

# Managing anger and stress for women

## TIP SHEET

*Relationships Australia WA's education team has 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 challenging times and times of change, your struggle with anger and stress may be amplified. It is important to raise our awareness of our emotional responses and learn ways to manage our feelings by choosing behaviours that have healthy outcomes for ourselves and the people around us.

**Here are some suggestions to help support you in managing your anger and stress during these times.**

### **1. Recognise that angry feelings are normal, but angry behaviour is not**

Life gets tricky sometimes – never more so than right now. However, angry behaviour is not ok when we behave in ways that negatively impact ourselves and the rights or feelings of others. To begin managing your anger, be the first to acknowledge you are angry. Then PAUSE & BREATHE and choose to behave in a way that looks after you and others.

### **2. Learn to pay attention to your warning signs**

It can help to consider your anger on a scale of 1 – 10. Anything before a 6 gives you the opportunity to think clearly and make healthier choices. After this things can get challenging for you and others. Imagine 6 as the point where you know you are very cross (e.g. tight jaw, clenched fists, raised voice or racing heart) and you want things to be better.

Now, or before this point, is the time to pause and become aware of how you got here and how you can change what is happening.

### **3. Take responsibility for your behaviour**

As tricky as times may get for us, it does not remove our power to be in charge of our feelings and how we express them.

Fear often sits underneath our anger. We get angry when the fear refuses to go away. One of the ways we can get back in charge is to practise accepting the things we cannot change or influence. We can stop blaming others and look at what we can do to make our own lives better – you are 100% responsible for how you behave.

#### 4. Remember, you are more powerful than you realise

Your words have the capacity to hold you prisoner, such as “*you make me angry*”, “*I am hopeless*”, “*you must fix this*”.

Or they can help you to be calmer and more in control: “*I am calm*”, “*this is not my concern*”, “*I can solve this*”.

#### 5. Recognise when it's time to let go

For many women, much of what we feel angry about today comes from concerns that have been bubbling away for years - old resentments and unresolved quarrels. Perhaps it is time to let go of things that make our lives harder and ask yourself “*what can I forgive?*” and “*what is most important to me right now?*”

#### 6. Embrace the vulnerability after the anger

Stress can feel quite energizing, and anger can sometimes feel the same, often accompanied by feelings of righteousness. However, more often than not these feelings subside and are replaced by shame and embarrassment, which in turn can lead to us feeling very vulnerable.

This is a tricky time because vulnerability can lead us in different directions. The first is to go straight back to anger to avoid vulnerable feelings, which is unhelpful and repetitive. The other, and most helpful direction, is to dig deep, acknowledge perhaps 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.

#### 7. Imagine you have only \$10 to spend every day on others

However, these dollars are a little different. Each dollar is equivalent to only one meaningful exchange (either positive or negative) with someone you care about, so each dollar is very precious. How will you spend your \$10?

**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 **Managing Anger & Stress for Women**, or any of our other courses, please email [education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au](mailto:education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au) or call 6164 0200.