

Anger Management Toolkit

Working with self-talk



This worksheet is designed to assist you in developing your personal skills to better manage your current situation.

If you are having trouble understanding this worksheet or need support, please call a MensLine Australia counsellor on 1300 78 99 78.

Things to think about

Self-talk is that commentary inside your head. It is what you think, how you think, and what you say to yourself.

We interpret our events with different thought patterns. These thought patterns are either self-defeating or constructive.

If we are critical of ourselves and others, our self-talk is negative and keeps us angry.

Self-defeating self-talk can generate high and unhealthy levels of stress or anxiety resulting in unmanaged anger. Has your anger become the first response to almost anything that goes wrong or contrary to plan?

Being aware of what we are angry about helps us to become more constructive. Constructive thoughts and self-talk help to short circuit your anger, and stop us becoming abusive.

How does self-talk work?

Imagine you are coaching an athlete who has what it takes to win.

Consider this scenario: The athlete has been up since 4am, doing warm-ups, stretches, and training and has pushed with all they have. Yet you say "one more lap."

Your athlete cannot imagine doing another lap and thinks "I have no energy left, I cannot do it. My legs cannot take one more step." But you, as the coach, use encouraging, motivational words so that the athlete's self-talk changes to things such as:

- "I can do this"
- "Every step gets me closer to my goal"
- "I was up at 4am, I've done this much and I want to win the flag"

And so the self-talk turns from being self-destructive and negative to constructive and attainable.

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Activity

Step 1: Think of a situation that may make you angry

Example: A car pulls out without indicating

Step 2: Write down what makes you angry about this situation

Example: It could have caused an accident

Step 3: Notice your self-talk and write the thoughts down

Example: 'This sort of thing always happens to me' or 'Drivers nowadays are stupid'

Step 4: Now change the angry thoughts to more constructive thoughts

Example: 'This sort of thing always happens to me' to 'This sort of thing happens to everyone.' 'Drivers nowadays are stupid' to 'That driver made a mistake'

Step 5: Practice saying the constructive words out loud. Keep saying them until you start to feel better.

This worksheet is part of a series on anger management, communication and self-care. You may find it useful to complete other worksheets in this series. For more information or assistance, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78