

Lesson	Recognizing Triggers		
Disability Category	Social/Emotional Impairments		
Grade	3-5	Program Track	Track 2
Learning Intention	Students will identify their own triggers and coping strategies.		
Common Core Standard(s)	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1, 3.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1, 4.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1, 5.3		
Duration	20 minutes		
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggers & Coping Strategies lists • Index cards and pencils/pens 		

Lesson Structure

Begin the activity by explaining that a *trigger* is something that reminds someone of a bad memory and then makes him or her feel intense emotions. Everyone has triggers. Explain that for this activity, students will reflect on their own triggers as well as appropriate strategies for coping.

Tell students that you will read aloud a list of items that might make a person feel overwhelmed. Explain that as you read each trigger, students are invited to indicate if the item is something that makes them feel overwhelmed or anxious by raising a hand or giving a thumbs up. Read the Potential Triggers list, pausing after each item to allow students time to think about the trigger and respond.

When you are finished reading the list, ask students to brainstorm coping strategies they can use when they feel overwhelmed. If needed, read the list of Potential Coping Strategies to augment/reinforce students' ideas.

Wrap up the activity by reiterating that we all have triggers that can make us feel emotional, but we can also identify and use different coping strategies to help ourselves feel more calm.

Assessment

Students use index cards as an exit ticket to write at least one trigger and one coping strategy.

Extensions

Students create short stories or plays where a main character describes his or her feelings in detail during a trigger and solves the problem by using one of the coping strategies discussed.

Triggers & Coping Strategies

Potential Triggers	Potential Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arriving to school, a concert, or sporting event late• Waking up in the middle of the night and remembering you forgot to do something• Being away from your family for a long time• An upcoming performance (show, presentation, etc.) or athletic event you are participating in• A big project that is due soon• An upcoming test or exam• Being new to a school or sports team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deep breathing and/or meditation• Exercising• Keeping a journal• Spending time with a pet or loved one• Talking with a friend• Watching a funny movie or TV show• Reading a book• Taking a bath or shower• Listening to uplifting music• Doing an art project or craft