



Counselling Services

ANGER

Anger is a completely normal human emotion. It is a heightened state of emotional arousal normally occurring in response to some sense of frustration, hurt or disappointment. Frustration occurs when we don't get something that we want eg a good grade, a supportive comment or when we get something negative that we don't want eg a critical comment, a flat tyre.

The degree of anger we experience in response to these events may range from mild annoyance to rage depending on many factors including:

- Our current emotional state
- The context of the event
- History of events *or*
- Our cognitive interpretation of the event.

Memories of traumatic or enraging events may also trigger angry feelings.

Symptoms:

- A sense of rising bodily tension including an increase in heart rate and blood pressure and certain hormones
- An increase in volume and rate of speech (shouting)
- Passive-aggressive behaviour (getting back at people indirectly)
- Continual criticising or being cynical or sarcastic
- Physical or verbal abuse

What Can Help:

- Relaxation
- Deep breathing, calming visual imagery
- Non-strenuous exercise like yoga, tai-chi etc
- Slow down, take time to think
- Challenging negative thinking
- Using logic to examine the situation rationally
- Expressing your feelings in an **assertive** not **aggressive** way
- Try not to fight back if criticised
- Try to find a solution to the problem
- Use a humorous response to defuse the situation

Other Sources of Help and Information:

- Talk to a counsellor at Counselling Services
- Some community agencies such as Lifeline, Relationships Australia and Kinnections often run anger management groups
- A useful internet site is at: www.apa.org/pubinfo/anger.html

QUT Counselling Services offers professional assistance with this and other issues

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