

# Science Communication: Using Pop Culture to Teach Children about the Brain and Behaviour

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Science communication, or “*scicomm*” as it is colloquially known, can be a powerful tool to make neuroscience research relevant and accessible to a wider audience.

We present here an example using the popular Avengers franchise to teach children about the brain and behaviour.

## ACUTE STRESS

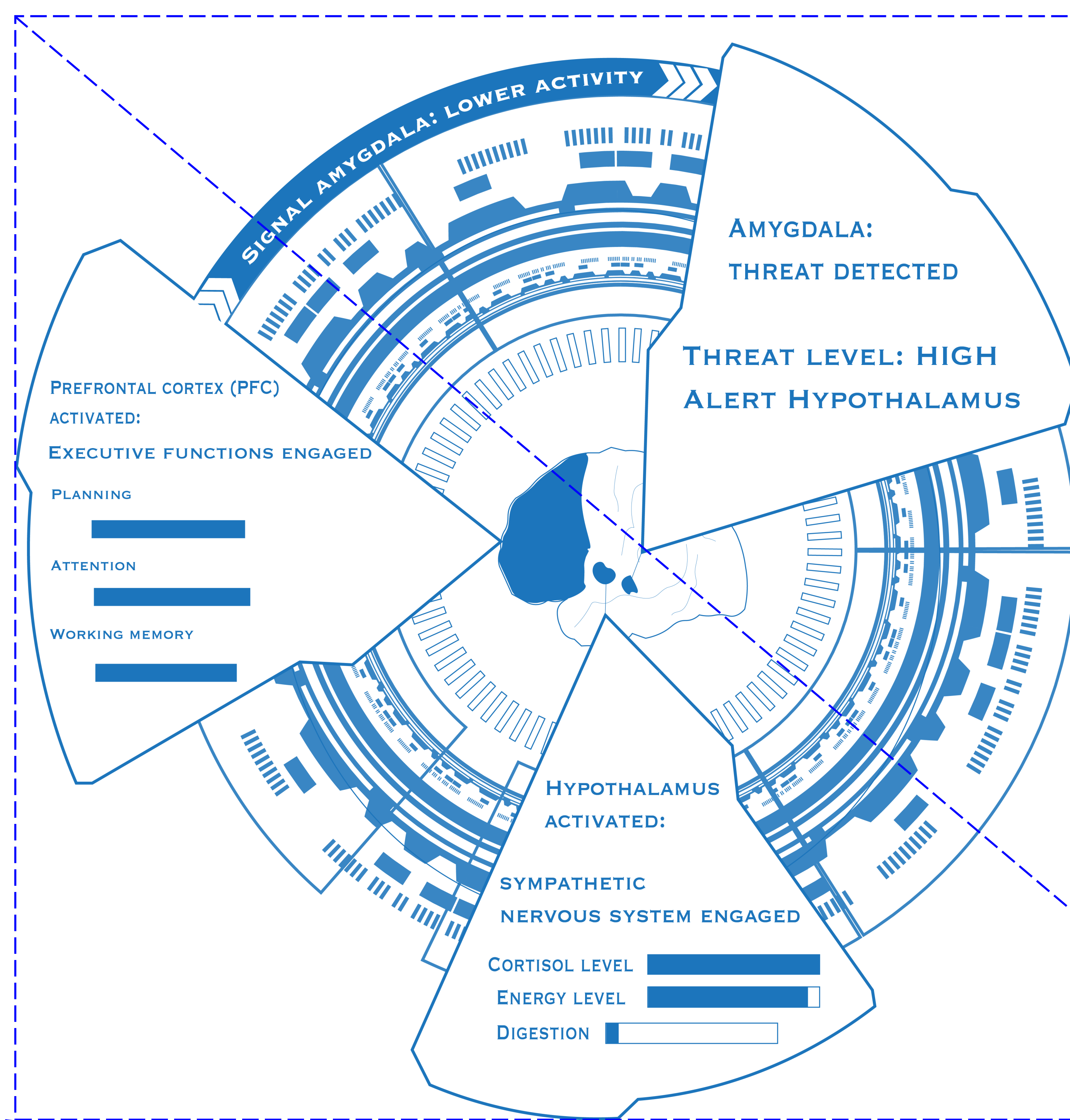


When a threat is over, our body starts the process of calming down.

