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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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Healthy matters to keep in mind.

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Stop. Breathe. Think. How to Protect Your Relationships from Anger

Everybody gets angry with a loved one sometimes. Maybe you feel your spouse has let you down. Or maybe job or family troubles have piled up until you're about to "blow a gasket."

Anger is a natural human reaction. It's how we express our anger that matters. Feeling angry is normal. Reacting by yelling, throwing things or hitting is not. The next time anger bubbles up, here are some tips to help you work through your feelings and protect your relationship.

Take a time out. Make a deal with your spouse or partner that if you're

beginning to fight, either of you can ask for a time out. Continuing a conversation in the heat of anger will not solve the problem and may just escalate the bad feelings.

Breathe. If you feel your shoulders tightening, your fists clenching and your heart beating faster — stop. Take three deep breaths. Each time you exhale imagine the anger floating away.

Think before you speak. Before you spit out an angry retort, think about possible consequences. Words spoken in anger can harm a relationship.

When you speak, speak carefully. It is healthy to express your anger. Learn to use "I" statements. "I was really angry when you broke your promise," leaves an opening for communication. "You never keep your promises! I hate you!" is a show-stopper.

Use your imagination. To postpone an angry reaction, close your eyes and picture yourself in a place that makes you happy: lying on the beach, strolling in the park, even hiking up a mountain.

Get moving. Burn up your anger with exercise: an intense workout, a vigorous

Anger-busters

If you feel your slow simmer is headed for a fast boil, try these four proven methods to turn down that angry feeling.

- 1. Change your point of view.** "Bad things always happen to me" probably isn't true. Try replacing negative thoughts with more positive, constructive ones.
- 2. Think logically.** Life can be frustrating. But don't take it personally. Remind yourself that nobody is out to get you. Take the emotion out of problem solving.
- 3. Slow down.** Before you react, stop and think. Listen to what the other person has to say. Take some time before you answer in anger.
- 4. Don't take yourself too seriously.** Sometimes humor can help defuse a tense situation.

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walk, or yoga stretches are just a few ideas.

Don't go to bed angry.

The happiest couples will tell you, "Don't let the sun go down on your anger." It's true that letting go of your anger will help you sleep better. In the morning, you can think about your problem in a logical way.

Once you're feeling calmer, you can bring up whatever made you angry in the first place. Use logic and stick to the facts. Listen to what your partner or spouse has to say. After all, they have feelings, too. Remember, a relationship is a two-way street.

Sometimes anger is tough to control. But you don't have to struggle alone. UBH is here to help. Call or log on any time for help with any of life's challenges.



Road Rage: A Two-way Street

More cars. More traffic. More distractions. It all adds up to a recipe for the specific kind of anger better known as road rage.

Sure, it's irritating when someone doesn't let you merge or races to beat you to the stoplight. It's how we react to this feeling that matters.

When someone cuts you off in traffic or takes your parking spot, do you:

1. Take a deep breath and shake it off.
2. Honk your horn and move on.
3. Lay on the horn, pound your fists, yell, and try to get even.



Drivers who answer yes to No. 3 are more likely to become aggressive on the highway. Aggressive drivers may tailgate, flash their headlights, make obscene gestures, or even deliberately block the path of another vehicle.

To avoid losing your cool when you're behind the wheel, try these simple tips:

Don't hold the steering wheel in a death grip.

The tension can spread from

your hands to the rest of your body.

Turn down the music.

Soothing sounds inside the car can help lessen the stress from outside the car.

Plan ahead. Give yourself more than enough time to get where you're going. That way you won't feel so tense if the traffic is bad.

Above all, remember: driving isn't a race. It's not about getting there fastest. It's about getting there safe.

Resources

United Behavioral Health

Ask your HR representative for your access code and toll-free number.

www.liveandworkwell.com

Visit the Relationship Resource Center for information, guides and tips to promote healthy couple and family relationships.

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