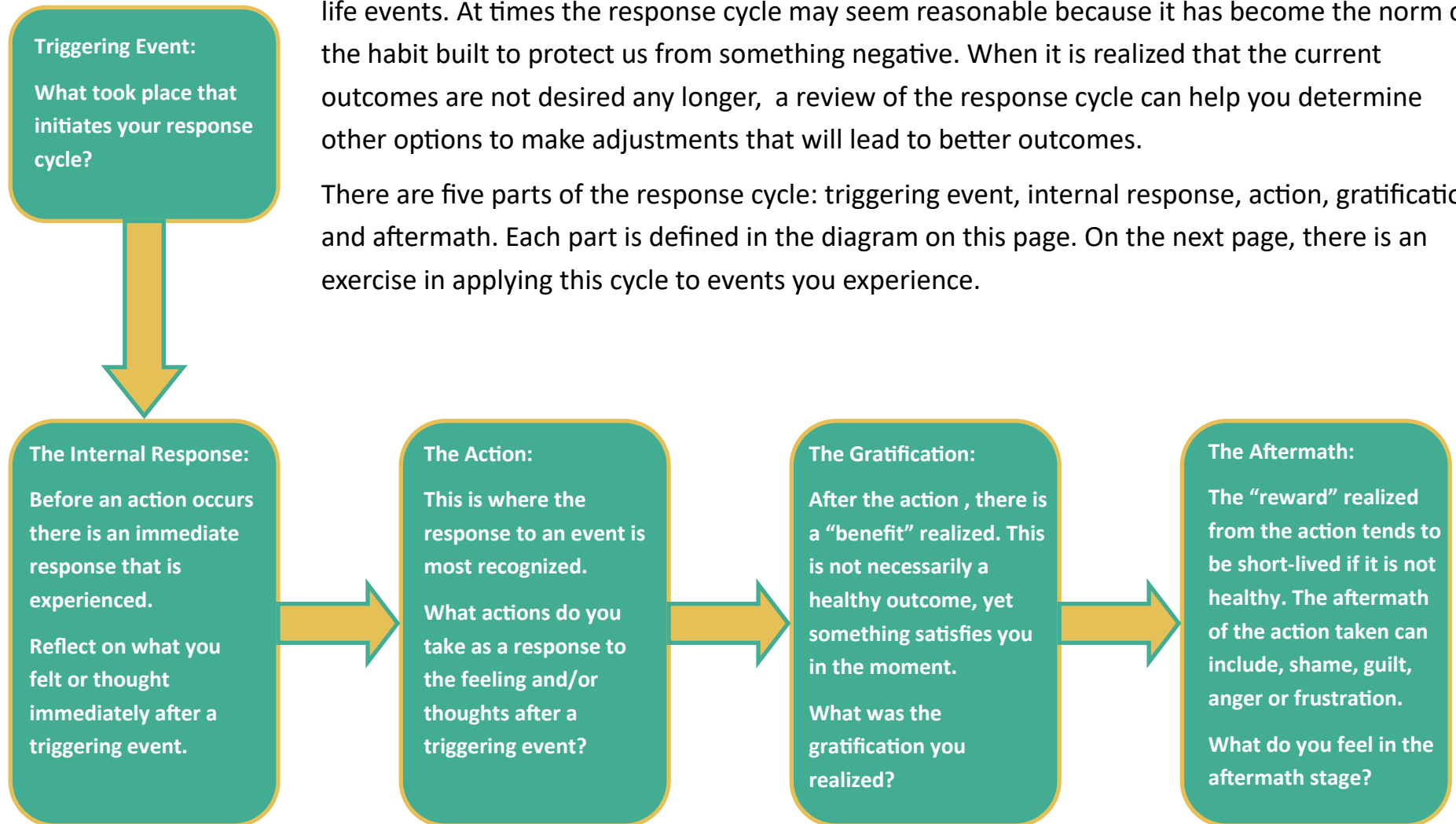


## Response Cycle: Introduction

A response cycle is the experience realized after a triggering event. Not all events may seem traumatic however there are actions and feelings that are a result of interactions with others or life events. At times the response cycle may seem reasonable because it has become the norm or the habit built to protect us from something negative. When it is realized that the current outcomes are not desired any longer, a review of the response cycle can help you determine other options to make adjustments that will lead to better outcomes.

There are five parts of the response cycle: triggering event, internal response, action, gratification and aftermath. Each part is defined in the diagram on this page. On the next page, there is an exercise in applying this cycle to events you experience.



## Response Cycle: Put Into Practice

Starting with the “Triggering Event” box, fill the space with what leads you into the current response cycle you experience. Keeping in mind this can be certain words, situations or interactions.

