THE COST OF ANGER

**INTRODUCTION**

***“People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.”***

**Proverbs 14:29 (NLT)**

When someone is angry with you, it’s easy to show anger in return. But before you allow yourself to get mad back, calculate what you’re going to lose. Calculate the cost of anger.

The Bible is very specific about uncontrolled anger. Proverbs 29:22 says, *“An angry person causes trouble; a person with a quick temper sins a lot”* (NCV). In Proverbs 15:18, you read, *“Hot tempers cause arguments*” (GNT). And Proverbs 14:29 says, *“A hot temper shows great foolishness”* (NLT).

When you let anger take control, there is a cost. You’re going to get in trouble. You’re going to sin. You’re going to cause arguments. You’re going to make mistakes.

When you lose your temper, you always lose. You may lose someone’s respect, the love of your family, your health, or even your job.

Maybe you’re someone who uses anger to motivate people to do the right thing. Don’t do it! You may get the short-term payoff. But in the long run, anger always produces more anger, more apathy, and more alienation.

How many kids have become alienated from a parent because of out-of-control anger? How many people have been alienated from a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a husband, a wife, or a friend because somebody lost their cool? Anger destroys relationships faster than anything else.

If you realize there’s always a price for returning anger for anger, you’re less likely to get angry when somebody’s pushing your buttons.

So before you retaliate, ask yourself, “Do I really want to do this? Do I want to make mistakes? Do I want to sin more? Do I want to cause arguments? Do I want to act foolish?”

Proverbs 14:29 says, *“People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness”*(NLT).

Anger always comes with a price tag. Before you retaliate, calculate the cost. Then choose the wise path of controlling your anger.

# The Cost of Anger

## EMOTIONS

**The Cost of Anger**

Anyone who says that anger is a sin does not know what they are talking about. Anger is not a sin, it is an emotion! On the other hand, anyone who says that the destructive behaviors motivated by anger are not a sin, also don’t know what they are talking about!

The apostle Paul instructs us in:

Ephesians 4:26

26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (ESV)

+ The first thing we see in this verse is permission to be angry over the injustices of life.

+ But then Paul challenges us not to allow our feelings to manifest into sinful behaviors.

+ The Bible is teaching us that there is righteous anger and destructive anger!

It’s not the feeling of anger that is a sin. It is the actions that often follow it that is!

Marcus Aurelius – “How much more grievous are the consequences of anger than the causes of it.”

Ambrose Bierce – “Speak when you are angry, and you will make the greatest speech you will ever regret.”

Unknown author – “Anger is only one letter short of danger.”

Anger is a powerful emotion that people feel when someone or something frustrates, offends, hurts, or wounds them. One of the roots of anger is the Greek word ankhone, which means “a strangling,” which is a perfect description of the way anger actually feels. Anger not only makes you feel like strangling someone, but it also strangles you!

Lawrence Wilder – “Anger never solves anything, but it can destroy everything.”

James 1:19-20

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (ESV)

Proverbs 29:22

22 A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression. (ESV)

Proverbs 29:11

11 A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. (ESV)

In the face of unending injustice, perhaps the wisest and most influential civil rights leader in American history has taught us all how to handle the emotion of anger:

“As you press on for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence. If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in your struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.” – Martin Luther King Jr. (1956)

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction … The chain reaction of evil – hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars – must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.” – Martin Luther King Jr (1963)

During his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, in Stockholm, Sweden, 1964, MLK Jr said:  “One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”

Martin Luther King Jr. was not just a Civil Rights activist, he was also a man of God!

Anger never produces the desired result, it only further magnifies the problem!

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (ESV)

Proverbs 3:31

31 Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, (ESV)

2 Famous Fits of Anger in the Bible, that costed people greatly:

Story #1: Cain & Abel! Back to the very beginning of the Bible, we stumble across the first fit of anger, as the first two siblings in the history of humankind have a tragic end to their sibling rivalry:

Ephesians 4:31

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (ESV)

Genesis 4:1-8

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” 8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. (ESV)

Story #2: Moses & The Rock! After traveling with a couple of million Israelites for months in the heat of the desert, God’s chosen leader, Moses, finally reached his boiling point after endless complaints.

Numbers 20:2-12

2 Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. 3 And the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! 4 Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink.” 6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, 7 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” 9 And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” 11 And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. 12 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.” (ESV)

+ Moses had already endured Israel’s complaints at the Red Sea, their complaints about the free Manna, and the 10 negative reports from the 12 spies at the Promised Land, and here comes another one! This time, the people began protesting over water!

+ God, who always provided, gave Moses specific instructions for their water, but Moses allowed his Anger to take over, and struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it!

+ Moses’ anger, which God called a lack of faith, cost Moses his Promised Land

Moses was instructed to speak, but he chose to strike

Proverbs 18:21

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. (ESV)

We are living in a time where words are being used to wound like never before! The spirit of anger is speaking through sinners and saints at an alarming rate. People who wear crosses are striking God’s fellow saints with endless accusations and angry words! There is not a week that goes by that I am not managing a verbal conflict!

