

# Anger Management

Directorate:  
Counselling and  
Career  
Development  
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**Define tomorrow.**

**UNISA**



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# Objectives

## To help students:

- To know what anger is
- To know what the signs and causes of anger are
- To understand what anger management is
- To explore strategies to manage anger

# What is anger?

Dr Charles Spielberger defines anger as "an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage" (American Psychological Association, 2005)

**Anger can be a good thing –**

- to express negative feelings.
- it can motivate you to find solutions to problems.
- **Excessive anger can cause problems** – disruption in thinking, and irrational decision making, aggressiveness

“

Where there is anger,  
there is always pain  
underneath.

- *Eckhart Tolle*”



“

It is wise to direct your  
anger towards problems –  
not people; to focus your  
energies on answers – not  
excuses

- *William Arthur Ward*”

# What causes anger?

- Some examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Seeing that your efforts are not appreciated
  - Rejection/ not being accepted ( conditional acceptance) : by peers, family, institution, work applications, etc
  - Not being acknowledged
  - Unresolved traumatic incidents,
  - Failure/ injustice
  - Low self esteem
  - Finances

# Signs of anger

- Anger can manifest itself differently for each person
- Examples include but are not limited to others:
  - **Affect:** irritability, anxiousness, frustration, aggression.
  - **Behaviours:** shouting, swearing, crying, binge eating, destructive behaviours.
  - **Cognitions:** difficulty in concentration, negative thinking, ruminating on the problem.
  - **Interpersonal relations:** conflict, withdrawal.
  - **Physical Body:** chest tightening, palpitations, headaches, sweating, shaking, stomach-aches.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY?**

# What is anger management?

- Anger management is
  - a learning process to recognise signs that one is becoming angry, and taking action to calm down and deal with the situation in a productive way.
  - an anger prevention and control program.

The goal of anger management is to reduce both the person's emotional feelings and the physiological arousal that anger causes.

# Strategies for anger management

## Cognitive Restructuring

- Changing the way you think – change negative thinking and try replacing these with rational and positive thoughts.
- For instance,
  - INSTEAD OF: "oh, it's awful, it's terrible, everything's ruined,
  - SAY: "it's understandable that I'm upset about it, but it's not the end of the world and getting angry is not going to fix it anyhow."



# Strategies for anger management

## Relaxation

- Take a deep breath and Count from 1-10.
- Give yourself time to think about the situation and why it upset you.
- Time will help you generate fresh ideas.
- Focus on generating solutions rather than problems.

# Strategies for anger management

- **Effective Communication**

- Listen to understand and not to respond.
- Avoid focusing on the individual – focus on the problem at hand.
- Take note of the communication roadblocks that you are sending to others and the effect it has on them.

- **Verbal Roadblocks to effective Communication**

- Go through the following list to identify the type of roadblocks you use on others and those you do not like when they are used on you.

# Roadblocks to effective communication

## **Ordering/ Commanding**

*You must / you have to / you will*

Can produce fear , invites testing, promotes rebelliousness

## **Warning /Threatening**

*If you don't then..../ You d better, or ....*

Produces fear, causes resentment, anger

## **Moralizing/ Preaching**

*You should / You ought to/ It is your responsibility*

Creates guilt, communicates a lack of trust, can cause person to defend themselves.

## **Advising/ Giving solutions**

*What I would do is .../ Why don't you.... / Let me suggest.....*

Prevents the person from thinking through a problem, causes dependency or resistance

## **Persuading with logic/Arguing**

*Here is why you are wrong/ The facts are / Yes but....*

Provokes a defensive positions, can cause the person to feel inferior

## **Judging/ Criticizing/Blaming**

*You are not thinking maturely/ You are lazy*

Implies incompetency and stupidity, cuts off communication

# Roadblocks to effective communication

## **Praising /Agreeing**

*Well I think you're doing a great job!/ You are right .. That lecturer sounds awful...*

Can be seen as manipulative, can cause anxiety when the person does not meet the speakers expectations

## **Name calling/ ridiculing**

*Cry baby/ Ok Mr Smarty....*

Can cause person to feel unloved, provokes fight, can have devastating impact on the person self image

## **Analysing/ Diagnosing**

*What is wrong with you is..../ Your just tired ..../ You don't really mean that...*

Can be threatening and frustrating, person can feel trapped, block communication

## **Reassuring/ sympathising**

*Don't worry/ You'll feel better/ Oh cheer up*

Causes person to feel misunderstood, evokes strong feelings of hostility

## **Probing and Questioning**

*Why... / Who / What did you do? / How? When? Why did you not?*

Causes the other to be fearful, and reply with half truths or not reply

## **Diverting, Sarcasm/Withdrawal**

*Let's talk about pleasant things/ Why don't you try running the world*

Implies that life difficulties are to be avoided rather than dealt with

# Strategies for anger management

## Identify Triggers

- Take note of the things that trigger your anger.
- Understanding the things that trigger your anger can help you plan accordingly.

## Evaluate Your Anger

- Your anger can be a warning sign that something else needs to change in your life.
- Example: like an emotionally abusive relationship or a toxic friendship

# Problem-solving

- **Face the reality:**
  - Sometimes, our anger and frustration are caused by very real and inescapable problems in our lives.
  - Pay attention on how you handle the problem.
- **Adjust your expectations:**
  - This can help if the problem is one of expecting someone or something to happen that is not realistic.
  - Focus on finding the solution.
  - Seeking help is not a sign of weakness.
- **Seek support:**
  - Seek the support of someone who can help you solve or mitigate the problem.
- **Time management:**
  - Manage your time, especially if that is what is causing or contributing to the problem.
- **Changing Your Environment:**
  - Sometimes it's our immediate surroundings that give us cause for irritation and fury.
  - Take some time off or take a walk.

# Counselling support

- Contact Unisa Counselling and Career Development should you require further assistance and support:  
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Contact-us>
- Access Unisa Counselling Self help resources:  
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Downloads-and-podcasts>

# Emergency contact numbers

- 24-hour HIGHER HEALTH Post school education and training helpline: Toll-free call 0800 36 36 36 / SMS 43336
- Corona virus (COVID-19) 24-hour hotline: 080 002 9999
- COVID-19 connect (WhatsApp): 060 012 3456
- Suicide crisis line: 080 056 7567
- Lifeline: 086 132 2322
- Domestic violence helpline: 080 015 0150
- Childline: 080 005 5555
- Unisa Covid-19 resources and messages: [https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Coronavirus-\(COVID%E2%80%939319\)-update](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Coronavirus-(COVID%E2%80%939319)-update)
- The *SA Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)* offers online resources related to your mental health and COVID-19. Learn more about managing stress and anxiety as well as living with a mental illness on their website at <http://www.sadag.org/>.



# References

- <https://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/anger-management-strategies-4178870>
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/strategies-controlling-anger>
- <https://mensline.org.au/how-to-deal-with-anger/understanding-anger-and-anger-management-strategies/>
- <https://www.stress.org/17-anger-management-techniques-for-stressful-occupations>

# Thank you

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