

Learning to Handle Your Emotional Triggers

What is an Emotional Trigger?

An emotional trigger is an experience that draws you back into the past and causes old feelings and behaviors to arise. You can begin to take control of your emotional triggers by increasing your awareness and developing new ways of responding.

Understand Your Triggers

- Realize we all have triggers and they're different with each person.
- Identify internal causes that interfere with your ability to live in the present moment.
- Spot external prompts, like situations or certain people that always "push your buttons."

Manage Your Triggers

- Keep a journal and track your triggers. Figuring out when, where and what triggers you can be one of the first steps in mastering them.
- Make time to relax. Reducing daily stress makes it easier to handle intense emotions. Many people find meditation helpful.
- Take care of yourself. Eat right, sleep well, and exercise regularly. It is much easier to manage your triggers when you are not exhausted and hungry.
- Take advantage of quiet times to brainstorm new strategies you can use when you're under pressure. Through this process you can begin to replace old triggers that don't serve you, with healthy triggers that have a positive impact.
- Know your capacity and proceed at your own pace.
- Be willing to place yourself in challenging situations. Be open to doing something new and more constructive.
- Develop a strong support network. Having people who are supportive but who will also hold you accountable is important in this journey.
- Show compassion. Strive to be a little more patient and forgiving and people will be more likely to do the same for you.