

Speak Freely NY

# managing anger



# anger is normal

## everyone feels it



Many people believe it is wrong or bad to feel angry, but this is a myth. Anger is a completely normal human emotion. It's okay to feel and express all emotions, even anger. Feelings of anger can arise when a person feels wronged or mistreated. This is an understandable reaction, but letting that anger bubble over into aggression or violence is not. It's important to not let anger take control. The hurt caused by angry and aggressive words or actions will not right any wrongs or solve any problems.

# Myth

# expressing emotions

Conflicts and disagreements are a part of everyday life. Knowing how to communicate well with others is an important skill in these situations. Just because you are angry or disagree with someone does not mean you have to be hurtful or aggressive. Using assertive communication means expressing yourself firmly, effectively, and respectfully. This is a healthy way of expressing feelings of anger.

## Passive

Passive communication is when a person puts the needs of others before their own. A person who is passive often keeps their thoughts and feelings to themselves, even when someone else is taking advantage of them. Angry feelings can get bottled up and hard to manage if someone is using passive communication all the time.

## Aggressive

Aggressive communication is when one person hurts other people's feelings or bodies to get what they want or need. The other person's thoughts and feelings are ignored, criticized, or disrespected. People using aggressive communication want to win at any cost and are unwilling to compromise. It's hard to listen when anger turns into aggression. Someone using this form of communication might plan responses in their head during an argument instead of listening to what the other person has to say.

## Assertive

Assertive communication is when a person expresses their thoughts and emotions while being respectful toward others. An assertive person listens to what others have to say, even when they don't agree with what is being said. They try to understand different perspectives without placing blame or putting others down. Someone using this form of communication will take breaks when they feel themselves losing control of their anger.

# take charge

## "I" statements

Using assertive communication relies on taking responsibility for your own feelings and sharing them in a way that is respectful to everyone involved. "I" statements help express what you are thinking and feeling without pointing fingers or blaming others. When people feel attacked or blamed they get defensive. This invites more conflict into the situation and stifles the chance of resolving your issues. Shifting the focus to how their actions impact you will make other people more receptive to hearing what you have to say.

### I feel... when...

"I" statements always start with how you feel about a situation and the effect it has on you.

### could we?

Once you've expressed yourself using an "I" statement, follow it up with a way you can work together to resolve the conflict.

### try

"I feel mad when you keep your phone out while we're talking because I can't tell if you're listening. Can we have some phone-free time together?"



### instead of

"You're always on your phone! Why don't you ever listen to me?"





# know your triggers

## stop conflict before it starts

Triggers are things that cause a person to feel angry. It's important to understand what makes you angry to avoid letting your emotions get the better of you. Keeping track of when you get angry can help you see patterns and identify your triggers.

1

What happened before you became angry? What events or facts triggered this feeling?

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2

What thoughts did you have while you were angry? How did these thoughts change once you cooled down?

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triggers

# warning signs

## recognize the changes

Anger can impact more than just your mind. There are warning signs in your body that signal your anger is rising. Take a few moments to cool down when you start noticing these changes.

