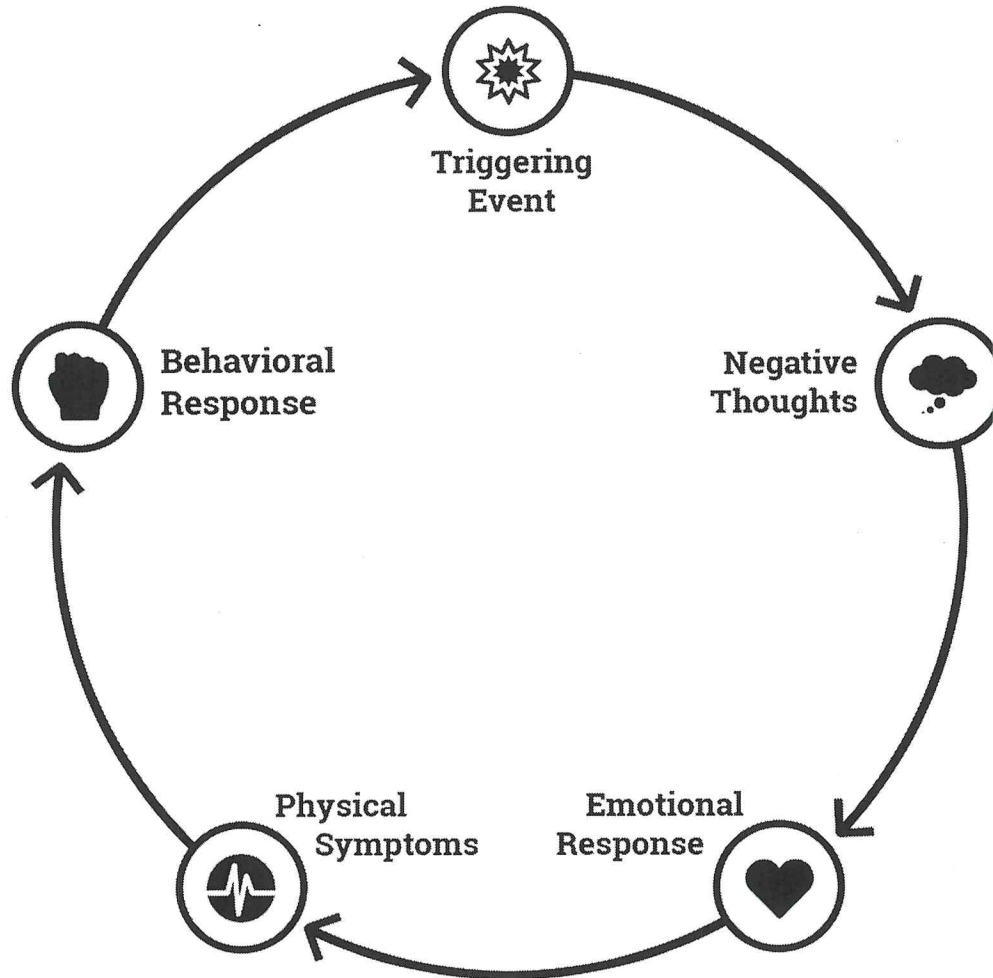


The Cycle of Anger



Triggering Event

An event or situation “triggers” a person’s anger. Examples:

- Getting cut off while driving.
- Having a bad day at work.
- Feeling disrespected.

Negative Thoughts

Irrational and negative thoughts occur as a result of the triggering event. Examples:

- “I’m the worst parent ever.”
- “The jerk who cut me off doesn’t care about anyone but themselves.”

Emotional Response

Negative thoughts lead to negative emotions, even if the thoughts are irrational. Examples:

- Feelings of shame and guilt due to being the “worst parent ever”.
- Rage directed toward a bad driver.

Physical Symptoms

The body automatically responds to anger with several symptoms. Examples:

- Racing Heart
- Sweating
- Clenched Fists
- Shaking

Behavioral Response

The person reacts based upon thoughts, feelings, and physical symptoms. Examples:

- Fighting
- Arguing
- Yelling
- Criticizing

Introduction to Anger Management



Anger: a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility

Aggression: hostile or violent behavior or attitudes toward another

Feelings of anger are a normal and healthy part of being human. Learning to avoid all anger would be an impossible goal. Instead, in anger management, you will learn to avoid negative reactions to anger (such as aggression), while learning new healthy habits.

