

Brain Lock: 4 Steps

The four-step brain lock method is a simple and effective way to manage obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and other forms of anxiety. This method was developed by Jeffrey M. Schwartz, a renowned psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of OCD.

Principles of brain lock

The brain lock method introduces cognitive-biobehavioral self-treatment as an innovative approach to managing obsessive-compulsive disorder. This method empowers individuals to act as their own behavioral therapists by combining knowledge about OCD with biobehavioral techniques.

Central to this approach is the four-step method, which enhances self-directed exposure and response prevention (ERP) strategies, allowing individuals to confront their obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors independently.

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Step 1: Relabel

The first step in the brain lock method is for individuals to relabel their thoughts and feelings as being caused by OCD or anxiety. It's important for them to recognize that these intrusive thoughts are not a reflection of reality but rather a product of their disorder. By relabeling them as such, they can start to distance themselves from these thoughts and gain control over them.

Step 2: Reattribute

The next step involves reattributing the cause of these thoughts and feelings to the disorder rather than to themselves. This can help reduce guilt or shame associated with these thoughts and decrease the power those thoughts hold over them.

Step 3: Refocus

In this step, individuals need to refocus their attention on something else—be it a task, an activity, or even their breathing. By shifting their focus away from the intrusive thoughts, they give those thoughts less power and control over their minds.

Step 4: Revalue

The final step is for individuals to revalue these intrusive thoughts and recognize that they do not have any significant meaning or influence in their lives. By understanding that these thoughts are simply symptoms of a disorder and not reflective of reality, they can begin to let go of them and move on with their day.

Disclaimer: It is important to note that this method should be used in conjunction with other treatments, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and other professional help if needed.
