It is natural to feel increased anger in the context of the current pandemic. Anger can be useful. At times, it can become intense and impact us in unhelpful ways. Below are some tips and skills for managing and healing through anger.

**Know your Triggers**
Triggers are the things that set you off and warning signs alert you that your anger is starting to grow. Knowing your triggers and warning signs will prompt you to use coping skills that reduce the likelihood of acting on your anger in unhelpful ways.
- **Create a list of triggers.** This will help you notice them before they become a problem.
- **Make changes to your lifestyle, relationships, or daily routine to minimize triggers.**
- **We can’t avoid all triggers, so make a plan for when you must face them.**
- **Notice warning signs** (e.g. sweating, raised voice, pacing, becoming argumentative, clenched fists) as early as possible, to prevent escalation.

**Use Coping Skills**
1. **Talk yourself down:**
   Take a deep breath. Acknowledge that your feelings of anger are valid. Imagine what your calmest friend would advise and give yourself the same advice.
2. **Deep breathing:**
   Try this simple technique to help manage hot and tough emotions. It is effective, discreet, and easy to use at any time or place, even with patients.
   - **Instructions:** Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.
3. **Distract yourself:**
   If you can distract yourself or remove yourself from the situation, you’ll have a better chance of effectively managing your anger. You can return to the source of your anger later - just set the problem aside for now.
   - **Instructions:** Go for a walk, listen to music, do a chore, read, exercise, call a friend.
4. **Take a time-out:**
   Take a time-out during a heated disagreement. When taking a time-out, both individuals agree to walk away from the problem and return once they have had the opportunity to cool down.
   - **Instructions:** Clearly communicate that you need a time-out, plan a diversion to do during the time-out that will help you cool down, and plan to return to the disagreement once both parties are ready.
5. **Be assertive:**
   Being assertive is a healthier way to express anger than aggression.
   - **Instructions:** Tell people that you are feeling angry and why. Talk slowly and clearly. Use the word “I” to make it about you, not about them. Make specific requests rather than demands or threats.

**Keep an Anger Log**
Following anger, take a moment to log what happened:
- **What happened before** you experienced anger? How were you feeling? What were you thinking? Were you hungry, stressed, or tired?
- **What events triggered** your anger? How did you react?
- **What were your thoughts and feelings during** the anger episode?
- **How did you feel after?**

**Worried about the Anger of Others?**
Below are links to resources if you believe you or someone you know needs help managing physical reactions to anger:
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233; thehotline.org; text LOVEIS to 22522
- Anti-Violence Project for LGBTQ and HIV-positive communities: 212-714-1141; 24/7; bilingual

**In a crisis?**
Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255