

# Understanding angry emotions

## TIP SHEET

*Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult times. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.*

During difficult and challenging times your struggle with anger may be amplified. Dealing with angry feelings, whether they are yours, or someone else's, can be hard at the best of times.

It is important we raise our awareness and take responsibility for understanding angry feelings. We can also learn ways to manage our emotional worlds and choose behaviours that have healthy outcomes for ourselves and the people around us.

**Here are some suggestions to help support you during these times:**

### 1. Understand your angry feelings are a signpost

Angry feelings are normal and very important. Unfortunately, anger has a bad reputation, which can make it harder for us to express it without causing harm to ourselves and others. Anger is a big signpost telling you that something is not right or something is uncomfortable. Your job is to work out what that might be, so maybe pause and ask yourself 'why do I feel angry?' or 'what's going on here for me?'

### 2. Be curious about your emotions

We experience many feelings each day, and they can become mixed up, so it can be difficult to work out exactly what we are feeling, especially uncomfortable emotions. Without questioning or exploring them they often escalate into anger. Getting curious gives us the opportunity to pause, identify and speak our feelings out loud, and choose different behaviours to send more useful messages to the people we care about.

### 3. Recognise that angry feelings are not the same as angry behaviour

We all feel anger, but aggressive behaviour is not helpful to us or the people we care about. It is hurtful and disrespectful to others. When the anger shows up it's helpful to begin by acknowledging you are angry, then **PAUSE & BREATHE & CHOOSE** to behave in a way that looks after you and others.

**4. Recognise that anger comes in many forms**

It's easy to see anger when there is yelling, but there are other ways it can be equally destructive. Many people bottle up their anger, others tell themselves they are bad people for being angry and punish themselves quietly and some may blame other people for their own anger. Each of these are unhealthy ways of dealing with our feelings. It is useful to understand how we deal with our angry feelings so we can better learn to communicate them more responsibly.

**5. Learn what to do after the anger**

Angry behaviour can feel quite energizing and is often accompanied by feelings of righteousness. But afterwards, we often feel shame and embarrassment and may feel vulnerable. To avoid these vulnerable feelings, we often go straight back to anger, which is unhelpful, and so the cycle goes on. A healthier response is to dig deep, acknowledge how you could have handled things differently and learn to say sorry. Vulnerability can make us more human, more courageous and more connected to others.

**As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.**

Our Education team are continuing to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face and online.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on [Understanding Angry Emotions](#) or any of our other courses, please email [education@relationshipsqa.org.au](mailto:education@relationshipsqa.org.au) or call 6164 0200.