



The Basics of Anger Management

Anger Basics

Anger affects your body.

When you get angry, your body creates energy.

Here's what happens:

- Adrenaline and other chemicals enter your bloodstream.
- Your heart pumps faster.
- Your blood flows more quickly.
- Your muscles tense.

Everyone gets angry sometimes.

Handling anger well can help you:

- Overcome problems.
- Reach your goals.
- Stay healthy.
- Feel better about yourself.

Anger has a purpose.

- Anger is a signal that something is wrong.
- Anger as an attempt to gain power over others.
- Anger as a way to increase social distance and minimize intimacy.
- Anger as a defense against shame.
- Anger as a defense against other feelings.

But too much anger or uncontrolled anger can cause problems.

It can cause:

- Problems in your relationships with family and friends
- Problems at work
- Legal and financial troubles
- Physical and mental health problems

Uncontrolled anger can lead to aggression.

Verbal or physical assaults

You may lose control and attack others physically or verbally. For example, you may:

- Throw or break things
- Yell, insult, or threaten
- Slap, shove, kick, or hit

Abuse

Tension and frustration may build. Family members may become your target, even if your anger has little to do with them. The abuse may be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual

Other criminal behavior

Anger is often a driving force behind:

- Destruction of property
- Murder
- Other violent crimes



What causes anger?

The causes vary depending on the person and situation. Some common causes of anger include:

- **Stress:**
Stress related to work, family, health and money problems may make you feel anxious and irritable.
- **Frustration:**
You may get angry if you fail to reach a goal or if you feel things are out of your control.
- **Fear:**
Anger is a natural response to threats of violence, or to physical or verbal abuse.
- **Annoyance:**
You may react in anger to minor irritations and daily hassles.
- **Disappointment:**
Anger often results when expectations and desires aren't met.
- **Resentment:**
You may feel angry when you've been hurt, rejected or offended.

Triggers: HALT = Hungry, Anxious, Lonely & Tired

- Hunger isn't only about food. People can be hungry for food, love, attention, money, fame, etc. Whatever you hunger for the most may make you more likely to get angry when you don't get it.
- Anxiety makes anger more dangerous. Combine the two and you have "scared anger", that "totally trapped", "back against the wall", "fight for your life", "desperate feeling". "Blind rage", the worst kind of violence, can be the result.
- Loneliness can give a person too much time to think. One danger when you're alone is that you can start thinking over and over again about how others have hurt, abandoned, and betrayed you.
- Tired isn't only about physical fatigue. Just like hunger, the word "tired" may refer to emotional as well as physical states. You may be tired of working long days, but also feel unappreciated at home, overwhelmed by responsibilities and demands, or feel helpless about something important, etc.

Choices

Getting angry is a choice, your choice. This section is designed to help you sort out the real crises from the phony ones.

Anger can make sense in some situations, however all 4 of the following criteria must be met:

- Somebody is doing something you really don't like and
- It's having a strong effect on you and
- The other person can actually change their behavior and
- It is within your responsibility to get involved.

It is not within your responsibility to get involved when:

- It's really none of your business.
- The situation is relatively unimportant.
- It's about something you can't change.
- You could handle the problem just as well without getting angry.
- You hurt or scare people with your anger.
- You will get in trouble if you get mad.
- You'll do more harm than good by getting upset.
- The answer to the question "Is this really helping the situation?" is NO.