

Managing anger

Anger is a normal emotion everyone experiences at least now and then. As the diagram below demonstrates, often anger is displayed when we really feel powerless, mistreated, misunderstood, humiliated, embarrassed, fearful or like things are out of our control.



Often we appear angry when we actually feel really sad. However, sometimes there is no obvious trigger.

While anger occasionally motivates us to do useful things (e.g. write a letter to a politician or ring up and dispute an account with a supplier), if it is not thoughtfully targeted, is very intense and/or is frequent, it can be destructive (both for you personally and those around you).

If you are finding that anger is becoming a problem in your life, consider the following:

Exactly what tends to make you angry?

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Where are you when when you are angry?

What are you doing when you are angry?

What are you thinking when you are angry?

What prior experiences, beliefs or 'buttons' are being pushed that may contribute to this anger? Or what are the other feelings listed in the iceberg that anger may be masking?

Is it possible to avoid any of these situations in the future? If so, what will the costs and benefits be?

What do you notice in your body when you are starting to feel angry?
(e.g. tightness in chest, sweating, tense muscles, pounding heart)

Next time you notice these bodily sensations or thoughts coming on, consider stopping and asking yourself what is making you angry then trying one of the following strategies:

- Explain that you need some time to think (or 'cool down') and **remove yourself from the situation**. This will give you a chance to think things through and respond in a calm and controlled manner
- **Distract** yourself from the situation by counting to 10, turning on the radio, walking around or speaking to a friend (about something else)
- Ask yourself if you have made a genuine attempt to see this from the **other person's point of view**
- Use **humour** to diffuse the situation
- Acknowledge what the other person has said, **assertively** tell them how you feel and communicate what you need or believe
- Choose to just **let it go**
- Try taking some **deep, slow breaths**

Learning techniques in the ifarmwell modules will also help.