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6.30pm Transcript

**Therapy not just all talk**

21.6.2007. 09:28:45

US Brain researchers have found talking about your feelings makes sadness and anger less intense.



The research, which appears in the journal Psychological Science, shows talking to therapists – or even sympathetic bartenders – often makes people feel better.

They said talking about negative feelings activates a part of the brain responsible for impulse control.

"This region of the brain seems to be involved in putting on the brakes," says University of Southern California Los Angeles researcher Matthew Lieberman.

**Strong emotions 'decreased'**

Researchers found that when people attached a word like angry to an angry-looking face, the response in the amygdala portion of the brain that handles fear, panic and other strong emotions decreased.

"This seems to dampen down the response in these basic emotional circuits in the brain - in this case the amygdala," Mr Lieberman says.

The results may alter the traditional view of why talking about feelings helps.

"I think we all believe that by talking about our feelings, we reach deep new insights, and that understanding is what transforms us," he says.

"What we see is something that at first blush is far more trivial.

"By simply putting the name to an emotion, the person doesn't feel like they've come to any new insight.

"And yet we see this dampening response anyway."

Mr Lieberman said while there likely are benefits to gaining

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Mr. Lieberman said while there likely are benefits to gaining enhanced understanding, talking about feelings may do something more basic.

"It's not just the deep thoughts," he said. "It's something about the way we are built."

**SOURCE:** Reuters

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