

Anger and Its Management

Anger is a naturally occurring normal, healthy emotion.

Its presence gives important information: it can be triggered by situations in which we feel controlled, threatened, devalued, criticized or hurt, and when we know this we can act on our own behalf.

Anger itself is not the problem, but what we do with anger—how we express it, how we behave and respond when angry—can either hurt us further or help us.

- Do you have a problem with anger? Does your use of anger hurt you or help you?
- Violence to others—physically, verbally or emotionally—is not a solution to your anger, it is an act to establish power. Actions are dangerous, not anger.
- When anger is expressed *appropriately* you are acting in your best interests in response to the stress you are experiencing without hurting others, and others respond accordingly; when anger is expressed *inappropriately*, either with blame, hostility or aggression, anger can be destructive to both you and others and make your problems feel worse.
- Learn about how anger problems negatively affect your health, mood, and relationships. Does your anger help you feel better about yourself? Or achieve your long-term goals? Does it make you safe, or give you long-term positive feelings or connections?
- Be curious about what perpetuates your anger: notice what triggers irritation, aggravation or impatience. What are you feeling? What are you thinking? How do you egg yourself on, and make the anger build? Ask yourself, can you do anything to change this sort of reaction?
- Do you hold others responsible for your stress or aggravation? The most important factor in feeling relief from anger is to take more responsibility for your own thoughts, actions and choices:
 - It is unreasonable to expect that you will either rarely or always get what you want.
 - As an adult, you are responsible for your own life, your choices, and the quality of your experience.
 - Learn to be realistic about what you can control and what you cannot. You only have control over yourself. Learn to accept and let go of the uncontrollable realities. If you choose to stay in a situation or relationship in which you are frustrated, learn to make peace with your decision.
 - Be clear about your thoughts and feelings, needs and wants. Only you can know these things.
 - Know that you are responsible for communicating your needs, thoughts and feelings clearly to others.
 - Taking good care of yourself is a basic factor in taking responsibility: Balance your life, get good nutrition, adequate sleep and exercise, enjoyable social contacts, and have pleasure and relaxation.
 - Learn relaxation tools and techniques: they can be as simple as breathing exercises, warm baths or milk and listening to peaceful music, or as complicated as yoga, meditation, or progressive relaxation.
 - Limit substance & alcohol use: even small amounts used regularly can disrupt your emotional balance.
- Consider these tools for understanding yourself better and managing your anger more effectively:
 - Make a commitment to change in order to improve the quality of your life. Engage in personal growth.
 - Be aware of how the words and behaviors of others affect you, and seek out positive relationships.
 - Focus your anger: Learn to compromise, and to seek mutual negotiation with others in a positive, respectful and calm way: that means being interested in the other person's needs and feelings too!
 - Develop a focus for managing your life: examine your difficulties, assess how you contribute to them, and decide what you are willing to do differently. Create personal goals with manageable steps.
 - Learn to have clear communication and limit setting skills: saying “no” is important, as is saying “yes.”
 - Let yourself stay angry long enough so that something good happens.