

options, and then choose the option that will bring you the most happiness.

If you can catch your anger before it escalates to the point where you begin to feel “ticked-off”, you can ask yourself, “**How can I best channel my energy so that I feel good about myself?**” It is a simple, yet effective, technique that makes a big difference in how you respond.

Anger Check List - How is Your Anger?

- People tell you that you need to calm down.
- You feel tense much of the time
- At work or school, you find yourself not saying what is on your mind
- When you are upset, you try to block the world out by watching TV, reading a book or magazine, or going to sleep
- You are drinking or abusing substances almost daily to help you calm down
- You have trouble going to sleep
- You feel misunderstood or not listened to much of the time
- People ask you not to yell or curse so much
- Your loved ones keep saying that you are hurting them
- Friends do not seek you out as much

Scoring:

0 – 2: Manageable

3 – 5: Moderate

6+: Out of Control

If you recognize yourself, or someone you know has a problem with anger, help is available through the CWFL.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE CWFL?

If you are a USC staff or faculty member and are interested in scheduling an appointment with a counselor or receiving information regarding resources and referrals, phone the CWFL at (213) 821-0800. If you are an immediate family member of a USC employee, you may also phone the Center directly to request services. CWFL services are available at all USC sites by special appointment.

The Center for Work and Family Life Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

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ANGER MANAGEMENT



center for
work & family
life

USC
Employee Assistance Program
www.usc.edu/worklife

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Everyone gets angry. Anger is a normal emotion that everyone experiences at one time or another. Damage to personal relationships is one of the most common costs of anger. In moments of anger we have said things which have harmed others, done things destructive to ourselves or our possessions, and at times, made ourselves physically ill.

Anger can ruin work relationships and limit your success. It can also block your ability to focus on important issues, perform quality work, and maintain relationships. It can even divert your energy and attention away from your work to where you focus on revenge or plotting against another person or attempt to sabotage someone else's work. Getting along with other people helps you succeed on the job and may even be as important as your ability to do the job itself. Supervisors and co-workers who see you as a difficult person will go all out to avoid contact or interaction with you.

Think about your own life. Has your anger ruined any important relationships? Do you tend to blame **other people** for how **you** are feeling? Letting go of your anger and being more accepting and flexible in close relationships will probably serve you better in the long – and short – run.

- Anger is a reaction to an inner emotion and not a planned action.
- Anger is easier to show; everyone gets angry.
- The feelings underlying the anger reaction make us feel vulnerable and weak; anger

makes us feel, at least momentarily, strong and in control.

- Angry behaviors are learned over the life-span and therefore can be unlearned and replaced with healthier patterns of coping.
- Anger can be an immediate reaction to an isolated event or it can be a response after numerous events.
- To repress or try to ignore the feelings of anger is unhealthy and yet to express it impulsively, as we often do, may give momentary relief but will usually carry negative consequences.

There are a variety of factors that increase the chances of an anger reaction.

- If we are frustrated and feel stressed, we are more likely to react with anger
- If we are tired, we are more prone to react in an angry fashion
- If we tend to hold our feelings inside rather than talk them out, we are more inclined to have an angry outburst as pressure builds

One of the most helpful things to remember about anger is that it is a **secondary emotion**. A **primary feeling** is what is felt immediately before we feel angry. We always feel something else first. We might feel afraid, attacked, offended, disrespected, forced, controlled, trapped, interrogated, or pressured. If any of these feelings are intense enough, we think of the emotion as **anger**.

An important point to remember about secondary feelings is that they do not identify the unmet emotional need. When all you can say is **“I feel angry”**, neither you nor anyone else knows what would help you feel better. A helpful technique is to identify the **primary emotion**. For example, if someone wants us to do something we don't want to do, we first feel a little pressured, but not enough to get angry. When they keep pushing, we begin to get irritated. If they continue, we become **“angry.”** To avoid getting to the angry feeling, simply express the first feeling, the **primary feeling**, before it elevates to the point of anger.

Steps for Handling Anger Within Yourself

1. **Recognize the Feeling.** Ask yourself what feelings preceded the anger. Ask yourself what other feelings you are having.
2. **Analyze the Situation that is Making You Feel Angry.** Ask yourself: What am I really angry about? What is the actual problem? Do I really have power over this, or am I wasting my energy trying to control someone else? Ask what you can control?
3. **Release Some of Your Internal Anger Energy.** Remember that anger suppressed becomes like a volcano. You need to find ways to let it out gradually so that a gigantic eruption may be avoided. Physical activity, sports, or walking are excellent physical releases. Try visualizing yourself doing something to release and be free of the anger. Keeping a journal or other written expression is a release that works well for many people.
4. **Surround Yourself with Supportive People.** Ask them to help you consider your