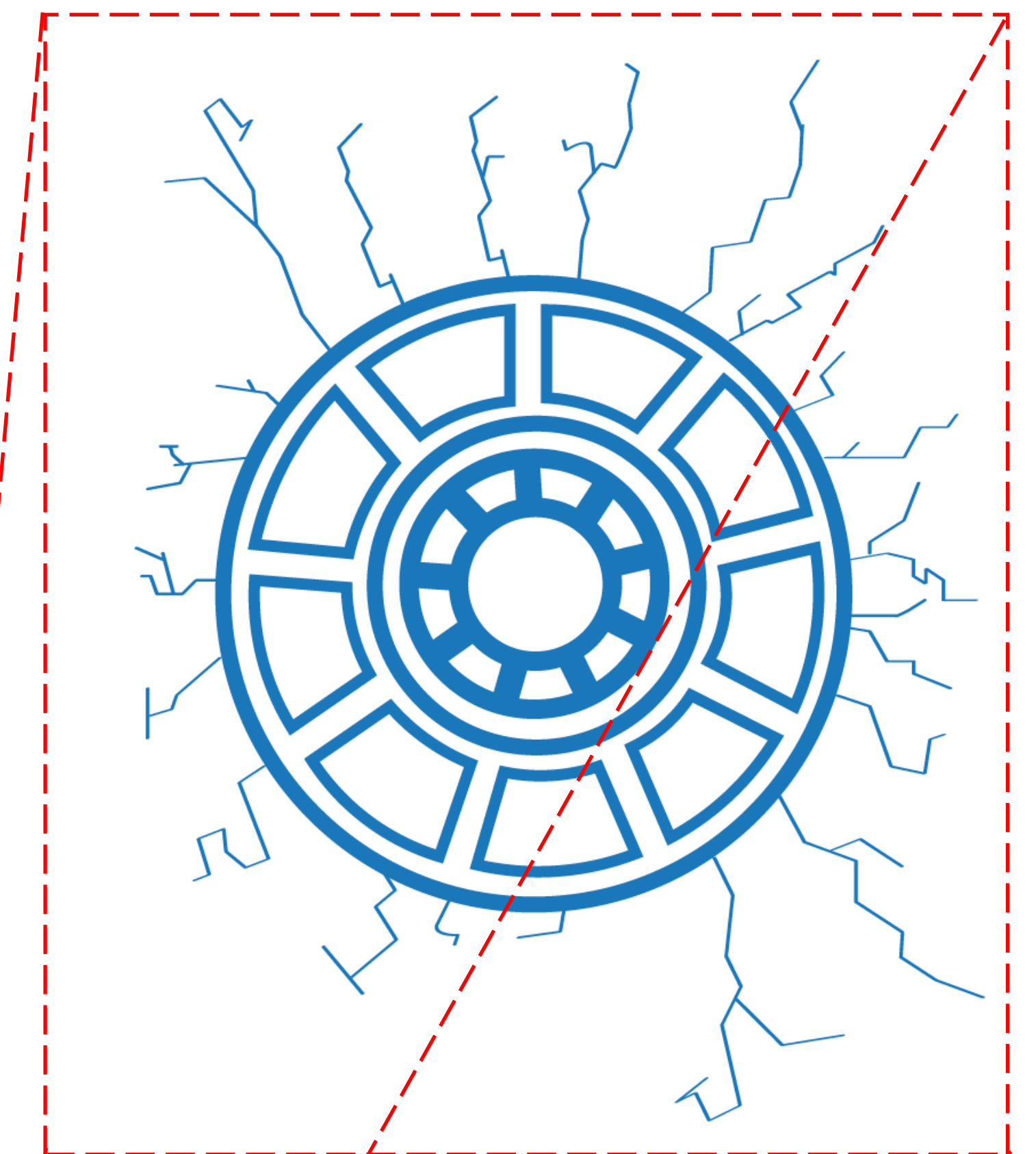
But sometimes, we continue experiencing the physical and emotional reactions associated with fight, flight, or freeze.

This is called chronic stress.

Tony Stark’s hypervigilance, insomnia, anxiety, palpitations, and restlessness in the aftermath of his battles as Iron Man are signs of the chronic stress his body is experiencing.



