



Anger Management



acacia EAP
employee assistance program

Everyone feels angry from time to time. It is a normal and natural response to vexacious or difficult situations. It is typically characterised by feelings of stress, frustration, and irritation, often associated with a sense of injustice and/or lack of control.

Identifying Anger

When we are angry, our body goes through certain biological and physiological changes. For example, you might experience a spike in hormones, such as adrenaline and noradrenaline, an increase in your heart rate, energy levels, and muscle tension, or even elevated body temperature or blood pressure.

Anger doesn't look the same in everyone – we all express it differently. For some people, screaming might be an outlet for their anger while others might express it by physically hitting an object or even another person.

Some characteristics you might notice when you are feeling angry include raised voices, clenched fists or jaw, frowning, rapid heartbeats, sweating, and pacing or trembling. Anger as an emotion can also trigger parts of the fight or flight response.

Although anger itself isn't a mental illness, in some cases, anger can be connected to mood disorders, substance use disorders, and other mental health conditions.

Anger only becomes a concern when it impacts your actions and begins to affect your daily functioning and the way you relate with people. Anger can range in intensity, from a slight annoyance to rage. It can sometimes be excessive or irrational. In these cases, it can be hard to keep the emotion in check and could cause you to behave in ways you wouldn't otherwise.

Managing Anger

Managing anger doesn't mean you never get angry. Rather, it involves learning how to recognise, cope with, and express your anger in healthy and productive ways.

Anger management is a skill that everyone can learn. Failing to manage your anger can lead to a variety of issues – you might yell at your loved ones, threaten a co-worker, send rash emails, develop health problems, or even resort to physical violence.

Not all anger issues are that serious, however. Instead, your anger might involve wasting time thinking about upsetting events, getting frustrated in traffic, or venting about work.

Finding healthy ways to cope with anger is very important. If you've been finding it difficult to keep your anger in check in certain situations, here are a couple of coping mechanisms that might help.

Identify the Trigger

The first step to coping with anger is identifying the root cause of your anger. Some common anger triggers include feeling wronged or mistreated, believing that nobody is listening to you, getting blamed for things you are not responsible for, feeling insecure or unsafe, or being insulted.

Recognise Your Warning Signs

If you're like some people, you may feel like your anger instantly hits you. Perhaps you go from calm to agitated quickly and without warning. But there are still likely warning signs when your anger is on the rise. Recognising your early signs of anger can assist you with regulating your emotions, reducing the impacts that your anger may have on yourself and others.

Walking Away

As soon as you start feeling emotions of anger, walk away from the situation. Give yourself short breaks during times of the day that tend to be stressful. A few moments of quiet time can help you feel better prepared to handle what's ahead without getting irritated or angry.

Mindfulness

Meditation, mindfulness, and self-care are beneficial in helping to control our emotions. Begin with simple meditation techniques like deep breathing exercises. Take a second before reacting when you are faced with a difficult situation. You can take several deep breaths to calm yourself or try to count until you feel calmer.



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Physical Activity

Exercising isn't just great for your physical health – it's also great for your mental health. Physical activity can help productively regulate our emotions like anger. Consider going for a quick run or swim when you are angry.

Avoid Triggers

If you tend to become angry quickly, it's useful to identify and avoid your triggers. For example, if you find that having a conversation with a particular person or about a particular topic tends to make you angry, avoid them or the topic until you have better control over your anger.

Final Words

Anger is a normal human emotion, but it's important to find healthy ways to express it. Learning to control anger can be a challenge at times and cause you to do things you regret or hurt those around you.

If your anger seems out of control or is impacting your relationships, you may have anger issues. You can engage with an EAP Professional through Acacia EAP to help you work through your anger, identify triggers, and explore any underlying mental health conditions that may be contributing to or triggering your anger.