

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR ANXIETY TRIGGERS

CREATED BY LESLIE STEVENS, M.E.D., LPC

Generalized anxiety consists of persistent and excessive worry about various domains, including work and school performance that the individual finds difficult to control. The individual experiences physical symptoms, including restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge; being easily fatigued; difficulty concentrating or mind going blank; irritability; muscle tension; and sleep disturbance (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

It is very important for you to understand *your* triggers if you find yourself experiencing anxiety. You can do this by careful observation. Take some time daily to write down the people, places, and things that seem to bring on your anxious feelings. Make note of specific people with whom you come into contact or think about. Did someone suddenly pop up unexpected? Did you take a trip home and encounter certain family members? Where did you go recently? Does a certain environment or atmosphere seem to impact your emotions? What else have you encountered? Did you happen to stumble across a familiar car, an article of clothes, or photographs. Observe what you have heard, seen, smelled, tasted, and touched. Use this thought log to keep a record of your triggers. Write out the trigger, the preceding event that caused the trigger, your thoughts, and feelings about the event and/or the trigger.

Date	Feelings	Thoughts	Preceding Events	Triggers

References: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.978089042559>