



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

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.



Is anger normal?

Anger is normal and can be helpful. Anger is not the problem but how you react to it is important. You can avoid people or things that make you angry. However, this may not be a viable ongoing option. It is more helpful to learn to manage how you react in these situations. Below are some tips for you to try.

Cool down

In the heat of the moment, you may say the first things that comes to mind. Depending on what is said in that moment, it may sometimes make the situation worse and you may find yourself regretting it later. If you feel yourself becoming angry, do something to “cool down”. This may be counting to 50 or 100, singing the lyrics to your favorite song in your mind, reciting an inspirational quote or engaging in a different activity and revisiting the situation later.

Take some time out

When feeling angry, it is not uncommon to be flooded with unhelpful thoughts. You may also find yourself jumping to conclusions, which you recognize as less realistic as time passes and you feel calmer. In this situation, take some time out. Go for a walk, turn on the television, listen to some music or read a book, magazine or a newspaper.

Self-talk

You may be feeling overwhelmed and down about the situation. Instead of telling yourself “This is terrible and cannot be fixed”. Try saying “it is frustrating and I feel upset and angry about it, but it is 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 appropriate words to express how you feel. Talk to someone you can trust about what is underneath the anger such as feeling hurt, upset or disappointed.

Use relaxation techniques or deep breathing exercises

Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and use imagery to visualise a relaxing scene. This can help to ease some of your feeling and give you the much-needed space to process the situation and address what you are feeling.

If you feel anger and strong negative emotion are getting out of control or is impacting negatively on your relationships, or other aspects of your life, talk to your doctor or mental health clinician. They will assist you in addressing personal issues and finding new ways of moving forward in managing strong negative feelings.

* Information sourced from the Project Air Synergy Strategy factsheets

Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

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caps.admin@sydney.edu.au
sydney.edu.au/counselling

Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building
Opening hours: 9am to 4.30pm,
Monday to Friday

Crisis contacts

Ambulance/Fire/Police: 000
Lifeline (24 hours): 13 11 14
Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511