



Coping with difficult emotions

When someone close to us dies, there can be a whole range of emotions that bubble to the surface including sadness, anger, fear, even happiness.

This leaflet will help you with your mixed emotions, giving you tips and things to do.

565 Service provides emotional support for children, young people and families living with a family member with progressive illness.



Coping with **difficult emotions**

When someone close to us dies, there can be a whole range of emotions that bubble to the surface: sadness, anger, fear, even happiness. We can switch between feelings very quickly or have mixed feelings when two happen at the same time. This can make us quite confused and frustrated which often comes out as being quite angry at everything and everyone!

Here are ten tips for coping with angry feelings

- **Take some deep breaths**

Take three deep breaths, quick and short through your nose and then slow and long out of your mouth. Think of smelling a cake and then blowing out the candles, it really works!

- **Punch a pillow**

Punch something that is soft, that won't hurt you or anyone else if you hit it, like a pillow, a cushion or a punchbag.

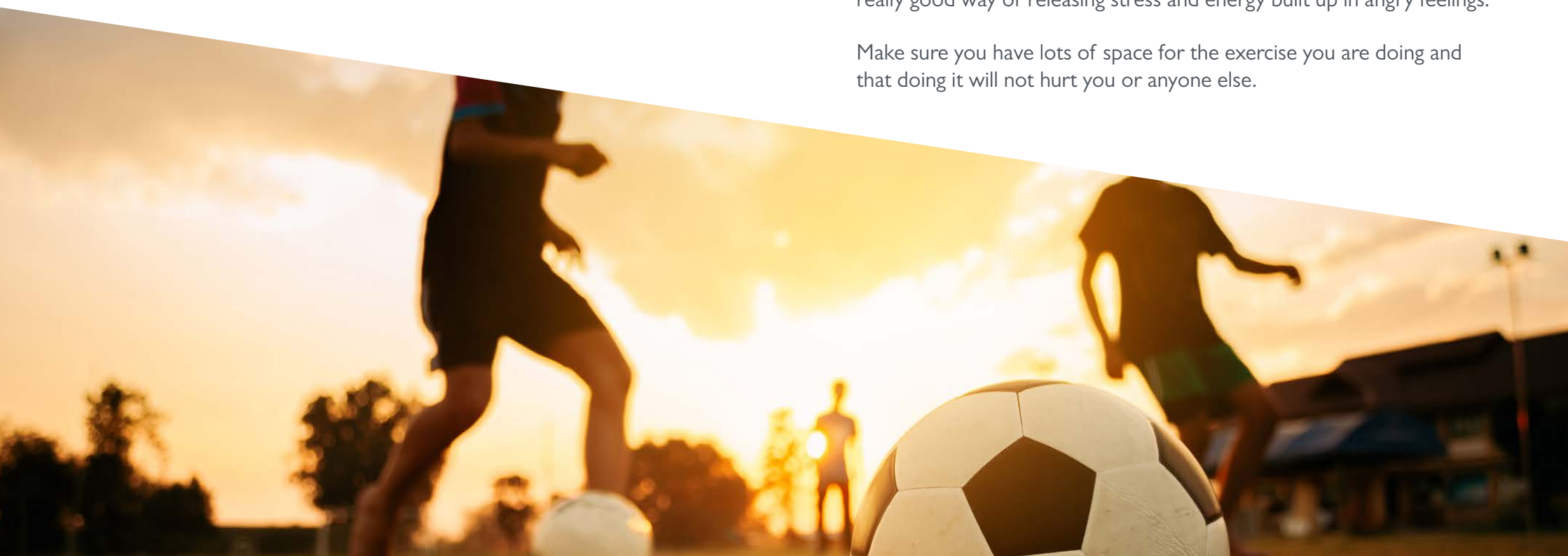
- **Scribble it out**

Don't think too hard, put pen to paper and scribble. Use colour - red is often seen as an angry colour, scribble hard to get all the feeling out and then scrunch the paper up, throwing it away. Do this as many times as you need to get the feelings out.

- **Exercise**

Go for run, kick a ball, skip on the spot or bat a ball. Exercise is a really good way of releasing stress and energy built up in angry feelings.

Make sure you have lots of space for the exercise you are doing and that doing it will not hurt you or anyone else.



- **Wiggle it out**

People feel anger and frustration in different parts of their bodies, some feel it in their head and others in their stomachs. Imagine your anger is salt in a pot, shake the part of the body that you feel it most, wiggle it down to your arms and legs, then down to your fingers and toes and flick it out of your body. It sounds silly, but it really works!

- **Write a letter**

Write down your feelings and think about what is making you feel this way, you can address the letter to your future or past self, or to the person who died. You can either send this letter to someone who can help or you can tear it up as a way of getting your feelings out.

- **Make some noise**

Shout into a pillow or go somewhere where no one will hear and you can make lots of noise. Shout your feelings out - what makes you angry or what makes you sad? Make sure you take some time to calm down afterwards.

- **Burst a balloon**

Blow up a balloon and imagine it is your anger: kick it, squeeze it and then pop it to let the feelings out.

- **Be creative**

Draw the things that make you angry or make them out of clay and then scrunch them, squeeze them, twist them, wreck them and throw them away.

- **Take a time out**

If you can feel that a situation is making you feel angry, then walk away from it (if you can) and find a safe place to take five minutes out to calm down. You can do some of the other anger busting techniques whilst you are taking a time out, doubling the stress relief!

There are a lot of other ways to help calm down, it can be a very personal thing. Think about what helps you get your worries out and write them on the next page.



Ask for help when you need it

- People might not know you're angry. Telling them what is upsetting you will help them to understand and take steps to help you feel calmer. If people don't know, they can't help.
- Sometimes the things that are making us angry are out of our control. talking to parents, teachers and other adults can help to find solutions to the things that are upsetting you.
- Talk to someone you trust, especially if you are feeling 'out of control'
- Be open about your angry thoughts – share what is annoying you. People can't help if they don't know what is wrong.



How much **does it cost?**

All emotional and spiritual wellbeing services at St Elizabeth Hospice are free. St Elizabeth Hospice is a registered charity and relies on gifts and donations to carry out its work. Because of people's generosity we are able to offer bereavement support free of charge to the relatives and friends of hospice patients.

Tell us what you think

Hearing about your experience of St Elizabeth Hospice can help us to improve our services and provide better care and support for those who need it.

To make a comment or complaint, or to compliment us on something we've done well, please write to us or visit stelizabethhospice.org.uk

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