

Managing Anger

Tips to Stay in Control

Experiencing Strong Emotions

Have you recently felt any of these emotions? Aggravated, incensed, enraged, furious, infuriated, provoked, irate, or livid? These are words often associated with anger; if you find yourself feeling this way more often than not, you may have an issue with anger.

Causes of Anger

Anger is typically the body's reaction to a perceived threat. There are a variety of ways we can feel threatened. There are also many ways we can react to those threats. Threats do not necessarily need to be directed at an individual for that person to experience an anger response.

Factors that contribute to a person's reaction to perceived threats include: amount of rest the individual is getting, hunger, general level of stress, recent grief issues, or mood disorders (depression/anxiety).

What Blomquist Hale Can Do

We can help you evaluate your anger and offer suggestions about how to improve. Call us today to set up an appointment.

Take a timeout

Counting to 10 isn't just for kids. Before reacting to a tense situation, take a few moments to breathe deeply and count to 10. Slowing down can help defuse your temper. If necessary, take a break from the person or situation until your frustration subsides a bit.

Once you're calm, express your anger

As soon as you're thinking clearly, express your frustration in an assertive but nonconfrontational way. State your concerns and needs clearly and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them.

Get some exercise

Physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions, especially if you're about to erupt. If you feel your anger escalating, go for a brisk walk or run, or spend some time doing other favorite physical activities. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that can leave you feeling happier and more relaxed than you were before you exercised.

Think before you speak

In the heat of the moment, it's easy to say something you'll later regret. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts before saying anything — and allow others involved in the situation to do the same.

Use humor to release tension

Lightening up can help diffuse tension. Don't use sarcasm, though — it can hurt feelings and make things worse.

Identify possible solutions

Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work on resolving the issue at hand. Does your child's messy room drive you crazy? Close the door. Is your partner late for dinner every night? Schedule meals later in the evening — or agree to eat on your own a few times a week. Remind yourself that anger won't fix anything, and might only make it worse.

Stick with 'I' statements

To avoid criticizing or placing blame — which might only increase tension — use "I" statements to describe the problem. Be respectful and specific. For example, say, "I'm upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes," instead of, "You never do any housework."

Don't hold a grudge

Forgiveness is a powerful tool. If you allow anger and other negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice. But if you can forgive someone who angered you, you might both learn from the situation. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to behave exactly as you want at all times.

Practice relaxation skills

When your temper flares, put relaxation skills to work. Practice deep-breathing exercises, imagine a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as, "Take it easy." You might also listen to music, write in a journal or do a few yoga poses — whatever it takes to encourage relaxation.