



Trouble in your bubble?

#CatchYourself



Emotions during COVID-19 and Self-Isolation

Most of NZ is staying home in our “bubbles” to stop the spread and save lives.

With the lockdown, many people will find themselves feeling worried, frustrated, irritable and even angry. These are all normal reactions to a very abnormal situation that all New Zealanders are facing together.

When we combine stress, fear, uncertainty with a lack of control, it can lead to people feeling high levels of distress. When we accept that there are things about this extraordinary situation that we cannot control, we give ourselves energy to focus on those things we can control for the better. Often trying to control things we cannot change only causes us more distress. This can lead to “trouble in the bubble”.

What we do with our emotions is important. If we “catch ourselves” and not act out our negative feelings, we respect our bubble and maintain healthy relationships within our homes. When you “catch yourself” it can be the difference between making life easier for ourselves and our families or causing more harm to our families and relationships.

Understanding anger

Anger is an emotion that can take over us so quickly and so intensely that we can end up acting without thinking things through. It can also lead us to do things that we might regret. For example, shouting or yelling at someone, saying mean and hurtful things, or lashing out and being violent.

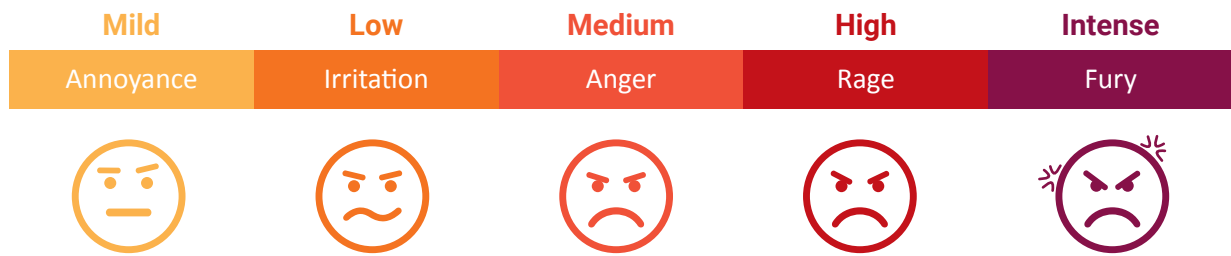
Anger is usually an emotion that covers up deeper feelings like fear and sadness or hurt. Sometimes it is really hard to face our biggest fears and admit deep sadness or being hurt because this can make us feel too vulnerable, so we avoid it as much as possible. In our avoidance we might shift to feeling and expressing anger instead. Often, we don't even realise we are making this shift because anger feels like it happens so automatically. But if we stop and think about our anger with honesty and openness, we can usually identify the underlying reasons why we get angry.

Some of the common underlying feelings we might be experiencing include:

- Fear and worry
- Uncertainty about the future
- Frustrated with change
- Helplessness
- Sense of loss



Like all emotions, anger happens on a spectrum, meaning on one end we can experience mild feelings of anger and on the other end we can feel extreme levels of anger. Noticing these emotions at the milder end will make it easier to “catch yourself”.



Factors contributing to ‘trouble in the bubble’

The pandemic and self-isolation has led to extra stressors for many of us which can contribute to increased experiences of frustration and anger. These are all normal and understandable feelings and experiences. It is helpful to talk to each other about these honestly and with compassion. What is not ok is when we use these feelings to lash out at others.



What can I do?

Lots of people may be experiencing “trouble in the bubble” at this time. So how do we stop things from getting out of hand?

- 1. Catch yourself**
Stop
- 2. Take a step back**
Breathe
- 3. Calm the mind**
Think
- 4. Act with respect**
Be kind

1. Catch yourself - Stop

The first thing to do is stop and “catch yourself”. We can do this better when we know our warning signs. If you know what sets off your anger, you know when to #CatchYourself. Warning signs are like an alert system for our experience of anger. When we stop ourselves from giving into anger, we maintain respectful relationships in the bubble.

Let's not Burst our Bubble

Anger may try to get us to act out without thinking things through. We need to stop and pause for a moment. In this moment, it's important for us to notice what is going on inside ourselves and around us. This helps us notice the kind of thoughts and feelings we're having, noticing any physical changes in our body and noticing the situation around us. We need to recognise these as signs and symptoms of anger.

