

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MANAGING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Emotional triggers can be events, circumstances, or people that provoke an intense emotional response

Do you ever find yourself overreacting to something that happens at work, or to something your partner says or does? Are you in control of your emotions or do they control you? Emotional triggers can be events, circumstances, or people that provoke an intense emotional response in us, such as anger, rage, fear, or sadness. Sometimes emotional triggers are carried over from painful or traumatic childhood experiences. Or they can be a reminder of a negative incident that continues to stir up powerful feelings.

Identifying your emotional triggers requires self-reflection and a willingness to examine the events or circumstances that push your buttons. Once you become aware of your triggers, you can decide how to manage your reactions and find ways to calm yourself down. Tips to manage emotional triggers include the following:

- **Take a mental step back from the situation and don't jump to conclusions.** Don't react right away, but give yourself time to sort through your emotions and think clearly.
- **Seek feedback from people you trust.** Sometimes others see things we can't see, including how our emotions and behavior affect other people.
- **Pay attention to negative self-talk and question your assumptions.** Do you tend to focus on the negative and put yourself, and/or others, down? Do you assume the worst of other people?
- **Surround yourself with positive-thinking people.**

Greater self-awareness and emotional regulation is not only good for your mental health, but also for your physical health. For example, there is a strong link between negative emotions such as anger and hostility and illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, and ulcers. Conversely, positive emotions such as feelings of hope and gratitude lower blood pressure and boost immunity.

While it may not be possible to avoid situations or people that bring up strong emotions, you can control how you act on your feelings.

