

Managing anger

Anger is a normal human emotion that we all experience at times

Anger is a signal worth listening to. It can tell you when something isn't right or energise you into getting things done. However, it can also arise in situations that stir up past hurts and may get out of control. It can also lead to further problems and interfere with how you're feeling about yourself and your relationships.

You can't avoid people or things that make you angry. However, you can learn to manage how you react in these situations. Here are some tips for managing anger that you may find helpful:

- **Cool down:** In the heat of the moment, you may say the first thing that comes to mind. This can sometimes make the situation worse and you may later regret it. If you feel yourself becoming angry, do something to 'cool down'. Count to 50 or 100, engage in a different activity and revisit the situation when you feel calmer.
- **Take some time out:** When feeling angry, it's not uncommon to be flooded with unhelpful thoughts. You may also find yourself jumping to conclusions, which you recognise as less realistic as time passes and you feel calmer. Take some time out. Go for a walk, turn on the television or read a book or newspaper.
- **Self-talk:** You may be feeling overwhelmed and down about the situation. Instead of telling yourself "This is terrible and can't be fixed", try saying "It's frustrating and I feel upset and angry about it, but it's not the end of the world".
- **Finding the right words:** You may have been treated unfairly and want to hit out in anger. Violence is never OK. Find words to express how you feel. Talk to someone you can trust about what's underneath the anger such as feeling hurt, upset or disappointed.
- **Use relaxation techniques or deep breathing:** Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and use imagery to visualise a relaxing scene. This can help to ease some of your feelings and give you much needed space from feeling angry.

If you feel your anger is getting out of control or is impacting on your relationships, or other important areas of your life, talk to your doctor or mental health clinician and ask them to help you learn new ways to handle it.

The Project Air Strategy acknowledges the major support of NSW Health. The Project works with mental health clinicians, consumers and carers to deliver effective treatments, implements research strategies supporting scientific discoveries, and offers high quality training and education. Contact us at info-projectair@uow.edu.au or visit www.projectairstrategy.org