

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Definitions:

Anger: the strong, often intense *emotion we feel* when things do not go the way we want them to go.

Righteous anger: this is the anger that follows a great injustice: sexual assault, robbery, accident caused by a drunk driver. These are situations society would agree are wrong.

Anger from loss: this follows the loss of an important relationship through death, divorce,

Selfish anger: these are the day to day situations where we want our way, we want people around us to behave the way we think they should. This is a product of the belief "I deserve to have what I want, when I want it, even if it imposes on the rights of others."

Displaced anger: anger that spills over onto other separate, unrelated areas. Often seen as an angry attitude, chip on their shoulder, testy, short fuse, "walk on egg shells around him," moody,...

Denied anger: "I'm okay, that doesn't bother me." "I just count to ten and I am fine."

Angry behavior: anger is an emotion, a feeling. We all experience it. BUT when we make the choice to put it into an action or harsh words is when things become more complicated. This is also called "acting out." Abuse, defiance, disobedience, fighting, throwing things, driving recklessly, breaking things, substance abuse, delinquent/criminal behaviors, are some examples of acting out.

Anger scale: there are many degrees of anger. On the low end there is annoyed while the high end is rage. In the middle is aggravated. Each individual has to describe for themselves what constitutes their personal scale.

Sources:

Anger is NOT usually the product of what other people do; it is the product of how we choose to respond to what they do. (e.g., one morning someone cuts me off on the highway, I lay on the horn and fume; another morning the same thing happens and I don't even respond. The response is MY CHOICE, not the person who cut me off.)

My choice may be influenced by a number of things:

- Did my role models show me this was an appropriate way to respond?
- Was I "spoiled" as a child and learned early that I can get my way much of the time? Did I learn to use guilt and doubt on my parents to get my way?

- Have I experienced injustices that hurt me deeply, and continue to hurt me even though the incident(s) is(are) past?
- Have I learned I can intimidate, manipulate, control others by acting angry?
- Am I entitled, special that I deserve things to go the way I want them to go? Am I self centered, selfish, narcissistic?

Facts:

Arguments are always started by the second comment. The first does not start an argument. It may be an inflammatory statement, but it doesn't turn into an argument until the second person responds. If they do not respond there is no argument.

Research show that men who explode with anger are at greater risk of having a stroke or heart attack. (American heart Association). Conclusion: acting out anger can kill you.

We make ourselves mad/angry. To say others make us mad/angry means they have control over our feelings, not us. We are a like a puppet and they are pulling the strings. Just not so.

Punching a pillow, wall,...acting out the anger to feel better is wrong. You do not want to learn that in order to feel better I have to be aggressive, hurt something, someone.

Denied and unmanaged anger leads to physical problems such as high blood pressure. It impacts all facets of a person's life.

Anger management:

1. understand your anger in relation to the above information
2. talk it out
3. write it out (journal)
4. work it out through exercise
5. problem solve
6. learn to accept things you cannot change
7. sorry, you are not special and you do not deserve to have everything your way.
8. diffuse angry people by responding: "I see." "Could be." "you really feel strongly about this." Listen; don't inflame by explaining where they are wrong, how they SHOULD feel, or how your situation is worse. Talking and explaining don't work when someone is having a "fit." Talk when everyone is calm. (for parents: "if I were your age, I'd be angry too.")

Richard E. Wheland, LSW
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