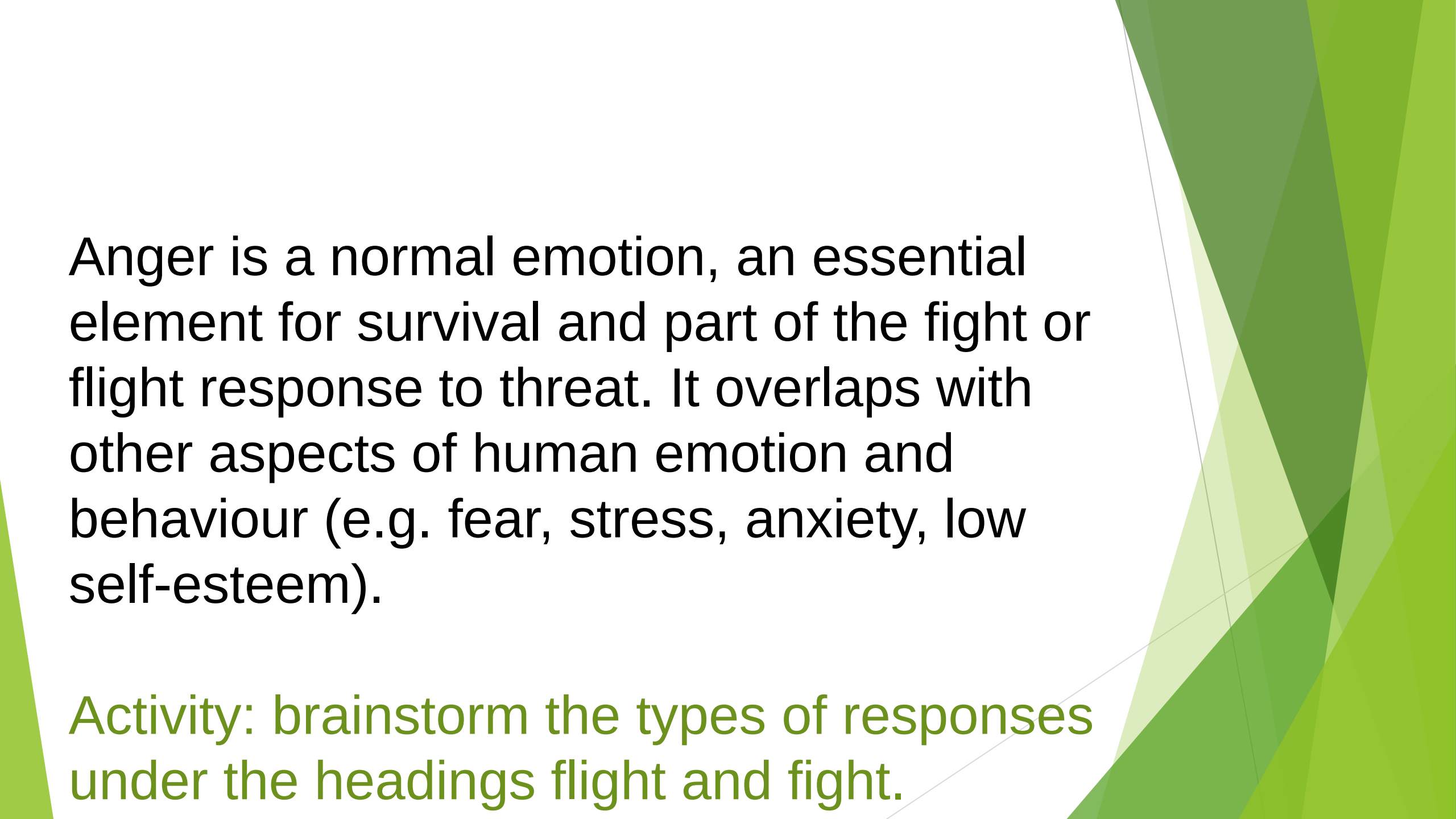


Anger management

Tilly McMorran Behaviour Specialist Teacher

Individuals have different dispositions to anger and consequently, their anger patterns differ. For example, some people erupt and then calm down quickly while others may be slower to arouse but take longer to calm down.

The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Anger is a normal emotion, an essential element for survival and part of the fight or flight response to threat. It overlaps with other aspects of human emotion and behaviour (e.g. fear, stress, anxiety, low self-esteem).

