

Managing Anger

1. Get to know your own anger responses. KNOW YOURSELF. How have you learned to express and respond to anger?
2. When you find that you are beginning to get angry about something, STOP and LISTEN. What is this anger about? What is the purpose of this anger in this situation?
3. Once you understand why you are angry, TAKE TIME.
4. While you're taking time, develop several OPTIONS.
5. Pick an option that is an appropriate RESPONSE to the situation.
6. Judge if the response fits your own personal VALUES and morals.
7. Then TAKE ACTION.

Remember, anger is a messenger. It is telling you that you or something you care about is in some kind of danger which may be physical, emotional, spiritual danger or even danger to your way of life. It is also telling you to take action.



“Anger is a messenger-it tells you that something you care about is threatened and you need to take action.”

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**Curt H Drennen, Psy.D. R.N.
Mental Health Services
3824 West Princeton Circle
Denver, CO 80236**

**Phone: 303-866-7403
Fax: 303-866-7428
Email: curt.drennen@state.co.us**

**Colorado Department of
Human Services**

**Colorado Mental
Health Disaster
Response
System**

Division of Mental Health

**Anger:
Understanding it and
using it constructively**

The Anger Response

In order to use anger appropriately we must first consider several questions:

1. What is Anger?
2. What is its purpose? Or Why do we get angry?
3. How does our culture view anger?

What is Anger?



Anger is an emotional response, a reaction to some external action or personal interaction. Anger, like all emotions, provides us

with important information about our surroundings.

What is the Purpose of Anger?

Again, anger provides us with information about what is happening around us and with us. Anger tells us “**Watch Out! DANGER.**” It also tells us that something is important to us and it provides us with the energy to take action. Emotions provide us with information much faster than our thoughts can. This emotion prepares us for action to either protect or

defend ourselves from a physical attack or a perceived emotional attack.

How Does Our Culture View Anger?

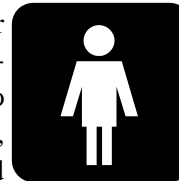
Cultures may view and respond to anger differently. As you read this information, please keep in mind your own culture, spirituality and lifetime experiences and how they relate to anger.

Typically in the United States the following are true:

- ✓ There are differences in the ways men and women express anger.
- ✓ Men are generally allowed to express anger and often it is the only “negative” emotion that men are allowed to express.
- ✓ Women are generally punished or ostracized for expressing anger (often characterized by phrases like, “she’s a bitch”).

As a result of these gender differences, a lot of confusion around anger develops.

Anger and Men: Since anger is often the only negative emotion that men are allowed to express, feelings such as fear, confusion, stress, jealousy, and being overwhelmed are often expressed as anger. This creates confusion for the individual and for those around him, and prevents an appropriate response.



Anger and Women: Since the expression of anger by women is frequently not allowed, it is often expressed through tears, through self-blame and through denial. These responses are used by



women to avoid the potential backlash from their expression of anger. As a result, the situation that has triggered the anger is often ignored.

General Views on Anger: Rarely is anger seen as a positive emotion. Unfortunately, this evaluation is an assessment of the destructive behaviors that often follow anger and is not a true assessment of the emotion itself.



The resulting reactions to anger are usually not very constructive. As a culture and society we put pressure on

others to not express anger because we fear the behaviors that may follow. This leads to an avoidance or suppression of the angry emotion.

When you avoid or suppress anger, the event that triggered the feeling is also avoided or forgotten. Then the original event is more likely to occur and cause the same problems or worse. The cycle can build until you become physically ill or explode with verbal or physical violence.

Turn to the back page for a step by step guide that will help you with your anger.