

When Professional Help Is Indicated:

You might consider counseling to learn how to handle anger better.



If you feel that your anger is really out of control and that you have the potential to hurt yourself or someone else by your actions or words.



If it is having an impact on your relationships and on important parts of your life.



If your medical provider or other person in your life expresses concern

You can be referred to the behavioral health specialist who can work with you in developing a range of techniques for changing your thinking and your behavior. This treatment is not designed to find out “why” you are angry; it is designed to give you strategies to deal with the anger you are feeling in a healthier manner.

You will need to practice the techniques given to you in either individual or group sessions. This isn't easy—you are trying to replace one set of responses that you have used for many years with another set of responses, but it can be done.



Sunshine Community Health Center

HC89 Box 8190
Talkeetna, AK 99676
(Mile 4.4 Talkeetna Spur Rd.)
(907) 733-2273 or (907) 495-4100

Anger management books available for loan at SCHC:

- Anger – Carol Tarvis
- Letting Go of Anger – Ron and Pat Potter-Effron
- The Dance of Anger – Harriet G. Lerner

To find information online,
scan the QR code below or
visit this webpage:

www.sunshineclinic.org/behavioral-health/anger-management/



Anger Management

Learn:

- What it is and early warning systems
- Defusing strategies
- Ways to change thinking patterns
- When you need professional help



What is Anger?

Anger is both an emotion and a behavior. It is completely normal to feel anger and to express it. Why then has anger come to be viewed so negatively? It is because it can get out of control and become destructive. When this happens it can lead to problems in personal relationships, at work, with health and in the overall quality of life. Anger can start as either a thought or a feeling and then move to become a behavior. The behavior is how you express the feeling and this expression can be appropriate or inappropriate.

Early Warning System

By recognizing signs of anger early on, we are far more likely to be able to defuse the situation and solve the problem. These signs include:

- Stressors – things that commonly trigger or worsen your anger such as problems with your child or money.
- Physical signs – Getting red in the face, clenching fists, etc.
- Cognitive signs – Thinking that life is unfair or you are being treated unjustly
- Emotional signs – Feelings that might lead to angry behavior such as feeling tense, guilty, embarrassed, or annoyed, etc.

Defusing Strategies

There are many strategies or techniques that can be used to defuse angry feelings and help stop the unhealthy expression / suppression of anger. These include:

- Consciously determine to be calm – Don't react, think. Count to 10 or 100 just to give yourself some time to slow down your breathing and get your physical reactions more in control.
- Communicate – When someone upsets you, tell them. Don't hold the feelings in. Calmly, using "I" statements, say how you feel.
- Remove yourself from the scene until you can respond without anger – Get some space from the person or situation that has triggered your anger. Use this "time out" to let out your energy, breathe deeply, or talk to a friend.
- Smile – If you smile you will feel more relaxed and others will respond better to you.
- Frequently take time for yourself – Do something you enjoy like walking in the park, swimming, reading, or seeing a feel-good movie. Do something nice for someone.
- Look for the positives – Don't dwell on the negatives. See the glass as half full.

Cognitive Restructuring

This phrase simply means learning how to think differently. Since feelings tend to match thinking, if the way a person sees and interprets a situation is not accurate, the feeling that is associated with the thought is often distorted. This then could lead to any number of potential angry reactions that may not be appropriate for the situation. If a new way of thinking can be learned, then feelings and actions are likely to be more healthy. Some tips for changing your thinking include:

- Replace exaggerated thoughts with more rational thoughts – Instead of thinking that everything is a really big thing, use the phrase "in the scope of life, how important is this?"
- Turn expectations into desires – Instead of saying "I demand" say "I would like"—you will be less disappointed.
- Ban "all or nothing" thinking – replace the words "always" and "never" with "sometimes" and "maybe".
- Use positive self-talk – Instead of saying "I can't" say "I can".
- Turn lemons into lemonade – Instead of being upset at what you can't do, be excited about what you can do.

Sources:

- www.apa.org/pubinfo/anger
- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/anger-management/MY00689>
- <http://www.angermanagementtips.com/tips.htm>