For now, just use the Trigger Decoding Worksheet (TDW). Here is what you will do:

1. Start with column 3: specific memory of the **stressor/trigger/dream**…just the most disturbing part. Notice something that triggers you in the moment: it can be happening in the here or now, or it is a memory of an event that you are recalling in the here and now that triggers you. Just write down a “chapter heading” about the trigger, not a whole chapter. I don’t want you writing a lot about the trigger b/c you risk re-living the memory. We don’t want that.
2. For column 2: **Symptom/reaction**: you will briefly describe your behavior (what did you do/not do in that situation i.e., ran, shut down, yelled, criticized myself), any urges you had i.e., the urge to run, the urge to yell, the urge to hurt yourself, and what part of your nervous system you might have been operating from i.e., fight, flight, freeze, faint, fold or fawn.
3. In column 4 you capture your **emotions**. Not how you feel NOW when you are doing the TDW, but what you might have felt then. Interestingly, you might notice you still feel the same feelings or your feelings might not be the same. Use page one of the AcademyEmotions&Cognitions handout to capture as many emotions as possible. Don’t explain your emotions or justify them. **Just list the emotion words** i.e., scared, nervous, vulnerable, etc.
4. For column 5, list your **body sensations**: what might you have been sensing in your body THEN when it happened…NOT now. This is very hard b/c most people don’t tune in to their body when they are stressed so you might not remember. It’s fine. This will start the process, if you don’t do so already, of noticing your body sensations. Do your best to consider what you might have been sensing in your body “then.”
5. Column 6 is VERY important, **negative cognitions**: using page 2 of the AcademyEmotions&Cognitions handout, you will identify AS MANY negative cognitions as you can that are linked to this memory. **Not** what you believe in general; but rather, when you were in that situation, or when you had that dream, what negative cognitions might have been activated? You might not have *actually thought those cognitions,* but when you think of the trigger and read the list, which of these cognitions might you have believed? Again, just copy EXACTLY what it says on page 2, don’t make up cognitions. These are curated intentionally. You might have NC’s in EVERY category, or not, so read each one every time you do this. Don’t just look for the “worst” ones. If a cognition seems to be linked to the memory list it even if it is a mild connection. You should have several listed. Sometimes up to 20 or more!
6. **Intensity** is how strongly you felt the trigger: 0 is you felt it, but you were absolutely calm when it happened (which is impossible, b/c if you were CALM it would not be triggering) and 10 is the most disturbance/activation/stress you can imagine.
7. In the final column, you capture the **duration** of time you think it took you to get back to a 0 or 1. Meaning, how long until you felt like you were calm so a 1 or a 0 intensity score i.e., 2 hours, one day, a week, or you may write down TBD b/c you are still not back to a 0 or 1.