Activity: brainstorm the types of responses under the headings flight and fight.

The way individuals express anger is determined by how and what they think (cognitive processes), their temperament and previous experience, which goes some way to explaining why individuals vary in their disposition to anger.

Activity: discuss what may happen to the body when we get angry.

When individuals become angry, a number of physiological changes occur in the body:

- ▶ Senses become sharper and pupils dilate, allowing improved vision, even in darkness.
- ▶ Body hairs stand on end to enable enhanced sensitivity to the environment.
- ▶ The heart rate increases dramatically, arteries constrict to maximise pressure and veins enlarge to ease the return of blood to the heart.
- ▶ The throat and nostrils open up to help speed up breathing and enable increased oxygenation of the blood, necessary to allow muscles to work harder .
- ▶ Fats from fatty cells and glucose from the liver are metabolised to create instant energy .

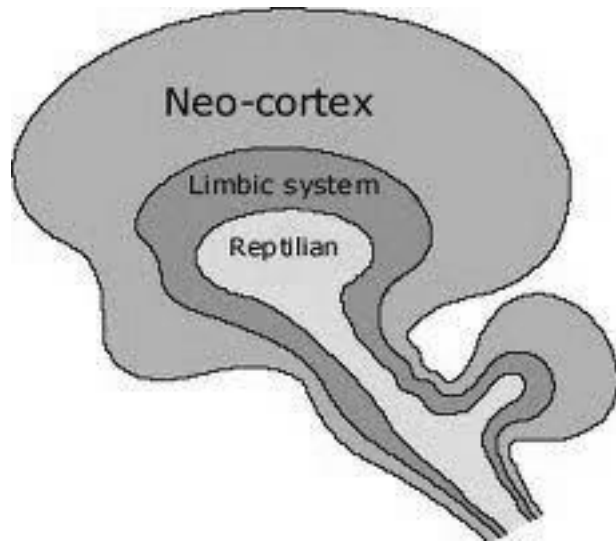
When individuals become angry, a number of physiological changes occur in the body: 2nd

- ▶ Blood vessels to the kidneys and digestive system are constricted, effectively shutting down systems that are not essential.
- ▶ Blood vessels to the skin are constricted reducing potential blood loss and sweat glands open to increase cooling of the overworked system.
- ▶ Endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, are released to minimise the impact of pain on the body's ability to respond to threat.
- ▶ The natural judgement system is turned down and gives way to more primitive responses.

