

# Meta Moment

This lesson was adapted from the Yale RULER curriculum

# What Triggers an Emotional Response?

A Trigger is an external event or circumstance that causes an emotional reaction. This can be a positive or negative reaction.

*Individually, review each of the following emotional needs and rank what is most important to you.*

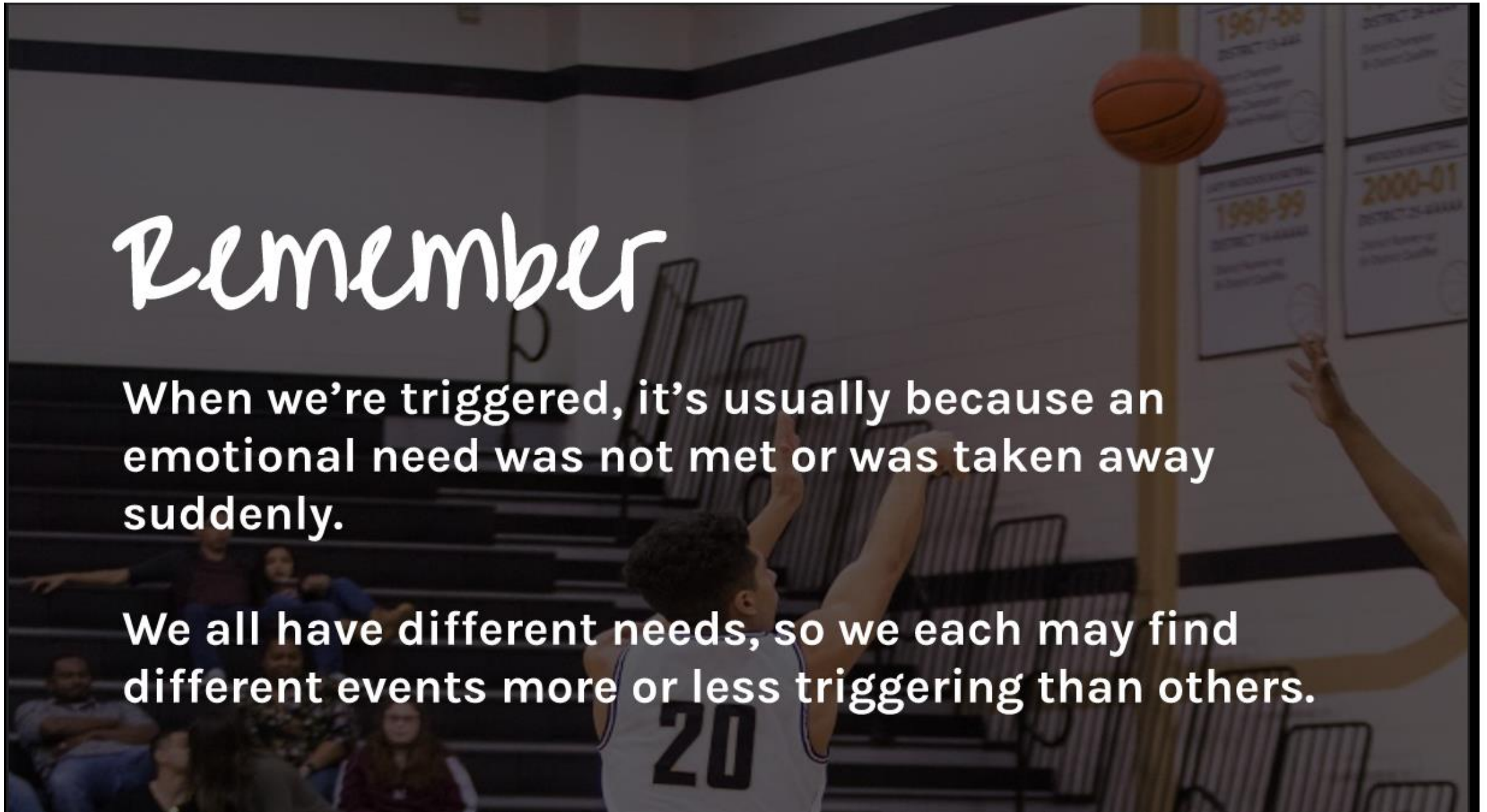
**How important is it for you to feel the following? (1 being least important, 10 being most important)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. To feel <b>ACCEPTED</b> and <b>INCLUDED</b> : <input type="text"/> | 8. To get <b>ATTENTION</b> : <input type="text"/>                 |
| 2. To feel <b>RESPECTED</b> : <input type="text"/>                    | 9. To be <b>FREE</b> / have <b>FREEDOM</b> : <input type="text"/> |
| 3. To be <b>POPULAR</b> : <input type="text"/>                        | 10. To have <b>PREDICTABILITY</b> in life: <input type="text"/>   |
| 4. To feel <b>UNDERSTOOD</b> by others: <input type="text"/>          | 11. To feel <b>LOVED</b> : <input type="text"/>                   |
| 5. To be <b>NEEDED</b> by others: <input type="text"/>                | 12. To feel <b>SAFE</b> : <input type="text"/>                    |
| 6. To be <b>IN CONTROL</b> of situations: <input type="text"/>        | 13. To feel <b>COMFORTABLE</b> : <input type="text"/>             |
| 7. To be <b>CORRECT</b> : <input type="text"/>                        |   |

# Remember

When we're triggered, it's usually because an emotional need was not met or was taken away suddenly.

We all have different needs, so we each may find different events more or less triggering than others.



# Essential Question

- What does "meta" mean?
- How can I identify my emotional needs and how do they relate to my triggers?
- What strategies can I use to pause when I encounter an emotional event or circumstance?

