

## MANAGING YOUR ANGER EXERCISE

### OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit [www.WhatIsPTSD.com](http://www.WhatIsPTSD.com) for additional resources.

### GOAL

The *Managing Your Anger Exercise* helps you to cope with the effects of the third cluster of trauma symptoms, hyperarousal, and is effective when you are feeling angry or irritable.

### TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

### MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil and the form we have provided on the following pages.

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**PATH TO COMPLETE**

1. Make use of simple relaxation techniques, such as the *3 – 6 Breathing Exercise* that we introduced in *Step 1: Finding Comfort*, to calm yourself as you feel your anger building.
2. Try to gain awareness of what happens within your body when you start feeling angry. There are clues if we learn to read them; for instance, does your breathing become shallower? Do you start to clench your fists? Does your heart start to pound? Do you get a stomachache? Headache? Tense muscles? Anger is a normal and natural response. However, physical symptoms can signal that your anger is becoming out of control and no longer something you can learn from. List five or more signs that anger is rising inside of you. These are your early warning signals. Make a note of them below:

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3. Identify several anger management techniques that you will use next time you begin to feel angry, so you have them at hand. Techniques that are helpful include:
  - Counting to ten
  - Distracting yourself with something you enjoy doing
  - Reaching out to a friend
  - Writing about your anger on a piece of paper and committing to work through it later
  - One of our favorites and a great technique: Exercise!

Identify what has worked for you in the past in releasing anger or getting through an angry moment. Have you been able to use Step 1 exercises to help you when you are feeling overwhelmed and emotional? Any of these can be used when you are feeling angry. List whatever has worked for you in dealing with anger below. Keep this list handy and use it often:

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4. While in the midst of your next angry mood, and even if you are in the middle of an argument, try to avoid words like “never” or “always”. While they may serve to justify your anger, they are inaccurate and

exacerbate a situation.

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5. Remember that anger is usually a response to some injustice that you feel you have experienced. While the traumatic event you experienced may have been an extreme injustice, daily slights of life are not necessarily directed at you.