

## **Anger - what is it and how to manage it**

### What is anger?

Anger is just a feeling. It's neither good nor bad. Anger is only a problem when it turns into aggression or rage. Whether that's smacking, screaming and shouting, damaging property, putting someone down or giving someone the 'silent treatment'. Angry feelings also may cause you to withdraw from the world and turn your anger inward, which can impact your wellbeing. Remember anger can be positive if it is used to stand up for someone or when it leads you to create social change.

Anger lets us know when we need to deal with something - for example, when we are being treated unfairly. When we learn to express anger calmly, it can help us to assert ourselves from a position of strength, and to communicate what we need in ways that don't threaten other people.

The trouble is that very few of us were shown how to express anger in a healthy way when we were kids. Most of us experienced anger from the adults around us as aggression in some form. So, we find ourselves repeating similar behaviour as adults, despite our best efforts not to. This is because these behaviours are rooted in our subconscious.

### ***Do you agree with the above? If not, what would you change here?***

Typical Anger Management Programmes cover some version of the following

- Changing the thinking that generates anger
- Overcoming stress as a source of anger
- Learning to identify and regulate emotions
- Overcoming unmet emotional needs as a source of anger
- Overcoming shadow projections and loss of personal goals as sources of anger
- Overcoming shame as a source of anger and developing self-compassion
- Learning to set boundaries and mastering calm, clear communication
- Overcoming anger that has its roots in past experiences
- Understanding the angry brain and learning to stop anger escalating
- How to stay on track in the future

### ***Do you think there are any sections of this that you haven't explored or don't feel are relevant to you? If not, why not?***

To manage anger, it's helpful to first identify triggers, practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing, and try to change negative thought patterns. Engaging in physical activity and seeking support from friends, family, or professionals can also be beneficial.

### ***I don't think any of the above is a surprise. For you, would being more practical and methodical help with this e.g. creating a list of triggers? Specifically looking for themes in thought patterns or repeated thoughts?***

### 5x5 rule

Will this matter in 5 years? If the answer is no, it's a signal to limit the amount of time and emotional energy you spend on it

5 minutes to acknowledge the issue, process your feelings and act if needed. Then consciously decide to move on. This isn't about dismissing your emotions but putting them in context and allowing you to focus energy on what truly matters to you.

***This is a common strategy suggested to those who deal with anger. Do you think this will work for you? What are the barriers to using this? (if there are any?)***

### Strategies to manage anger

#### *Recognising and Understanding Your Anger:*

- Identify triggers: Pay attention to situations, people, or thoughts that tend to make you angry.
- Understand the root of your anger: Is it frustration, fear, sadness, or something else?
- Acknowledge your feelings: Don't suppress anger but also don't let it consume you.

#### *Managing Anger in the Moment:*

- Deep breathing: Inhale deeply and exhale slowly to calm your nervous system.
- Mindfulness and meditation: Focus on the present moment to reduce reactivity.
- Progressive muscle relaxation: Tense and release muscle groups to reduce physical tension associated with anger.
- Take a time-out: Step away from the situation to cool down.
- Change your physical posture: Standing tall or leaning back can help you feel more grounded.
- Engage in a distracting activity: Listen to music, read a book, or take a walk.

#### *Addressing Underlying Issues:*

- Seek professional help: A therapist or counsellor can help you explore the causes of your anger and develop coping strategies.
- Address any underlying mental health conditions: Anger can be a symptom of conditions like depression or anxiety.
- Practice self-care: Make time for activities you enjoy and ensure you're getting enough sleep and healthy food.

#### *Changing Your Thinking:*

- Challenge negative thoughts: Instead of thinking "I'm always getting pushed around," try "I'm feeling frustrated right now, and it's okay to feel that way,"
- Replace negative self-talk: Identify and reframe negative thoughts with more realistic and positive ones.
- Practice empathy: Try to understand the other person's perspective, even if you don't agree with it.

#### *Developing Healthy Coping Mechanisms:*

- Exercise: Physical activity is a great way to release tension and reduce stress.
- Creative outlets: Writing, painting, music, or dancing can help you express and process your emotions.
- Social support: Talk to trusted friends, family members, or support groups about your feelings.
- Forgiveness: Releasing grudges can help reduce anger and improve your overall well-being,
- Set healthy boundaries: Learn to say "no" and protect your time and energy.

*Long-Term Management:*

- Practice patience: It takes time to develop new coping skills.
- Be kind to yourself: Anger is a normal human emotion, and it's okay to feel it sometimes.
- Focus on small steps: Don't try to change everything at once. Set realistic goals and celebrate your progress.

***Looking through this list, are there any 'quick wins' here? Things you could easily include in life. Some of them are things you already do or have done in the past, so getting them back in the routine may be a good start (when life has settled a little)***