

Cortex Culture Kit

Stressed for Success

Phase 2: The Amygdala – Your Brain's Alarm System

Session Purpose

Understand how your amygdala influences your workplace responses and practice tools to reprogram it for better results.

10 Rules of Inclusion

1

We keep in mind our desired outcome.

2

We assume good intention from others.

3

We turn off all notifications and any distractions from all view to show respect for one another by being fully present.

4

We use timed rounding to be sure all are heard

5

Each person sticks to "I" statements.

6

We remain curious, especially when we do not agree with someone.

Fast-Track Overview

Amygdala = Brain's Security Guard

- Reacts in 1/10th of a second to keep you safe.
- Doesn't know the difference between real or imagined threats.
- Stores experiences and triggers automatic reactions.

When Overloaded → Anxiety or Panic

Signs: pounding heart, rapid breathing, muscle tension, stomach distress, difficulty focusing, urge to flee.



Sometimes mislabels safe situations as dangerous, limiting your ability to think at your highest level.



Breakout 1 - Workplace Triggers

Purpose: Recognize real vs. imagined threats.

Prompt:

Describe a recent workplace moment where you had a strong reaction.

Ask yourself: Was this threat real in the moment—or was my amygdala relying on an old experience?

Group Questions:

- 1. What was the situation?
- 2. What signs or symptoms did you notice?
- 3. How might a different belief about that situation have changed your reaction?

Practice - Stop the World

Follow the 3:34-minute exercise to interrupt stress/anxiety as it's happening. Notice how your state changes.

Breakout 2 - Reprogramming Scenarios

Purpose: Practice reframing old experiences so they don't trigger future reactions.

Prompt:

Think of a time your amygdala overreacted in a work situation.

Identify a new way to view that experience so your brain stores it as non-threatening.

Group Questions:

- What past experience has been triggering for you?
- 2. What belief could you replace it with?
- 3. How might this new belief change your behavior in the future?

Breakout 3 - Personal Calming Plan

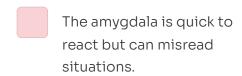
Purpose: Leave with a tool you can use immediately.

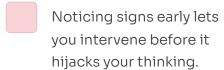
Prompt: Create your own 3-step plan to calm your amygdala when it fires unnecessarily.

Group Questions:

- 1. What's my most common workplace trigger?
- 2. Which calming technique works best for me? (breathing, muscle relaxation, reframing, etc.)
- 3. How will I remind myself to use it in the moment?

Key Takeaways





Reframing and calming techniques can retrain your brain for better results.

Your Personal Calming Plan Step

DEADLINE PRESSURE	Step 1: My common workplace triggers are
Step 2:	When I notice signs of an amygdala response, I will
Step 3:	My first calming technique to try will be