



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.

7

We strive to appreciate others' strengths and ability to contribute.

8

We say it now, with kindness and respect, rather than waiting until later.

9

The person leading or in authority of the session honors agreed upon start and stop meeting times.

10

We leave the meeting with clearly defined next steps that each person can take action on right away.



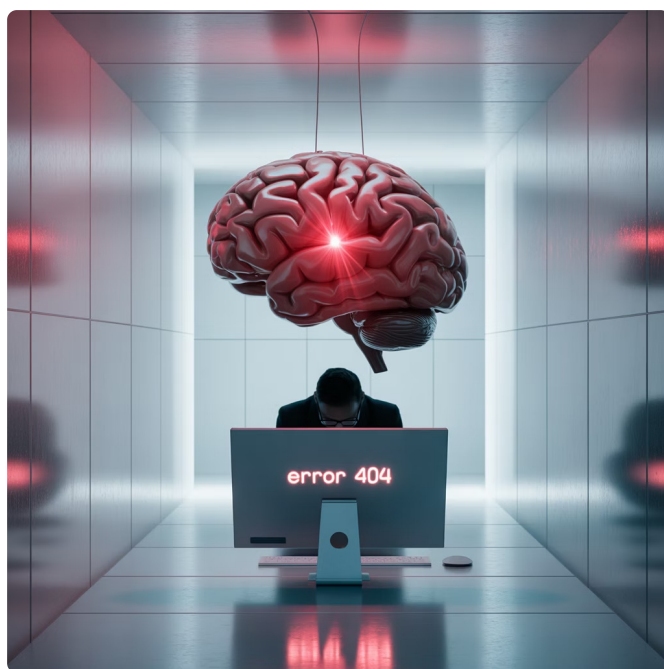
Fast-Track Overview

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.



The Bully in Your Brain

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:

1. 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



The amygdala is quick to react but can misread situations.



Noticing signs early lets you intervene before it hijacks your thinking.



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

Your Personal Calming Plan Step



Step 1: My common workplace triggers are...

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Step 2: When I notice signs of an amygdala response, I will...

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Step 3: My first calming technique to try will be...

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