

# MANAGING ANGER

Anger is a powerful emotion that can serve people well at times, especially when things are unjust because anger can give us the energy and motivation to act. Unfortunately, this same anger is frequently unleashed in ways that create conflict, aggression and hurt feelings between people.

Addressing anger effectively has two important components. First, people need to be able to contain their anger and communicate with others respectfully. This can be learned through identifying and applying anger management skills. Next, it is important to identify the foundation for the anger and how that can be resolved.

## SKILLS FOR MANAGING ANGER

### Pay Attention To Your Body

When humans are angry, their muscles get tight. Notice where this tension builds in your body. Do you clench your teeth? Is your neck tight? Are your fists clenched? These body clues can help you be aware that tension is building and you need to take a break.

### Pay Attention To Your Breathing

Breathing can either increase or decrease tension. When people are angry, they tend to take short breaths from high in their lungs. This builds tension and escalates anger. Practice taking deep, slow, even breaths from the abdomen, breathing in and out equally. This takes oxygen to the tight muscles, helps reduce emotions, and creates a chance to think before reacting.

### Pay Attention To Your Thoughts

Angry thoughts tend to be short, fast thoughts that fuel the fire of emotion. Breathing slowly helps to slow the thinking process. Identify one or two thoughts that help you to calm yourself. "When I get too upset, I always make things worse, or, this isn't worth it, or when I stay calm, things turn out better."

### Pay Attention To Your Words

Only speak if you can use a calm tone. Avoid inflammatory words like "you always, or, you never" Be firm, but respectful.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR ANGER

Anger is an emotion that rarely exits by itself. Notice what other emotions are present. Are you disappointed, sad, hurt, resentful, or in grief? What thoughts and experiences are connected to these emotions? When these emotions and thoughts are identified and resolved calmly, anger subsides.



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## MANAGING ANGER, ctd.

Ways to help address emotions underlying anger:

- Write them down, “for your eyes only”
- Talk to a trusted friend
- Exercise or engage in a physical activity
- Listen to music
- Pray or meditate
- Engage in any type of expressive art like drawing, singing, or drama

When these types of basic anger management skills and expressions for emotions are not effective in addressing anger problems, professional therapy can help. Contact Youthville Family Consultation Service for assistance from a qualified therapist.



Zenith Sayed, LMSW is a Licensed Master Social Worker. She has a Master's degree in Social Work and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Zenith specializes in treatment of problem sexual behavior, anger management, and trauma, providing direct clinical services to individuals, families and groups as well as in-home family therapy. Zenith utilizes play therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioral therapy and Theraplay®.

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