# Why are we learning about this concept?

## *Learn to Take a Meta Moment*

- When we encounter emotional triggers or things that make us upset, how can we learn to respond in a way that allows us to present our "best self" or ideal response?
- Learn strategies to use when you feel angry or upset to allow yourself to respond with your "best self" or ideal response.

# Meta .... What?!

**Meta means something that is about itself.** For example, in films or movies, it describes something that refers to itself – like a movie that makes fun of itself or a movie about people making a movie. “Going meta” is when someone goes to a higher level of abstraction.

**What does this have to do with emotional intelligence?** Going meta requires some level of self-awareness and self-understanding. In psychology, there is a term for this: meta-cognition. It means thinking about thinking or feeling an emotion about your own emotions (being anxious about how anxious you are, being frustrated with how upset you are, etc.).

# Meta-Moment

The Meta-Moment is a tool to create time and space to allow you to react to a triggering situation.

STEP 1: SENSE

STEP 2: PAUSE

STEP 3: See your "Best Self"

STEP 4: Strategize & Act

Today, we are just going to focus on SENSE and PAUSE



# SENSE

This is when you recognize that something has happened or shifted in your environment, body, mind or behavior. Some people refer to this as a trigger. You can be triggered by People, Thoughts, Situations and Actions.

Our senses can also trigger thoughts and emotions and shift our mind or behavior. Let's reflect on the different senses and think through how each example causes a reaction in your mind, body or behavior....





# Identifying Sense Triggers

**How do you notice your thoughts, body or mind react as I read through these examples?**

## **Examples for Seeing:**

See someone cheat on a test

See a scene in a movie that reminds you of a bad experience

## **Examples for Hearing:**

Someone tapping a pencil

Friend retells a story that was embarrassing for you

## **Examples for Touching:**

Itchy clothing

Someone hugs you without asking

## **Examples for Smelling/Tasting:**

Thinking of a sour candy

A food that makes you nostalgic



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## Step 2: Pausing

When we're triggered and our resources are depleted, it's helpful to consider emotion regulation strategies for **pausing** (Step 2 of the Meta-Moment).

**Before reviewing the strategies on the following slides, take a moment to discuss what strategies you already use.**



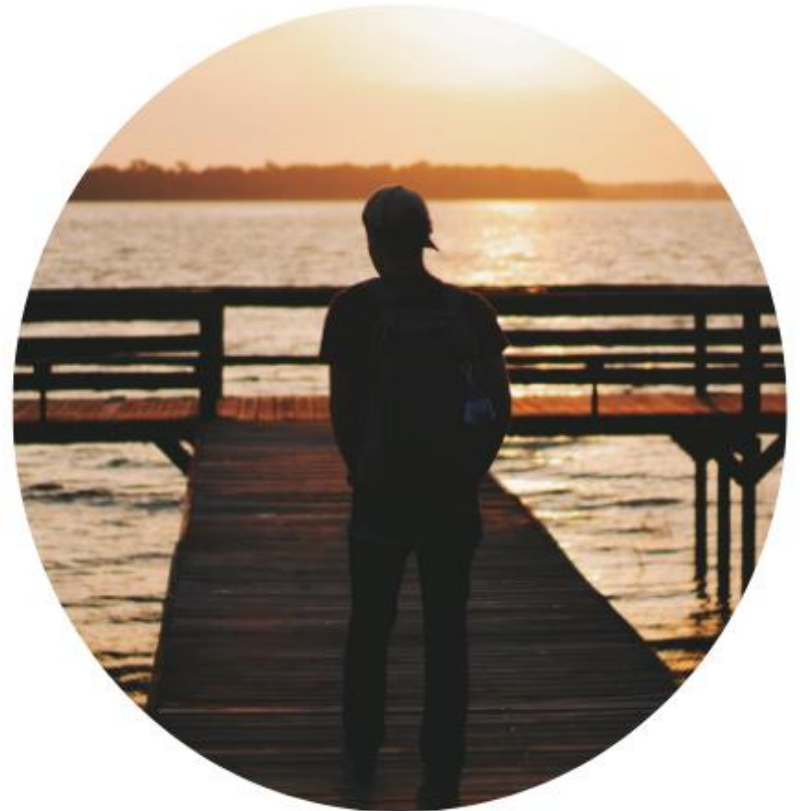
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# Taking Space

The first strategy is to **take space**.

This means putting physical distance between yourself and the trigger before you make any other decisions.

Have you ever used a strategy like this? When do you think it's most useful?



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## Count On It

The next strategy is **counting**. To practice, try counting back from 100 by 13's. It's hard – try it as a group!

The point of this strategy is that you have something to focus on besides your emotions for a moment, which delays you from making a poor choice.



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## Be Mindful

The fourth strategy is to take a moment to **be mindful**. Let's try it!

1. Think of four things you can currently see. When you've thought of four, raise your hand – then wait for all hands to be raised.
2. Now, close your eyes or lower your gaze. Think of three things you can feel right now and raise your hand when you have them.
3. Now, try to name two things you can hear, and raise your hands.
4. Lastly, name one thing you can taste or smell right now.
5. **When might this strategy be helpful for pausing?**



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## Keep Breathing

The final strategy is **breathing**.

Breathing is the only bodily process that is usually automatic, but we can take it over consciously when we choose to.

If we pay attention, we can make ourselves breath faster or slower, deeper or more shallowly.





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# Breathing

When we take control of our breathing, this changes what part of the brain controls our breathing.

The **brain stem** controls automatic breathing.

However, when we decide to control our breathing, the **motor cortex** takes control. This part of the brain also allows us to move a body part, shoot a basketball, or dance.



# Reflection

*What was your biggest takeaway from this lesson?*

*How can the meta-moment help you at school? At home?*

*Which pausing strategy will you use this week when you encounter one of your identified triggers?*

