

Coping with Emotional Triggers

An emotional trigger is something that causes a strong emotional or physical reaction. It might be a person, situation, memory, thought, sound, or other reminder.

You might suddenly feel afraid, angry, sad, anxious, overwhelmed, or on edge. Sometimes, you may not know exactly why you feel this way—and that’s okay. Learning to recognize what affects you can help you understand your reactions and find ways to feel more grounded and supported.

Describe The Problem:

What situation, thought, or feeling is making you feel upset or overwhelmed?
What is the worst thing you think could happen if you experience this feeling again?

Identifying Your Triggers:

Many different things can bring up strong emotions or reactions. To begin noticing what may affect you, take a look at the categories below. Think about whether there are certain emotions, people, places, situations, memories, or experiences that are difficult for you. There are no right or wrong answers—simply write down what comes to mind in the spaces provided.

Emotional State	
People	
Places	
Things	
Thoughts	
Activities/Situations	

Developing A Plan to Address Your Triggers

In this section, you'll create a plan for responding to three triggers that feel especially difficult for you. Take your time and choose strategies that feel realistic and supportive. You may choose to create space from a trigger when possible, or prepare ways to cope if you encounter it. Revisit your plan as often as you need and practice the strategies when you feel calm and safe.

Describe Your 3 Most Difficult Triggers in Detail:

1.
2.
3.

Describe your strategy for avoiding or reducing exposure to each trigger:

1.
2.
3.

Describe your strategy for dealing with each trigger head on, when they cannot be avoided:

1.
2.
3.

Tips for Navigating Triggers

- Give yourself permission to create space. When possible, stepping away from people, places, situations, or experiences that feel overwhelming can help you feel safer and more grounded. This may mean making small changes to your daily routine, surroundings, or relationships. You do not have to make every change at once—start with what feels manageable for you.
- Think ahead about what might help. If you know you may encounter something difficult, consider creating a plan for how you would like to respond. This might include coping strategies, trusted people you can reach out to, or a few phrases you can use to give yourself space or leave an uncomfortable situation.
- Practice when you feel calm. Trying a new coping strategy for the first time during a difficult moment can feel overwhelming. Practice when you feel safe and grounded so the strategies you choose feel more familiar when you need them.



Please Remember: This resource is here to help you understand your emotions and explore healthy ways to cope with them. Use what feels helpful and move at your own pace. It is not a substitute for professional or crisis support. If you need additional help, reaching out to a trusted person or professional is okay.