What causes a trigger?

As listening to a favorite song may trigger a sense of happiness, triggers can also bring up negative emotions that lead to emotional eating and disrupt your efforts to improve health. Possible negative triggers include: relationship conflicts, work or family stressors, fatigue, financial pressures and health problems. Triggers such as these can cause a cycle that looks something like this:

We feel a negative emotion that triggers us to eat unhealthy foods. As a result, “feel good” hormones are released and we temporarily feel better. But after a little while we might feel guilt, shame, or anger which can start the negative trigger cycle all over again.

Strategies to cope with negative triggers:

DON’T DEPRIVE YOURSELF: eat satisfying amounts of healthy foods and enjoy occasional treats to get variety and curb cravings.

SNACK HEALTHY: try pre-cut veggies or fruit, ¼ cup nuts, 3 cups popcorn, 6 whole grain crackers, 1 cheese stick, or ¼ cup granola, for example.

LEARN FROM SETBACKS: forgive yourself and start fresh the next day. Try not to let one episode derail the progress you have made toward a healthier lifestyle.