced the development of FOPPI and all Trigger Orientated tools on the website. Written in a jargon free way that can also be used as a psychoeducational tool.



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### Summary

FOPPI contributes to our capacity to:

- Remind ourselves what happens when we trigger in relation to threat, typically attachment related in the modern world.
- Notice ourselves trigger, reducing the influence of our Reflective Mind as our Reactive Brain/Body increasingly drive a compulsive reaction to what is happening within and around us.
- Stand an improved chance of activating resources that will help us slow down the rate we are triggering at and reduce its intensity.
- Reduce the discomfort we and perhaps others around us experience when we trigger.

