III. Understanding Your Reactions

Exercise: Emotional Triggers

We all have certain reactions that are more likely to trigger emotions for us. Most of us are relatively comfortable with encountering certain types of negative emotional states or behaviours, and quite uncomfortable with others (e.g., you may find it relatively easy to interact with a worker who is sad and tearful, but find it nerve-wracking to deal with a hostile worker). Understanding your emotional triggers helps you plan ahead for how to address different situations.

What are some of your emotional triggers? Choose from among the following list or add your own.

- Passive-aggressive behaviour
- Whining
- Crying
- Blaming
- Criticizing/judging
- Frustration/irritation
- Worry/nervousness
- Anger
- Victim mentality
- Aggression
- Hostility
- Need to please
- Silent treatment
- Manipulation
- Deceit/lying
- Dislike
- Disappointment
- Sadness
- Unhappiness
- Sarcasm
- High-strung temperament
- Arrogance
- Conceitedness
Think of the various emotional states you have encountered among individuals with whom you currently work. Which do you find easiest to deal with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Emotions I Can Deal with Easily (minor triggers)</th>
<th>Negative Emotions that Are More Challenging to Encounter (major triggers)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g., frustration</td>
<td>e.g., despair</td>
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Identify those that are most challenging for you. Think about what specifically makes the challenging emotions difficult to deal with. Think about times you effectively dealt with a worker’s challenging emotional reaction or state. What made it easier for you to deal with? Was it the person, the place, the situation, your current emotional state or something else?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Emotions that are Major Triggers</th>
<th>What I Find Specifically Challenging</th>
<th>Factors that May Help Reduce the Challenges</th>
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