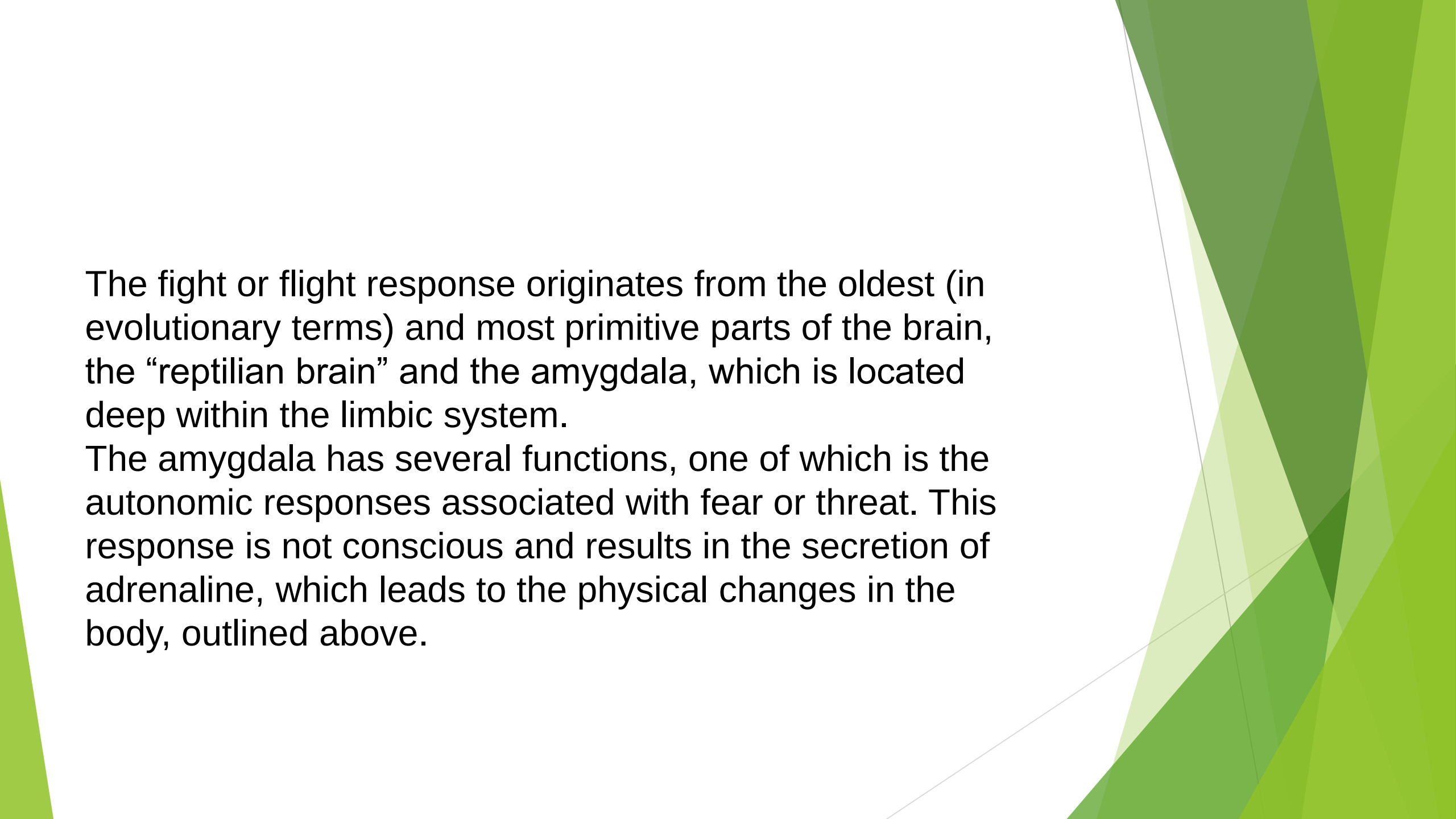
The structure of the brain in relation to anger,

As the brain evolved, it developed into three parts:

- ▶ The most primitive part, the “reptilian” brain, which is the control centre for the body’s automatic functions (e.g. heart beating, digestion, breathing) and the fight or flight response;
- ▶ The limbic system, the emotional centre of the brain, also plays a significant role in learning; and
- ▶ The neo-cortex, where higher-level thinking, language and complex processing of information are located.



