

## Bumps in the Road

### Getting Assistance From Situations That Trigger Us

It's hard to ask for help, to seek assistance, to be vulnerable. Trauma survivors are always going to be triggered by this process because they hate being vulnerable.

They remember...*Bad things can happen when I'm not in control.*

Sometimes it's even harder.

Sometimes we need help from people or situations that trigger us the most:

- *When a woman seeks assistance from a formerly abusive husband.*
- *When a grown child needs help from parents who had been overly harsh.*
- *When a veteran has to receive care from the place associated with some of the worst memories of their life.*
- *When an alcoholic attends their first AA meeting.*
- *When an adult traumatized by authority figures in the past goes to his boss or the doctor.*

There are these and more.

And the truth is, these types of interactions *never* go perfectly.

Our mistake is expecting them to.

Sometimes we need help from the *last* people we want to approach.

Anytime there's a lot of history, a lot of *difficult* history, even if only by association, the potential exists for disagreements to escalate, for people to get hurt *more* than is intended. When there is a lot of pain in the past, it doesn't take much to remind us of it.

Remember this as you try to give or receive assistance.

We all need to interact with people and systems that trigger us. Just like people with allergies sometimes have to endure unpleasant exposures.

We can follow the allergy model when forcibly exposing ourselves to expected high-level triggers.

We can prepare as best we can.

We can minimize our exposure.

And...most importantly...we can *decrease* expectations.

We can *expect* bumps in the road.