

## Trigger Mapping

As we navigate crises or organize in intense situations to resist fascism or dismantle systems of oppression that personally impact us, we may be exposed to stories, sensations, and experiences that we find unsettling or evoke painful memories for ourselves. These are triggers – situations that deeply impact us, causing reactions ranging from stress responses to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

While each of us may have different triggers, even those of us who do not have diagnosed PTSD or other anxiety disorders may react to specific incidents, sounds, types of stories, or interactions with stress responses.

“Trigger mapping” and “mad maps” are resources developed by the Icarus Project, a social justice-oriented “support network and education project by and for people who experience the world in ways that are often diagnosed as mental illness.” These resources are designed to allow individuals to document how they want to proceed during periods of crisis, activation, or mental health episodes and are a great resource to maintain agency and choice in times where they are often removed.

In the space below, feel free to jot notes, write full sentences, or draw images to map out triggers and support that would be helpful for you. If you need more space, you can use these guiding questions and blank paper to fully answer them.

### **Guiding Questions**

#### **What are my triggers?**

(Triggers can be certain memories, locations, situations, or other sensations like smells and sounds that bring up traumatic memories.)

#### **What types of stories and incidents are harder for me to engage with?**

**How do I cope with triggers so that I don't get lost?**

**In the past, when I have been triggered what has been helpful?** (examples might include removing yourself from the situation; taking time to breathe; stepping outside with a friend; sleeping)

**In the past, what has not been helpful?** (examples might include bystanders intervening without consent; bystanders observing with acknowledging what is happening or intervening; touch without a warning; using substances)

**What resources can I keep with me or close by, in case I have a panic attack while I am out of the home?**

**Who do I trust to support me if I have been triggered? How can I have a conversation ahead of time about what kind of care feels good for me?**