

# Anger Management

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Sometimes the term "anger management" refers to an educational process during which students learn very basics of anger issues. For example, people rarely distinguish between the emotion of anger and the behavior they exhibit when angry. Most often people believe that when overcome by anger they are out of control. In fact, they are most often very much in control of their behavior while not in control of the emotion. It is often difficult to accept this as fact, as it is much easier to excuse one's misbehavior when the behavior was committed while one was out of control.

Anger management classes attempt to remind students of their personal responsibility while providing strategies to assist in avoiding having the emotion of anger in the first place. Basic self-cares (adequate sleep, exercise, and avoidance of drugs and alcohol) together with stress reduction actually seem to help reduce the number and scale of anger episodes.

Anger is defined as a completely normal, usually healthy, human emotion to being violated. Anger by itself is not good or bad - it's what the person does with his/her anger that matters most. According to the *Mental Medicine in Practice Journal*, 20 percent of Americans experience levels of hostility high enough to be harmful to their health.

With regard to interpersonal anger, Dr. Eva L. Feindler recommends that people try, in the heat of an angry moment, to see if they can understand where the alleged perpetrator is coming from. Empathy is very difficult when one is angry, but it can make all the difference in the world. Taking the other person's point of view can be excruciating when in the throes of anger, but with practice it can become second nature. Of course, once the angry person is in conditions of considering the opposite position, then anger based on righteous indignation tends to disappear. Researchers have also found that family background plays a role. Typically, people who are easily angered come from families that are disruptive and not skilled at emotional communications.

Anger expert David Brown says, "Anger often becomes a problem when: you stuff your anger inside until you explode or experience medical problems, you stay angry for too long, the anger you feel is too much for the situation, the way you express your anger is inappropriate or destructive, your anger leads to negative consequences (relationships end, or are damaged and great emotional/physical distance is created between people in relationship , you get arrested), and/or you feel out of control of your anger. "

People who are unable to manage their anger often experience the following physical symptoms:

- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Headaches
- Arthritis
- Circulatory Disorders
- Aggravation Of Existing Physical Symptoms
- Disabilities Of The Nervous System
- Emotional Disturbances
- Genito-Urinary Disorders
- Respiratory Disorders

Mismanaged anger also has a powerful effect on a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. People who stuff anger become passive aggressive and manipulative, thus causing loved ones to back away in pain. People who directly express their anger inappropriately are often arguing with others, yelling & screaming, using colorful language, drinking and/or using drugs, rationalizing their behavior, speaking rapidly, and/or fantasizing about getting revenge.

## The Three Main Approaches of Expressing Your Anger in A Positive Way

1. **Expressing Your Angry Feelings in an Assertive - Not Aggressive – Manner.** This is the healthiest way to express anger. To do this, you have to learn how to make clear what your needs are, and how to get them met, without hurting others. Remember to try, in the heat of an angry moment, to see if you can understand where the alleged perpetrator is coming from.
2. **Suppressing Anger and Redirecting It.** This happens when you hold in your anger, stop thinking about it and focus on something positive. The aim is to inhibit or suppress your anger and convert it into constructive behavior. The danger in this type of response is that if it isn't allowed outward expression, your anger can turn inward - on yourself. Anger turned inward may cause any of the physical symptoms listed above.
3. **Calming Yourself Down Inside.** This means not just controlling your outward behavior but also controlling your internal responses, taking steps to lower your heart rate, calm yourself down and let the feelings subside.

## Signs & Symptoms of Anger

1. *Procrastination In The Completion Of Imposed Tasks*
2. *Passive Aggressive Behaviors*
  - **Level 1: Temporary Compliance**, in which the passive aggressive person verbally complies with a request, but behaviorally delays acting on it. Temporary compliance is the most common form of passive aggressive behavior and sounds something like, "I'm cooooooming!"
  - **Level 2: Intentional Inefficiency**, in which the passive aggressive person complies with a request, but carries it out in an unacceptable manner. Intentional Inefficiency looks something like my husband unloading the dishwasher by putting everything out on the counter and claiming, "I wasn't sure where these went!"
  - **Level 3: Letting a Problem Escalate**, in which the passive aggressive person uses inaction to allow a foreseeable problem to escalate and takes pleasure in the resulting anguish. Passive aggressive kids are at this level when they return a car with an empty gas tank, even when they know their parent will be late for work if they have to stop for gas.
3. *A Liking Of Sadistic Humor*
4. *Sarcasm, Cynicism Or Flippancy In Conversation*
5. *Smiling While Hurting*
6. *Frequent Disturbing Or Frightening Dreams*
7. *Difficulty In Getting To Sleep Or Sleeping Through The Night*
8. *Excessive Irritability Over Minor Events*
9. *Grinding Teeth (Especially While Sleeping)*

10. *Chronically Stiff Or Sore Neck Or Shoulder Muscles*

11. *Over Politeness, Constant Cheerfulness, An Attitude Of “Grin And Bear It”*

12. *Waking Up Tired Rather Than Rested And Refreshed*

## How Can I Learn To Control My Anger?

Perhaps the best way to identify whether or not you're suffering from an anger management problem is to ask yourself if your anger has in any way negatively affected your enjoyment of life. If the answer is yes, you may want to explore treatment options.

Counseling can be in the form of individual or group therapy, and may involve medication when necessary.

**Individual Therapy:** In individual anger management therapy, you have more one-on-one time with the therapist and your experiences can be explored on a deeper level.

**Group Therapy:** whereas, in anger management group treatment participants learn from other people's experiences and gather information from the group leaders. A group is also a great place to learn and practice new ways of dealing with problems. The goal of an anger management group is to learn new, more effective ways to keep anger from being a problem by reducing how long you stay angry and how much anger you feel, and by developing new skills for managing and expressing anger.

Mental health professionals can work with you in developing a range of techniques to help you change your thinking and your behavior. In fact, through the use of counseling, some professionals believe that a highly angry person can move closer to a middle range of anger in about 8 to 10 weeks, depending on circumstances and techniques used.

## 11 Ways to Control Your Anger

1. Get Away From The Situation To Give Yourself Time To Calm Down.
2. See If You Can Understand Where The Alleged Perpetrator Is Coming From.
3. Clean Up Your Language By Avoiding Cussing And Name Calling.
4. Slow Down Your Talking and Breathing. Give Yourself Time To Think.
5. Let The Other Person Have The Last Word So The Argument Can End.
6. Allow Yourself The Extra Time To Drive To Cut Down On Road Rage.
7. Agree To Disagree When You Can't Reach An Agreement.
8. Be Realistic About What You Expect From People And Situations.
9. Develop An Attitude Of Respect And Tolerance For People Who Are Different.
10. Choose Your Battles And Don't Fight About Things That Don't Matter.
11. Consider The Consequences Of What You Want To Say Or Do.