The number 1 concern of pastors right now in America is not COVID, it’s disunity!

Colossians 4:6

6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (ESV)

Speak Life Challenge: Is it encouraging? Is it graceful? Is it gentle? Is it loving?

Psalm 19:14 “May these words of my mouth [or smartphone] and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer.”

**Talk It Over**

* What methods do you use to keep your cool when someone gets angry at you or attacks you?
* What has uncontrolled anger cost your relationships?
* Some people choose to lead by anger and intimidation. What’s a better way to lead people?

Uncontrolled anger can result in loss of employment, loss of one's family, and even incarceration. Individuals who cannot get a grip on their disruptive, aggressive behavior are likely to suffer not only increased risks for health problems but serious social problems as well.

Uncontrolled anger can adversely affect your health, **self-esteem, relationships**, the emotional well-being of your children, and your productivity at work. On a more extreme scale, it can lead to such undesirable behaviors as road rage, domestic violence, child abuse, physical assault, and even murder.

Everyone feels angry sometimes. Anger becomes a problem when it begins to impact a person’s daily life and causes them to react in a way that might hurt themselves or those around them.

# Chapter

# Effects of Anger on mental health

## **Why do I feel angry?**

Anger can be our way of expressing or responding to a range of other feelings, like:

* frustration
* embarrassment or humiliation
* guilt or shame
* jealousy
* hurt or sadness
* feeling unable to control a situation
* feeling threatened or frightened
* feeling unfairly treated
* feeling misunderstood or not listened to
* feeling the pressure of living in two worlds (that is, First Nation Peoples and non-Indigenous)
* feeling a loss of connection to family, community or country.

## **When does anger become a problem?**

Anger becomes a problem when it begins to affect a person’s daily life and causes them to react in ways that might hurt themselves and/or others around them.

Signs that anger might be a problem include:

* feeling angry a lot of the time at an intense and overwhelming level
* behaving aggressively (verbally, physically, passive aggression)
* having trouble expressing anger
* feeling sad and distressed as a result of getting angry
* using alcohol and other drugs to manage anger
* feeling the need to use aggression to get people to do something
* withdrawing from people or situations
* bottling things up rather than coping with them
* regretting the things you did or said when you were angry
* expressing anger by saying or doing something aggressive or violent (e.g., shouting, swearing, throwing or hitting things).

## **Anger vs aggression**

**Anger can sometimes lead to people being aggressive or violent (e.g. physically, verbally, sexually) but they’re not the same. Anger is a feeling, but aggression and violence are actions, and it’s these actions that can lead to problems.**

Anger can sometimes feel intense and overwhelming, but it doesn't necessarily lead to violent or aggressive behaviour.

## **How can I manage my anger?**

There are five steps you can take to manage your anger in a healthy way.

1. Start to Understand Your ‘Angry’ Triggers and Signs

Think about the things that regularly trigger your anger (like running late or being blamed for something you didn’t do). This might help you find a way to respond differently. It might be possible to avoid these triggers in the future, react differently when they happen, or allow you to let others know your triggers so that they can help.   
   
Know your ‘angry signs’. These can be things like; feeling hot or flushed, clenched fists or teeth, a tight feeling in your chest, or your heart beating faster. If you recognise the early signs of anger, you’re in a position to try some new ways to manage this feeling.

1. Neutralise the Situation

As anger increases, so does our body’s physical reaction. There are a few ways to reduce the intensity of our body’s reactions:

* Slow your breathing. Taking some long slow deep breaths can help to slow down your heart rate, lower your core temperature, and get your thinking brain back online.
* Taking a break. You could walk away from a situation until you’ve calmed down – this will stop you from acting in a way that hurts you or someone else.
* Connecting with nature. Connecting with nature can help to calm down the mind and body, and give you some space, so you can decide how to respond to the situation in a healthier way.
* Using delay or distraction. Try counting slowly to 10 or doing something physical, like push-ups or bouncing a ball.

These strategies can help you feel more in control and stop you from saying or doing something you might regret.

1. Understand Why you’re Feeling Angry

Understanding the underlying things that may be contributing to your anger can help you to get back in control of your response to anger. This can make it much easier to work out solutions or alternatives to aggression.

* Did someone do or say something that upset me?
* Do I have other feelings right now that might affect the way I’m reacting, like being sad or embarrassed, or feeling a loss of connection to my friends or my mob?
* Does the situation bring up bad memories?

Some people find it easier to write down or draw their answers to these questions.

1. Explore your Solution

Brainstorm some helpful ways to express and resolve your anger. It might help to ask yourself questions like:

* How can I explain the situation in a respectful way?
* How might other people feel about this situation?
* What do I want to happen now? Is this reasonable or do I need to think about a compromise?
* Can I deal with this while being respectful to myself and others involved?

Communicating clearly can help you express your anger in healthy ways instead of bottling it up or becoming aggressive (e.g. I am feeling really angry at the moment and need some time out before I can talk more about this). Check out our [interactive tool on communicating well](https://headspace.org.au/decks/communicating-clearly/) for more tips.

