

Anger Management Toolkit

Safe steps when you are angry: time out



This worksheet is designed to assist you in developing your personal skills to better manage your current situation.

If you are having trouble understanding this worksheet or need support, please call a MensLine Australia counsellor on 1300 78 99 78.

Things to think about

The best time to work out some strategies for managing your anger and behaviour is usually when you are feeling calm and level headed.

Abuse is not always physical. Simply put, abuse is when someone else is scared of you, your behaviour, your actions, or is afraid of what you might do when you are angry.

Feelings of anger or frustration need to be managed carefully so communication and relationships don't get damaged. Anger is not usually a good response to problems, even if it seems helpful in the short term.

Steps to staying safe

Below is a five step process for keeping others safe and to prevent you from being abusive while you are feeling angry:

1. **Momentary delay** – When you feel like you might become abusive, start by taking a pause. Take a moment to think about what you are doing so you don't act on impulse.

2. **Time out** – Once you have taken a moment to delay, remove yourself physically from the anger provoking situation. However, if you are in the middle of an argument, don't just walk off. Negotiate with the other person for time out. Tell them what you are going to do and when you will return, otherwise it could make matters worse.
3. **Do something** – Once you have left, find a way to calm down. Do something physical (avoid driving) – walk, run, kick the footy, smack a tennis ball – anything to get that pent-up energy out and cool down.
4. **Return** – Make the time out brief (minutes rather than hours). When you return, the other person may still be angry. If the situation flares up again, repeat the time out process.
5. **Problem solving** – Once you return do not talk about the anger provoking situation immediately, unless it is absolutely urgent. Negotiate with the other person to talk about the issue in the next few days when you both have some perspective.

Next time you are feeling angry, try one of these actions above. Note: Just because you do these things does not mean the other person will not be angry, or behave well. This is about you not being abusive.

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Activity

The next time you are feeling angry try and put into place the four step actions above, even if you don't think it's needed.

- 1. What was the situation that made you so angry?**

- 2. How far did you get through the steps above?**

- 3. On a scale of 1 (no abuse) to 10 (highly abusive), how well did your new strategy work to help you manage your abusive behaviour?**

- 4. What will you do next time you are feeling angry?**

This worksheet is part of a series on anger management, communication and self-care. You may find it useful to complete other worksheets in this series. For more information or assistance, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78