



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Sutton

What is anger?

Anger is part of being human, and is a natural response to feeling threatened, hurt or violated, or to something that does not seem fair. Anger itself is a normal process, but problems can occur if it is not managed in the right way. Expressing anger through violence and aggression can be destructive, while suppressing anger can also be damaging. When we feel angry it is often because we want something changed. Expressing ourselves assertively, rather than angrily, can be a useful way of achieving change.

Anger can vary from mild irritation to intense fury and rage. People can experience a range of physical and psychological symptoms (symptom box). People can react to things outside them in an angry way, or people can become angry through thinking about their own personal problems, or by an upsetting memory. The physical symptoms of anger are similar to anxiety (see symptoms box), but the way we recognise those feelings will depend on the situation we are in.

Anger management strategies

There are some strategies that can help. The books and websites over the page have more detail about strategies that can be useful.

Knowing when to walk away

It is helpful to recognise when you are becoming angry before you lose control, or “see red.” If you feel that you are becoming unable to think straight or feel that you might hurt someone, explain that you are too angry to talk now, if you can, and go somewhere quiet to calm down. There may be situations where this is not always possible, where other strategies might be better.

Getting to know your anger

Look at when you get angry and explore the good and bad consequences of getting angry. Think of times when you have managed not to get angry – what was different? How did you react differently?

Improving communication

Often when people are angry, they find it hard to communicate what they are feeling, or do not communicate it at all. When angry, people tend to jump to conclusions and assume things. It is really important to listen to what the other person is saying when you are angry, which can be very difficult to do.

Learning assertive communication skills can help reduce your feelings of anger, while recognising the problems you faced that made you angry. The websites and books overleaf contain information about being assertive.

Fight or flight

When people become angry they experience what is called the “fight or flight” response. This is a release of adrenaline and other hormones that get the body ready to run (fly) or attack (fight) when we perceive a threat.

People may experience

- Breathlessness or difficulty breathing
- Their heart racing (palpitations)
- Chest pains
- Hot flushes or chills

These symptoms are similar to anxiety and are a result of the same bodily responses.

When it anger is uncontrolled or unresolved (not expressed) there can be longer term effects.

Physical

- Digestion problems (including heart burn, irritable bowel syndrome and stomach ulcers)
- Problems with the heart and circulatory system
- Difficulties sleeping (insomnia)
- A higher sensitivity to pain
- Skin disorders like eczema
- A weaker immune system so you are more likely to catch colds and infections.

Psychological

- Feeling depressed when the anger is turned in on yourself
- Feeling anxious
- Losing confidence in yourself (low self esteem)
- Using drugs and alcohol to relieve feelings of anger or to allow yourself to express them more
- Hurting yourself (self-harm)
- Being emotionally or physically aggressive toward other people

Other mental health problems are related to anger.



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Anger management strategies (continued)

Relaxation

Simple relaxation tools, such as controlled breathing and relaxing imagery, can help calm down angry feelings. These techniques may help to keep you calm, even when you are not angry. www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/coping_relaxation.shtml has some useful tips on relaxation.

Changing Your Environment

Sometimes the situation or environment that we are in can make us stressed, tense and angry. Some people may feel trapped by their situations. Try to give yourself a break. Make sure you have some "personal time" scheduled for times of the day that you know are particularly stressful.

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

Websites

- www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/coping_angermanagement1.shtml
- www.angermanage.co.uk
- www.nhsdirect.com/articles/article.aspx?articleId=1890
- www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/How+to/How+to+deal+with+anger.htm

Books

- Beating Anger: The Eight-point Plan for Coping with Rage by Mike Fisher ISBN: 1844135640
- Taking Charge of Anger: How to Resolve Conflict, Sustain Relationships and Express Yourself Without Losing Control by W.Robert Nay ISBN: 1572306807
- Overcoming Anger and Irritability by William Davies ISBN-10: 1854875957
- The Anger Habit Workbook: Practical Steps for Anger Management by Carl Semmelroth ISBN: 0595245625

Local non-NHS services Your GP will also be able to advise you of local services and how to contact them.

<p>Everyman Project The Everyman Project provides individual and group therapy to people who are violent towards their partners, and support for partners.</p> <p>Head office, 1A Waterlow Rd London N19 5NJ</p> <p>Telephone 020 7263 8884 Email everymanproject@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Open Door Counselling Open Door Counselling offers Psychodynamic therapy for young people and adults. For more information and to access the service, please call.</p> <p>1 Grove Cottage Grove Park High Street, Carshalton, SM53BB</p> <p>Telephone 020 8770 4388 Email karen-opendoor@fsmail.net</p>
<p>Other Useful Numbers</p> <p>SaneLine: 0845 767 8000 (Monday- Sunday 1-11pm) Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90 (everyday, 24 hours) NHS Direct: 0845 46467 (every day, 24 hours) Mental Health Helpline: 0500 639 000</p>	<p>Sutton Counselling Service Sutton Counselling aims to offer affordable long term and brief psychodynamic counselling to adults (18+) in Sutton.</p> <p>21a Cheam Road, Sutton, SM1 1SN</p> <p>Telephone 020 8661 7869 Email suttoncounselling@btinternet.com</p>
<p>Private Therapy</p> <p>If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommended that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:</p> <p>British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies www.babcp.com British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy www.bacp.co.uk/ British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm</p>	