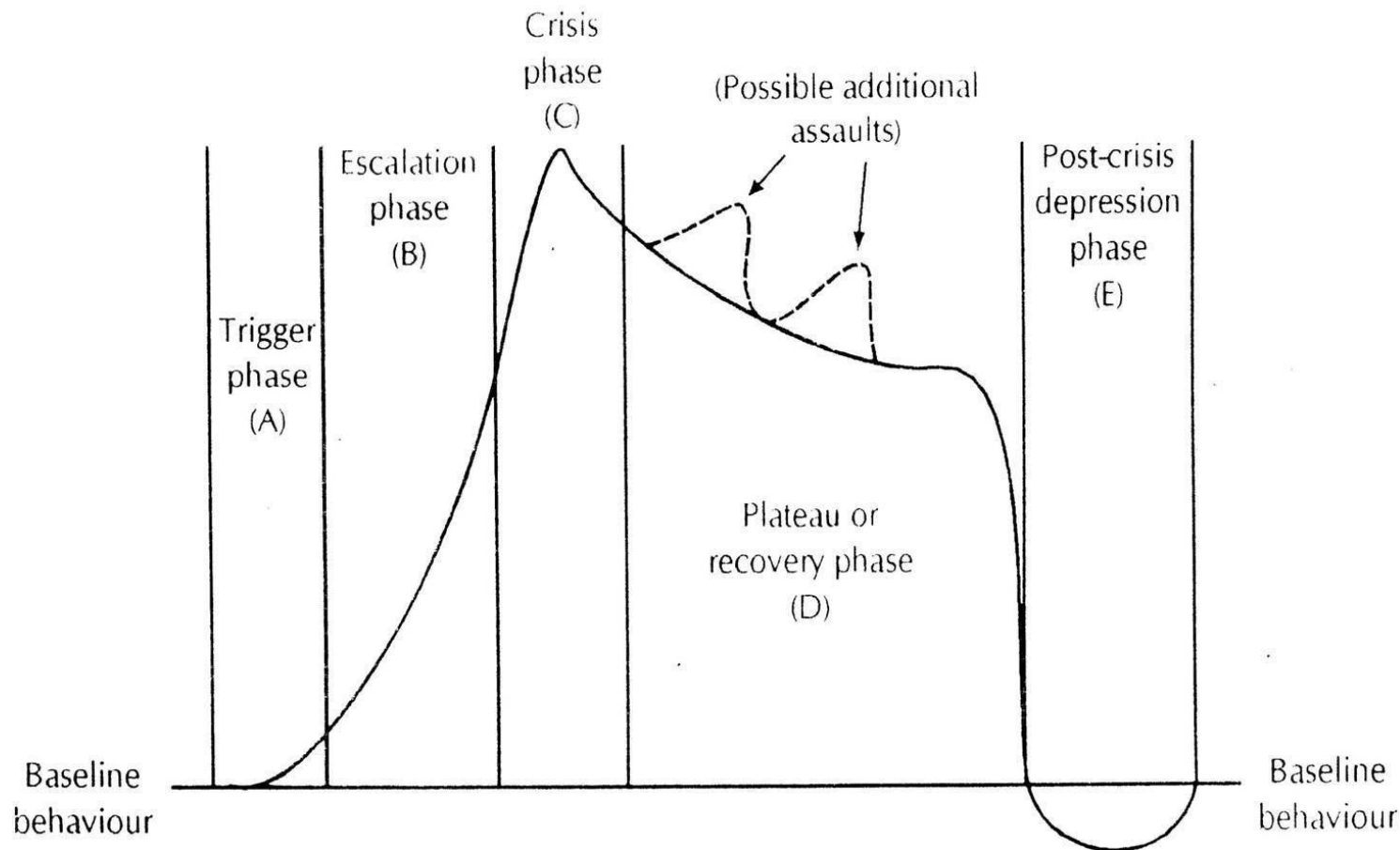
The Triune Brain Model

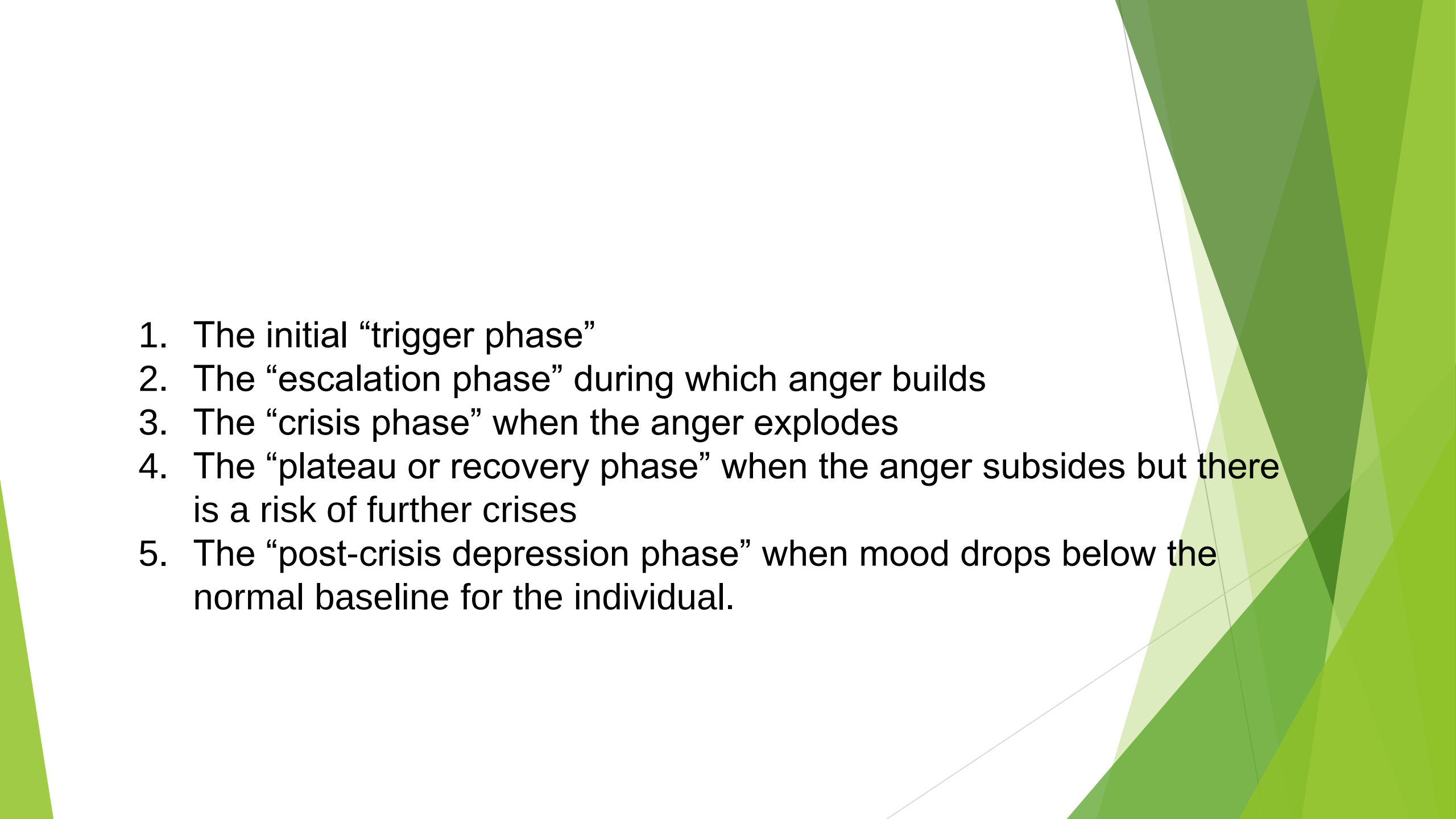
The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are concentrated on the right side of the slide, creating a modern, dynamic feel.

