

Dear Families/Caregivers,

Emotions give meaning to our lives. They drive our feelings, thoughts, behaviors, decisions, and sense of self.

Certain situations can spark strong emotions within us. These situations are called emotional triggers. They are like little electric shocks, sparking emotions. Understanding one's emotional triggers is key to managing emotions and making better decisions. We learned these strategies for identifying and responding to emotional triggers:

- Pause.
- Identify the emotional trigger.
- Name the emotion.
- Accept the emotion.
- Choose your response.

Here are some activities that you can do with your teen:

- Ask your teen to think of a time where he or she experienced a strong emotion and to talk about what sparked or triggered that emotion.
- Notice the emotions your teen experiences within a day. Talk about the emotions with your teen. What situations cause what kind of emotions? What are the behaviors your teen has when experiencing different emotions?
- Ask your teen to keep a journal of emotional triggers that includes the trigger, the emotion, and how he or she acted in response to that emotion.

Having awareness of what triggers certain emotions can help us improve our awareness of how we act and help us to manage our emotions more effectively.