The first step in anger management is to begin learning about your own anger. To start, you will learn about triggers (the things that set you off), how you respond to anger, and how anger has affected your life.

<p>List three situations, topics, or people that often leads to you feeling angry: (ex. arguing with your partner about money, dealing with authority, poor drivers)</p>

<p>What do you do when you're angry? List ways in which you act differently when angry: (ex. shouting, arguing, throwing or breaking objects, become physically aggressive)</p>

<p>Have you ever run into problems because of your anger? If so, list them: (ex. damaged relationships, reprimanded at work, public altercations)</p>

Anger Warning Signs

Sometimes anger can affect what you say or do before you even recognize how you're feeling. You may become so used to the feeling of anger that you don't notice it, sort of like how you can hear the sound of an air conditioner, or the humming of a refrigerator, but block it from your mind.

Even if you aren't aware of your anger, it influences how you behave. The first step to managing anger is learning to recognize your personal warning signs that will tip you off about how you're feeling.

How do you react when you feel angry? Some of these warning signs might start when you are only a little irritated, and others might start when you are very angry. *Circle the warning signs that apply to you.*

Mind goes blank	Insult the other person	Face turns red
Body or hands shake	Start sweating	Throw things
Heavy or fast breathing	Stare at the other person aggressively	Scowl or make an angry face
Scream, raise voice, or yell	Clench fists	Feel sick to the stomach
Punch walls	Feel hot	Become aggressive
Become argumentative	Go quiet and "shut down"	Crying
Pace around the room	Headaches	Can't stop thinking about the problem

Anger Management Skills

Recognize your Anger Early

If you're yelling, it's probably too late. Learn the warning signs that you're getting angry so you can change the situation quickly. Some common signs are feeling hot, raising voices, balling of fists, shaking, and arguing.

Take a Timeout

Temporarily leave the situation that is making you angry. If other people are involved, explain to them that you need a few minutes alone to calm down. Problems usually aren't solved when one or more people are angry.

Deep Breathing

Take a minute to just breathe. Count your breaths: four seconds inhaling, four seconds holding your breath, and four seconds exhaling. Really keep track of time, or you might cheat yourself! The counting helps take your mind off the situation as well.

Exercise

Exercise serves as an emotional release. Chemicals released in your brain during the course of exercise create a sense of relaxation and happiness.

Express your Anger

Once you've calmed down, express your frustration. Try to be assertive, but not confrontational. Expressing your anger will help avoid the same problems in the future.

Think of the Consequences

What will be the outcome of your next anger-fueled action? Will arguing convince the other person that you're right? Will you be happier after the fight?

Visualization

Imagine a relaxing experience. What do you see, smell, hear, feel, and taste? Maybe you're on a beach with sand between your toes and waves crashing in the distance. Spend a few minutes imagining every detail of your relaxing scene.

The Fight-or-Flight Response

Fact Sheet

► What is the fight-or-flight response?

The **fight-or-flight response** is one of the tools your body uses to protect you from danger. When you feel threatened, the flight-or-flight response is automatically triggered, and several physiological changes prepare you to either confront or flee from the threat.

► What are the symptoms of fight-or-flight?

- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Shaking
- Racing thoughts
- Nausea / "butterflies" in stomach
- Sweating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Tensed muscles

► How is the fight-or-flight response triggered?

Even threats to emotional well-being, such as the fear of embarrassment before giving a presentation, can trigger the fight-or-flight response. In these cases, the symptoms often do more harm than good. An increased heart rate and sweating might help you escape from a bear, but they won't do much to help you look cool and collected during a presentation.

► Is the fight-or-flight response bad?

Everyone will experience the fight-or-flight response at times, to varying degrees. Usually, it's natural, healthy, and not a problem. However, when the fight-or-flight response leads to excessive anger, anxiety, prolonged stress, or other problems, it might be time to intervene.

► How can I manage the fight-or-flight response?

In addition to the fight-or-flight response, your body can also initiate an opposing **relaxation response**. Many symptoms of the relaxation response counteract fight-or-flight, such as slower and deeper breathing, relaxed muscles, and a slower heart rate. The relaxation response can be triggered by using relaxation skills, such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.