



Managing Anger Workshop Guide

The goals and objectives below are meant to serve as a guide for individuals or groups working with the Fair Shake Reentry Packet; please adjust as needed according to your group or individual needs.

Goals and Objectives: The goals and objectives of this section are to provide tips that will assist the participants with managing anger now and in the future. The participants will understand why it is beneficial to deal with anger effectively. Participants will learn multiple ways of dealing with anger including learning that feeling anger doesn't mean you have to demonstrate anger, and also how to deal with someone else's anger.

Discussion: You may use the paragraphs and questions below for discussion, but we encourage you to develop your own questions that correlate to the Managing Anger section of the Reentry Packet. This is to provoke personalized thoughts and experiences so that the material is as effective as possible for each participant.

What is Anger?

Anger is a normal emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation, and frustration to rage. It is a reaction to a perceived threat to us, our loved ones, our property, our self-image, or some part of our identity. Anger is a warning bell that tells us that something is wrong.

Anger has Three Components:

Sources: *Anger Research Consortium; American Psychological Association*

Physical Reactions: usually starting with a rush of adrenaline and responses such as an increased heart rate, blood pressure, and tightening muscles

Cognitive Responses: or how we perceive and think about what is making us angry. For example, we might think something that happened to us is wrong, unfair, and undeserved.

Behavior: or the way we express our anger. There is a wide range of behavior that signals anger. For instance, we may turn red, raise our voice, clam up, slam doors or stomp our feet when we walk away. We may also state that we are angry and why, ask for a time-out, request an apology, or ask for something to change.

Everyone experiences anger, and it can be healthy. It can motivate us to stand up for ourselves and correct injustices. When we manage anger well, it prompts us to make positive changes in our lives and in our world.

Mismanaged anger, on the other hand, is counter-productive and can be unhealthy. When anger is too intense; out of control, misdirected and overly aggressive, it can lead to poor decision making and problem solving, create problems in relationships at home, school and work, and can even affect your health.

When anger is out of control, it can cause you to make poor decisions. These decisions can create problems in all aspects of your life including driving. People may begin to feel fearful and anxious around you. Anger can cause high blood pressure, headaches and sleeping problems.

Anger is harmful when

- You get angrier than the situation calls for.
- You stay angry after the situation is over and can't move on.
- You feel angry all the time or many times a day.
- You're not always sure why you're angry.
- You get angry with those very close to you for very little reason.
- You use physical or verbal aggression.
- You lose jobs, friends, or relationships because of your anger.
- You turn to drugs or alcohol to cope with your anger.

Despite the potential problems that not managing your anger can cause some anger can be beneficial. Because anger is such a strong emotion, it can be a motivating factor for change in your life - one of the best ways to manage anger is to channel what is making you angry into creating lasting, positive change. Consistent anger can also be a warning sign of a lack of job fulfillment or an unsatisfying relationship. By understanding what makes you angry you can work on managing anger to improve your life.

Discussion Questions:

- How can anger be an effective emotion?
- How can unmanaged anger derail your journey towards positive re- entry?
- How would you normally react to someone flying off the handle?
- What is the best way to deal with someone else's anger?

Anger Triggers

The situations that cause you to get angry are called triggers. These might include being ignored or failing at something new. Sometimes they are situations that remind you of painful situations from your past.

Your anger triggers are unique and based on your life experiences. If you can predict your anger triggers, you can be ready to react appropriately.

Recognizing Feelings Related to Anger

Anger is not always just anger. You may react with anger when what you really feel is embarrassment, fear, or hurt. One reason you might react with anger is because you think being angry makes you look strong and showing those other feelings makes you look weak. Feeling angry may seem safe. It may just be a habit you've had for a long time.

When your anger is triggered, pay attention to the other feelings that come up. If you can name the feelings underneath your anger, you can start to resolve them in a healthy way. Here are some feelings that can be caused by anger triggers.

Disrespect
Impatience
Sadness
Embarrassment

Frustration
Boredom
Shame
Hurt

Disappointment
Loneliness
Fear
Impatience

Managing Anger Worksheet

There are no right or wrong answers this worksheet is a tool to help you better understand the ways you manage your anger.

1. Give an example of a time when your anger was unhealthy. What effects did it have?
2. Give an example of a time when your anger was healthy. What effects did it have?
3. Read a list of signs of harmful and helpful anger on the previous page. Are any of the signs true for you? Which ones?
4. Do you think you have a problem with anger? Explain why or why not
5. Write three of your personal anger triggers, then think about what feelings might be beneath your anger in each of those situations.
6. What are Sue's anger triggers? What are some effective ways to resolve her issues? Do you think her issues will come up in other situations? If so, when or where?

Anger Cues

Another way to recognize anger is by paying attention to your body. Anger cues are physical signs that you are getting angry. It is important to recognize these physical signs before the anger get out of control. Then, you can pause and try to figure out what other emotions you are feeling underneath the anger.

Once you are honest with yourself about your feelings, you can be honest with others. This is a healthy way to deal with anger. Anger cues can include the following:

Racing or pounding heart
Clenched teeth
Clenched fist
Feeling hot
Feeling cold
Sweating
Loud voice

Breathing faster and harder
Red face
Tensed muscles
Trembling or shaking
Upset stomach
Dry mouth
Lots of energy

Think about the last time you got angry. How did your body feel? Discuss.

Dealing with Anger

Even though everyone experiences anger, the way people deal with anger are as different as we are. Lots of things affected how you learned to express anger. You learned how to respond to anger from your culture and the society you grew up in.

You also learned how to express anger from your family. If your parents yelled at you or at each other, you probably yell when you are angry at someone. If your family never talked about how they felt, you probably don't tell people when you are angry at them.

There are three main ways people deal with anger. As you read through the list, think about your past experiences and how your family and friends generally deal with anger.

Expressing it. Some people will express their anger verbally or physically. If their anger is uncontrolled, they may yell, throw a tantrum, destroy property, or physically hurt someone when they are angry. If they are in control of their anger, they communicate their anger and take action to solve the problem.

Suppressing it. Some people will hold in their anger or direct it themselves. While it's okay to suppress anger for a short period of time, people need to deal with their anger eventually. When people always suppress their anger, they can suffer from depression or health problems, such as high blood pressure. Some people may also try to escape their anger by turning to drugs and alcohol or, other self-destructive habits.

Managing it. Some people will take steps to manage their anger and calm themselves down. Deep breathing exercise and positive self-talk are a few ways people manage their anger and calm themselves. Once calm, people can express their anger in a controlled way.

Finally, in our society, we often see anger expressed with violence, which causes more violence. We see violence in movies, on television, and in video games. We hear about it in the lyrics of popular music. We witness violence in our communities.

Violence can ruin lives. Anger often causes violence, and violence causes more anger. To break the cycle of violence we must learn to deal with and express our anger in a controlled, assertive way. Discuss.