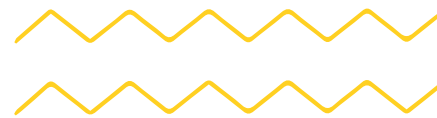




## Coping with

# ANGER



*Explains anger, what anger can look & feel like and suggestions of how to manage anger. Also includes some other useful links and info.*

What is anger?.....	pg. 2
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## What is anger?

Anger is one of a range of emotions that we all experience. It's okay and perfectly normal to feel angry about things that you have experienced.

Anger can start to become a problem when you express it through unhelpful or destructive behaviour - either towards yourself or other people. It can also contribute to you developing mental health problems, like depression and anxiety, or make existing problems worse.

If you find yourself doing these sorts of things, it might be a sign that you need some support:

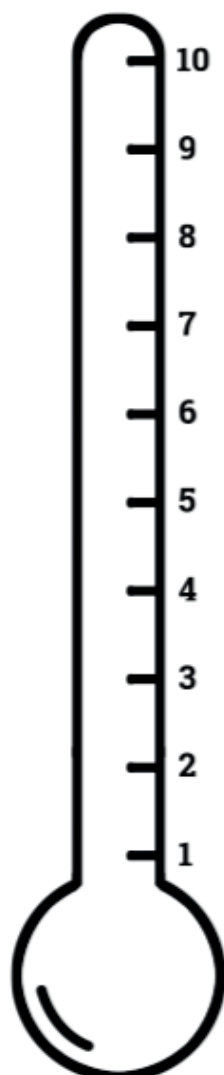
- Hitting or physically hurting other people
  - Shouting at people
  - Breaking things
  - Losing control
- Spending time with people who get you into trouble
  - Constantly ending relationships
  - Getting in trouble at school or work.



## Scaling your anger

### *ANGER THERMOMETER*

Record your anger symptoms on this 10-point scale, where a "10" represents your maximum anger level (the angriest you have ever been, or can imagine being), and a "1" represents no anger at all. Give specific examples of symptoms you have at each point on the scale, as your anger escalates. Symptoms can include thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.



# Agression

## ***OUTWARD AGRESSION***

Do you often find yourself being aggressive towards other people?

Are you frightening or worrying yourself, or those around you with your behaviour?

## ***INWARD AGRESSION***

Do you tell yourself that you hate yourself, that you're useless, that you don't deserve things?

Do you shut yourself off from the world, deny yourself things that make you happy or selfharm?

## ***PASSIVE AGRESSION***

Do you behave passive-aggressively towards other people? Do you ignore people, refuse to speak to them, or are you often sarcastic or sulky?

## ***WHY DO I FEEL ANGRY?***

Everyone feels angry sometimes - and we all have different triggers.

You may experience anger in situations where you feel powerless, or frustrated. This could be because of problems at home or school, or if you've fallen out with a friend, or had a break up with a partner. You might start to feel angry if you feel misunderstood by people around you, like your parents, or if you are confused about your sexuality.

But sometimes, you can feel angry and not know why. This could be the result of lots of stress and different pressures building up around you. Or, it could be because of something that happened to you in the past, like neglect or abuse.

Recognising the types of situations which trigger your anger is the first step to figuring out what is causing it, and finding a way to make things better.

## How can anger affect me?

When we get angry, it can be hard to think things through – especially if that anger seems overwhelming or uncontrollable. And if we feel angry a lot of the time – in other words, if we get into constant patterns of thinking angry thoughts about ourselves or others – it’s hard to take a step back and communicate in a healthy and productive way. We may tense up and clench our teeth. Our hearts pump faster, our stomachs might churn, and we may clench our fists. These are useful early warning signs that we are getting wound up.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to recognise just how much anger you are feeling, and how it is affecting you. This might be because you have lots of things going on in your life. After getting angry about something you might start to feel guilty about it, and this can make you feel worse. Issues with anger can lead to risky behaviour, refusing to go to school, isolation, eating problems, depression, and self-harm. Drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs might be seen as ways of coping with anger issues but remember, they make you feel worse and are likely to create bigger problems later.

Anger feels differently for everyone but you may experience some of the following things listed below:

### PHYSICALLY

- **A churning feeling in your stomach**
- **Rapid heartrate/tight chest**
- **Clenching your jaw/grinding teeth**
- **Shaking/trembling**
- **Feeling hot**

### EMOTIONALLY

- **Easily irritated**
- **Resentful towards others**
- **Guilt**
- **Feeling tense/anxious**
- **Feeling overwhelmed/frustrated**

# How can I manage my anger?

## RELAXATION

Over time, you'll learn to manage your anger better yourself. When you feel angry or stressed you can try out different relaxation techniques to help you calm down, such as:

- Going for a walk
- Listening to music
- Taking deep breaths
- Doing some exercise
- Doing something you enjoy
- Talking to someone about your feelings
- Playing computer games for distraction
- Reading a book
- Write how you are feeling
- Having a hot bath

## HANDLING CONFLICT

If you have a problem with someone, think about what you want to say beforehand and how you want to get your point across. Listen to their point of view and calmly put yours across too.

