

Reflecting on Triggers: A Journaling Exercise

Take some time to reflect on how the current climate of unrest might be impacting you and potentially triggering past experiences.

Use the following prompts to guide your journaling so you can start to recognize anxiety and curb your thoughts and actions before they interfere with your daily life.



Current Feelings of Unrest

Sit quietly for 20 minutes, scan your body and acknowledge area of stress in your body. Invite your inner world to "speak" to you. How would you describe your emotional state in response to current anxiety or stress? What specific feelings are present? Make a note of whatever comes to your consciousness.

Do you have any judgment about it?

This is important because trauma can lead to self-judgment, guilt, shame, or negative beliefs about oneself, which can interfere with the healing process by adding another layer of distress to the existing symptoms.

- **Self-blame and shame:**
After a traumatic event, people can internalize blame, leading to negative self-thoughts like "I should have done something" or "It's my fault."
- **Internal conflict:**
Judgment about one's reactions can create an internal conflict, making it harder to accept or process the trauma and its effects on the body.
- **Interference with healing:**
Holding these judgments can prevent the nervous system from fully returning to a balanced state, hindering the body's natural ability to release stored stress and anxiety.
- **Avoiding emotional content:**
Sometimes, individuals may use physical complaints or focus on the bodily symptoms as a way to avoid confronting the underlying emotional pain or the trauma itself. Judgment can become a part of this avoidance, as it justifies negative feelings about the experience, [notes the National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#).



Past Experiences of Unsafety

Reflect on any past experiences in your life where you felt significantly unsafe, threatened, or overwhelmed. What were the circumstances? What emotions did you experience?



Potential Connections

As you consider the current unrest and your past experiences of unsafety, do you notice any connections or resonances between the two? Are there any similar feelings, thoughts, or physical sensations that arise?



Your Triggers

What specific types of news, social media content, or situations in the current climate seem to be most triggering for you? What are your typical reactions when triggered?



Self-Regulation Strategies

What self-regulation techniques do you currently use, or could you begin to use when you notice yourself feeling triggered by current events? (e.g., deep breathing, grounding, taking a break).



Supportive Connections and Boundaries

Who are the supportive people in your life you can reach out to during challenging times? What qualities or state of being they possess others in your life don't?



Small Steps Towards Resilience

What is one small step you can take this week to strengthen your self-awareness, practice a self-regulation skill, or nurture a supportive connection to build greater resilience in the face of external unrest?



Co-Regulation

Make an intention to find a Co-Regulation partner. Ask him/her to take turns of listening and speaking. Set the tone where the listening partner only kindly and empathically listen and switch roles. No need to fix anything just kindly listen to each other.

- ☐ Remember that acknowledging these connections and developing coping strategies is a powerful step towards healing and preventing the past from overwhelming your present. Be gentle and patient with yourself as you navigate this process.

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