

FREE EDUCATIONAL WORKSHEET SERIES

The Emotional Trigger Log

Track, understand, and respond to your triggers

A simple, structured way to notice what sets you off, what happens in your body, and how you'd like to respond next time — one day at a time.

A free resource from ZipHealthy

What Is a Trigger?

A trigger is anything — a comment, a memory, a tone of voice, a place, even a smell — that sets off a strong emotional reaction, often faster and bigger than the situation alone seems to explain. Triggers aren't a sign that something is wrong with you. They usually point to something that matters to you, or to a pattern your nervous system learned to protect you a long time ago.

The goal of this workbook isn't to get rid of triggers. It's to get to know them — so you have a little more space between the moment something happens and how you respond.

Before the Feeling Has Words, the Body Speaks First

Often the very first sign of a trigger isn't a thought — it's a physical sensation. Learning to notice these early signals gives you a head start.

Common body signals to watch for:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Tight chest or shallow breathing | ☐ Sudden urge to leave, freeze, or shut down |
| ☐ Clenched jaw, fists, or shoulders | ☐ Lump in the throat or watery eyes |
| ☐ Racing heart or heat in the face | ☐ Restlessness or needing to move |
| ☐ Stomach dropping or churning | ☐ A wave of heaviness or numbness |

How to use this workbook: Over the next several days, use the Trigger Log (pages 3–4) each time you notice a strong reaction. Then use pages 5–7 to look for patterns and build a simple response plan you can lean on going forward.

WORKSHEET

The 7-Day Trigger Log (Part 1 of 2)

Fill in one row each time you notice a trigger. Be brief — a few words is enough. There's no need to fill every box.

Day & Situation	Body Signals	Emotion & Intensity (0–10)	Automatic Thought	What I Did	What I'd Try Next Time
DAY 1					
DAY 2					
DAY 3					
DAY 4					

Continued on the next page →

WORKSHEET

The 7-Day Trigger Log (Part 2 of 2)

Day & Situation	Body Signals	Emotion & Intensity (0–10)	Automatic Thought	What I Did	What I'd Try Next Time
DAY 5					
DAY 6					
DAY 7					

Tip: "Intensity" is just a rough number from 0 (barely noticeable) to 10 (as strong as you've ever felt it). You don't need to be precise — a quick gut-check number is plenty.

IN-THE-MOMENT SKILL

The STOP Skill

When you notice the body signals from page 2 building, this four-step skill — widely used in evidence-based emotion-regulation approaches — can help create a pause before you react.

S **Stop.** Freeze for a moment. Don't act on the impulse yet. Your body may want to move fast — let it not, for just a few seconds.

T **Take a step back.** Physically or mentally distance yourself. Take a breath. Let a little space open up between the trigger and your response.

O **Observe.** Notice what's happening in your body, your emotions, and your thoughts, and what's happening around you — without judging it as good or bad.

P **Proceed mindfully.** Ask what would actually help here, and what fits your values — then choose your next step on purpose.

A Paced-Breathing Box

Slower, longer exhales help calm the body's stress response. Try tracing the box below with your finger or your eyes.

Breathe in for 4 counts → Hold for 4 counts → Breathe out for 6 counts → Hold for 2 counts

Repeat for 4–6 rounds, or until you notice your body begin to settle.

REFLECTION

Identifying Your Top 3 Patterns

Once you've logged a few entries, look back over your Trigger Log. Patterns often become visible after just a handful of entries. Use the prompts below to sum up what you're noticing.

Pattern 1

Situations that tend to trigger me: _____

The body signal I notice first: _____

The thought that usually shows up: _____

Pattern 2

Situations that tend to trigger me: _____

The body signal I notice first: _____

The thought that usually shows up: _____

Pattern 3

Situations that tend to trigger me: _____

The body signal I notice first: _____

The thought that usually shows up: _____

My Personal Response Plan

Using the patterns you identified on page 6, write a simple "if this, then that" plan for each one. Having it written down ahead of time makes it easier to reach for in the moment.

If _____

then I will _____

If _____

then I will _____

If _____

then I will _____

People I Can Reach Out To

Name	Relationship	Phone / How to Reach

PLEASE READ

About This Resource

This worksheet is offered as free educational self-help material. It is intended for general informational purposes only and is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, or treatment. Using this material does not create a clinician-client relationship between you and ZipHealthy PLLC or Stephen Velasquez. If you are working with a mental health provider, consider bringing this worksheet to a session to discuss together.

If you are in crisis or in danger, please reach out now:

Call or text 988 · Text HOME to 741741 · Call 911

Want Support Putting This Into Practice?

This workbook can go a long way on its own — and if you'd like professional support working through what you notice, I'm here to help.

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