

Anger (Mis)Management



Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.

Objective: Clients will better understand harmful versus helpful ways of dealing with and expressing anger.

Audience: This tool is applicable to all individuals. However, if clients are engaging in conflict at excessive levels or exhibiting violent or destructive behavior, then it may be appropriate to avoid this tool (and others) in this module. In such cases, consult with a professional involved with domestic violence to identify necessary services.

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Educator Instructions: Review the instructions printed on the tool. Have the client first answer all items on the top portion of the tool before proceeding. Reinforce that it is normal for individuals to engage in some poor forms of anger management. This tool is primarily to help the client understand how they respond to anger. If the client reports many negative behaviors and few positive behaviors of managing anger, use other manage tools to help them manage anger, such as "Keeping Your Cool".

Discussion Starter: Anger is a common emotion that everyone experiences. There are many different ways individuals can deal with anger, and different people deal with anger in different ways. Think about the last time you were angry with your romantic partner (or child, co-worker, relative, etc. if not in a relationship). How did you respond? What did you do? Let's look at some different ways people tend to manage their anger. Place a check next to any statement that is similar to how you might deal with your anger.

Follow-up: In later conversations, ask how they are dealing with their anger. Do they still see themselves dealing with anger similarly? Are they dealing with anger differently? Have they shared any of this information with anyone else? Again, if more severe or problematic anger management is reported or inferred (violence, substance abuse), pursue additional professional help.

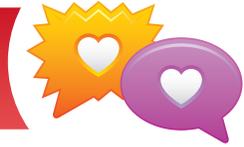
Based on the clients' responses, you can let them know the following items associated with different types of ways to handle anger:

- *Physical or verbal anger* – Physical or verbal attacks can provide momentary relief, but mistreat the person to whom the attack is directed and often leads to more anger.
- *Suppressed anger* – Suppressing anger does not make it go away and can cause unresolved problems to keep building in a relationship. It can also lead to negative health impacts, such as headaches, stomach aches, ulcers, and other illnesses.
- *Passive aggressive anger* – Passive aggressive comments can alleviate some of the anger within a person, but they do not help resolve the problem.





Anger (Mis)Management



In any relationship, feelings of anger are going to occur. The intensity of angry feelings varies from person to person and from couple to couple. How you deal with anger can affect you and your relationship.

How do you deal with anger?

Below is a list of different ways that some individuals deal with their anger. Think back to some recent times when you were angry. What did you do? Check each behavior below that describes ways you tend to deal with anger.

Five common myths about anger

- If you don't look angry, you're not.
- If you ignore anger, it will go away.
- If you vent, it will go away.
- Holding anger in will not harm you.
- Expressing anger or hurt will harm your relationship.

Physical or Verbal Anger

- I am forceful when things don't go my way.
- If I am upset, I'll hit something.
- If things are bad enough, I'll throw something.
- I swear loudly to blow off steam.
- I feel like hitting someone who makes me very angry.

Suppressed Anger

- I avoid or withdraw from people.
- I overeat, drink, or take drugs.
- I try not to let my anger show.
- I feel uncomfortable expressing my anger.

Passive Anger

- I complain about people behind their backs but not to their faces.
- I pout and feel sorry for myself.
- I use sarcasm to make people look or feel bad.
- I become silent to make it obvious I am unhappy.
- I get depressed/moody.

Active Anger Management

- I disagree with others without attacking on a personal level.
- I disagree with others without being defensive.
- I don't hold grudges or seek revenge when problems cannot be resolved.
- I take time to calm down before talking with others about disagreements.
- I politely, but firmly tell others when I am angry.
- I look for mutually agreeable solutions when people disagree with me.

Did you check mostly physical or verbal, suppressed, or passive anger behaviors? If so, work on using more active anger management techniques. This approach includes identifying the original cause of the anger, expressing the anger in appropriate ways, and having strategies to calm down.

Managing conflict well requires managing your anger well.