



ANGER IS  
AN OUTWARD  
EXPRESSION OF  
HURT, FEAR AND  
REJECTION

By Yumna Zubi  
Clinical Psychologist  
Rivonia  
admin@psychologycouch.com

# WHAT IS ANGER?

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger is a normal healthy emotional response just like sadness, fear and joy. Often patients come to therapy with the idea that they want to get rid of anger as it is a negative emotion. It is important to understand that emotions are the barometer of your body. For example, having a broken leg causes us pain which tells us something is wrong and protects us from walking or running on it to create further damage. Anger is an indication that something is not right, needs to be attended to. Anger is a secondary emotion often protecting us from feelings of rejection and injustices. For example. If someone physically punched another person, chances are that the person would feel angry. This anger is protecting underlying feelings of hurt and injustice. It is unlikely in the moment, the person would tell the other person their behavior was hurtful and unfair. The ability to understand and express feelings in

a healthy way is an important part of processing the anger.

Anger, when full blown is probably the least rational and least controllable of feelings. Giving into anger with the attendant loss of control is very frightening to someone who always feels the need to “keep a grip” on yourself.

Anger comprises on a continuum of emotions ranging from the rage at one extreme, to impatience and irritation at the other. Frustration is perhaps the most common form of anger that most people experience.

Irritation

Murderous

Impatience

Rage

## WHEN DOES ANGER BECOME A PROBLEM?

Anger becomes a problem when a person's behavior becomes out of

control and it causes distress to them and negatively impacts interpersonal relationships. Some symptoms to be aware of to help evaluate if a patient's anger is impacting on them and those around them:

### Physical abuse

- Verbally abusive language
- Yelling and Shouting at Others
- Threatening others
- Destroying things
- Rage over insignificant events
- Increase in heart rate
- Rapid breathing
- Sweating
- Dry Mouth

The first step in treating Anger issues is to acknowledge that it has become a problem. Secondly, is for the patient to have the awareness of their behavior and thoughts.

EMOTION	MESSAGE	ACTION
<b>Anger</b>	Not getting their own way. Feeling forced to make a compromise that patient is uncomfortable with. Anger warns a person that the compromise may make them give up power. Anger is a wild general feeling often covering for hurt, fear, or frustration. Anger is a secondary emotion usually covering up feelings of rejection and injustice. It is easier to express anger than to express the feeling of hurt and rejection	the need to analyze the compromise and decide whether the person is prepared to make it. How will giving up power in this instance affect the person? Once one has made a decision they should accept it, live with it and let go of the energy. If it's covering for other feelings, they should work directly with those emotions.
<b>Aggression</b>	Acting out anger which causes a tremendous loss of energy. It is a defense against feeling insecure or vulnerable.	

**Tips on learning to deal with Anger**

**DIFFERENT WAYS TO REDUCE THE INTENSITY OF ANGER BEFORE DEALING WITH IT.**

- If a person's anger is very intense, they are probably not ready to talk to someone yet. Instead, they should try to engage in a distraction technique to help reduce the intensity of the anger until they are able to directly confront it. Since Anger is such a physical sensation physical modes of expressing it such as exercising, boxing, punching a bag, screaming into a pillow may help reduce some of the intensity of it.
- SEPARATING THEMSELVES FROM THE ANGER: PEOPLE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE NOT THEIR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS. EVEN THOUGH THE FEELING MAY BE INTENSE IT WILL PASS. THEY SHOULD NOT BECOME THEIR ANGER!
- Understanding why they are angry, so they should really try to connect with the primary emotions that are behind the Anger. Anger serves as defense to protect a person from feeling the rejection and injustice. The moment they can connect with it and understand what they are really angry about, the more the anger symptoms alleviate the better

their ability to process and handle the situation effectively.

- After the anger has reduced to a moderate level, they should talk it out with someone. If possible share with a neutral friend first before directly confronting the person with whom they are angry.

**CHALLENGING FEARS OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THEY EXPRESS THEIR ANGER**

- Usually these fears are exaggerated and unreasonable, for example they would have feelings such as, "what if I go crazy? Or what if I do something terrible?". Remember that anger withheld for a long time may seem ominous at first. Angry feelings will diminish as soon as one allows themselves to experience them. If a person's anger is intense, they should try discharging it into an inanimate object or on paper instead of dumping it onto someone they would like to blame for their feelings.

**WORKIN ON OVERCOMING FEARS ABOUT ALIENATING PEOPLE THAT ONE CARES ABOUT WHEN THEY ALLOW THEIR ANGER TO SHOW.**

- Being able to appropriately communicate angry feelings to significant others is, in fact, an indication that one does care about them. If one didn't

care they would be more likely to withdraw from them and withhold their true feelings.

**COMMUNICATING ANGRY FEELINGS ASSERTIVELY RATHER THAN AGGRESSIVELY**

- It is possible to for a person to convey their anger or frustration to other people in a way that respects their dignity – in a way that doesn't blame or put them down. One way is to begin with what they say. In other words they can use statement such as, "I feel angry when you break your agreements, instead of you make me so mad when you break your agreements". These statements maintain respect for the other person; you-statements put people on the defensive and assign them blame for your feelings. Other people don't make a person angry, they react angrily to their own interpretation of the significance of another person's behavior. Sometimes a person may say or do something that goes against their standards of what is acceptable or just and so they feel angry. People can learn to convey their angry feelings without hurting, judging or blaming others by using effective communication skills.

**MHM**

**References available upon request**