

Do It Now

Finding Balance

Triggers can send you into a whirlwind of emotions that can range from thrilling to devastating. Even when an emotion is positive, its strength can put you off-balance and exaggerate your reaction. When this happens, there are techniques you can use to help keep yourself in balance.

Centering

The Centering technique helps to focus and settle the physical effects of strong emotions and the thoughts that accompany them. It combines deep breathing with the use of positive imagery and helps calm and center emotions and thoughts.



1. Stop.



2. Close your eyes and picture a place, person, or object that makes you feel calm.



3. Slowly breathe in, picturing your calming image in your mind.



4. Slowly exhale, breathing out the thought or feeling that is unbalancing you.



5. Continue your deep breathing, and gently shrug and then roll your shoulders forward and back and stretch your neck slowly from side to side and front to back.



6. Continue to breathe in the calming image and breathe out the unbalancing thought or feeling as you gently keep moving your shoulders and neck.



7. Breathe in and out at least ten times until you feel calm, centered, and refreshed.

Re-Framing

The Re-Framing technique can help you check whether your emotional responses and physical reactions to triggers are realistic and in line with the situation. If they aren't, you can create new and accurate responses. There are three different Re-Framing strategies: Reality Check, The Double Standard, and Past Experience.

Begin with the Centering technique and follow with one or more of the following Re-Framing strategies.

Supported by the State Department of Health

This project is supported by Grant Number 1 TPAH000241-01-00 from the HHS Office of Population Affairs. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Population Affairs.

Do It Now

Reality Check

Ask and answer these questions about the situation:

1. "What am I thinking and feeling?"
2. "Am I using words like *never*, *always*, *worst*, or *best* and overemphasizing the extreme aspects of the trigger?"
3. "What is the worst result that could happen?"
4. "What can I find that is positive about this situation?"
5. "What would be the best resolution of this situation for me?"

The Double Standard

Something's gone wrong. What's your response? Do you tend to put yourself down? The Double Standard asks you to treat yourself the same way you would a good friend. It is based on the idea that we are often harder on ourselves and more likely to see our own situation in a negative light than we would see it for others.

Ask and answer these questions:

"Would I say these things to a close friend who was in a similar situation?"

"What would I say that would be helpful?"

Listen to yourself!

Past Experience

This strategy is based on the idea that emotional responses and reactions sometimes mirror a past experience that had the same or a similar trigger. Recalling these experiences can assure you that most of the things you worry about happening either don't happen or don't turn out as badly as you think they will. It also reminds you that if you handled strong emotions and thoughts in the past, you can successfully do it again.

Ask and answer these questions:

"Has a trigger like this happened to me before?"

"What was the trigger that time?"

"How did I handle it?"

"How did it work out?"

"What can I do now to make sure I get a successful result?"

Supported by the State Department of Health

This project is supported by Grant Number 1 TPAH000241-01-00 from the HHS Office of Population Affairs. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Population Affairs.