



## Analyze Your Anger

In this exercise you will begin to learn how to analyze an episode of anger. This involves learning how to identify events and cues that indicate you are escalating. Being aware of an event that has triggered intense anger in the past allows you to prepare for it.

### Events That Trigger Anger

When you get angry, it is because you have encountered an event in your life that has provoked your anger. Many times, specific events touch on sensitive areas. These sensitive areas or “red flags” usually refer to long-standing issues that can easily lead to anger. In addition to events that you experience in the here and now, you may also recall an event from your past that made you angry. Just thinking about these past events can make you angry now. Here are some examples of events or issues that can trigger anger.

- Long waits to see your doctor
- Traffic congestion
- Crowded buses
- A friend joking about a sensitive topic
- A friend not paying back money owed to you
- Being wrongly accused of something
- Having to clean up someone else’s mess
- Having an untidy roommate
- Having a neighbor who plays the stereo too loud
- Being placed on hold for long periods of time while on the telephone
- Being given the wrong directions
- Rumors being spread about you that are not true
- Having money or property stolen from you

- What are some of the general events and situations that trigger anger for you?

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- What are some of the “red flag” events and situations that trigger anger for you?

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## Cues to Anger: Four Cue Categories

A second important way to monitor anger is to identify the cues that occur in response to the anger-provoking event. These cues serve as warning signs that you have become angry and that your anger is escalating. Cues can be broken down into four categories: Physical, Behavioral, Emotional and Cognitive (or thought) cues. After each category, list the cues that you have noticed when you get angry.

1. *Physical Cues* (how your body responds: e.g., increased heart rate, tightness in the chest, feeling hot or flushed)

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2. *Behavioral Cues* (what you do; e.g., clench your fists, raise your voice, stare at others)

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3. *Emotional Cues* (Other feelings that may occur along with anger: e.g., fear, hurt, jealousy, disrespect)

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4. *Cognitive Cues* (What you think about in response to the event; e.g., hostile self-talk, images of aggression and revenge)

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## The Emotions Behind Your Anger

When anger becomes a habit, it sometimes protects us from feeling other emotions, which make us feel vulnerable or at risk. Recognizing and accepting the tender feelings underlying the anger allows us to develop new skills to express and resolve these other emotions.