

e-Health: Understanding and managing your anger

Do you ever get angry? Sure you do. We all do. Anger is a natural emotion.

It can also be like the tip of the iceberg. People may act angry, when underneath they're actually feeling hurt, scared, frustrated, or disrespected. Everyone is different in how easily, how often, and how intensely they get angry.

You probably know some people who never seem to get angry and others who have a very short fuse. It's important to understand anger and ways to manage it. So it doesn't become an obstacle in your life.

How can anger be an obstacle?

If your anger is out of control, it can get in the way of relationships, lead to depression, and even cause illness. People who spend too much time feeling angry can have headaches, high blood pressure, insomnia, stomach problems, and other ailments.

How can you tell if your anger is a problem?

Ask yourself, do you feel angry many times a day? Do you use alcohol or other substances to soothe your anger? Do you ever hit or break anything when you're angry? Do people say you're a hot head? Do you ever regret things you do or say when you're angry?

Managing your anger

Now, let's talk about ways you can understand and value your feelings while also managing your anger better.

The first step is to learn how to catch yourself in the heat of the moment. It's not easy, but it's really important. If someone triggers your anger, realize how angry you feel. But avoid reacting or saying or doing anything while you're upset. And remember, never get behind the wheel of a car when you're angry.

Walk away and take time to collect your thoughts and calm down. This is an important step. Try taking slow deep breaths. Take a walk outside. Listen to some relaxing music. Find effective ways to soothe yourself and settle down.

Once you're calmer, you can think about what to say or do about what made you angry. Think about whether it's constructive to address what triggered your anger. If so, set up a time to sit down and talk about it with the person or people involved. Be prepared. Say what made you angry, but don't yell. Stay calm. Say how you feel and what you need from them going forward. Ask if there's something you can do to avoid the situation from happening again.

It takes time, but after a while you'll become much more aware of your angry feelings. You'll start to notice the types of things that get under your skin. You may want to get counseling to better understand your anger and learn other helpful ways to manage your feelings.

Remember, anger is a signal to you. If you learn to notice the signal, control your reactions, and take positive action, you'll be happier and healthier for it.

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