

LISTENING DEEPLY



Quiz

TRIGGERS & THRESHOLDS

triggers & thresholds

Preparing yourself to know how to react if strong emotions show up in a listening session is an important task.

What if something unexpected happens? We will talk a bit more about triggers & thresholds. How to recognize them and what to do in case they happen.

Answers will show after each question.

triggers & thresholds

What is a trigger?

a trigger is a strong emotion caused


- by a reminder of a trauma that was experienced
- when a strong opinion or preference about a concept occurs
- by a concept that causes strong emotion, like alarm, pain, anger, shame
- wording that recalls privileges that one person does not have access to
- by microaggression, telegraphing subtle hostility or contempt (accidental or intentional)

triggers & thresholds

How can you prepare yourself to handle being triggered?

know your threshold

because in the wash of a strong emotional reaction,
you need a simple rule to follow



a threshold helps you
decide whether it's
possible to continue
the listening session

triggers & thresholds

What is on either side of a typical threshold?

a threshold is usually

inside
related to the purpose

the way they address it

prejudice is part of their
interior cognition

between

outside
unrelated to the purpose

expressing bias, hate,
harassment
aimed at you or a group
you belong to

your threshold

you can get triggered on
either side of the threshold

triggers & thresholds

How might you handle a trigger, on either side of a typical threshold?

plan how to handle it

inside
related to the purpose

- support (\neq agreement)
- simple reflection
- find the roots
- shift topics
- end the session politely

outside
unrelated to the purpose

- let it roll off of you
- 3 strikes, you're out
- tell the person to stop
- end the session politely
- end the session quickly

between

your threshold

choose what works
best for you

triggers & thresholds

Who gets priority on either side of the typical threshold?

who gets priority



inside
related to the purpose

1. the person first
2. yourself next
3. the study/organization last

outside
unrelated to the purpose

1. yourself first
2. the person next
3. the study/organization last

your threshold

triggers & thresholds

Now, the trigger happened. Let's say it was inside the threshold, but the person was telling you about intentional microaggression. Even though it was their thinking about the purpose, it triggered you strongly.

You ended the listening session, for your own good.

What are some ways you explain your decision to your boss?

tell your boss

“My discomfort level made it impossible to pay rapt attention.”

“There are other people out there to recruit.”

triggers & thresholds

This time, let's say the trigger was outside the threshold, unrelated to the purpose. The person kept relating degrading opinions about other people of your gender.

You ended the listening session, for your own good.

What are some ways you explain your decision to your boss?

tell your boss

“I was not getting relevant data from this person. It was out of scope.”

“The repeated opinions built up a strong reaction in me, and I could not pay rapt attention any more.”

“There are other people out there to recruit.”

remember

inside or outside, if you are triggered, it is **not your fault**

you have sustained a **mental injury** (mild to serious)

no matter how you handled the session,
take care of yourself after

triggers & thresholds

But what happens if you're the one who triggers the person?

a threshold is usually

inside
related to the purpose

listener lets assumption,
confirmation bias into the
wording of support or
simple reflection

between

outside
unrelated to the purpose

listener lets assumption,
confirmation bias into their
wording, referencing the
person or a group person
belongs to

the person's threshold

triggers & thresholds

How can you notice if the person has been triggered?

triggers & thresholds

- the person is flooded with emotion
- pauses, silence, breath
- change of mood, tone
- shift of topic
- mentioning the trigger to you



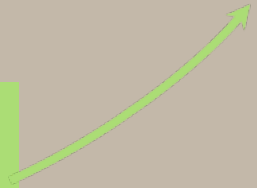
triggers & thresholds

What do you do then?

apologize immediately

without prompting, even though you feel embarrassed or defensive

Repair trust by offering the option to exit. Offer support and shift the topic. Avoid **making it about you.**



triggers & thresholds

If you don't notice a trigger, and the person wants to stop

Allow person to exit the session

Embrace the fact you must have made them feel unsafe or triggered
(go over the transcript to see if you can find where)

additional resources

If you want to learn more, you'll be able to find more resources available on the handouts for this video