**Know how your body reacts to anger. You may experience one or more physical signs that your anger is taking control.**

## warning signs

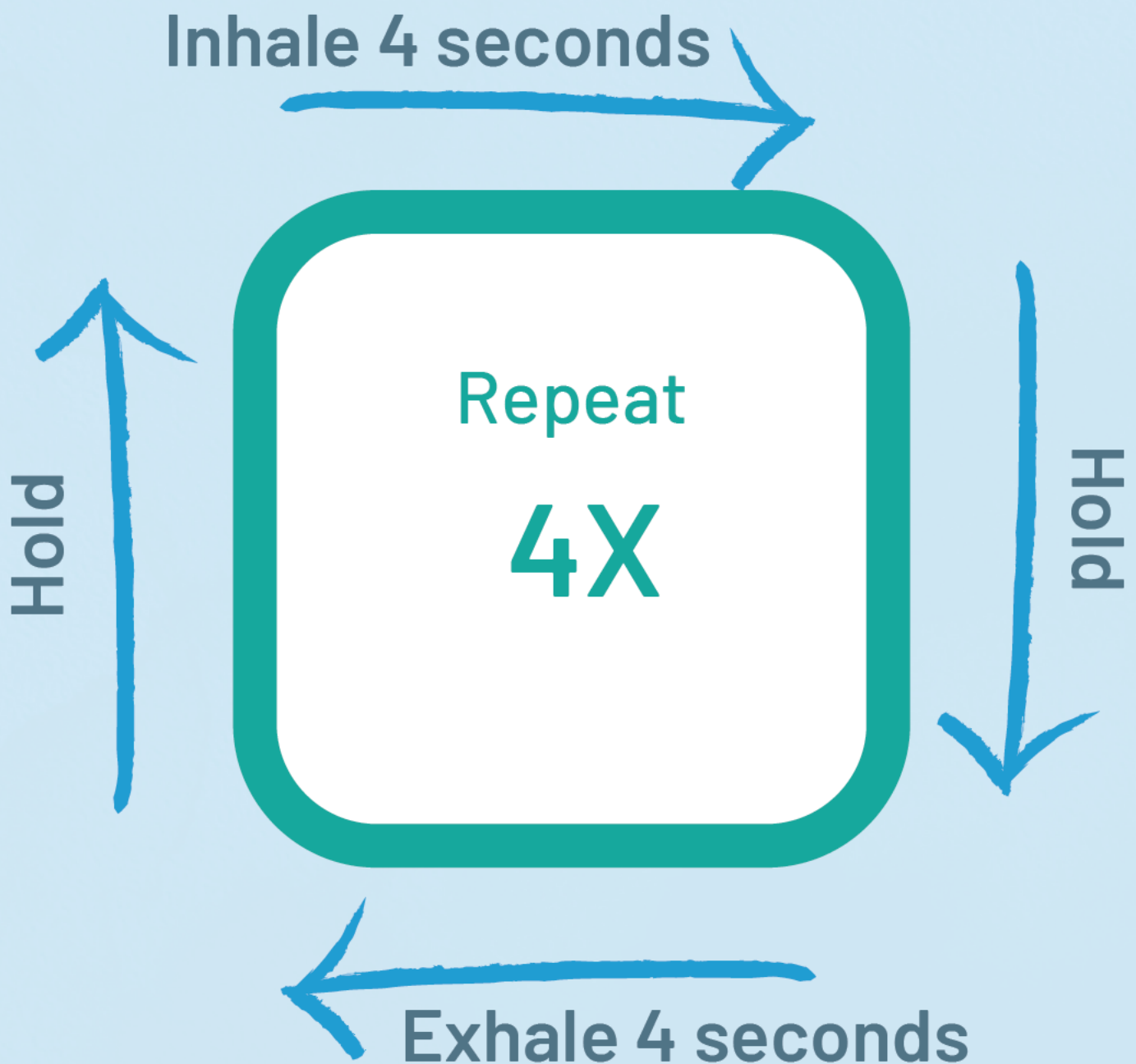
- Sweaty palms
- Stomachache
- Racing heartbeat
- Making fists
- Clenching your jaw or grinding teeth
- Feeling hot

- Flushing or turning red in the face
- Pacing
- Headache
- Shaking or trembling
- Tightness in your muscles or chest
- Feeling weak in the legs

# use your breath

regain focus

Anger can be a dangerous thing when it escalates to the point where you feel out of control. Box breathing is a quick and easy way to calm down during a conflict or stressful situation. It's often used by athletes and people with high-stress jobs to regain focus.





# take a time out

## use distraction

If using expressing your anger in a healthy way feels too difficult, walk away. Use distractions to allow yourself to cool down and regain control. Do things that make you feel good before trying to work out any conflict. Once you've put yourself in a better mindset, you can think more clearly about situations (and their solutions).

Watch a movie or show that makes you feel good

Play with pets

Exercise or play a sport

Draw, paint, or craft something

Read a book or graphic novel

Play a game

Journal or write

Listen to your favorite music

Spend time with family & friends

Go for a walk or spend time in nature

Play an instrument





# Speak

# freely ny

Speak Freely NY is a service for New York residents looking for a space to talk about the challenges they're facing. Whether you feel angry, ignored, or just overwhelmed, we're here to listen. Conversations are confidential. We can help connect you to someone who will listen without judgment, and work with you to make positive change.

do you need  
more help?

contact us now!

Text (646) 801-4777  
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