

Anger¹

What is Anger?

Anger is the name we give to the strong, aggressive feelings that we get when something happens that we do not like. When we are angry, there are signs and symptoms that warn us. In situations of high stress, chemicals are released into the blood stream, making the body react physically. This is called the 'fight or flight' response. These changes warn that we are heading towards 'losing it.'

Typical Symptoms of Anger

- ◆ Raised heart rate and blood pressure
- ◆ Rapid, shallow breathing, chest heaviness, throat feeling restricted, holding of breath
- ◆ Stomach upset, queasiness, vomiting and/ or diarrhea
- ◆ Muscles tightening, particularly shoulders, neck, jaw, and hands into fists
- ◆ Changes in skin temperature: face and hands feeling hot

When anger escalates, we are flooded with these feelings, making clear thinking and emotional control difficult. If we notice the symptoms early, we can take control. Anger can arise when our needs or expectations are not met. Some exploration when you are not angry helps to determine whether the anger is/was justified in the particular situation. If you recognise when anger is starting to arise, you are then in a better position to control it before it controls you.

Passive Anger

Passive anger is when we hold our anger inside or deny that we are angry. We avoid emotional discussion and withdraw, refusing to reveal what is wrong, although the we may feel terrible.

Aggressive Anger

Aggressive anger involves shouting, swearing, name calling, pushing, slapping, hitting, blocking, or intimidating, either emotionally or physically. We often regret this later and suffer feelings of guilt.

Passive-aggressive Anger

Passive aggressive anger is when we do things indirectly to another person that we know will upset them, or fail to do what they want us to do. We may not know that we are angry but feel out of sorts.

Assertive Anger

Assertive Anger is the best one to adopt. You express your feelings without being unpleasant or aggressive. This can lead to a thoughtful discussion and bring a resolution of the conflict.

Managing Anger

When not angry consider, what are your anger symptoms? Know your 'hot buttons' – what triggers your anger. Consider whether your response is out of proportion with the cause. Re-frame the situation by thinking about it differently. Learn how to manage the physical symptoms. Slow your breathing. Practice when you are not in a 'crisis' situation so that you are ready for when you are.

Ensure that you have enough relaxation and light or fun activities. Have enough rest and sleep. Keeping your lifestyle balanced is essential to managing your emotions and strong feelings. If you would like to learn very effective Mindfulness techniques to manage anger, get in touch below.

Dr Pauline Enright Mobile: 0409 191 342
Email: pauline@radiancehobart.com.au

PO Box 907, Sandy Bay, TAS 7006
Website: www.radiancehobart.com.au

¹ Taken in part from *RAGE workbook*, Richmond Community Services.