

Trigger Action Plan

Step 1: Slow it down

Slow it down and recognize if you are feeling the following warning signs:

- Sweating/feel hot
- Heart races
- Racing/cycling thoughts
- Clenched fists
- Using verbal insults
- Becoming argumentative
- Can't get past problems
- Aggressive body language
- Go quiet/"shut down"

Awareness of Triggers:

- Tired
- Hungry
- Stressed about work
- Feeling irritable
- PMSing

Step 2: Ask for space

Actions:

Pause and ask for space, acknowledging you are emotionally dysregulated, and want to return to the conversation later:

"I'm feeling really triggered and emotionally dysregulated and I need to take [x] minutes to calm down and communicate my feelings better. After this time, I will come back to reconnect and listen. I love and care about you and I recognize that my feelings are my responsibility and could be disproportionate to the situation."

Step 3: Ten Affirmations

Write ten "I am" statements.

Step 4: Breathing exercises

Take 10 deep breaths, focusing on square breathing x 2.

Focus on your body and your breath.

Step 5: Journaling

Core Activity:

Situation:

What I did:

Check the facts:

1. What event triggered my emotion?
2. What am I feeling? Use the feeling wheel.
3. Does my emotion and its intensity match the facts of the situation or just my assumptions of the situation?

Action/reaction:

1. What do I need in order to feel supported?
2. How could I get these needs met in a healthier way? (I.e. assertive communication, prioritize self-care daily)

If you need more time:

Discussion questions:

- What could the other person be feeling?
- What are your communication goals? Are your actions consistent with these goals?

Review activities:

- Look at photos of us in PPT slides.
- Look at documents that we wrote.

Step 6: Use diversions

Options:

- Go for a walk around the neighborhood.
- Go on elliptical.
- Cook/bake something.

- Stretch.
- Go for a run.
- Run an errand.
- Call friends or family.

Step 7: Reconnect

- Acknowledge other person's feelings.
- Assertively communicate your feelings.
- If you feel you can't fully respond/meet their feelings in this moment, schedule a speaker listener the next day.
- Take space after talking, if needed to avoid repeating this cycle.

