

Coping with difficult feelings

Psychology Team





Psychology Team at MCSI

SCI IS A MASSIVE TRAUMA

- Unexpected
- Few people have much knowledge about it or how to deal with it
- It's not a single event
- Huge but uncertain impact on the future
- Life changing for the individual & impact on immediate family



IT IS NORMAL
TO HAVE LOTS
OF INTENSE
FEELINGS
ABOUT THIS



THE IMPACT OF BEING IN HOSPITAL

- Separated from family
- Alien environment/
smells/surroundings
- Loss of independence & control
- Weeks-months of bedrest
indoors
- Hospital routine



PSYCHOLOGICAL TASKS

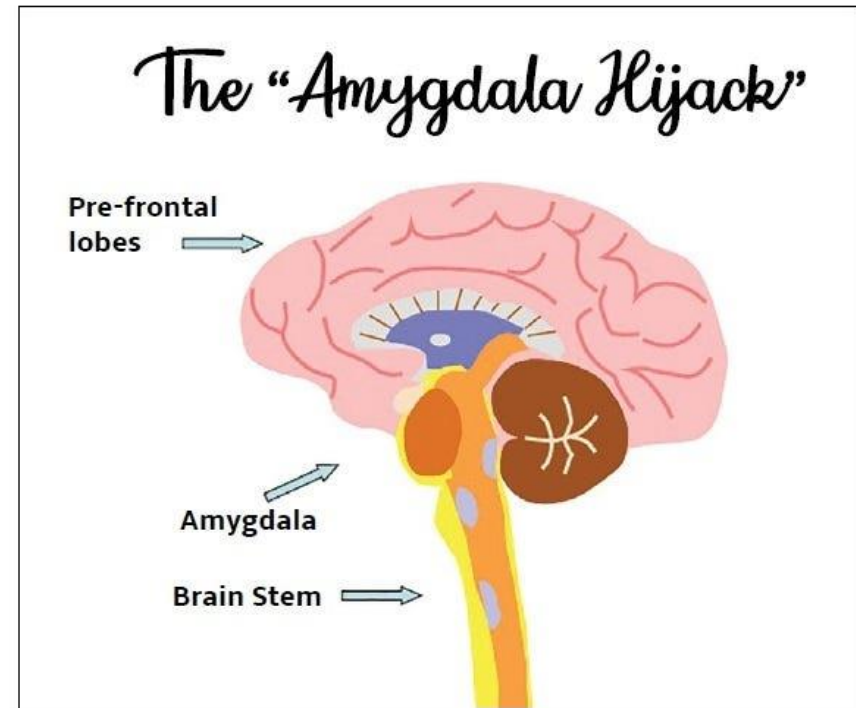
- Trying to make sense out of what has happened.
- Processing emotions
- Finding a way to carry on and live with it.



THE ROLE OF THE 'THREAT SYSTEM'

- Automatic system evolved for survival.
- Triggered when we perceive something that may be threatening to us in some way.
 - Physical danger
 - Feeling overwhelmed / uncomfortable / emotional
 - Feeling challenged or criticised
 - Space invaded
- When system is triggered – our brain/body does things **AUTOMATICALLY** to help us survive.
- Body response – Adrenaline released, heart rate increased, breathing rate increases, muscle tension, blood flow re-directed.

- Brain shuts down 'thinking' – focus on safety responses
Fight / Flight / Freeze / Appease
- More difficult to take in or retain information
- Difficult to think things through



THREAT SYSTEM TRIGGERED – AUTOMATIC RESPONSES

Fight



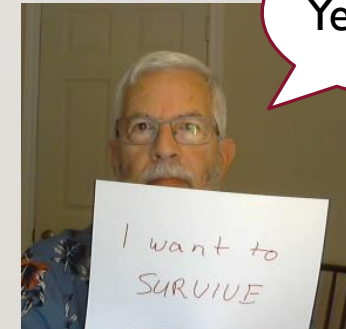
Flight



Freeze



Appease



Yes, Yes....


SOOTHING SYSTEM



COPING WITH DIFFICULT FEELINGS

- Keeping brain active
- Taking one thing at a time
- Passing the time with tv, music, radio
- Talking to family/friends
- Talking to other patients



A photograph of a garden scene. In the foreground, there are several tall, thin green stems with clusters of small purple flowers. To the left, there are some pink roses. In the background, a paved path leads towards a house with a brick wall and large windows. There are green bushes and trees around the house. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "Thank you for listening".

Thank you for listening