### **Remember, we can’t always change the things that make us angry, but we can change the way we respond.**

1. Reach Out to Someone you Trust

\* Your family and friends, a teacher or coach, or your mob or Elders might have ideas about how you can express your anger in healthy ways. Talking with them can be a great place to start.

\* If you’re being harassed, bullied or discriminated against, there are people who can help. A counsellor, a welfare officer at your school or your [GP (general practitioner)](https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/general-practitioners/) could help you manage what’s going on.

\* If your anger related problems continue without improvement, then talking to your GP or a mental health professional could help. They could teach skills, like relaxation and communication, help you understand your anger, and help you deal with anger in a healthy way.

**7 Ways Anger Is Ruining Your Health**

Constantly losing your cool can hurt more than your relationships.

People who are habitually angry also report feeling sick more often.Ben-Schonewille/Getty Images

Sometimes anger can be good for you, if it's addressed quickly and expressed in a healthy way. In fact, anger may help some people [think more rationally](http://psp.sagepub.com/content/33/5/706.abstract). However, unhealthy episodes of anger — when you hold it in for long periods of time, turn it inward, or explode in rage — can wreak havoc on your body. If you're prone to losing your temper, here are seven important reasons to stay calm.

**1. An angry outburst puts your heart at great risk.**Most physically damaging is anger's effect on your cardiac health. “In the two hours after an angry outburst, the chance of having a heart attack doubles,” says [Chris Aiken, MD](https://www.moodtreatmentcenter.com/providers/chris-aiken/), an instructor in clinical psychiatry at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine and director of the Mood Treatment Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

“Repressed anger — where you express it indirectly or go to great lengths to control it, is associated with heart disease,” says Dr. Aiken. In fact, one study found that people with [anger proneness](http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/101/17/2034.full) as a personality trait were at twice the risk of coronary disease than their less angry peers.

To protect your ticker, identify and address your feelings before you lose control. “Constructive anger — the kind where you speak up directly to the person you are angry with and deal with the frustration in a problem-solving manner — is not associated with heart disease,” and is actually a very normal, healthy emotion, says Aiken.

**2. Anger ups your stroke risk.**If you’re prone to lashing out, beware. One study found there was a three times higher risk of having a stroke from a blood clot to the brain or bleeding within the brain during the two hours [after an angry outburst](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24591550). For people with an [aneurysm](https://www.everydayhealth.com/aneurysm/guide/) in one of the brain’s arteries, there was a six times higher risk of rupturing this aneurysm following an angry outburst.

Some good news: You can learn to control those angry explosions. “To move into positive coping, you need to first identify what your triggers, and then figure out how to change your response,” says Mary Fristad, PhD, a professor of psychiatry and psychology at the Ohio State University. Instead of losing your temper, “Do some deep breathing. Use assertive communication skills. You might even need to change your environment by getting up and walking away,” says Dr. Fristad.

**3. It weakens your immune system.**If you're mad all the time, you just might find yourself feeling sick more often. In one study, Harvard University scientists found that in healthy people, simply recalling an angry experience from their past caused a six-hour [dip in levels of the antibody immunoglobulin A](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25389190), the cells’ first line of defense against infection.

cIf you're someone who's habitually angry, protect your immune system by turning to a few effective coping strategies. “Assertive communication, effective problem solving, using humor, or restructuring your thoughts to get away from that black-and-white, all-or-nothing thinking — those are all good ways to cope,” says Fristad. “But you've got to start by calming down.”

**4. Anger problems can make your anxiety worse.**If you’re a worrier, it’s important to note that [anxiety and anger](https://www.everydayhealth.com/anxiety/anxiety-and-anger.aspx) can go hand-in-hand. In a 2012 study published in the journal Cognitive Behavior Therapy, researchers found that [anger can exacerbate symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221721892_The_role_of_anger_in_generalized_anxiety_disorder) (GAD), a condition characterized by an excessive and uncontrollable worry that interferes with a person’s daily life. Not only were higher levels of anger found in people with GAD, but hostility — along with internalized, unexpressed anger in particular — contributed greatly to the severity of GAD symptoms.

**5. Anger is also linked to depression.**Numerous studies have linked depression with aggression and angry outbursts, especially in men. “In depression, passive anger — where you ruminate about it but never take action — is common,” says Aiken. His No. 1 piece of advice for someone struggling with depression mixed with anger is to get busy and stop thinking so much.

“Any activity which fully absorbs you is a good cure for anger, such as golf, needlepoint, biking,” he says. “These tend to fill our minds completely and pull our focus toward the present moment, and there's just no room left for anger to stir when you've got that going.”

**6. Hostility can hurt your lungs.**Not a smoker? You still could be [hurting your lungs if you're a perpetually angry, hostile person](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2104760/). A group of Harvard University scientists studied 670 men over eight years using a hostility scale scoring method to measure anger levels and assessed any changes in the men's lung function. The men with the highest hostility ratings had significantly worse lung capacity, which increased their risk of respiratory problems. The researchers theorized that an uptick in stress hormones, which are associated with feelings of anger, creates inflammation in the airways.

