

# Coronavirus (COVID-19): Managing your anger & distress

## TIP SHEET

*Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.*

Western Australian's are currently experiencing an unprecedented time of change and stress. For men or women who already struggle with managing their anger or distress, this may be an especially challenging time.

Unmanaged anger or distress may contribute to us choosing destructive behaviours which not only impact ourselves, but our family, friends and work colleagues. It is our responsibility to be aware of our emotions and stress levels and manage them so we can choose to behave in ways which positively impact us, our family, friends or work colleagues.

**Here are some suggestions to help support you in managing your anger and distress during this time:**

### 1. Get to know your **WARNING SIGNS**

To manage anger you must become an emotional detective. The more aware of your own emotions and feelings you are then the quicker you can do something about managing them!

**Action:** Before an interaction with someone, take a moment to bring your awareness into your body, notice any stress, tension, emotion or pressure you might feel – this is called **self-awareness**. Some people report feeling tense in their shoulders when they are feeling angry, others in their neck, some get a red hot face, others feel their heart rate increase. These are your **WARNING SIGNS** - learn what they are and pay attention to them.

### 2. Learn how to **RELAX**

Anger is an emotion of action. When we are becoming distressed and angry, it releases hormones in our body which prepare us for action. To manage this release of hormones we need to relax our nervous system - this is called **self-regulation**.

**Action:** When you notice a **WARNING SIGN** you need to practice something which relaxes your nervous system. For some people this is deep slow conscious breathing, while for others it is asking for a time out and going for a relaxing walk and then returning to connect. Learn what works for your own body and mind to relax you.

### 3. Begin to take responsibility

Only we are responsible for how we think, feel and behave. To best manage our anger and distress we must first stop blaming others and making others responsible for how we feel, think and behave. When we take responsibility for our own emotions, thoughts and behaviours, then we can begin to manage our anger.

**Action: Take responsibility** for your own emotions, thoughts and behaviours and resist blaming your family, friends or work colleagues. When we **take responsibility** we are empowered to make better choices in how we behave and to deal with our emotions ourselves without projecting them onto 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 will continue to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face once government guidelines allow. You might like to like us on Facebook to keep up to date with support information and details of services we can offer during this time.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on **Managing your Anger** once available, or any of our other courses, please email [education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au](mailto:education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au) or call 6164 0200.