

Where I'm At	Triggers: Things that happen right before I feel this way	Looks Like/ Sounds Like: What other see or hear	Feels Like: How I feel inside	What I can Do: Things that make myself feel better	What others can do: Things that help me
5 Against the Law					
4 About to blow up					
3 Edgy/ Cranky					
2 OK					
1 Feeling Great					

5 point scale and Self Regulation:

- A “5 point scale” is a self regulation tool that can help youth identify their “triggers”, feelings and needs. It helps individuals begin to notice how they’re feeling and thus regulate to a less stressed state by using “tools”, or things that help them feel better.
Behaviors are a form of communication that help is needed, our job is to find out what.
- “Triggers” are things that increase our stress level. We all have them, I am sure you can identify most of yours easily or at least after you have a problem you can figure out why it happened. I know there are things for me that can get me off on the wrong foot and affect me by making it hard to do my best (not sleeping well, waking up late, cranky children, extra work I hand’t planned on, forgetting to eat breakfast etc...). As an adult I am so lucky, I can tell my boss, I had a rough morning, I know I’m not at my best today and they will cut me some slack, or even offer me support in a caring and empathetic way. They might say take a little time for yourself to get ready for the day, offer food, give extra time, or even suggest a day of rest.
- Unfortunately, we don’t often offer kids the same kind of support when we notice negative behaviors as this is seen as a “reward”. But, remember, negative behavior is purely communication when people are not being heard. Thus, kids don’t often have the ability to get what they need, we ask them to push on and expect high achievement every moment, we don’t allow bathroom breaks, or drinks of water, extra time to rest or even to share what’s going on. We forget that due to home circumstances many kids are probably always at a “3” on their scale, 1 is something that rarely happens for them due to domestic issues, or special needs they struggle with every day. Things that we think are fun, like class parties are just one more trigger on top of a long list they come in with every day. And then we wonder why they rent’ having fun, why they shut down or are disruptive in class.
- It’s absolutely time to start supporting kids every moment we can. Every time we forget to say, “It looks like you are having a really hard day. Is there something you need?” and instead say things like, “they just don’t want to be good learners”, or they are “being defiant on purpose” and send kids away we give them the opportunity to increase their negative behavior until someone finally gets their needs met. Sometimes kids really do need out of a classroom. The more opportunities they have to be truly heard and understood, the more chances we are giving them to ask for what they need in a way that is acceptable in our society. So... If you know a kids “triggers” you can better understand where they are at on any given day and thus help EVERYONE to have a good day by listening to their needs. Give a kid a break, or let them go to the bathroom, get a drink, or other things they have identified that can help, 5 minutes, hours or a day or 2 now now could save you and your entire class hours, days, weeks or months later.

