

## Staying Calm

It is normal for people to experience intense feelings at times and to react strongly to situations that we find challenging.

When a stressful event or moment somehow gets the better of us, the rising levels of adrenaline (a stress hormone) in our body can turn into feelings of:

- Anxiety and Agitation.
- Frustration and Anger.
- Depression and Hopelessness.

### Immediate Tips for Calming Down:

**STOP** – It is important to break the cycle and not let emotion build further. Take a few minutes to stop and focus.

- Stop what you are doing. Tell yourself to 'STOP'.
- Stop still. Sit down or slow down first. Don't act on your emotions right now! Wait until you are calmer.
- Try one or more of these techniques for stopping:
  - Breathe – Breathe in and out at a slower and deeper pace. Concentrate on your breathing and relax.
  - Change your focus by moving your body. Sit down, stand up or move out of the room.
  - Drink some water – Have a cuppa or cold drink to get some space and slow down.
  - Say – In your mind or quietly to yourself - “Just relax, things will be sorted out, let's take it one step at a time”.
  - Count backward – Try counting backwards 50-45-40-35-30-25.....or 10-9-8-7-6.....

**START SLOWLY** – It is important to take positive action once you feel calmer. You're more likely to act in a helpful way rather than reacting to your emotions. Think first, be safe and don't rush.

Choose a deliberate and helpful action, that will help you to:

- a) Feel better about the situation.
- b) Think less about the situation or think more positively
- c) Re-focus on other tasks at hand.

### Strategies for Keeping Calm:

- Re-Focus – Change your attention back to a task: Read a book, listen to music, watch TV, write a list or crossword.
- Call and talk to someone.
- Relax – Find a quiet spot and relax your body, breathe slowly and clear your mind.
- Walk – Go for a short walk, get some fresh air and new perspective.
- Positive Self-talk – Tell yourself “This will pass, this happens to people and can be managed. I will get through this and feel better soon”.



- Re-think your expectations and remove hot thoughts, try the following:
  - Catch what you are thinking in your head; you can even write it down.
  - Check if it's helpful or realistic thinking – i.e. will this thinking lead to a health outcome.
  - What's a calm way to think about this?
  - What do I expect to happen and is this realistic?
  - Replace hot thoughts (like “this is all too much”) with helpful action thoughts (say “what I can do now, that's helpful, is...”).

*Seek Support* – Talking helps to release emotions, clarify positive actions and take back a sense of control. It also can give you support and guidance for immediate and future concerns.

Tell yourself:

- You can talk to someone about what you feel, what has happened or what you want.
- Who would you phone? Call a friend, GP, family member, colleague, supervisor or other confidant?

Things to remember:

- It is normal to feel intense feelings from time to time. It is also common to feel overwhelmed by situations that seem too difficult to manage.
- With support and strategies, you can be on top of the situation and back on track soon after.
- You can gain greater control over your emotions.
- This will pass, and you will find a way through this.