



I Want it Now!!! (🌈 An Emotional Health Story)
(3rd Grade – 8-9 yrs.)
Think, Pair, Share: Knowing Your Triggers



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDE 11 (Approx Time: 20-25 mins)

What triggers impulsive behavior? When you really enjoy doing something, your emotions can be exaggerated, and this could cause you to do impulsive behaviors. By stopping and thinking before you do something, you can avoid making choices you might regret later, like having a temper tantrum. By stopping and thinking about the situation, you may realize that you are not mad, but embarrassed, frustrated, sad, or even scared. You might also be tired or hungry which can be triggers. Stopping and thinking about what you were feeling – identifying your emotions - before you do something impulsive will help you to avoid temper tantrums.

Materials needed:

- Paper (1 per student)
- Pencils
- Chart paper (optional)
- Markers (optional)

Preparation needed:

- Determine student grouping (Individual student will work with facilitator)

Instructions:

1. In this activity, student(s) will think about different things that trigger their emotions, work with a group to discuss these triggers, and share them with the group.
2. Begin the lesson by posting or asking the following questions and giving student(s) ample time to jot down their answers, thoughts, and ideas about each question:
 - a. What are some words that are trigger words for you?
 - b. What kind of body language is a trigger for you?
 - c. How do you know you are angry?
 - d. How do you usually react to your triggers?

****NOTE: Be sure that student(s) remember and understand the word “trigger.” You may need to review by going over the questions before they are asked to write about them independently.****

- A **trigger** is a word or a behavior that initiates a course of action. A trigger word can cause a listener to feel strong emotions because of previous experiences. Trigger words or phrases can cause a person to remember memories and emotions from traumatic events that happened in the past.

(<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/trigger-word>; <https://pca-nwa.com/trigger-words/#:~:text=Trigger%20words%20and%20phrases%20are,and%20emotions%20from%20traumatic%20events>)

3. Next, put student(s) into pairs or small groups.
4. Have each group discuss what they wrote for each question.
5. Together, they will create a list of responses for each question. You can have them use chart paper or regular sized paper.
6. When all groups have finished their lists, have one person in each group share the answers, thoughts, and ideas that their group compiled.
7. After all groups have shared, post the lists so all student(s) can see them and discuss the following:
 - Compare and contrast the lists.
 - What are the most common verbal triggers?
 - What are the most common non-verbal triggers?
 - Are there any triggers on all the lists?
8. Once student(s) have had the opportunity to analyze their group and class lists, get them to think a bit deeper by asking and discussing as a group some of the following questions:
 - How are the triggers alike? Different?
 - What does this tell you about each other?
 - What does this tell you about triggers?
 - What triggers make the most people mad?
 - What are the most common signs that a trigger is making someone angry?
 - What is the most common reaction to triggers?
 - What are the consequences of these reactions?
 - Who is affected by these reactions?
 - Is there ever a time when it is okay to ignore an anger-provoking action?
 - Why is it important to learn how to stay calm when someone is doing something that triggers anger in you?
 - How do you feel when you are impulsive and react in a negative way when triggered?
9. In closing, remind student(s) that there are going to be times when they are triggered by something and want to act impulsively out of anger or another exaggerated emotion. Being able to understand and recognize their triggers will allow them to react in a more positive and controlled way, which is good for their social health.

Activity Idea Credit: <https://www.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/sos-triggers.pdf>