

# ANGER MANAGEMENT

## Steps & Scripts to Use When You're Fired Up

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**E**motional outbursts are habitual responses to uncomfortable feelings. Since the ADHD brain is wired for intense feelings, anger and frustration often ambush when adults with ADHD underestimate their ability to cope with stressors.

Metacognition is an awareness of your thought processes and patterns. This executive function can help you monitor and evaluate your thoughts and behaviors without judgment when experiencing anger, thereby changing your emotional reactivity.

You can't control stressful situations, but you can control your reactions by building metacognition skills.

### Metacognition Questions

- What is happening to activate me or make me feel on edge (e.g., receiving negative feedback, being blamed unfairly, being chastised, or feeling shame)?
- What sensations do I feel when I become angry or upset (e.g., headache, stomachache, sweating, chest tightness)?
- What behaviors do I resort to when I'm upset or angry (e.g., lashing out, attacking, shutting down, catastrophizing, blaming, or denying)?
- How are others reacting to my words and actions? What are their faces or bodies showing?
- What has helped me calm down in the past? (Make a list of coping tools and save them on your phone and on sticky notes around your home).

### How to Respond When You're...

#### Mildly Uncomfortable

- Notice the negative, critical voice changing your thoughts.
- Compare your limiting beliefs about the situation or yourself to the real facts.

#### Activated

- Acknowledge and validate your feelings. Say, "It's okay to be angry. But what can I do to settle down?"
- Repeat affirmations or supportive phrases like, "This is not the most fun or my best moment, but I'll get through it."
- Visualize yourself settling down. Picture yourself by a lake, tossing in rocks. As each rock falls, feel yourself relax into your feet or chair.

#### On High Alert

- Try triangle breathing: Breath in four counts; hold for four counts; exhale for six counts. Pause and repeat.
- Physically remove yourself from the stressor or situation.
- Engage in physical activity (e.g., walk, run, or swim).
- Turn to a timed distraction. Listen to music or play a game on your phone.

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