

Experiencing Anger?

You can manage your anger

Anger

Anger is an entirely normal emotion to feel, and is usually quite healthy and temporary. But sometimes it may feel as though it has taken over. It can have a strong negative impact on many areas of your life, particularly your relationships, as well as your physical and mental health. Anger becomes a problem when it verbally or physically hurts you or other people.

Physical symptoms may include

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure and adrenalin production
- Breathing faster, pounding heart, hot, flushed face, and headache
- Tensing of the shoulders, hands, jaw or stomach

Understanding your anger

It is helpful to understand the reasons why you get angry. Perhaps as a child it seemed normal when others were violent. Some people who have experienced trauma or high stress may become angry more quickly. Others may not have learned to understand or express their emotions, so they use anger to cover up what they are truly feeling, such as fear or disappointment.

Top tips

- **Be more aware of your emotions**
Is it really anger you are feeling or are you using anger to cover how you really feel?
- **Let go of your need to control**
Learn to listen to others with more patience and tolerance, consciously looking for agreement and compromise.
- **Manage your anger triggers**
Identify the people, places or situations that trigger your anger and find ways to avoid or manage them more effectively.
- **Know your warning signs**
Identify how your body feels anger, and look out for those early signs.
- **Have a cool-down plan**
Find techniques that work to cool you down quickly. Slow, deep breathing or counting, or going for a walk are some suggestions.

Further help

If you have tried many of these ideas and are still aware of problems with anger, ask for help from a counselling service, or find out about attending an anger management class.

More on managing anger

Get in touch with your feelings and understand your emotions

You may not actually be feeling angry but you may be out of touch with your real feelings. Learn to express your true emotions honestly. Give yourself permission to be more emotionally aware so that you can understand yourself and your reactions better. With access to an understanding of a greater range of emotions, you may find more effective ways to express yourself.

Let go of your need to control and to be right

The need to be right and to get your own way can lead to frustration and anger. Perhaps you have learned that those who show most anger get their own way more often, and you are not as aware of all the more effective and relationship-building ways to get your viewpoint across. Practice listening with more patience and tolerance, and find ways to reach agreement and compromise. Different people may have very different points of view, and another person may not be wrong just because you don't agree with them. Find the joy in maintaining positive and supportive relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

Identify and manage your triggers

Think about the times you get angry and consider if they have something in common. Perhaps it is the people you are with, the places, situations, or

time of day. Consider how you may avoid unnecessary aggravation, or how else you might prepare for, and manage yourself in those situations.

Look out for your warning signs

Anger has normal physical responses, and the angrier you get, the more your body expresses it. Being aware of your own personal signs gives you the chance to manage your anger before it may get out of control. Identify how anger feels in your body, and pay attention when you sense those symptoms.

Have a plan to cool down quickly

Find a technique that works for you, so that you can manage your responses more effectively, and without harm. Some useful techniques to try include:

- Take several deep, slow breaths to reduce your tension
- Count slowly from 1 to 10 and further, until you feel your anger easing
- Use your senses by paying close attention to what you can see, hear, touch or taste
- Visualise yourself in a place you love, or listen to relaxing music
- Just walk away