

What will students take away from the workshop?

- An increased understanding of what pushes their buttons and what they do to push others' buttons
- An understanding of how hot buttons may be influenced by cultural values
- Practical solutions, in the form of action steps, to prevent conflict in school and at home
- An awareness of what triggers us and what we do that triggers others
- Concrete steps for engaging triggers in a productive way
- An appreciation that individuals may react very differently to the same trigger

Your Turn: A Hot Button exercise

What are the behaviors you find annoying, irritating and enraging? In the boxes below, list the things that people say or do that push your hot buttons. Identify one behavior at work (or school) and at home for each level.

Hot Buttons at Work/School	Hot Buttons at Home
Annoying: _____	Annoying: _____
Irritating: _____	Irritating: _____
Enraging: _____	Enraging: _____

Reflection Questions

- Which of these hot buttons have caused conflict for you?
- Which of your behaviors is a hot button for your family? For your colleagues? For your classmates? If you don't know, how will you find out?
- What strategies do you have for dealing with your hot buttons, both for you and for other people?

Action Steps – Fill in the blank

- One thing I will do to take my hot button response from red to yellow is _____.
- I will make it a point to learn the hot buttons of these three people in my life:
_____.

Your Turn: A Trigger exercise

Examples of statements that can trigger emotional responses for some individuals – but not for others – may include:

- *“I don't see differences; I just see people.”*
- *“If everyone just worked hard, they could achieve anything.”*

Emotional responses to triggers can include anger, confusion, pain, fear, surprise, and embarrassment. Responses to triggers include:

Avoidance: Avoiding future encounters and withdrawing emotionally from people or situations that trigger us.	Silence: Not responding to the situation although it is upsetting; not saying or doing anything.
Misinterpreting: Feeling on guard and expecting to be triggered, we misinterpret something said and are triggered by our misinterpretation, not the words.	Attacking: Responding with the intent to lash back or hurt who ever has triggered us.
Confusion: Feeling angry, hurt or offended, but not sure what to do about it.	Internalization: Taking in the trigger, believing it to be true.
Naming: Identifying what is upsetting us to the triggering person or organization.	Confronting: Naming what is upsetting us to the triggering person and demanding that behavior to be changed.
Surprise: Responding to the trigger in an unexpected way, such as reacting with constructive humor that names the trigger and makes people laugh.	Discretion: Because of the dynamics of the situation (power imbalances, fear of physical retribution), deciding not to address the trigger right away but in some way at some other time.

Read the following statements. How does it make you feel? How would you respond if you heard someone say this (pick from the trigger responses above).

Trigger Statements	My "trigger" response
<i>"Teenagers these days are so lazy and unmotivated. When I was a teen, I had to earn everything."</i>	
<i>"If they are going to live in this country, they should learn to speak good english."</i>	
<i>"I think homeless people choose to be homeless. Really, they just need to get a job like everyone else."</i>	

<p><i>“It’s just a natural, biological fact that men are better at being leaders than women.”</i></p>	
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Reflection Questions

- What surprised you about how you responded to these statements?
- Which statements triggered you the most?
- Why do you think some statements were more triggering than others?
- What things do people say that are triggers for you?
- Why is it important to know what triggers you?
- How can you deal with triggers in a more productive way?