Anger Management

Anger is a normal human emotion. Anger can range from mild irritation to rage. Anger management skills become needed when your anger becomes harmful to yourself or others. Problem anger can damage your health. You control your anger. Your anger does not control you.

CAUSES

There are many reasons for unhealthy anger. Many people learn how to express anger from observing how their family expressed anger. In troubled, chaotic, or abusive families, anger can be expressed as rage or even violence. Children can grow up never learning how healthy anger can be expressed.
Other causes may include mental health or chemical health issues such as:

- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Traumatic brain injury.

These issues require medical help.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of anger include:

- Increased blood pressure.
- Rapid heartbeat.
- Tensing muscles.

This is the body's way of preparing to "flee or fight" when we feel threatened. People with problem anger tend to overreact and retaliate against a real or imagined threat. The need to retaliate can turn into violence or verbal abuse against another person. Extreme reactions such as this are never acceptable. The individual with these problems needs professional help. Even low levels of chronic anger may cause health problems.

TREATMENT

Typical treatment includes:

- Cognitive-behavioral counseling -- you learn skills to change the thoughts that influence your mood.
- Relaxation training.
- Interpersonal counseling.
- Medication, if deemed necessary by your physician.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Options to manage moderate anger may be relatively simple.

- Exercise is essential to release pent-up emotion.
- Relaxation tapes, meditation, or prayer may be beneficial to calm the mind.
- Write in a journal. This can release emotion on paper and clarify your feelings.
- If you are in counseling, practice what you learn.

SEEK MEDICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP IF:

Always seek help from your doctor, psychotherapist, or an emergency room if your anger leads you to want to harm yourself or others.

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