

Managing Anger and Shutdown

A practical worksheet for emotional pressure, conflict and withdrawal.

Important

This resource is for information and self-support. It is not a substitute for therapy, medical advice, emergency care, or a personalised clinical assessment. If there is immediate danger to life, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E.; For urgent mental health support in England, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Anger and shutdown as survival strategies

Anger can protect against threat, shame, fear or helplessness. Shutdown can protect when the system feels overloaded. The task is not to shame these responses, but to notice them earlier and choose safer actions.

My escalation pattern

- Early signs: jaw, fists, heat, pacing, sarcasm, silence, withdrawal.
- Middle signs: raised voice, tunnel vision, blaming, urge to leave or confront.
- Late signs: losing control, threatening, driving off, substance use, self-harm thoughts, shutdown.

<p>My early warning signs:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What usually escalates me:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>What people see on the outside:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What I may be feeling underneath:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Pause plan

- Say: "I need 20 minutes. I am not abandoning this conversation."
- Move away from weapons, alcohol, keys or anything that increases risk.
- Put both feet on the floor and slow the out-breath.
- Do something physical but safe: walk, stretch, cold water, press hands together.
- Return to the issue only when I am back inside my window of tolerance.

Repair after conflict

What I need to take responsibility for: _____ _____ _____ _____	What I need to explain without blaming: _____ _____ _____ _____
What I need from the other person: _____ _____ _____ _____	A repair sentence I can use: _____ _____ _____ _____

Safety boundary

If anger or shutdown creates risk of harm to yourself or others, seek urgent support. If there is immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E.; If you need urgent mental health help in England, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.