Deal with trauma reminders

Sometimes people are triggered by reminders of scary or uncomfortable things from their past. When this happens, your mind and body might act like you're right back in the traumatic situation. Your heart races and you become alert.

These automatic reactions are helpful at the time of the trauma. They prepare you to defend yourself or escape. But when you are no longer in danger and are only reminded of the event, the automatic reactions can make the situation worse.

This worksheet contains 3 steps you can use to deal with your trauma reminders.

Step 1: Relax

To begin, take 30 seconds to relax by breathing in and out slowly.

As you breathe in: Think the word "let."

As you breathe out: Think the word "go."

Step 2: Identify the trigger

Next identify the trauma reminder that triggered your reaction. Figuring out what triggered you can sometimes be tricky. Triggers can be:

- Inside ourselves (like thoughts or memories), or
- Outside ourselves (like conversations, situations, or places)

In the space below, describe what triggered your response.

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Notice how the trigger is just a reminder and not the actual trauma happening again. Remind yourself of this fact again and again.

In the space below, describe how your current situation is different from the traumatic experience.

Step 3: Decide what to do

Now that you realize that you are not in danger at this moment, the final step is to decide what to do.
For example, you could:

- Stay in the situation to see if your stress goes down
- Take a time out
- Seek support
- Try another Tool (such as Relax through breathing, Relax your body, Relax through visualization)

In the space below, describe what you decide to do.

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