

Consciousness refers to a person's awareness. It could be an awareness of ourselves or the things around us. Consciousness is strongly influenced by the parts of our brains that we use for planning, problem-solving and other complicated tasks.

In the survival circuit, the first two steps are both automatic and unconscious. The brain claims something is a possible threat and sends signals to the body to be prepared for it. All of that happens *before* somebody is conscious of what is happening.

When the survival circuit gets activated, the future and planning parts of our brains get turned off. If we are in a real moment of danger, our brains want to react quickly. They don't want to be distracted by anything else.



For individuals who experience posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and have an overactive survival circuit, their brains could be sending warning signals of danger almost constantly. This can make it hard for them to keep their attention or even make plans. It also changes how they understand things in the world. People with an overactive survival circuit may overestimate or underestimate how risky certain choices are.