**7. Anger can shorten your life.**Is it really true that happy people live longer? “Stress is very tightly linked to general health. If you're [stressed](https://www.everydayhealth.com/stress/guide/) and angry, you'll shorten your lifespan,” says Fristad. A University of Michigan study done over a 17-year period found that [couples who hold in their anger](https://www.everydayhealth.com/womens-health/managing-your-temper.aspx) have a shorter life span than those who readily say when they're mad.

If you're not someone who's comfortable showing negative emotions, then work with a therapist or practice on your own to be more expressive. “Learning to express anger in an appropriate way is actually a healthy use of anger,” says Fristad. “If someone infringes on your rights, you need to tell them. Directly tell people what you're mad about, and what you need,” she says.

Chapter

Social Costs of Anger

In addition to physical health costs, there are significant social and emotional costs to being angry all the time. Hostile, angry people are less likely to have healthy supportive relationships than are less hostile people. Because they are constantly angry, hostile people tend to have fewer friends. Hostile people are also more likely to be depressed, and they are more likely to become verbally and/or physically abusive towards others. Most importantly, chronic anger reduces the intimacy within personal relationships; partners and other family members tend to be more guarded and less able to relax in their interactions with hostile people.

While this may not sound like a bad fate to suffer, consider that research consistently shows that having healthy supportive relationships with family, friends, coworkers and colleagues is quite important for maintaining health. Having the social support of one's peers helps to ward off emotional problems and serious health conditions, including heart disease. People are less likely to experience debilitating depression when they have strong social support.

Angry people frequently have cynical attitudes toward others and are unable to recognize or utilize support when it is available. Because hostile people don't realize the impact their behavior has on others, they don't realize that they are pushing people away when they refuse or ridicule genuine attempts at helpfulness. Angry people also tend to drink, smoke, and eat more than their less angry counterparts. Without a social network of people to dampen these tendencies, the probability of serious health consequences is high.

Anger's physiological response and arousal evolved to help people handle physical threats. In today's world, however, there are not very many places where physical aggression is an appropriate response. This is particularly true in the more public parts of your life, including your workplace interactions. Verbally assaulting your boss will likely get you fired. Similarly, jumping out of your car to attack a motorist who cut you off could land you in court. Uncontrolled anger can result in loss of employment, loss of one's family, and even incarceration. Individuals who cannot get a grip on their disruptive, aggressive behavior are likely to suffer not only increased risks for health problems but serious social problems as well.

**Anger & Your Relationships**

Anger always affects your relationships, especially with those who matter most to you. The greater your anger, the greater the potential for long-lasting negative impact. It simply isn’t possible to work in harmony with another person, set goals, or accomplish anything if one or both people in a relationship harbor anger. A marriage will suffer greatly if it’s present. Anger disrupts family life and interferes with parent-child relationships. A work group will not be as productive or creative if one or more members is angry. A church will not minister effectively if it’s filled with angry people.

A man argued with me one day, saying, “My anger doesn’t hurt anyone. If they get hurt, it’s because they choose to be hurt. If they don’t want to hear my angry words, they can walk away.”

That isn’t really a valid argument. No one can totally tune out another person’s tirade. You may choose not to take to heart the other person’s anger. But you cannot avoid having to deal with it in some way. Outbursts of anger cause everyone within range to feel some degree of emotional pain, whether it’s intended or not.

Anger is an extremely powerful emotion. It can destroy lives, tear relationships apart, and ruin a believer’s witness. The apostle Paul understood the negative potential of resentment, and he offered this advice on how to deal with it: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

When we’re in the middle of tense situations, Paul’s recommendations may seem unrealistic and impractical. But unless we apply his advice, we could easily face the devastating consequences of uncontrolled anger.

We have a choice. We can let our anger control us—which means we opt to suffer the consequences. Or we can release this debilitating emotion by not allowing it to gain the upper hand in our lives, affecting our relationships along the way.

Prayerfully ask the Father to help you identify causes of anger in your life, and bring each of them before Him. Trust that He will empower you to overcome these sources of strife. Read Ephesians 4:31-32 once more, and let the truth of God’s Word empower and strengthen you.

**The Consequences of acting out in Anger**

**Why it’s best not to avoid attending an anger management course: The consequences of acting out in anger**

Anger is natural and every person at some point in their life have had serious anger outbursts at something that might have triggered such an emotion. Anger becomes a problem when the outbursts are too frequent and it starts to affect you and the people around you. You can take an anger management course to control the rage and negative emotions.

Anger management classes are the best way to cope with the rage you feel. People portray anger in different situations, sometimes the anger is a cover for vulnerability, and other times people use anger to achieve control. To help get a grip on anger, anger management courses are designed to cater to the negative emotions that lead to anger. Unfortunately, some people avoid taking anger management classes for different reasons. Once they stop attending the classes, they lose the self-control and the anger outbursts are more devastating than ever.

**Anger starts to affect you and the people around you**

The initial negative effect of skipping anger management classes is forgetting self-control. These feelings make you feel like you are on the brink of falling over. Then the constantly angry emotions start to build up on you and it lasts for long periods. Little things aggravate and distress you that wouldn’t matter much if it was another day, but now it’s stressing you out causing you to scream and shout in rage.

