

ReGAIN for triggered states ©

When you suddenly experience upsetting thoughts, feelings, or memories “out of nowhere” that don’t make sense or seem too powerful based on what is going on at the moment:

- **Recognize** that something has happened and that you are probably being triggered. You may notice that your responses are stronger or more intense than make sense, you may recognize a trigger in your environment, or you may have thoughts or feelings that usually happen when you’ve been triggered before. Remind yourself that you are remembering something upsetting from the past, not experiencing the present.
- **Ground** yourself. Look around you, try a relaxation or breathing exercise, say positive and supportive things to yourself, or distract yourself if you need to. Let yourself calm down a bit before the next step, *Allowing*.
- As best you can, **Allow** yourself to experience whatever is happening inside, with self-compassion. This doesn’t mean you let yourself be flooded by what you are experiencing, just that you let yourself feel as much as you can without becoming overwhelmed. Although you may not know where these feeling or thoughts are coming from, see if you can feel caring and kindness for yourself that you are being triggered, just as you would feel for someone else if they were experiencing what you are.
- **Investigate** how you have been triggered, the source of the trigger, and the source of the suffering.
 - See if you can figure out:
 - Where the trigger came from, for example child abuse, witnessing family violence, feeling neglected or abandoned as a child.
 - Why they are so upsetting (what it is about this trigger that makes it so painful).
- **Nonidentify** with triggered thoughts, feelings, and memories. Remind yourself that you are not your thoughts or feelings; You are having them, but they do not determine who you are or what you should do. Things you might say to yourself include:
 - “This is not me, these are triggered reactions.”
 - I don’t have to do what my mind is telling me to do.”
 - “I am remembering the past. What I am feeling is not real.”
 - “I am not what happened to me or how people judge me.”
 - “These are just thoughts or feelings. They may not be true.”
 - “This is my childhood talking.”