



Do you Manage your Anger?

What is Anger?

Anger is a normal human emotion that is characterized by a sense of antagonism towards someone or some thing. It can range from irritation to white hot rage.

Anger is a natural, and sometimes adaptive response to a threat that affects us physically, raising our heart rate and blood pressure, and activating our fight or flight system.

It affects how clearly and logically we are able to think, and influences how we behave. Poorly managed anger impacts many aspects of life and relationships.

For more anger information, contact
the EAP line on 1300 878 379

What Causes Anger?

Anger may be activated by external triggers or internal events such as thoughts, worries or memories. The way that we interpret events, such as blaming others, can lead to feelings of anger.

Anger is often thought of as the tip of an emotional iceberg. Emotions that contribute to anger and bring it to the surface are often complex and hidden from view.

Sadness, grief, shame, disappointment, pain, insecurity, stress, or simply being hungry or tired can make us more likely to feel angry. Understanding this can help when angry feelings appear to be out of proportion to what is happening.

ANGER - FACTSHEET

The Difference Between Anger & Aggression

Our instinct when we experience angry feelings is to lash out and react with aggression - our fight system has been activated.

It's very important to distinguish between the feeling of anger, and the different ways that we can choose to respond and behave.

Sometimes people who have difficulty with controlling anger have grown up with aggression, and anger and aggression have become a habitual response.

How Can I Prepare for and Reduce Anger?

Different things can make us feel angry. It's important to recognise what triggers anger for you.

Resolve - make efforts to resolve issues that make you angry.

Avoid- try to avoid triggers, as long as this does not get in the way of important things in your life.

Prepare - try to prepare proactively rather than getting overwhelmed by anger. Noticing your anger while it is still manageable, using relaxation skills and taking a balanced rather than a blaming approach with your thinking can help you reduce the likelihood of experiencing problematic anger.

How Can I Manage Anger?

There are three main ways we tend to deal with angry feelings:

Express - expressing your feeling in a calm and assertive, but not aggressive way in order to resolve the issue is the healthiest way to resolve feelings of anger.

Suppress - sometimes anger can be suppressed, and then converted or redirected. This can be useful if the issue is unresolvable, but it may be leaving the direct cause, or underlying emotional issue unresolved. Unexpressed or unresolved anger can lead to resentment, blaming yourself or others, passive aggressive behaviour, and ongoing feelings of anger.

Calm - taking deliberate steps to manage your physical reactions (eg. slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation), calm your thinking (eg. trying to see a different side to a situation, reduce blaming, keep things in proportion), and manage your behaviour (eg. walking away, talking calmly).

Summary

Anger is a normal human emotion, one that may be difficult to manage sometimes. We cannot eliminate angry feelings but we can learn how to deal with them. Understanding underlying emotions, recognising and preparing for triggers, balanced thinking, communicating calmly and reducing aggressive behaviour are important skills in managing anger.