Apart from the emotional turmoil, avoiding anger management classes will bring back the negative emotions gradually. The excessive anger will have an adverse impact on your physical health and well-being. Headaches, intense migraines, body pains, and hypertension are caused by excessive anger.

Your out of control anger outbursts not only have adverse effects on you but it has a negative impact on the people around you. Friends and family members will be hurt to see you in distress and rage constantly. You might be having heated arguments with your loved ones over petty things who mean you well. Resolving a conflict with anger is never a viable solution, it creates more problems by escalating the issue at hand. In some cases, failure to control anger through anger management classes might force you to act with violence and aggression with others. Experts consider anger as the primary reason for domestic violence among partners.

**Self-hating and loathing**

Once you have stopped attending your anger management classes, the feelings of self-hate are likely to make an unwelcome return. The anger inside you can increase to serious proportions leading to depression and feeling of unworthiness. Anger at yourself can also lead to suicidal tendencies. At this stage, it’s important to realize that your issues are real. To get rid of your complex problems, start the anger management courses once again.  
Anger management classes teach you to control your anger and hostility when you are facing the unwanted situation. We have highlighted the harmful effects of skipping your anger management course. Avoid skipping your classes, as they are a way for you to deal with your anger issues and lead a happy healthy life.

# Chapter

# Anger Symptoms, Causes and Effects

According to a study conducted by the Harvard Medical School, close to 8 percent of adolescents display anger issues that qualify for lifetime diagnoses of intermittent explosive disorder. Anger issues aren’t limited to teens, and it’s important to understand anger symptoms, causes and effects if you suspect you are, or someone you know is, suffering from an [anger disorder](https://www.psychguides.com/anger-management/treatment/).

## What Are the Types of Anger Disorders?

Individuals who have trouble controlling anger or who experience anger outside of a normal emotional scope can present with different types of anger disorders. Different experts have published contradicting lists of anger types, but some widely accepted forms of anger include:

* Chronic anger, which is prolonged, can impact the immune system and be the cause of other mental disorders
* Passive anger, which doesn’t always come across as anger and can be difficult to identify
* Overwhelmed anger, which is caused by life demands that are too much for an individual to cope with
* Self-inflicted anger, which is directed toward the self and may be caused by feelings of guilt
* Judgmental anger, which is directed toward others and may come with feelings of resentment
* Volatile anger, which involves sometimes-spontaneous bouts of excessive or violent anger

## Passive Anger

People experiencing passive anger may not even realize they are angry. When you experience passive anger, your emotions may be displayed as sarcasm, apathy or meanness. You might participate in self-defeating behaviors such as skipping school or work, alienating friends and family, or performing poorly in professional or social situations. To outsiders, it will look like you are intentionally sabotaging yourself, although you may not realize it or be able to explain your actions.

Because passive anger may be repressed, it can be hard to recognize; counseling can help you identify the emotions behind your actions, bringing the object of your anger to light so you can deal with it.

## Aggressive Anger

Individuals who experience aggressive anger are usually aware of their emotions, although they don’t always understand the true roots of their ire. In some cases, they redirect violent anger outbursts to scapegoats because it is too difficult to deal with the real problems. Aggressive anger often manifests as volatile or retaliatory anger and can result in physical damages to property and other people. Learning to recognize triggers and manage anger symptoms is essential to dealing positively with this form of anger.

## What Causes Anger?

A leading cause of anger is a person’s environment. Stress, financial issues, abuse, poor social or familial situations, and overwhelming requirements on your time and energy can all contribute to the formation of anger. As with disorders such as alcoholism, anger issues may be more prevalent in individuals who were raised by parents with the same disorder. Genetics and your body’s ability to deal with certain chemicals and hormones also play a role in how you deal with anger; if your brain doesn’t react normally to serotonin, you might find it more difficult to manage your emotions.

## What Are the Signs of an Anger Management Problem?

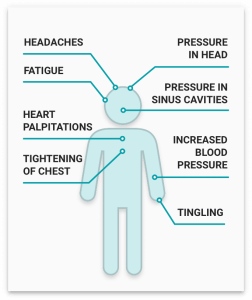
Losing your cool from time to time doesn’t mean you have an anger management problem. Mental health professionals look at trends in your behavior, emotional symptoms and physical symptoms to diagnose an anger disorder.

## Emotional Symptoms of Anger-Related Problems

You might think the emotional symptom of anger-related problems are limited to anger, but a number of emotional states could indicate that you are failing to deal with anger in a positive and healthy fashion. Constant irritability, rage and anxiety are possible emotional symptoms.

If you feel overwhelmed, have trouble organizing or managing your thoughts or fantasize about hurting yourself or others, you could be experiencing an anger disorder or another issue. Don’t wait for these emotions to take control of your life; maintain control by calling our hotline today at . Representatives are available to listen and offer advice 24/7.

