

When Your Body Remembers

Remember: after something painful or frightening, your brain learns to watch for anything that feels similar. A trigger is a reminder that sets off that old alarm, so your body reacts as if the past is happening now. It's not weakness. It's protection that hasn't gotten the message you're safe.

What being triggered can look like

- ☐ Sudden panic, anger, or tears out of proportion to the moment
- ☐ Heart racing, tight chest, upset stomach
- ☐ Snapping at people you love
- ☐ Feeling frozen, numb, or far away
- ☐ Wanting to run, hide, or shut down
- ☐ Exhaustion afterward

Common triggers

A tone of voice, a smell or song, anniversaries, being touched unexpectedly, conflict, feeling trapped or unheard, certain places or times of year.

Bringing yourself back

- 1 **Notice the shift.** "I'm being triggered. My body thinks I'm in danger."
- 2 **Orient to now.** Look around and say today's date, where you are, and that you are safe.
- 3 **Use your senses.** Feel your feet, hold something textured, sip cold water, smell something calming.
- 4 **Breathe slow.** A long exhale tells your nervous system the threat has passed.
- 5 **Be kind afterward.** Rest and recover. You didn't fail. Your body did its job.

For me to notice

My triggers often include...

What helps me feel safe and present:

When to reach out: if triggers are frequent, you're having nightmares or flashbacks, or you're avoiding more and more of life, trauma-focused therapy like EMDR can help your brain finally file the memory as past.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

PSALM 147:3