If you feel your anger levels rising, walk away from a situation to calm down, rather than saying or doing something you might regret later. You can learn to manage your anger and find techniques that work for you.

### TIP

"Think of the bigger picture, will this bother you in a year? Try and say why you're angry, and remember that time alone to calm yourself down is okay. Take some time to think about how your actions are affecting others, and try to remember people are usually trying to help you!"

## Recognising Triggers

It can be helpful to keep a diary about the times you have felt angry

- What were the circumstances?
- Did someone say or do something to trigger your anger?
- How did you feel?
- How did you behave?
- How did it feel afterwards?

### ***Learn to recognise your warning signs that anger is rising.***

Use concentrating on breathing to calm

Counting before you react

Learn difference between anger and assertion – remember that if you are being excessively angry and aggressive it can get in the way of communicating what you are angry about

### ***Instead of anger try to be assertive by***

- Thinking through what you want to say
- Breathe steadily
- Be specific – use I statements – avoids blaming anyone – what are you angry about?
- Be prepared for the conversation to go wrong and walk away

# Breathing Techniques

## **PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING**

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.

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## **4-7-8 BREATHING**

1. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
  2. Hold your breath for a count of seven.
  3. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of eight.
  4. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.
- 

## **THE 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE**

Take a deep breath and...

1. Acknowledge **five things** that **you can see** around you.
2. Acknowledge **four things** that **you can touch** around you.
3. Acknowledge **three things** that **you can hear** around you.
4. Acknowledge **two things** around you that **you can smell**.
5. Acknowledge **one thing** around you that **you can taste**.



## What can help my anger?

### **TAKE A TIME-OUT**

Time-outs are a powerful tool for relationships where anger-fueled disagreements are causing problems. When someone calls a time-out, both individuals agree to walk away from the problem, and return once you have both had an opportunity to cool down.

#### *How to use time-outs effectively:*

- With your family or friends, plan exactly how time-outs will work. Everyone should understand the rationale behind time-outs (an opportunity to cool down—not to avoid a problem).
- What will you both do during time-outs? Plan activities that are in different rooms or different places. The list of diversions from above is a good place to begin.
- Plan to return to the problem in 30 minutes to an hour. Important problems shouldn't be ignored forever, but nothing good will come from an explosive argument.

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### **COUNSELLING**

Your GP may refer you to your child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) where you would talk to a specialist about your feelings and behaviour. The specialist may advise you how to deal with these. They may also suggest counselling if there are problems or things that happened in the past that may be causing your anger issues now.

If counselling is your best option, the specialist arranges a series of confidential one-to-one sessions with a counsellor or therapist.

You can talk with them about concerns or problems you might have. The counsellor will help you work through your issues and give you skills and strategies to deal with your anger better.

## What can help my anger?

### WRITE IT DOWN

#### KEEP A NOTE OF HOW YOU'RE FEELING:

- What happened that made you angry?
- How did you respond? Did it help?
- How did you feel afterwards?
- What else is on your mind?  
Is there something making you feel worried, scared or alone?

### TALK IT OUT

It helps to talk about how you're feeling. Try saying:

"I've been feeling really wound up recently and I'm starting to think something might be wrong. Can I talk to you about it?"

"I want to talk to you about something that's been bothering me."

If you often feel angry there are things you can do to help yourself. Other people can help too.

### TALKING

Talk about how you are feeling. Parents or carers and other family members, such as grandparents, may be good listeners. Your close friends and other family friends may be able to help. At school, find a teacher, mentor, counsellor or school nurse who you trust. In the community, social workers, youth workers and leaders will also be able to listen.

You can also see your GP. They may be able to suggest some treatment or recommend a counsellor.

#### *You could try saying:*

- "I've been feeling really wound up recently and I'm starting to think something might be wrong. Can I talk to you about it?"
- "I want to talk to you about something that's been bothering me."

# How can anger affect me?

## **WRITING IT DOWN**

Keep a note of how you are feeling:

- What happened that made you angry?
- How did you respond? Did it help?
- How did you feel afterwards?
- What else is on your mind? Is there something making you feel worried, scared or alone?

### ***Keeping an Anger Worksheet***

**1. Identify:** identify a situation where you experienced distress or anger

(Who? What? Where? Why?)

**2. Alternatives:**

- Think of 2 ways you could make the situation worse
- Why didn't (or wouldn't) you do that?

**3. Exercise:**

- Think of 3 ways you could make the situation better
- What would you need to do to handle the situation better next time?



## Useful info and links

### ***More useful info and links:***

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/controlling-anger/>

<https://www.camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk/anger-and-aggression>

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-anger-and-its-effects-on-mental-health/>

### ***Be Mindful***

[bemindful.co.uk](http://bemindful.co.uk) Information about mindfulness and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR).  
Guidance on how to learn mindfulness, including course listings.

### ***Moodjuice***

[moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk) Free online self-help guide from the NHS.

### ***Respect***

0808 802 40 40

### ***Men's advice line:***

0808 801 0327

[respect.uk.net](http://respect.uk.net) Information and support for people who are worried about their violent or aggressive behaviour towards loved ones.