## Physical Symptoms of Anger-Related Problems



Strong emotions often bring about physical changes to the body, and anger is no exception. Letting anger issues go unaddressed can put your overall health at risk. Some physical symptoms of anger-related problems include:

* Tingling
* Heart palpitations or tightening of the chest
* Increased blood pressure
* Headaches
* Pressure in the head or sinus cavities
* Fatigue

## Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Anxiety

Unresolved anger issues lead to anxiety, which can have long-term effects on your life. Immediate effects of anxiety might include dizziness, rapid breathing, nausea, muscle pain, muscle tension, headaches, and problems with concentration and memory. Such symptoms can make it difficult to perform routine tasks and can add to generalized anger about life.

Long-term anxiety can pose dangerous risks to your physical and emotional states. Individuals who suffer from long bouts of anxiety can be at a greater risk for strokes. Serious memory loss, chronic sleep disorders and relationship issues can also develop. Before your anger and anxiety wreak havoc with your entire life, find out what you can do to stop the cycle by calling.

## Is There a Test or Self-Assessment I Can Do?

A number of self-assessment tests are available online to help you to recognize any anger and [anxiety issues](https://www.psychguides.com/anxiety/) you may be experiencing. If you take an online test, it’s a good idea to ensure that it was written and published by someone recognized as an expert in the mental health field.

Even if the test is offered by a reputable organization, you should never allow a self-diagnosis or an online test to direct your course of treatment. Individuals who think they might be suffering from anger issues should speak to professional counselors, family physicians or volunteers from local healthcare organizations.

## Anger Medication: Anti-Anger Drug Options

Mental health professionals recommend counseling, group therapy sessions and anger management classes as treatment options for anger disorders. In some cases, medication may be helpful in controlling emotions and chemical reactions in the body that lead to uncontrollable anger.

## Anger Drugs: Possible Options

The type of drugs prescribed will depend on individual circumstances and take into account other diagnoses. Possible options include:

* Prozac or other antidepressants
* Benzodiazepines known to treat anxiety, such as Klonopin
* Lithium or other medications known to stabilize mood

## Medication Side Effects



According to reports, up to 50 percent of patients on lithium experience renal-related side effects. These effects are usually reversed by medical care or discontinuation of the drug but serve as a good illustration of why you should only take medication for anger symptoms while under the care of a physician. Other side effects for different anger-related medications include:

* Nausea
* Increased thirst
* Changes in thought patterns
* Fatigue
* Dizziness
* Tremors
* Fever
* Addiction

## Anti-Anger Drug Addiction, Dependence and Withdrawal

It’s important to understand whether your anti-anger drug could be addictive. Addiction to the drug will depend on your own personality, your body’s chemical makeup and the drug itself. Discuss the dangers associated with dependence and withdrawal with your healthcare provider, and make sure you follow instructions regarding the dosage closely. If you experience side effects, find yourself wanting more of the medication, or are unable to stop taking the medication, talk to your doctor immediately.

## Medication Overdose

To reduce the chance of medication overdose, always follow dosage requirements. If you experience health issues while taking the medication, report them immediately to the prescribing physician because physical symptoms could be an indicator that your dose is too high.

## Depression and Anger

[Depression](https://www.psychguides.com/depression/) and anger go hand in hand and can cause a revolving cycle that’s hard to break. Lashing out in anger can lead to alienation and feelings of guilt, which can lead to depression. Long-term depression can make it difficult to handle emotions, increasing the likelihood of anger outbursts. Often, the only way to break this cycle is to seek professional help.

## Dual Diagnosis: Addiction and Anger

Drug and alcohol addictions [can decrease](http://baysidemarin.crchealth.com/substance-abuse-addiction/anger/) your ability to deal with anger. It’s important to seek treatment options that deal with emotional and physical issues related to your disorder. A treatment program that addresses anger without dealing with addiction leaves you vulnerable to emotional issues in the future.

Likewise, attending a group to discuss your addiction without mentioning your struggle with anger makes it likely you’ll use drugs or alcohol to deal with emotional pain in the future.

## Chapter

## Getting Help for Anger-Related Problems

The first step to taking control of your life is to seek help for your anger-related problem. Treatment resources include inpatient facilities, outpatient programs, individual and group therapy, and medication. Call us today at to find out what you can do to start on the path to recovery today. [Learning about](http://www.angerdefense.com/blog/7-symptoms-of-anger-problems-how-to-know-if-you-have-a-problem-with-anger/) anger symptoms, causes and effects will help you address your disorder in a healthy and positive way.

# Anger - how it affects people

## Actions for this page

* The long-term physical effects of uncontrolled anger include increased anxiety, high blood pressure and headache.
* Anger can be a positive and useful emotion, if it is expressed appropriately.
* Long-term strategies for anger management include regular exercise, learning relaxation techniques and counselling.