The fight or flight response originates from the oldest (in evolutionary terms) and most primitive parts of the brain, the “reptilian brain” and the amygdala, which is located deep within the limbic system.

The amygdala has several functions, one of which is the autonomic responses associated with fear or threat. This response is not conscious and results in the secretion of adrenaline, which leads to the physical changes in the body, outlined above.

Breakwell2 (1997) identified five phases which occur when an individual becomes angry:



- 
- The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.
1. The initial “trigger phase”
 2. The “escalation phase” during which anger builds
 3. The “crisis phase” when the anger explodes
 4. The “plateau or recovery phase” when the anger subsides but there is a risk of further crises
 5. The “post-crisis depression phase” when mood drops below the normal baseline for the individual.

Approaches to anger

- Psychodynamic
- Behaviourist
- Cognitive
- Humanist
- Ecosystemic

The psychodynamic perspective

This perspective is based on the early work of Sigmund Freud (1912) and takes as its main precept, the belief that behaviour is governed by subconscious feelings which arise from early life experiences.

The behaviourist perspective

This perspective is based on the work of psychologists Watson (1930) Skinner (1953) and Thorndike (1932) The main principle, as expressed in Thorndike's "Law of Effect", is that behaviour that leads to satisfaction is strengthened and behaviour which is ignored or is unsatisfying is weakened.

Behaviourist theory claims that all behaviour is learned and can therefore be modified by a system of rewards and punishment.

The Cognitive perspective

This perspective suggests that individual cognitive processes, such as reasoning, understanding and interpretation of events influence behaviour most.

The cognitive approach goes some way to addressing the question 'Why does the same stimulus produces different responses in different people?'

The Humanist perspective

This developed from the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Roger

Behaviourists recognise only one motivation for behaviour (i.e. to maximise those experiences that result in positive reinforcement).

‘Humanists’, however, take into account other very important drivers, which they consider to be essential for human development. These are the need:

- To belong to a social group
- To think well of oneself
- For personal growth.

The Ecosystemic perspective

This perspective is based on the idea of an ecosystem, in which even quite small changes in any part of the ecosystem, will bring about related changes elsewhere.

Key features of the ecosystemic approach to behaviour are that: problem behaviour does not originate from within the individual, who displays it, but is a product of social interaction the cause of any instance of problem behaviour is part of a cyclical chain of actions and reactions between participants.

Managing anger

- When managing anger, teachers may rely on some or all of the following:
- Identifying triggers and exploring how these may be reduced or avoided
- Using techniques to defuse anger, such as distraction, redirection, relocation, humour and active listening
- Managing anger flare-ups – moving away, separating antagonists
- Encouraging reflection, and
- Using follow up procedures including sanctions or the use of restorative approaches, where appropriate.