

# Managing our emotions during a crisis

Everyone finds themselves in a crisis at some point. A crisis is a time of intense difficulty. This may include a feeling of being in danger or an actual threat to one's safety. An example of a crisis is an argument with a loved one, a natural disaster, violence or loss of income. As you can see from these examples, these arrive suddenly and sometimes, with no warning.

**During a crisis, people may feel scared, anxious, stressed, confused, apprehensive, angry or hopeless.**

There are times when we need to manage these emotions. At work, the way in which we handle our emotions contributes to our colleagues' perception of our professionalism. Our negative emotions may be caused by events at work or could be a result of events at home and continue to affect us when we are at work. This, of course, works in the opposite direction too and we may take some of our negative emotions felt during the workday back home with us.

**Some ideas on how to manage your emotions:**

## BREAK THINGS DOWN

Take it one step at a time. When you think of everything that needs to happen in relation to or because of the crisis, this can be overwhelming. Try and think of the next thing you need to do. If there are too many thoughts running around in your head, take the time to write it down – it can be everything that is bothering you or a list of things that you need to do.

## BREATHING EXERCISES

You can do this at your desk or on a yoga mat – whatever you have access to! Breathing exercises help us reduce stress and calm our minds.

## TAKING A PAUSE (The 10 second rule)

Sometimes, our minds need a moment to catch up with the physical reaction we have had. Take some time – even 10 seconds – to consider your next step and think about how it is you want to react in this situation.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR TRIGGERS

A trigger is something which can make us feel uncomfortable, offends you or makes you feel angry. Understanding what does this for us, allows us to avoid being or, if we cannot avoid it, manage our emotions which arise rather than feeling out of control in the situation.

## GET SOME SUPPORT

This may be practical support like bringing over a meal or helping you find a place to live or emotional support such as having a conversation or giving you a hug when you are feeling down.

If you are unable to contain your emotions, it is important to try and be respectful. If your feelings are caused by someone else being rude, there is no need to reciprocate even when it may feel automatic to do so. If you have an outburst, it is important to apologise. Everyone has moments when our emotions get the better of us. If others around you may have heard the outburst, you should also apologise to them. You do not need to provide a large amount of information, simply saying "I am sorry, I reacted badly" is sufficient.

If you need to discuss any of these ideas or unpack ways to manage emotions, please contact ICAS on [0800 424242](tel:0800424242)

