

Cope with the anger

One of the changes in today's society is that aggression is no longer tolerated and there are potentially severe penalties for such behaviour.

Many people don't have the skills to deal with their anger, yet live in a society where the triggers for anger are multiplying.

People manage their anger in different ways, not always successfully. Some try very hard never to get angry and do everything in their power to swallow it. They have trouble accepting that anger is a normal emotion and, dealt with appropriately, causes no harm.

Others can be explosive and trigger easily, but once their anger is blown can recover quickly and wonder why others who have been affected are not over it. In a relationship situation, their partner may feel under siege and unnerved by the attack and incredulous that they are expected to act as normal.

These individuals are often sensitive to criticism, take in a lot of stress and may be unaware of their triggers.

Mastering relaxation techniques can generally be very beneficial to them. Yet other people have behaviour patterns where their immediate response to any situation is anger, a habit that needs to be replaced with more productive thoughts and behaviour.

Feeling angry may be quite an appropriate response when we have been attacked or betrayed in some way. However, anger often masks deeper emotions and in these cases it can be much easier for people to be angry than cope with their feelings of sadness, guilt or fear.

Understanding why we feel angry is an important first step to managing it. Keep a record of your experiences of anger in a diary because this can help you make choices about your behaviour.

To resist the temptation to become unnecessarily angry, you may need to develop some self-soothing techniques that work for you. For example, if you are stuck in a traffic jam and feel rage coming on, undertaking a breathing awareness technique or changing your belief about the situation (being five minutes late isn't the end of the world) can calm you down.

Consider joining an anger management group. You can draw strength from learning that you are not alone in struggling with your anger. Hearing the stories of others can have a powerful positive effect.

Survival tips

- **Try to understand why you become angry. Keep a diary of your anger experiences**
- **Develop strategies that stop anger from taking over in your relationships with other people**
- **Contact Relationships Aust. Victoria for further information about groups that can assist men and women with anger concerns.**