

# LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER

By Terri Phillips, MFT

Anger is a feeling that we have all experienced. It can be experienced by anyone from toddler to elderly ages and everything in between. Anger is a natural human emotion. Wikipedia defines anger as “an emotion related to one’s psychological interpretation of having been offended, wronged, or denied and a tendency to react through retaliation”. Anger is a feeling that can cause us to feel very uncomfortable and even make it difficult for us to control our actions.

Even though all of us have experienced anger to some degree, we don’t have to let anger get the best of us. It is impossible to avoid having angry feelings, but it is possible to control our actions when we experience angry feelings. When angry, it is always critical to first of all make sure that everyone remains safe. It is never acceptable to harm others or ourselves when we feel angry.

The best way to take steps to control your anger is to recognize the triggers or events that happen to cause your angry feelings. Interrupting the angry cycle as it begins is better than trying to manage your feelings as they spiral out of control. Some people may notice a flushed face or tense body and hands as they begin to experience angry feelings.

When you feel angry about something, your first line of defense is always to separate yourself from the situation. Sometimes adults think that “time outs” are only for children but nothing could be further from the truth. A time out by going to the other room or outside for a walk is a great way to manage your anger and prevent feeling out of control. Talking to a friend or family member can also be calming when angry. Writing or keeping a journal can help you express your feelings as well.

Anger is often more difficult to manage when you are stressed so making sure your stress level is under control is also important. Make sure you are getting regular exercise, at least 8 hours of sleep, practice healthy eating habits and make sure to add regular fun to your life.

If you are already practicing good self care habits and you still find it difficult to manage your anger, there may be some underlying mental health issues. Anyone that finds their anger out of control and they are unable to manage it on their own, should seek an assessment by a mental health professional.

Neurofeedback is one way to help decrease stress and ultimately manage angry feelings. The brain needs to be functioning at its best in order for us to be able to effectively utilize our coping skills to manage our feelings. Neurofeedback is a non-invasive form of brain exercise performed in a professional therapist’s office. The therapist will set specific goals with you and connect you with sensors to a video game

system. Their brain will actually exercise by playing the video game without hand controllers. This session only takes about 20 mins and conditions the brain to operate in a calm, alert and focused zone.

Remember, there is help available for managing your anger. If you or someone close to you is experiencing out of control angry feelings, call a mental health professional today for an assessment. Don't wait and let anger get the best of you!!!

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