

## Triggers

### Objectives

This module will help you explore and understand:

- the different types of triggers
- your own triggers
- different ways to manage your own triggers

### Triggers

#### What can trigger the urge to offend?

A 'trigger' is also called a cue, prompt or call to action. Triggers are what come before thoughts, feelings and behaviour and can lead to a response or change in emotion and behaviour.

There are different types of triggers:

#### Internal triggers

These are triggers that come from within you. This includes thoughts, emotions and physical feelings.

Examples include emotions such as unhappy, frustrated, bored, resentful, stressed and anxious; physical feelings such as arousal; or thoughts such as 'I don't like this feeling' and 'she is going to leave me'.

#### External triggers

These are triggers that come from outside of you. These might be related to a specific situation or an environment.

Situational triggers may include stressful life events or stressors (e.g., argument with partner, work pressure, friend cancelling a plan), and environmental triggers may include general elements of the environment including your daily routine (e.g., working alone late at night, accessing pornography website or using phone/computer in isolated location).

It is also useful to highlight that external triggers (e.g., annoyed look from a partner) can trigger internal triggers such as emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger) and thoughts ("it's not fair", "I need a release"), all of which are relevant when understanding your triggers.

#### What are your triggers?

Identifying triggers and ways to manage them can help you to avoid situations that are riskier for you and build your skills to manage triggers as they arise.

Triggers often appear at the beginning of the cycle of offending and can prompt behavioural responses. Being aware of your triggers is essential to increase your ability to stop the cycle as early as possible.

On the worksheet identify your triggers – internal which includes emotional, and external which include situations, sights and sounds.

It is likely that you will have several triggers. Sometimes these will work by themselves and sometimes they will work as a combination.

Internal	External	
<i>Lonely</i>	<i>Pop-ups</i>	

## **Situational and environmental risks**

### **Managing triggers and risks**

Some places and situations present specific risks and triggers for people, for example being alone at home late at night with internet access. These can become more risky if combined with risky thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and can provide the beginning of a chain of unhealthy behaviour.

That's why it is so important to recognise what your triggers are, and situations and environments that are risky for you.

On the worksheet list what these triggers and situations are and why they are risky. Then identify what you can do to manage them.

Triggers – internal and external, including situations	How to manage
<i>Feeling lonely.</i>	<i>Pick up the phone and call a friend.</i>

It can be difficult to consider a variety of different management strategies for each of your triggers, so we encourage you to contact the helpline advisors who are here to support you and help you further explore your learnings. You can stay anonymous and don't have to give your real name or any contact details. If you're not ready to speak to anyone yet, you can also use the Stop It Now! Australia live chat.

*Please return to the website and complete the **Reflection** questions at the end of this module.*