

Coping with Anger and Irritability

Anger is a completely normal emotion and can arise from feeling threatened, experiencing injustice or mistreatment. It is often helpful, but there are also times when anger can cause problems; it can affect our relationships, and sometimes lead to other people being harmed. There are things you can do to cope.

Make sense of your anger.



You may already have a good understanding of the reasons for your anger. Acknowledge the anger and remind yourself that it is understandable to be angry. Angry feelings are often directed towards ourselves; self-soothing or relaxation exercises can help.

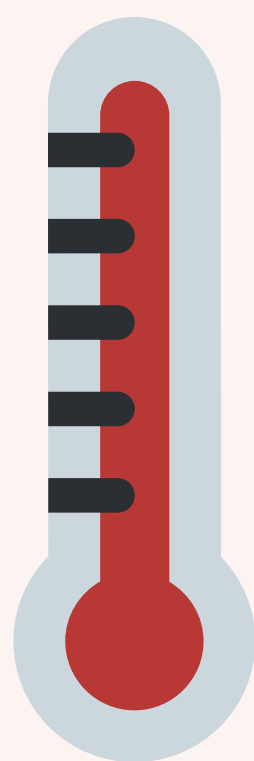
Use relaxation techniques.



If you cannot avoid or change the situations which trigger your angry feelings, then think of ways to change how you respond. Try using controlled breathing, relaxation or peaceful imagery to calm yourself. You could also consider going for a run or doing exercise to release some of the angry or stressful feelings.

Notice the 'warning' signs.

Try to recognise when you are becoming angry: e.g. your muscles tensing, getting hot or your breathing getting faster.



Walk away to give yourself space and time to become calmer or consider having a discussion another time when you feel calmer.

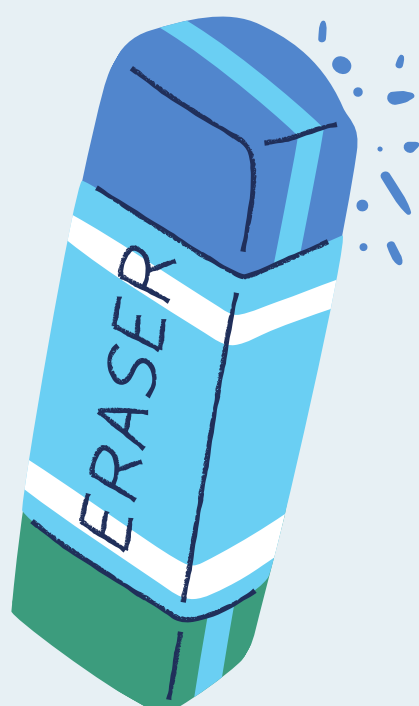
Use calming statements.

Say or read calming statements when you notice you are becoming angry. For example: **"I need to slow down and give myself time to think"** or **"I can solve this without anger: anger is not going to help"**. It may be helpful to keep them on you so you can read them when needed.



Try not to dwell.

Remember to try not to dwell on difficult situations afterwards or go over what should have been said or done. This can't change what has happened and may make you feel worse. Instead, try problem-solving or relaxation techniques.



Be assertive.

Assertiveness involves speaking in a clear, calm manner and thinking of solutions to the problem in a non-aggressive manner:

- **Plan** what to say in advance
- Keep it **simple**
- **Wait** for a good time to say it
- **Tell** the person your thoughts in a **direct** but **polite** way
- **Listen** to others
- Try to find a compromise that meets **both** your needs

