



"The young people who come in contact with the district attorney's office need to learn how to make good choices and decisions. BrainWise® teaches them how to do this."

Ed Rogers  
Former District Attorney  
11th Judicial District, Colorado

## The BrainWise Method

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### Wizard Brain Thinking in a Lizard Brain World!

*"I've taught 'thinking skills' to teens for the past twenty years, but BrainWise puts the skills together in one program. The Lesson Plans make it easy to teach rather difficult abstract concepts. It is exciting to see the students use their new thinking skills to stop and think and avoid problem situations. The concepts are retained, too -- even by students who took the course three years ago!"*

– Marsha Harman, School Counselor

Teaching children and teenagers critical thinking and decision making skills requires that certain specific concepts be introduced, applied, used, and reinforced. Through careful research and field-testing, Dr. Patricia Gorman Barry developed a thorough set of curricula and teaching aids that are focused on cultivating these essential skills. These curricula were specifically designed to be flexible and adaptable by the teacher and easy-to-learn and engaging for the students.

In the BrainWise curricula, instructors receive comprehensive lesson plans that are flexible and adaptable to the instructor's situation. To give the students sufficient exposure and practice with these concepts, the program is divided into two distinct stages.

## 10 Wise Ways

### Part I – BrainWise: Learn It!

This section of the curricula introduces students to a series of skills called the **10 Wise Ways**. Learning about these thinking and behavioral strategies helps them begin to build fundamental neural pathways in their brain, replacing impulsive responses with sound decision-making behavior.

#### Wise Way #1: Wizard Brain over Lizard Brain



In order to stop and think, thinking skills must be learned to engage the section of the brain where problems are assessed and analyzed before responding. Otherwise, the reptilian or "lizard" part of the brain – the section housing emotions and the fight or flight

response – takes over, triggering impulsive, non-thinking responses.

#### Wise Way #2: Build a Constellation of Support

### Part II – BrainWise: Live it! In the BrainWise Zone!

In this section, students use their newly-acquired thinking skills to assess and analyze a variety of problems. This practice involves classroom applications and everyday activities that allow them to use the **10 Wise Ways** to analyze stories, movies, videos, popular TV shows, advertising, and current events. This approach engages young people by using popular culture to give them opportunities to apply what they have learned to a wide range of situations. Awareness of how the brain uses thinking skills to process problems and replace impulsive reactions gives children and teens a greater understanding of why the **10 Wise Ways** are important. Equally as important is knowing that skills not used are lost, leaving the brain to revert to impulsive and reactive Lizard Brain responses.



### Teaching Aids Include:

**Checklists** – a summary of the **10 Wise Ways** and how to apply them to assess and evaluate 1) problems individuals face, 2) problems other face and 3) Mastery – individuals simultaneously apply the **10 Wise Ways** to themselves and others.

**Games** – Age appropriate games are used to practice learning thinking skills. The games are examples of how the **10 Wise Ways** can be integrated into all types of games.

**Bookmarks** – Using a bookmark with a list of the **10 Wise Ways**, children learn how to practice assessing and analyze stories, current events, and other problems by identifying what thinking skills were used or not used.

**Entertainment** – Practice moves outside the classroom when lessons include using the **10 Wise Ways** to assess and analyze cartoons, comic books, television shows, movies, songs and computer games

**Skill Sheet** – By placing a story on a BrainWise skill sheet containing the **10 Wise Ways**, students assess and analyze the story by drawing lines from words and sentences to their corresponding thinking skill. The books contain age-appropriate examples, and blank sheets can be used to insert



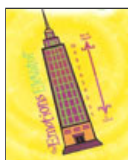
Awareness of people and what resources to go to for help involves knowing how to evaluate the type of help you need and identifying the best place to get it. This includes learning how to recognize people who will help you succeed, and understanding why people close to you may not be able to give you the support you need.

*Wise Way #3: Recognize Red Flag Warnings*



Thinking skills involve recognizing internal (what you feel inside) and external (what you see or do) red flags. The red flags warn of something about to happen, and awareness of these warning signals gives you time to stop and think.

*Wise Way #4: Exit the Emotions Elevator*



Think of emotions as an elevator in a ten-story elevator – the higher up the elevator rises, the more intense the emotion and the probability of Lizard Brain responses. A number of strategies help keep emotions low or off the elevator, including control self-talk, stop talking, leave the situation, redirect the emotions, deep breathing and relaxation methods, and recognizing and changing Lizard Brain response patterns.

*Wise Way #5: Separate Fact from Opinion*



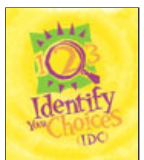
The root of many problems is the inability to separate fact from opinion. A fact is what you know to be true, an opinion is what you think is true. Used in conjunction with Wise Ways 1-4, the process of separating fact from opinion is easier to understand and do.

*Wise Way #6: Ask Questions to Gather Information*



Having access to the right information requires the ability to recognize what questions to ask, and knowing how to ask them. This involves integrating Wise Ways 1-5 into the question asking process.

*Wise Way #7: Identify your Choices (IDC)*



People who use their Lizard Brain respond one way, believing they only have no choices. This creates a feeling that their lives are controlled by fate, luck, chance or powerful others. Wizard Brain thinkers recognize that they have more than one choice, and use thinking skills to assess and analyze all their choices so they make the best choice possible.

*Wise Way #8: Consider Consequences*

stories children write themselves or stories by others can be taped on the page.

**Problem Solving Worksheet** – Individuals learn how to solve problems and gain practice using their thinking skills when they use the worksheet to guide them through the process of assessing and analyzing problems by applying the **10 Wise Ways**.



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Consequences Now and Later (CNL), Consequences Affecting Others (CAO). Wizard Brain thinkers are aware of the consequences of their choices. They use thinking skills 1-7 to help them assess and analyze the consequences of their choices now, the consequence later (CNL), and the consequence affecting others (CAO).

*Wise Way #9: Set Goals and Plan for Action*



Wise Ways 1-8 help build a foundation to understand the importance of setting goals and making plans to reach them. Within this framework, it is easy to build connections among and between the Wise Ways, creating awareness of the importance of goals, and why successful achievement must be accompanied by a plan to reach them.

*Wise Way #10: Communicate Effectively*



Using "I" Messages, taking other people's Point of View (POV), using Positive Body Messages, and using Assertive Statements. Communication involves using all the **10 Wise Ways**, not at the same time, or in the order learned, but integrated throughout conversations and different methods used to send and share information. Effective communication involves understanding other people's points of view recognizing how using thinking skills helps to deliver information and messages clearly.