Common warning signs for anger



Physical

Increased heart rate
Tightness in the chest
Sweating or shaking
Clenched jaw or fists
Tense muscles



Thoughts

Thoughts of hurting someone
Wanting to teach someone a lesson
Thinking someone is rude on purpose
Thinking about seeking revenge
Thinking that you've been disrespected



Emotions

Frustrated or annoyed
Resentful
Disrespected
Rejected
Feeling abandoned or afraid



Behaviour

Becoming critical
Sarcastic
Argumentative
Withdrawing



Spirituality

Questioning religious beliefs
Feeling angry towards God/higher power
Feeling as though God is far away



2. Take a step back - Breathe

Taking a step back and slowing down our breathing helps us to calm down. Try practising a breathing technique like the one below:

- Take deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth
- Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and then breathe out for 8 seconds (your breath out should be slower than your breath in)
- Do this 10 times.

Sometimes we need to remove ourselves from the things that set off our anger. Walking away from the situation maybe the best and easiest thing we can do for our relationship at the time.



3. Calm the mind - Think

Anger can lead to errors in our thinking which are unhelpful. It can also make it harder for us to think about the consequences of our actions. We can learn how to think before we act. It may be helpful to ask yourself these questions to gain perspective:

- How would my actions impact on my relationships in the bubble?
- How are my actions aligning with my values?
- What's the bigger picture? How important is this?
- Am I angry at the person or how they're behaving?
- How is the other person feeling?
- How could we compromise?

It can also be helpful to remind yourself of the following things:

- The current situation is hard for everyone.
- My family are struggling too, I need to be more patient with them.
- These feelings will pass.
- I love my family in my bubble.



4. Act with Respect - Be kind

When you can “catch yourself” and calm down, you can then focus on acting with respect to people in your bubble. Below are some tips that can help to maintain respectful relationships.

- Respectful communication - Consider the needs of others as well as our own when talking and listening. Express your feelings by owning them. Use “I feel...” instead of “you make me...”. Clearly ask for what you want/need in a respectful way.
- Show your values - Remember what your values are – like respect, love, and family - and act in ways that align with your values.
- Keep up positive connections - Focus on doing something positive with the person or people around you.

Sometimes we may not “catch ourselves” in time, and act in ways that upset or harm others in our bubble. If this happens, we need to repair our bubble back to a healthy state. Here are some tips:

- If you need to, apologise with sincerity. Say the words, “I’m sorry”.
- If you’ve made a mistake, admit to it and try and make things right.
- Offer to do something that will make the other person/s in the relationship feel better.
- Try to see the other person’s perspective, even if you don’t agree.



The Serenity Prayer:

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.*



More support



auntydee.co.nz



mentalwealth.nz



atumai.nz



leva.co.nz

If you need to talk to someone now

Help is available now, even during COVID-19 self-isolation and lockdown. Support is available for those feeling unsafe in their bubble and for those finding it difficult to manage their anger. Check out the information below.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call the Police on **111**, even if you're not sure.

1737

Free call or text **1737**. Kiwis feeling down can talk to a trained counsellor for free.

1737

0800 HeyBro

(0800 439 276) - Keeping Whānau Safe: We're here to support Men 24/7 to listen and to help. So give us a call next time you're on the edge!

Women's Refuge

free call **0800 733 843** (0800 REFUGE) for 24-hour service advocacy and accommodation for women and their children experiencing family violence

Youthline

Call **0800 376 633**, free text **234**, or email talk@youthline.co.nz

Elder Abuse Helpline

Call **0800 32 668 65** (0800 EA NOT OK). 24-hour service answered by registered nurses

Tu Wahine Trust

Call **09 838 8700** for kaupapa Māori counselling, therapy and support for survivors of sexual harm (mahi tukino) and violence within whānau

Covid-19

Find more information on the official government website covid19.govt.nz/help-and-advice/for-everyone/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-prevention

Preventing violence by supporting families to have respectful relationships
www.atumai.nz

Equipping young people to look after their mental health.
www.mentalwealth.nz

Growing the Pasifika mental health & addiction workforce
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/mental-health

Improving the quality of health services through cultural competency
www.leva.co.nz/training-education/engaging-pasifika

Enhancing mental health literacy in online gaming
www.manarestore.nz

Igniting community collaboration for wellbeing solutions
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/gps-satellite-seminars

Supporting community-based suicide prevention for Pasifika families
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/suicide-prevention

Equipping all New Zealanders with skills to prevent suicide
www.lifekeepers.nz

Fostering te ao Māori approaches to suicide prevention training
www.lifekeepers.nz

Championing equity for Pasifika people with disabilities
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/disability-support/faiva-ora-leadership

Shaping resiliency in young people with e-mental health tools
www.auntydee.co.nz

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#CatchYourself | Respect your bubble

Le Va

*Folau ia I lagi ma, ma ia
mamao ni ao lealea, I lo outou
sa ua folau nei I vasa loloa*

May your voyage be under clear skies
and may there be no dark clouds in
sight as you continue on your journey
on the vast ocean.



#CatchYourself | *Respect your bubble*