

# Managing Emotional Activators After Financial Fraud

Financial fraud can leave lasting emotional impacts, and certain experiences or events—like the holidays or anniversaries—can reactivate those feelings. Recognizing these activators and having a plan in place can help you navigate these challenging emotions.

## Understanding Emotional Activators



**Holidays:** This season often brings financial stress and expectations, which may amplify emotions tied to past fraud experiences.



**Anniversaries or Milestones:** Significant dates, like the anniversary of the fraud, can bring renewed feelings of loss or anger.



**Unexpected Expenses:** (e.g., medical bills, car repairs) can reignite feelings of financial vulnerability or mistrust.



**News and Media:** Hearing about scams, fraud, or financial crimes in the news or on social media can evoke feelings of anger, fear, or helplessness.



**Interactions with Financial Institutions:** Navigating disputes, applying for loans, or even checking bank statements might activate memories of the fraud.



**Conversations about Money:** Discussing finances with friends, family, or colleagues can create stress, particularly if others express judgment or dismissiveness.



**Gift Giving:** Birthdays, weddings, or other occasions involving financial contributions or generosity may highlight financial limitations caused by the fraud.



**Declined Purchases, Credit Issues:** Experiences like a card being declined or trouble with credit applications can remind someone of the fraud's impact.



**Legal Proceedings:** Filling out paperwork, engaging in legal action, or revisiting fraud-related documents can bring up unresolved emotions.



**Scam Calls or Texts:** Receiving suspicious communications, even unrelated to the initial fraud, may activate fear or distrust.



**Places Associated with the Fraud:** Revisiting locations, interacting with people connected to the fraud, or encountering similar environments can evoke strong emotions.



**Changes in Finances:** Life events that alter financial stability, such as a job loss, career change, or retirement, may reactivate feelings of insecurity or regret.



**Peer Support:** While peer support is a safe space to share and process your experiences, listening to others' stories may also feel emotionally activating.

## Tips for Recognizing Emotional Activators

1

**Listen to Your Body:** Pay attention to physical signs like tension, a racing heart, or shallow breathing—they may indicate an emotional reaction.

2

**Track Your Emotions:** Keep a journal to identify patterns in when and where these feelings arise.

3

**Ask Yourself Questions:** Reflect on what happened before the activation. What thoughts came up?

## Emotional Activators Are Normal

It's important to remember that activators are a normal part of the healing process. They don't mean you're back at square one—they're an opportunity to practice resilience and self-awareness as you continue to heal.

# Managing Emotional Activators After Financial Fraud

Feeling emotionally activated is a natural response to past trauma, especially after experiencing financial fraud. These moments can feel overwhelming, but they also present an opportunity to pause, process, and practice self-care. By having a plan for immediate relief and strategies for long-term resilience, you can regain a sense of control and safety in the moment. The steps below are designed to help cushion your feelings, ground you in the present, and guide you toward emotional balance when activators arise.

## What to Do When Feeling Activated

### Pause and Acknowledge

- Recognize and name what you're feeling.
- Take deep breaths to ground yourself in the present moment.

### Create Safe Space

- Step away from the situation if possible (e.g., take a walk or move to a quiet area).
- Write down what you're feeling to externalize the emotion.

### Cushion Your Feelings

- Use calming activities like listening to music, practicing mindfulness, or using grounding techniques (e.g., focus on a sensory experience).
- Reach out to a trusted friend, peer, or therapist for support.

### Practice Self-Awareness

- Know Your Activators: Reflect on specific events, situations, or environments that make you feel emotionally raw.
- Track Patterns: Keep a journal to identify when and how emotions resurface.

### Plan Ahead

- Develop coping strategies for known activators, such as setting boundaries around holiday spending or limiting exposure to certain situations.

## Long-Term Strategies to Build Resilience

### Develop a Support System

- Engage in peer support groups or therapy to talk about your feelings in a safe, understanding space.
- Balance sharing your story with self-care to avoid emotional burnout.

### Practice Healthy Boundaries

- Limit exposure to conversations or events that you know might be overwhelming.
- Communicate your needs with friends, family, or support networks.

### Focus on What You Can Control

- Take small, actionable steps to rebuild your financial confidence (e.g., creating a budget, setting small financial goals).
- Celebrate progress, no matter how small.

### Cultivate Healthy Coping Skills

- Explore mindfulness, meditation, or breathing exercises to build emotional resilience.
- Dedicate time to activities that bring joy or relaxation, like hobbies, exercise, or spending time in nature.

By becoming more self-aware and creating a plan for both immediate relief and long-term resilience, you can regain control and continue to heal. For more support, consider joining one of Give an Hour's Financial Fraud peer support groups.

Peer Support for Victims and for Loved Ones:  
<https://giveanhour.org/peersupport/>