

Getting Worked Up



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 how their bodies respond to stress and specific events that lead them to become angry and experience negative emotional arousal.

Audience: This tool is applicable to all individuals. It may be particularly useful for clients who find themselves getting easily "worked up".

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Educator Instructions: Review the instructions printed on the tool. Have the client complete the upper portion, identifying common signs that he or she notices when angry. If clients struggle to identify any signs, encourage them to think about recent personal examples. You can note that many of these reactions to anger are normal, natural ways that our bodies react. After completing the upper section, have the client complete the lower portion, identifying situations, people, or circumstances that make them angry. For those in a relationship, have clients identify their partner's triggers. Encourage them to ask their partner to complete this tool and see if they were correct about knowing their partner's trigger points. (*Caution: Because you will know the couple best, determine if this activity is something you should be present for when shared with the other partner so that you can facilitate dialogue and manage possible conflict*). This tool may be particularly useful to use along with the "Keeping Your Cool" and "Keeping it Cool Together" tools.

Discussion Starter: Any time we experience a strong negative emotion, such as anger, our whole body reacts. Getting angry is not something that occurs only in our heads, but impacts the entire body. Think back to the last time you were angry. What made you mad? Did you notice how your body reacted? This sheet contains two sections that can help recognize situations when we are overly angry. The first section contains different signs that people experience when they are starting to get aroused (or "worked up") from negative emotions. The second section lets us begin to understand different situations that "trigger" our anger. When we recognize the signs that we are angry and the types of situations that make us angry, we can better manage our anger.

Follow-up: In later conversations, ask if they have been better at noticing their signs of anger. If so, what was the result? If not, what are some things that might help them become more aware? Are they still aware of times and situations when they are most likely to become angry? How has this information helped them?



HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIP
& MARRIAGE
EDUCATION
TRAINING

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Adapted from: *Together We Can: Creating a Healthy Future for our Family*. Michigan State University Extension. *Family Works: Families and Anger*. University of Illinois Extension.

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Recognizing Anger Signs

Our bodies react when we have strong negative emotions, such as anger. Getting angry is not something that just occurs in our heads, but it impacts the entire body. Knowing the types of things that signal our anger can help prevent times of intense anger from spiraling out of control. Which of the following signs or symptoms do you experience most when you are angry?

- Increased breathing rate
- Heart pumping faster
- Higher blood pressure
- Sweating
- Cold hands, sweaty palms
- Face feels hot, flushed
- Tightness of chest
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Feel like you're in a "fog"
- Neck tightens up
- Legs get shaky
- Upset stomach
- Loss of appetite
- Increased appetite
- Tapping fingers
- Cramps
- Backaches
- Grind teeth
- Headaches
- Fidgeting

Anger Triggers

Different people get angry about different things. These can be thought of as "triggers." What are some specific situations or behaviors that are common anger "triggers" for you? How angry (a little upset versus *really* angry) do you get?

Event or "Trigger"	A little upset	Very, Very Angry
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	
_____	☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹	

Times of intense anger can cause us to say or do certain things we later regret. Recognizing times when we are starting to get angry and worked up can help us know when we need to find ways to calm down. Being able to prevent these situations from spiraling out of control is a benefit to individuals and their relationships.

***The more we are aware of when we are angry,
the better we can manage it.***