

Managing anger tip sheet

What is anger?

Anger is a normal emotion. It can tell us when something feels unfair or when we need to stand up for ourselves, and when expressed well it can motivate positive change. Anger triggers the body's fight or flight response, so heart rate and breathing rise. When anger is frequent, intense or hard to manage, it can affect health, relationships, work and safety.

Common signs

Some people notice signs that anger is becoming harder to manage, such as:

- Getting angry often or very quickly
- Feeling out of control when angry
- Arguments or damaged relationships
- Bottling anger up until it bursts out
- Feeling tense, irritable or on edge
- Headaches or trouble sleeping
- Regret after angry episodes
- Others feeling uneasy around them

Things that may help

Some people find these ideas helpful for managing anger.

Noticing early signs

Some people learn what happens in their body as anger builds, such as a racing heart, tight jaw or clenched fists. Noticing early can give more choice about what happens next.

Taking a break

Some people find it helps to step away until they have cooled down, letting the other person know they will come back to talk.

Calming the body

Slow breathing, relaxation, meditation or yoga may help settle the body's stress response.

What is behind it

It can help to reflect on what led to the anger, and whether other feelings sit underneath, such as hurt, fear or embarrassment.

Movement

Physical activity such as a walk, run or sport may help release tension, and regular exercise may help with stress over time.

Talking it through

Many people find conversations go better when everyone is calm, and when they share how they feel. It is okay to agree to disagree.

Things that **may help** (continued)

An anger diary

Some people write down when they felt angry, what triggered it and what helped, which can show patterns over time.

Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and other drugs can make strong emotions harder to manage.

When to get **more support**

If things are becoming unmanageable and affecting your social, family, work or study life, you may want to see your GP or a psychologist. You do not need to wait until things feel serious to reach out.

A GP, psychologist or counsellor can offer support in understanding and managing anger. If you are worried you might hurt yourself or someone else, the numbers below offer support now.

Benefits of **seeking support**

- Talking with a GP or psychologist may help you make sense of what is happening.
- Support might help you feel less alone with what you are going through.
- A psychologist could offer new ways of coping that suit you.
- Support could help you understand what sits beneath anger and respond in ways that feel better.

Need help **right now?**

If you or someone else is in danger or thinking about suicide, please reach out now.

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Emergency services, if life is in danger

13 11 14

Lifeline crisis support, 24 hours, 7 days

13 92 76

13YARN, run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 24/7

Trusted **Australian resources**

Better Health Channel betterhealth.vic.gov.au

MensLine Australia 1300 789 978

healthdirect healthdirect.gov.au | 1800 022 222

This tip sheet offers general information only and does not replace advice from your GP, psychologist or other health professional.