

Keeping Your Cool



Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.

Objective: Clients will better understand various strategies to help manage situations of emotional arousal.

Audience: This tool is applicable to all individuals, regardless of relationship status.

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Educator Instructions: Review the instructions printed on the tool. Talk through each of the strategies, offering examples as needed. Allow clients to offer their own strategies in addition to those included on the tool. On the bottom of the sheet, work with clients to identify at least one situation in which one or more of these strategies could be implemented. This tool may be particularly useful to do in association with the "Getting Worked Up" and "Keeping it Cool Together" tools.

Discussion Starter: Anger, conflict, frustration – these are all feelings we experience on a daily basis. In our relationships with romantic partners, children, relatives, a co-parent, and others, there are times when we experience intense negative emotions. If we are not careful, our anger can quickly intensify and lead to more negative emotions. However, there are some things we can do to reduce negative emotions. We all need to find healthy ways to calm down when we get worked up. At the end, we'll practice applying a specific strategy to a common "angry" situation that you experience.

Follow-up: In later conversations, ask if they have implemented any of the strategies. If so, are they finding it useful? If not, what barriers are preventing them from doing them?





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Everyone gets angry, "worked up," "hot," "ticked off" – whatever you want to call it. If we are not careful, problems or conflicts can lead to negative outcomes. When we are really angry or frustrated, there are different ways to think and act that can help us manage those emotions.

Strategies for Individual Anger

Which of these do you currently do? Which of these do you think would work best for you?

Thinking Strategies

- Talk to yourself – Talk through why this is happening, what you are feeling, why it is impacting you in this way.
- Change perspectives – Try to look at the situation from a different point of view. What might you be missing about what happened? Why might the other person be behaving that way?
- Think about a solution – Consider possible solutions, both immediate and long-term. Think about the possible impact of each solution. What are the pros and cons of each choice?
- Are there any other personal thinking strategies that work well for you?

Behavioral Strategies

- Controlled breathing – Take long, deep, steady breaths.
- Walk away – Remove yourself from the situation for a moment.
- Work out – Do a physical activity or exercise to help relieve tension and anger.
- Do something relaxing – Read a book, watch a movie, listen to music, or take a nap.
- Talk to someone – Turn to a trusted friend or family member who can listen and offer advice.
- Are there any other things you do when you are upset or angry that work well for you?

Your turn: What is one thing that often makes you angry? What strategies could you use?

Situation: _____

Strategy: _____

If we do not learn to control our anger, it can control us! Knowing – *and using* – specific strategies to calm down will help us better manage our anger and conflict. Being in control will benefit you as an individual and your relationship.

When you manage your anger, you improve your relationship with others.