

Exercises to Promote Integration for Ambivalent Attachment

Following are some basic practices to help you integrate your brain if you've had a history of ambivalent attachment. These practices are inspired by Dr. Dan Siegel's book [Brainstorm](#).

Name It to Tame It

When you have a history of ambivalent attachment, there is a tendency to get overwhelmed with emotion. One effective exercise for integrating your brain is "name it to tame it," the practice of naming your internal emotional states as feelings arise. This practice helps strengthen your left hemisphere's language capabilities and link them to the more raw and spontaneous emotions on the right side of your brain. As you practice "name it to tame it," remember you can simply describe your feelings; you don't need to explain them.

Wheel of Awareness

Dr. Dan Siegel's Wheel of Awareness (available [here](#)) is an excellent practice for integrating your brain. It is particularly helpful to individuals with an ambivalent attachment history, as it encourages you to sort through your sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts before you choose to express them to others.

Handling Emotions

It is important to know that feelings are not facts. Distinguishing between facts and feelings can help you sort through intense emotions when they arise. With a history of ambivalent attachment, your attachment system is prone to go into overdrive. During a relationship challenge, for instance, the need to connect with your partner can quickly escalate in your mind to feel like a matter of life or death. During these challenging times, when your right hemisphere is flooding you with emotion, it is helpful to practice mindfulness or emotional regulation exercises. Two helpful practices are the Balancing the Mind and RAIN exercises located in the Skills Section of this eCourse.

Strengthen Your Internal Observer

Focus on developing a part of your mind that can observe, witness, and narrate your experiences. With a history of ambivalent attachment, there is a tendency to get overwhelmed by emotions that are usually echoes from the past. When you fail to recognize the core feelings that are being triggered during these emotional storms, you are more likely to overreact in your current relationships. Allowing your mind's internal observer to narrate your experiences as they are unfolding gives you the emotional space to calm yourself down and see what is actually happening in your relationships more clearly. The internal observer also allows you to hit the pause button before reacting when you are emotionally triggered.

