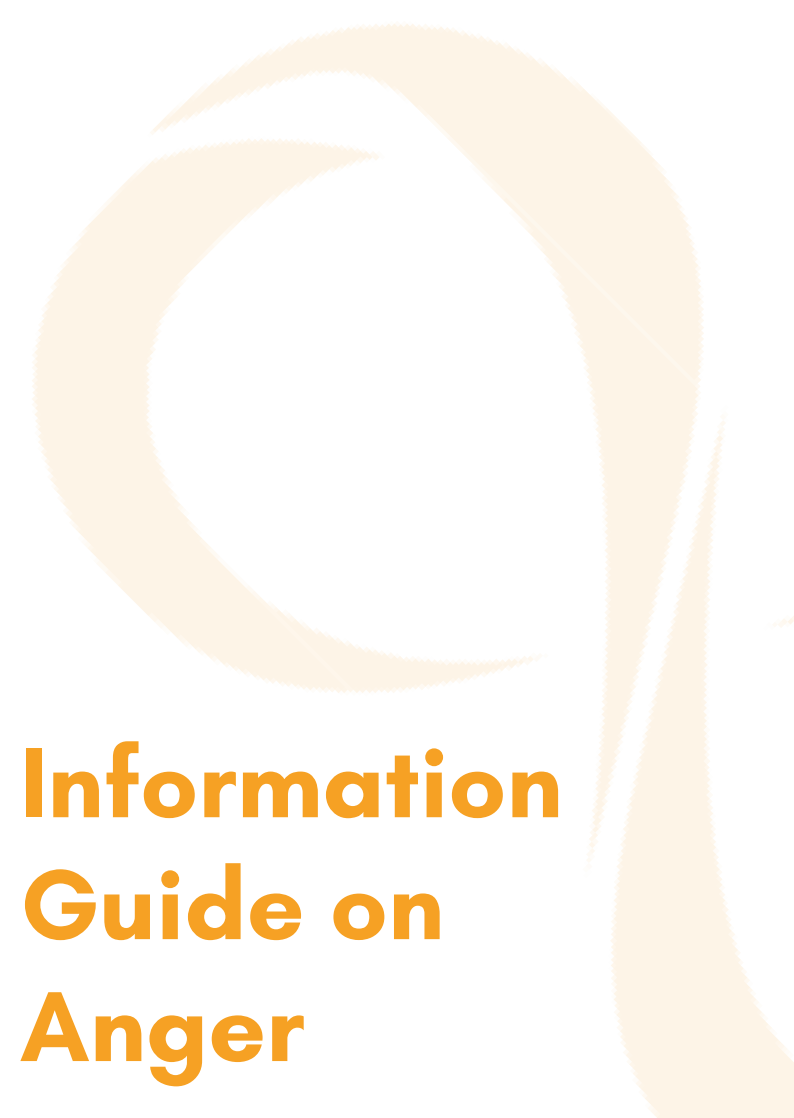


An abstract graphic consisting of several thick, flowing orange lines that swirl and curve across the page, creating a sense of movement and energy. The lines are a warm, golden-orange color.

Information Guide on Anger

What is anger?

Anger is a bodily reaction to something that happens around us. This could be things like: noise levels, other people, constant physical pain and/or something that happens within us (inside us, such as poor self esteem, depression, lack of healthy coping strategies, hormonal disturbances).

Generally, we can feel anger for two main reasons – when we believe something is unfair and when we believe we have no control, power or choice. Therefore, it is very common if you have experienced sexual violence to feel angry at what happened to you and/or the person that hurt you.

What is the purpose of anger?

- To give us the courage to defend ourselves
- It motivates us to improve the world by inspiring social justice and action
- It warns others not to take advantage of us
- It can help prevent depression, low self-esteem and a feeling of victimisation
- Make us feel more powerful

However, on the flip side, excessive anger is not useful and is likely to have a negative effect on your life, affecting relationships, your health and ability to be happy.

How can anger make you feel?

When you feel angry, your nervous system can make physical changes to your body. For example, you may quickly feel tension in your muscles, increased adrenaline surges and your heart rate may increase. Excessive anger over a long period of time can contribute towards physical ailments including a higher risk of heart disease and strokes.

Emotionally, anger can make you feel agitated, rageful, depressed, guilty and possibly suicidal. Some people are naturally angrier than others and this may be because they are responding to a past trauma, shame, unhealthy/unhelpful thinking, low frustration tolerance, a lack of assertiveness, fear, loss, or it may have become a habit.

Just because you are angry does not necessarily mean you have a problem. Most people get angry at some point in their lives. It is after all, a natural survival response which helps us to protect ourselves.

You may find it hard to express your anger, particularly if you have lived with the abuse for a long time. On the other hand, you may notice that you are angry or lash out towards those closest to you.

How can I manage my anger?

Understanding the triggers can be a good first step to understand the things/people/situations that make you feel angry. Although you may gain some short-term benefits from your anger, most of these benefits could be gained from healthier means of asserting yourself.

Work out a plan for when you are overcome with anger, or when it is getting too much.

Releasing your anger can be helpful. You could:

- Express the anger by hitting a pillow, rip up paper or crumple it
- Go somewhere where you can scream or shout
- Talk to someone you feel safe with
- Exercise to let off steam. This can be walking, gardening, swimming, going to the gym, aerobics; whatever you enjoy!
- Write it down. Put down on paper what's going through your head. Or if you're not sure on the words, try drawing it

- When you recognise that you are angry, try and say so in words rather than actions
- Learn ways to be assertive so that you can express yourself to others
- Try relaxation techniques like yoga, listening to music or guided meditation
- Try and eat well – sometimes not eating well can make you feel irritable
- If you drink alcohol, it may help to cut down your intake as sometimes alcohol can affect your ability to cope with/control anger

When you feel yourself getting angry, It might help to manage your anger by practising the STOPP steps below:

Stop – take a step back, do not react immediately or automatically

Take a breath – notice your breathing, try to keep it regular

Observe – what are you thinking?
Are these thoughts helpful? Are they accurate?

Pull back – try to view the situation as someone external would see it

Practise what works – what do you know will help you most in this situation?



Further Help support and information

RASAC provides further information via our website and helpline service which can be contacted via calling, email and webchat | 0300 303 4787 | www.rasac.co.uk | helpline@rasac.co.uk

Rape Crisis England and Wales | 0808 500 2222 | 24/7 Support line | www.rapecrisis.org.uk | Live chat via their website

Samaritans provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress or at risk of suicide | 116 123 | www.samaritans.org

MIND | 08457660163 | www.mind.org.uk/

NHS Talking Therapies | 01484 343700 | www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/services/iapt-kirklees/

Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield

PO Box 230
Huddersfield
HD1 5UY

Helpline: 0300 303 4787

Websites: www.rasac.co.uk

Email: helpline@rasac.co.uk

