

Healthy Families Healthy Nations
Domestic Violence Training

for Professionals and Service Providers

Theme - Improving Our Communities - Understanding Violence

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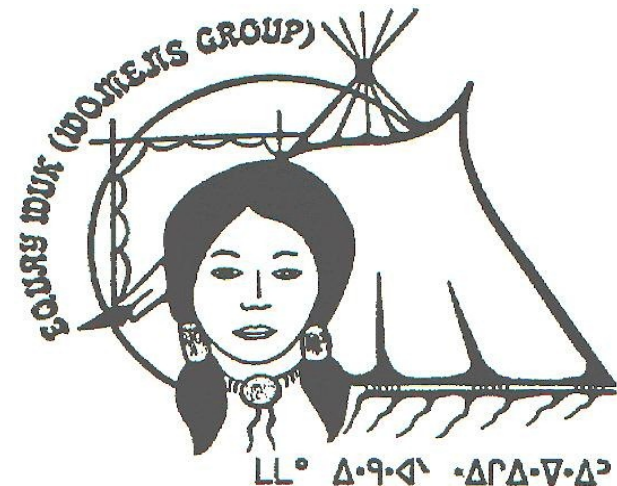
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Understanding Anger



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Keys To Anger Management:

- it's okay to feel angry
- remember body language (use a firm voice, space, eye contact)
- focus on behaviour
- "I" statements ("I feel angry when you.....because.....")
- avoid saying things you do not mean (words do hurt)
- avoid bringing up the past; focus on the present
- choose constructive over destructive
- empty chair exercise/letter writing/journaling
- relaxation techniques (music, imagination)
- positive self talk ("I will not overreact.")
- acceptance and forgiveness
- set limits for yourself
- remember, someone is watching, listening, and learning (children)

Anger Can Be Recognized:

- **physically** - headaches, dizzy, stomach-aches
- **emotionally** - depression, guilt, resentment, anxious
- **behaviourally** - yelling, abusing substances, sarcastic, abusive, withdrawal

Anger-Arousing Thoughts:

- ▶ **Self-Centeredness** - "How dare she look at me that way!"
- ▶ **A Sign of Hostile Intent** - "He's trying to make me look like a wimp."
- ▶ **Mislabeling** - "I have to defend myself."
- ▶ **Assuming the worst** - "If I don't slap him I am a wimp."
- ▶ **Blaming Others** - "She's asking for it, so I'll do it."

We can group trigger thoughts into three themes:

- ▶ **Assuming it was intended** (example: thinking that the person/s are doing things to purposely upset you)
- ▶ **Magnifying** (example: making the situation worse than it really is)
- ▶ **Labelling** (example: using negative, hurtful words to describe the person's behaviours or actions)

The assumption behind trigger thoughts is that something wrong has happened. Trigger thoughts are misleading, by making situations seem intentional. Some-times all we want to do is shout and blame, but it really does not solve anything. When everything has quieted down, nothing has really changed unless we learn to solve problems and get down to the root cause of our anger.

We can learn how to stop our trigger thoughts by using positive self talk. Telling ourselves that, “I’m going to stay calm, I don’t have to get angry.” and “I can cope with this.” We can do this every time we feel ourselves getting irritated.

We can also change our way of thinking, for example “She really is not trying to get me mad, she just needs to let her emotions out.” We need to start reminding ourselves that there are more positive ways to look at the problem.

At times, we have repressed or ‘bottled up’ our anger inside ourselves. Repressed anger can be a result of: different abuses that happened, abandonment, ridicule, neglect, racism, resentments, rejections, etc.

If we do not deal with our past issues with anger, we may begin to have violent outbursts of rage.

Anger tends to run in families. Angry parents tend to raise angry children. Sometimes, whole communities also are known to be angry. There are many forms of violence that occur in communities, to the point of being seen as normal and accepted. It is not normal. It is a learned behaviour, we are not born angry.

Each of us has learned, somewhere, how to handle our emotions/situations in our lives. Expressing anger has consequences, whether it is positive or negative. Positive behaviours may include feeling good about releasing feelings (constructive) or negative behaviours may include feeling bad about releasing feelings (destructive).

Anger Management:

- **positive** - helps us channel our energy into more constructive activities (example: physical exercise, chopping wood, talking it out, etc)
- **negative**- usually will get us into trouble in all aspects of our lives (example: abusing others, ignoring the root of anger, destroying property, etc)

Taking personal responsibility for our own anger is an important step. Again, nobody can **make** us angry and how we handle situations is our **choice**. We may find ourselves getting angry if our needs are threatened in any way, or if they are not being met.

Sometimes we blame ourselves for the situations we may find ourselves in, or we may blame others. We need to take responsibility and recognize our emotions . We need to stop blaming others for the choices we make. We can make mistakes, this is how we learn.

The most effective way to managing anger is to be open, honest, and direct. It is easier said than done, but we can keep certain points in mind.