



## Anger and Anger Management

 **Anger** is a feeling or **emotion** that can range from mild irritation to intense annoyance to rage. It may be a natural response when possible harm is anticipated or when another person has done something wrong or harmful.

Example:

*Greg is angry. He has just returned home from working a 12-hour shift to find that dinner was not prepared. His wife, Jane, is still out with her friends. Greg realizes that he is grinding his teeth and his heart is beating rapidly and he is thinking that his wife doesn't appreciate how difficult his job is.*

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## Anger and Anger Management

### Passive Behavior

When angry, individuals may respond with passive behavior. Passive behavior usually means that opinions, feelings, and wants are withheld or expressed indirectly. Responsibilities and decision-making are avoided, as is the need to take a personal stand on matters of importance.

Example:

*Greg resents that his wife was out with her friends and that dinner wasn't prepared.*

*However, he decides that he won't mention his feelings to Jane. Instead, he spends the weekend with buddies instead of spending the weekend with Jane.*

### Aggressive Behavior

When angry, individuals may respond with aggressive behavior. Aggression can cause harm to another person, or property. Aggressive behavior can include verbal abuse, threats, or violent acts.

Example:

*When Jane returns home, Greg curses at her. Greg's aggressive language communicates the following message: "My feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are more important than yours."*

### Assertive Behavior

When angry, individuals may respond with assertive behavior. Assertiveness allows individuals to stand up for their rights and express their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways.

Example:

*Greg tells Jane that he would prefer that she prepare dinner on days when he works 12-hour shifts. He checks in with Jane to see if she agrees with this plan. Jane agrees. Greg's assertiveness communicates the following message: "My feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are important, and your feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are equally important."*



### The Aggression Cycle

Aggression happens in 3 phases:

1. **The Escalation Phase:** During the *escalation phase*, anger is building. Cues or warning signs that indicate that anger is building include physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
2. **The Explosion Phase:** During the *explosion phase*, anger is released in the form of verbal or physical aggression.
3. **The Post-Explosion Phase:** The *post-explosion phase* involves the negative outcomes that have resulted from the behavior that occurred during the explosion phase.

### Anger Management

Managing anger effectively means preventing the anger from reaching the explosion phase. This can be done through:

- Increased awareness of what triggers the anger.
- Attending to the cues or warning signs that indicate that anger is building.
- Using an Anger Meter to monitor anger levels with zero being completely calm and ten being out of control.
- Being assertive instead of aggressive.
- Learning about and using other tools to stop and reverse the escalation of anger.
- Talking to helpful “coaches.”

### Why Should I Manage My Anger

**Anger, especially chronic or long-lasting anger, can lead to physical health problems:**

- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Chronic pain
- Heart disease
- Muscle pain and joint problems
- Dental problems due to jaw clenching and grinding
- High cholesterol
- Immune system disorders
- Stomach and digestive system problems
- Early death

**Anger can also lead to:**

- Frequent arguments
- Physical injury to self or others
- Domestic violence
- Child abuse
- Pet abuse
- Poor thinking and decision-making
- Work problems
- Lost promotions
- Being fired
- Legal and money problems
- Jail or prison time
- Road rage and traffic tickets
- Hurt or ruined relationships
- Divorce