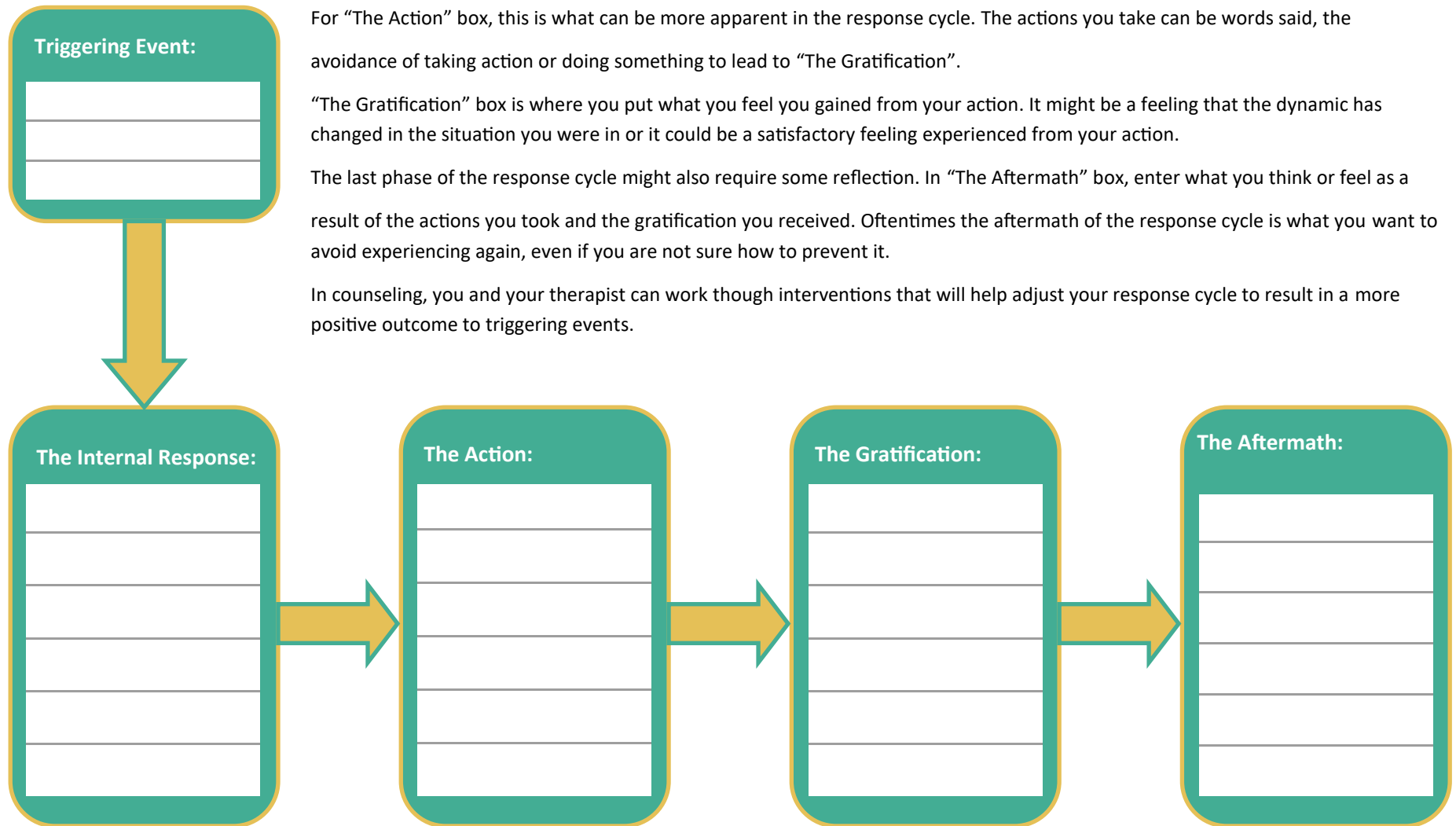
In the “Internal Response” box, take time to think of what you feel and think when you encounter a triggering event. This can sometimes be confused with the action you take because they seem to happen so fast. However, there is a feeling or thought that supports the action you ultimately take.

For “The Action” box, this is what can be more apparent in the response cycle. The actions you take can be words said, the avoidance of taking action or doing something to lead to “The Gratification”.

“The Gratification” box is where you put what you feel you gained from your action. It might be a feeling that the dynamic has changed in the situation you were in or it could be a satisfactory feeling experienced from your action.

The last phase of the response cycle might also require some reflection. In “The Aftermath” box, enter what you think or feel as a result of the actions you took and the gratification you received. Oftentimes the aftermath of the response cycle is what you want to avoid experiencing again, even if you are not sure how to prevent it.

In counseling, you and your therapist can work through interventions that will help adjust your response cycle to result in a more positive outcome to triggering events.



# Response Cycle: Add Your Interventions

Once you have completed the Response Cycle for your specific concerns, the next step will be to determine where you would like to practice an intervention to make changes to your current cycle.

An intervention can be placed at any stage of the Response Cycle. The goal is to decide where in the cycle will it be easiest to begin trying something to make a positive change in how you handle a triggering event. For example, if you want to try taking deep breaths after experiencing a triggering event, you'll place that intervention in the space between the Triggering Event box and the Internal Response box.

It is possible to add more than one intervention, however trying one at a time will provide some insight to what is actually working and what else might be needed to help you reach your desired Response Cycle. Working with your therapist can help track progress and make appropriate adjustments to the interventions.

