

Anger Management

Do I Have an Anger Problem?

Everyone gets angry. It's a normal human experience, but it can become a problem if you lose control of it. Here are some signs you might have an anger problem:

- Avoiding situations that might make you angry because you fear you might lose control
- Disliking yourself because you're angry all the time
- Relationship or legal troubles stemming from anger
- Health troubles like hypertension or ulcers

Why Do I Rely on Anger?

Anger is a defensive emotion. It's almost always used to cover-up more vulnerable feelings like fear, self-doubt, and sadness. Anger makes us feel empowered, but it also makes it harder for us to address the underlying feelings causing it.

Identifying and addressing the vulnerable feelings beneath your anger can be a powerful anger management tool. It can also be difficult, so you might want to consider seeking help with that process.

The Anger Bottle

It can be helpful to think of anger as something that fills up a bottle inside you. Your bottle only has so much room, so it gets closer to overflowing (or exploding!) every time you add more anger.

To prevent an explosion, you should empty out your anger bottle every now & then. Let go of grudges, resolve ongoing conflicts, & accept that you have occasionally been wronged. By doing these things, you'll reduce the likelihood your anger will spill out of control.

Escalating Vs. De-Escalating Thoughts

We all have a running mental dialogue in our heads called *self-talk*. With regard to anger, self-talk can be escalating or de-escalating.

Escalating self-talk is a thought process that makes you angrier. Examples include statements like, "This is so unfair!" and "Why does this always happen to me!"

De-escalating self-talk is the exact opposite. These statements help you to calm down. For example, you might tell yourself, "This isn't as big a deal as I'm making it out to be."

While angry, you should monitor your self-talk for escalating ideas. When you notice them, consider what you would say to an angry friend to calm her. Then, say that to yourself.

It's also important to monitor your dialogue for "You" statements like, "You always act like this!" Such statements almost always escalate anger. Try replacing them with "I" self-statements like, "I need to learn how to be more patient with people."

Know Your Anger Cues

Anger is usually associated with a variety of physical signs. It's important to identify the earliest bodily sensation linked with your anger. Does your chest hurt? Do you start to sweat? Do you feel tingling in your fingers? Do you reflexively clench your fists?

Once you identify the physical signs that you might lose your temper, you should monitor yourself for those signs. When you notice them, that's your cue you need a break. Walk away, self-soothe, and re-engage later.

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