The 3 Rs of Anger

ANGER IS A SIGNAL.

YOUR RESPONSE IS A CHOICE.

A practical crisis-clinic workbook for noticing anger, understanding what it may be telling you, and choosing a safer next step.

Use this workbook your way

Write a word, complete a page, or ask someone to help. You can pause or skip any exercise.

RECOGNIZE - What is happening?

REFLECT - What do I need to understand?

RESPOND - What is the next safe step?

Read This First: Your Safety

This workbook provides coping skills and reflection activities. It does not replace mental health therapy, assessment, medication, crisis intervention, or emergency care.

If you need help now

Tell clinic staff immediately if you feel unable to stay safe, or if you are worried you may hurt yourself or another person.

Crisis support: call or text 988

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available in the United States for emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, and mental health crises.

Immediate danger: call 911

For life-threatening emergencies or immediate danger, call 911 or seek emergency care. Do not drive yourself if you feel unsafe or unable to focus.

If a question or body-focused exercise makes your distress worse, stop. You can choose another approach or ask a staff member to stay with you. You do not need to complete this workbook to receive help.

THE METHOD

How the 3 Rs Work

The goal is not to make anger disappear. It is to notice the reaction early, better understand what is happening, and choose an action that protects your safety and values.

R1 Recognize

Notice the trigger, thoughts, body signals, and urge.

R2 Reflect

Separate what happened from what you assume. Identify your feelings and needs.

R3 Respond

Choose the safest action available. Ask for help when needed.

START HERE

Quick Anger Check

How strong is my anger right now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0 = low or manageable

10 = highest intensity

What do I notice in my body?

- ☐ Tight or clenched
- ☐ Hot or flushed
- ☐ Shaky or restless
- ☐ Fast heartbeat
- ☐ Heavy or shut down
- ☐ Other body changes

What do I feel an urge to do?

- ☐ Raise my voice
- ☐ Send a message
- ☐ Leave or withdraw
- ☐ Argue or prove a point
- ☐ Break something
- ☐ Ask for help

What happened right before my anger increased?

What would help me stay safe in the next few minutes?

STEP ONE

R1: Recognize

Notice without judging. Your feelings deserve attention, and you are still responsible for choosing safe actions.

What happened just before I became angry?

What thought showed up first?

What was the first sign in my body?

What did I feel pulled to do?

Recognize Your Warning Signs

My early warning signs

- [ ] Tight chest
- [ ] Clenched jaw
- [ ] Racing heartbeat
- [ ] Hot face
- [ ] Pacing
- [ ] Shaking
- [ ] Raised voice
- [ ] Tunnel vision
- [ ] Withdrawing
- [ ] Other

Which early sign is easiest for me to notice?

What can I do when I first notice that sign?

Remember

An early warning sign gives you an opportunity to act sooner. It is information, not a failure.

STEP TWO

R2: Reflect

Slow the story down. Strong anger can make an interpretation feel certain even when information is incomplete.

What facts do I know about what happened?

What am I guessing or assuming?

What else might be true?

What information might I be missing?

What Is Under the Anger?

I may also be feeling

- [ ] Hurt
- [ ] Disrespected
- [ ] Ignored
- [ ] Sad
- [ ] Exhausted
- [ ] Fear
- [ ] Embarrassed
- [ ] Powerless
- [ ] Overwhelmed
- [ ] Other

What do I need most right now?

What could I ask for without threatening or blaming anyone?

A useful question

Is this need about safety, space, fairness, respect, connection, or something else?

STEP THREE

R3: Respond

Choose one action that reduces the chance of harm. You do not have to resolve the entire disagreement right now.

Safer responses I could try

- [ ] Lower my voice
- [ ] Ask for a break
- [ ] Drink water
- [ ] Move toward clinic staff
- [ ] Set my phone aside
- [ ] Use a grounding skill
- [ ] Contact a trusted person
- [ ] Wait before responding

The safest next step for me is:

Words I can use to communicate my need:

A sentence to borrow

"I am upset. I want to handle this safely. I need a few minutes or some support before we continue."

Reaction or Response?

Think about the possible impact of your choices. This is for learning, not self-criticism.

If I react immediately, what might happen?

If I pause and respond, what could improve?

One action I want to avoid is:

One safer action I will try instead is:

Repair After an Anger Moment

Use this page when you are steadier. Repair does not mean taking blame for everything or contacting someone who is unsafe.

Who or what may have been affected by my response?

What part can I take responsibility for?

Is it safe and appropriate to apologize or repair? How?

What support or boundary would help next time?

Practice the 3 Rs

Anger before practice

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0 = low or manageable

10 = highest intensity

RECOGNIZE - What triggered the anger?

REFLECT - What feeling or need needs attention?

RESPOND - What is one safe next step?

Anger after practice (if helpful)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0 = low or manageable

10 = highest intensity

My Personal 3R Card

Make a short plan you can refer to when anger starts rising. Share it with a trusted person or clinician if useful.

My clearest early warning sign:

My most common trigger:

My best way to pause or get grounded:

A safe person, place, or service I can contact:

QUICK PRACTICE

One-Page 3R Reset

Use only the parts you need. If your safety is at risk, ask for help first.

1. RECOGNIZE - I notice anger rising because...

2. REFLECT - Under the anger, I might be feeling or needing...

3. RESPOND - My next safe step is...

One moment at a time

I can feel anger without acting on every urge. I can pause, ask for help, and choose one next step.

My Safety and Support Plan

If you may hurt yourself or someone else, feel unable to control unsafe behavior, or are in immediate danger, do not rely on this worksheet alone. Alert staff or seek urgent help.

My warning signs that I need immediate support:

A person or clinic staff member I can tell:

A safer place I can stay while help is arranged:

Words I can say when asking for immediate help:

Help is available

Call or text 988 for crisis support. Call 911 for immediate danger. Avoid driving, confrontation, or being alone if you cannot stay safe.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Credits & Additional Resources

The 3 Rs of Anger is an educational coping-skills workbook designed for guided or independent reflection in behavioral health and crisis support settings. It is not a formal assessment or a stand-alone treatment.

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Bodhi Life Balance

Find additional mental health workbooks

https://bodhilifebalance.com/mental-health-workbooks

Edition

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The 3 Rs is a practical reflection framework. Grounding, emotion identification, and safer communication may support coping, but results vary; professional assessment and intervention may be needed.