



Recognising Triggers

Step One: The first step to dealing with your triggers is to admit that you are triggered at the moment that it is occurring. The only way to know if you are triggered is to have a solid and tangible baseline marker of what you feel like when you are not triggered so that you have something to compare it to. For example, if you are usually pretty at ease with your surroundings and do not feel anxious, that will be your baseline.

Any step above that point is now classed as a triggered state. The more we are in tune with our bodies, the more we can recognise when we are triggered and deal with it effectively. In the space below, list the possible reactions that you have when you are triggered so you can begin to recognise that you are in a reactive state and not a responsive one.

SIGNS THAT I AM TRIGGERED

- e.g. Fawn response and giving compliments
- Heart rate increasing/ feeling tense

Step Two: The next thing that you need to be able to do after you recognise that you are triggered is to compartmentalise the trigger. You need to be able to notice the flag and then give no emphasis to it and control the reaction. At this moment, you can use anchoring techniques to bring yourself back into your body and surroundings so that the task in front of you is not interfered with. If you let the trigger run wild, the reactive state will take over, and all your energy will be given over to defensiveness and survival, doing whatever you can to ease the discomfort in the moment.

Self-statements in these moments can be supportive, such as "I am triggered right now; I need to put that to the side and deal with it later so that I can support the person in front of me." This step aims to support the body in coming out of a reactive state and back into a more supportive state where you can access the information and skills required to navigate the current situation. In the space below, write down some techniques that you can use to support yourself to come back to your body when you notice that you are triggered.

WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT IT

- e.g. Gently tap my fingers on my knees
- Rock my feet forwards and back to ground myself



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Step Three: After the moment has passed and you can successfully come back to a less reactive and more responsive state, revisit the trigger. With a lens of curiosity and absolutely no self-judgement or self-bashing, ask yourself what the trigger was about.

Why that particular person or situation? Is it that they are doing something you do, and you don't like to be on the receiving end of that behaviour? Or is it that you held back from expressing what you felt to say to make it more comfortable for the other person? Does the person remind you of someone you have an incomplete relationship with? Perhaps a parental figure or a time when you felt helpless or frightened? Use the space provided to explore what the trigger was and why it impacted you. **Remember: our triggers are our red flags for evolution.** Learn to embrace your reactions and use them as learning opportunities to fast-track your personal and professional growth.

EXPLORING THE REACTION

EXPLORING THE REACTION (CONT.)

Step Four: If necessary, write down some possible explorative questions that you can take to your therapist or supervisor to unpack this situation further. Some of these buttons (triggers) can be really hard-wired and immeshed; it might require some additional support to detangle them from your nervous system.

QUESTIONS I STILL NEED TO EXPLORE



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