

USING THE ABC TECHNIQUE TO PREVENT AN AMYGDALA HIJACK

A = ACTIVATING EVENT (TRIGGER)

WHAT CAUSED THE HIJACK?

B = BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS AND HOW DID YOU BEHAVE?

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C = CONSEQUENCES

WHAT HAPPENED AS A RESULT?

C = CHANGE

WHAT COULD YOU CHANGE NEXT TIME TO DEAL WITH A HIJACK OR PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING?

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WHAT IS AN AMYGDALA HIJACK?

An amygdala hijack refers to a psychological and physiological response that occurs when the amygdala, a part of the brain responsible for processing emotions, takes over the rational thinking centers in the brain during a perceived threat or emotionally charged situation. The term was popularized by Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and science journalist, in his book "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ."

When a person faces a perceived threat or experiences strong emotions like fear, anger, or stress, the amygdala reacts quickly and instinctively, triggering the body's fight-or-flight response. This response can occur before the more rational parts of the brain, such as the prefrontal cortex, have time to process the information and respond in a measured and thoughtful way.

As a result, individuals experiencing an amygdala hijack may act impulsively or emotionally without considering the consequences of their actions. They might say or do things they later regret or behave in ways that are out of character for them. This phenomenon can happen in various situations, from personal conflicts to high-stress work environments.

Individuals suffering with chronic stress or anxiety may be more prone to an amygdala hijack as their amygdala is effectively on high alert most or all of the time.

Understanding the concept of an amygdala hijack is crucial in developing emotional intelligence and learning to manage strong emotions effectively. By recognizing when an amygdala hijack is occurring, individuals can take steps to calm their emotional responses, give their rational brain a chance to process the situation, and respond in a more composed and thoughtful manner. Techniques like deep breathing, mindfulness, or taking a short break can be helpful in regaining control during an amygdala hijack.

To learn about techniques that can help to prevent an amygdala hijack and manage your stress or anxiety more effectively, check out the other articles on my website.

Remember that this advice is designed to help you deal with the symptoms of stress and anxiety. They do not address the underlying or root cause of your stress and anxiety. To do this you should seek help from a professional that specilaises in stress and anxiety management.

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