## **On this page**

* [Physical effects of anger](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#physical-effects-of-anger)
* [Health problems with anger](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#health-problems-with-anger)
* [Expressing anger in healthy ways](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#expressing-anger-in-healthy-ways)
* [Unhelpful ways to deal with anger](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#unhelpful-ways-to-deal-with-anger)
* [Dealing with arguments](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#dealing-with-arguments)
* [Reasons for dealing with arguments](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#reasons-for-dealing-with-arguments)
* [Suggestions for long-term anger management](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#suggestions-for-long-term-anger-management)
* [Benefits of regular exercise in mood management](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#benefits-of-regular-exercise-in-mood-management)
* [Teaching children how to express anger](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#teaching-children-how-to-express-anger)
* [Where to get help](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/anger-how-it-affects-people#where-to-get-help)

Well-managed anger can be a useful emotion that motivates you to make positive changes. On the other hand, anger is a powerful emotion and if it isn’t handled appropriately, it may have destructive results for you and those closest to you. Uncontrolled anger can lead to arguments, physical fights, physical abuse, assault and self-harm.

## **Physical effects of anger**

Anger triggers the body’s ‘fight or flight’ response. Other emotions that trigger this response include fear, excitement and anxiety. The adrenal glands flood the body with stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. The brain shunts blood away from the gut and towards the muscles, in preparation for physical exertion. Heart rate, [blood pressure](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/blood-pressure) and respiration increase, the body temperature rises and the skin perspires. The mind is sharpened and focused.

## **Health problems with anger**

The constant flood of stress chemicals and associated metabolic changes that go with ongoing unmanaged anger can eventually cause harm to many different systems of the body.  
  
Some of the short and long-term health problems that have been linked to unmanaged anger include:

* [headache](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/headache)
* digestion problems, such as abdominal pain
* [insomnia](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sleep-insomnia)
* increased [anxiety](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/anxiety)
* [depression](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/depression)
* [high blood pressure](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/blood-pressure-high-hypertension)
* skin problems, such as [eczema](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/eczema-atopic-dermatitis)
* [heart attack](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/chest-pain)
* [stroke](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/stroke).

## **Expressing anger in healthy ways**

Suggestions on how to express your anger in healthy ways include:

* If you feel out of control, walk away from the situation temporarily, until you cool down.
* Recognise and accept the emotion as normal and part of life.
* Try to pinpoint the exact reasons why you feel angry.
* Once you have identified the problem, consider coming up with different strategies for how to remedy the situation.
* Do something physical, such as going for a run or playing sport.
* Talk to someone you trust about how you’re feeling.

## **Unhelpful ways to deal with anger**

Many people express their anger in inappropriate and harmful ways, including:

* **anger explosions**– some people have very little control over their anger and tend to explode in rages. Raging anger may lead to physical abuse or violence. A person who doesn’t control their temper can isolate themselves from family and friends. Some people who fly into rages have low self-esteem, and use their anger as a way to manipulate others and feel powerful. For more information, see ‘[What is violence against women?](https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/Primary-Preventatives/Understanding-The-Cause)’ on the White Ribbon Australia website
* **anger repression** – some people consider that anger is an inappropriate or ‘bad’ emotion and choose to suppress it. However, bottled anger often turns into depression and anxiety. Some people vent their bottled anger at innocent parties, such as children or pets.

## **Dealing with arguments**

When you have had an argument, it is easy to stay angry or upset with the other person. If you don't resolve an argument with a person you see often, it can be a very uncomfortable experience.

Talking to the person about your disagreement may or may not help. If you do approach them, make sure it is in a helpful way. Stay calm and communicate openly and honestly.

If the person could be violent or abusive, it may be best not to approach them directly. You could talk to them over the phone to see if they are open to finding a solution to the argument, if you feel safe to do so. It might be helpful to ask someone to be there with you, to give you support when you make the call and afterwards.

Try and tell the person how you feel as a result of their opinion, but avoid trying to tell them how they feel. It is possible to agree to disagree. You may need someone else to help you resolve the disagreement. You could ask a trusted third person to act as a go-between and help you both get another view on the argument.

## **Reasons for dealing with arguments**

There are good reasons for dealing with arguments, including:

* It will give you a sense of achievement and make you feel more positive.
* You may feel more relaxed, healthier and more able to get a good night's sleep.
* You may develop stronger relationships.
* You may feel happier.

## **Suggestions for long-term anger management**

The way you typically express anger may take some time to modify. Suggestions include:

* Keep a diary of your anger outbursts, to try and understand how and why you get mad.
* Consider [assertiveness](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/assertiveness) training, or learning about techniques of [conflict resolution](http://www.crnhq.org/).
* Learn relaxation techniques, such as [meditation](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/meditation) or [yoga](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/pilates-and-yoga-health-benefits).
* See a counsellor or psychologist if you still feel angry about events that occurred in your past.
* [Exercise regularly](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/keeping-active).

## **Benefits of regular exercise in mood management**

People who are stressed are more likely to experience anger. Numerous worldwide studies have documented that regular exercise can improve mood and reduce stress levels. This may be because physical exertion burns up stress chemicals, and it also boosts production of mood-regulating neurotransmitters in the brain, including endorphins and catecholamines.

