



# Now and Then



The "Now and Then" technique (Stimulus Discrimination) is a valuable exercise in trauma therapy that helps you recognize and differentiate between triggers associated with traumatic memories. It is normal that we aren't always aware of these triggers and how they are linked to our traumatic event. This exercise aims to increase your awareness of these triggers

## Instructions

1. Think about triggers: Where were you when you were triggered? Who was there and what were you doing? It's important to understand that triggers related to trauma are not always obvious. Memories can arise seemingly out of nowhere, triggered by subtle cues in the environment or physical sensations. Recognize that your mind is not out of control, but rather responding to "hidden" triggers that you may not be consciously aware of yet. Starting to reflect on the circumstances you were triggered can help over time to make these triggers more recognisable.
2. Identify Differences: When traumatic memories are triggered, remind yourself of what is different now compared to the time of the trauma. Focus on comparing the past and the present by using the information of your senses. Also consider factors like your current location and the progress you have made since the traumatic event. This step helps to ground you in the present reality and provides a perspective shift.
3. Use the differences: Challenge the power that triggers hold over you by actively reminding yourself of what has changed. Remind yourself that the sensations or cues you are experiencing are not indicative of the present danger but are remnants of the past trauma. Reinforce the idea that you are in control of your responses and that you are equipped with the ability to navigate these triggers.

## Tips

1. Patience and Self-Compassion: Be patient with yourself throughout this exercise. Healing from trauma takes time, and recognizing triggers and their differences can be challenging. Practice self-compassion as you navigate this process, acknowledging the progress you make along the way.
2. Gradual Exposure: If you find the exercise overwhelming, start with smaller triggers and gradually work your way up to more significant ones. Take breaks as needed and ensure your emotional well-being throughout the process.
3. Professional Guidance: Consider seeking guidance from a qualified therapist experienced in trauma therapy. They can provide insights, support, and additional techniques tailored to your specific needs.



# Now and Then



Please fill in the following columns thinking about the differences between the traumatic situation then and your current present. It is helpful to use your senses and the information they give you to distinguish between these.

Then

Now