## CHRONIC STRESS

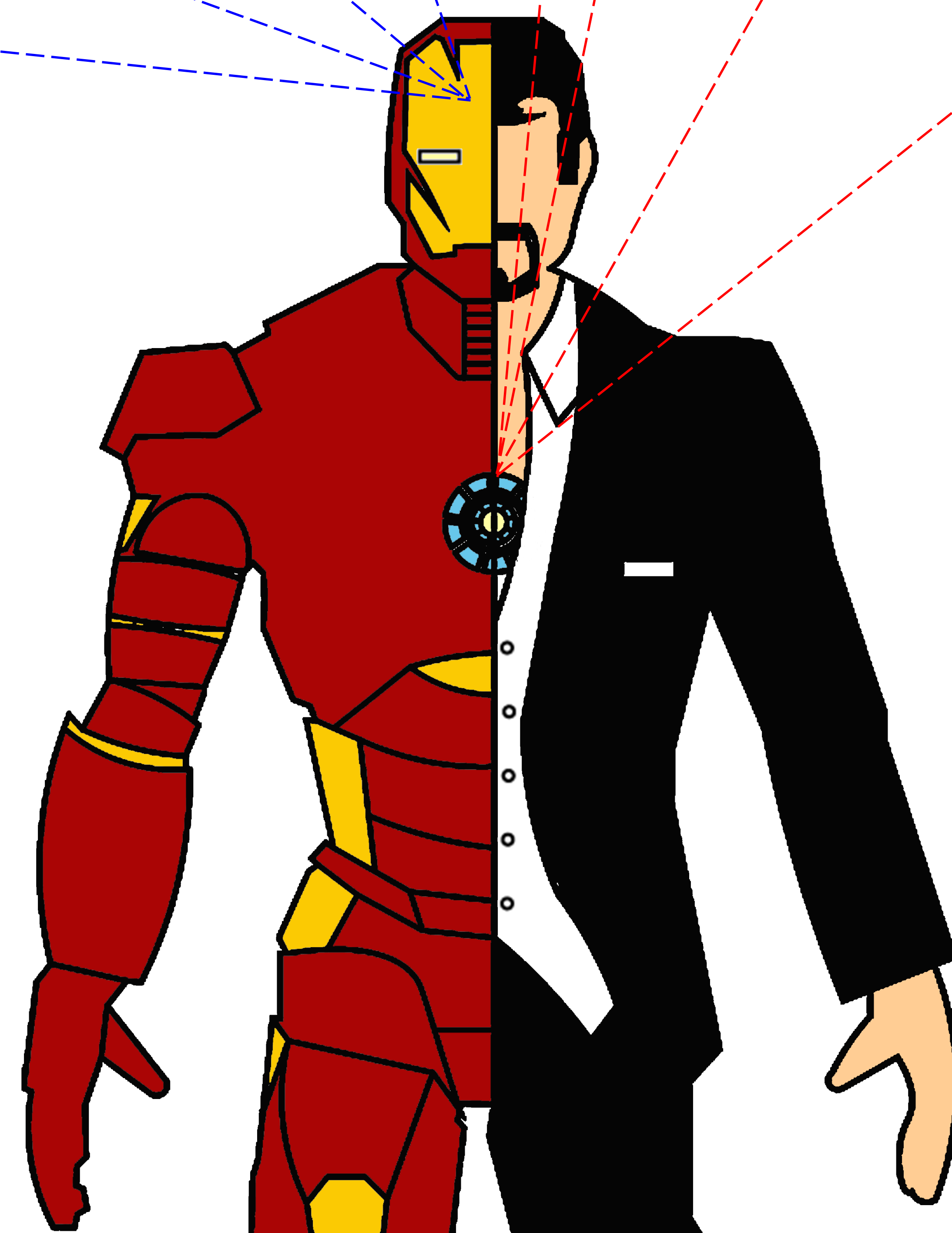


When we perceive a threat in our surroundings, fight, flight, or freeze is activated:

Our body evaluates the threat and allocates resources to help us respond accordingly.

This is called acute stress.

When Iron Man is in battle, his suit’s user interface helps him focus on salient information in his surroundings to enable him to take down his targets.



Involving children in science early might help them see that science is not something “out there,” to be feared, and that they, too, have a place in it.

Increasing accessibility of scientific discoveries can also help increase the impact of that research, combat and decrease the spread of misinformation, generate community engagement and support, and influence decision-making on both the individual and public level.