## **Teaching children how to express anger**

Expressing anger appropriately is a learned behaviour. Suggestions on helping your child to deal with strong feelings include:

* Lead by example.
* Let them know that anger is natural and should be expressed appropriately.
* Treat your child’s feelings with respect.
* Teach practical problem-solving skills.
* Encourage open and honest communication in the home.
* Allow them to express their anger in appropriate ways.
* Explain the difference between aggression and anger.
* Have consequences for aggression or violence, but not appropriately expressed anger.
* Teach your child different ways of calming and soothing themselves.

# The Costs and Pay-Offs of Anger

Managing our anger can be a difficult task; as with most emotions, there are costs and pay-offs to expressing it.  Behavioral skills training can help us to manage both the intensity levels and the frequency with which we convey this powerful emotion.

### What is Anger?

Much of the time, we can recognize anger within ourselves and others fairly easily. Clenched fists, angry faces, swearing, or acting out can all be expressions or anger, as can the soft, sinister voice that some people master.

### The Costs of Anger

In addition to its cost to your relationships, **anger can also be bad for your health**. Think of a garden hose. Let’s say you have two sizes: a ¼ inch and a ½ inch hose. If you hook the ½ inch hose up to the outside water faucet, you get a stream of water. However, if you hook up the ¼ inch hose, you get a much stronger stream of water because the pressure has been raised. When we get angry, our blood vessels constrict and it’s just like we switched from a ½ inch to a ¼ inch hose.

 It’s clear that **we need an outlet for anger**. Some of us keep our anger locked up inside us and deal with it by not thinking about it. Other people tend to explode when they are angry. Neither outlet is very constructive, so we want to find other ways to deal with this powerful emotion.

### What Are Your Anger Pay-Offs?

Could there really be a payoff to anger? Yes! There is usually some sort of pay-off for us: people do what we ask them to do, our tension is released, and for a brief moment we feel better, or we feel we’ve gotten revenge. Some examples of pay-offs for expressing anger include:

* Reduce stress
* Hide emotional pain
* Get attention
* Punish and get revenge
* Change the behavior of others/get people to do what you want

 At least in part, our anger is learned. We’ve learned how to cope with our frustrations and our hurts this way, and it has worked, at some level. In some cases, we’ve learned that being angry and aggressive is not appropriate, and we’ve learned that expressing anxiety or depression are more acceptable. Either way, we’re not managing our anger or channeling it in a healthy way and behavioral skills training should be considered. Sometimes we learn angry reactions, too. If our families are disruptive, chaotic, rude, or troubled, we can have a difficult time learning how to communicate our emotions.

Don’t be quick-tempered, for anger is the friend of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NLT).

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and saw the people worshipping a golden calf, which they had constructed by themselves, he was enraged. Right there, he smashed to pieces the tablets of the law engraved by the finger of God (Exodus 32:19). Moses had to engrave another one all by himself, as a punishment.

On another occasion, as the children of Israel sojourned in the wilderness, they suddenly ganged up against Moses and Aaron because there was no water for them to drink. The Lord then instructed Moses to assemble the congregation, and tell the rock before their eyes to bring forth water for them to drink.

Moses, obviously angry at the people’s outburst, charged and rebuked them, tagging them rebels! In a fit of rage, he turned and struck the rock instead of speaking to it as the Lord had instructed; in fact, he struck it twice (Numbers 20:11). Water came out for the people to drink, but Moses’ action displeased the Lord.

In as much as Moses was referred to as “…very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3), he allowed anger affect his ministry and walk with God, such that he wasn’t allowed to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land as the Lord had intended. He certainly was faithful in the administration of all God’s house (Hebrews 3:5), but anger was his undoing.

Anger is a quick destroyer. Don’t even try to “tame” it; eschew it. If you’ve been termed or described as someone who’s quick to get angry, get before the Lord in prayer, and give yourself to the Word in meditation.

There’re people who won’t fulfil their calling, as it has happened in history, because of anger. And in such cases, what God does is to have another plan. Don’t let it happen to you. Why should anyone miss out with God, and fail in their divine destiny, because of a negative attitude that could easily be controlled and overturned with God’s Word? Psalm 37:8 (NIV) says, “Refrain from anger and turn from wrath….” Act on God’s Word. Refuse to let anger rule you.

PRAYER  
Dear Father, I delight myself in your Word and to do your will. Your Word is in my heart, causing me to walk in righteousness and fulfil my destiny in you. I’ll not give myself to anger, rage or fury, for my desire is to please you in all things, as I live by your Word, in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY  
Proverbs 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

1 YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN: Revelation 9 ; Jonah 1-4

2 YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN: John 21:13-25 ; 2 Chronicles 31

Psalm 37: 8

"Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil."

Ps 86: 15

"But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

Prov 14:29

"Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly."

Prov 15:1

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Prov 15:18

"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."

Prov 22:24

"Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man."

Prov 29:22

"A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression."

Ecc 7:9

"Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools."

2Tim 2:22

"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

Ecc 20:4

"If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest."

Eph 4:26

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger..."

Eph 4:31

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

Eph 6:4

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Col 3:8

"But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth."

Col3:15

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."

1Tim 2:8

"I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling..."

James 1:19

"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger..."

James 1:20

"...for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

Pst 34:14

"Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."