

A Guide for Patients and Families

Anger Management



Anger is a natural human emotion that we all experience from time to time. It is not all bad as it can help us instinctively detect and react to a threatening situation. However, allowing anger to get out of control can lead to problems in both our professional and personal lives.

Causes

Other people

- Family, friends, co-workers, or strangers who say or do things that upset you.

Stress

- Job stress, family arguments, finances, responsibilities, and poor health.

Frustration

- Sometimes, you feel that life is not within your control and that you are not reaching your goals.

Daily hassles

- Traffic jams, busy schedules, loud and unbearable noises, office politics.

Social stress

- Racism, sexism, isolation, or poverty.

How to control your anger

Take a timeout

If you feel your anger will lead you to say or do something you might regret, take a few minutes to calm down before reacting. You may want to try counting to 10 and/or taking deep breaths.



Get some space

Walking away or distancing yourself from the situation can help defuse your temper and give you a better perspective on things.



Learn to express your anger in a constructive way

It is healthy to express your frustration in a non-confrontational way. Some healthy ways include hobbies that you enjoy. It can even be as simple as doing housework.



Get some exercise

Physical activity not only provides an outlet for your emotions but has the added advantage of producing calming endorphins in your body to help you relax. Go for a brisk walk, run or a swim.



Practise relaxation skills

Learning skills to relax and de-stress can also help you to control your temper. Practise deep-breathing exercises or visualise a relaxing scene. Other proven ways to ease anger include listening to music, writing in a journal and doing yoga.





Think carefully before you say anything

Otherwise, in the heat of the moment, you are likely to say something you will regret. It can be helpful to write down what you want to say so that you can stick to the issues.



Identify solutions to the situation

Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work with the person who angered you to resolve the issue at hand. Use 'I' statements when describing the problem. This will help you to avoid criticising or placing blame on the other person.



Don't hold a grudge

If you can forgive the other person, it will help you both. Focus on moving forward.



Use humour to release tension

Humour can help diffuse tension. Sharing a joke or looking at the situation in a light-hearted way will help to diffuse the situation.

Avoids alcohol and other drugs

Using alcohol, illegal drugs or over-the-counter drugs will not solve your problems. In fact, they will only make them worse or create further problems.



Get support

It always helps to talk with someone who knows or cares about you. These people may include:

- Family members
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Counsellors
- Support group members



Relaxation techniques

- Imagine that the anger you are feeling is a fire burning inside your body. Visualise that fire. Find a glass of water. It is best if it is cold.
- As you drink this glass of water, visualise the cool water running down your throat and into your body.
- As the water travels down your throat, visualise the water pouring over the fire that is representing your anger.
- Visualise the fire being extinguished by the water.



Bear in mind that the more you practise these skills, the easier it will be for you to handle your anger.

Uncontrolled anger not only hurts people around us, it can also hurt us physically, emotionally and mentally. Studies have shown that people who lose their temper easily are at a higher risk of developing health problems such as digestive problems, depression, high blood pressure and a weak immune system.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about anger management, talk to your counsellor or doctor today.