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# ANGER MANAGEMENT

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Compiled from Therapistaid.com



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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE PRECINCT 4

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The first step is learning to manage your anger is to learn *about* your anger, how you react to it and what things set you off. Feeling anger is normal. Reacting with aggression or other negative behaviors is not appropriate.

Your success in learning new skills and gaining understanding about anger, how you react and how it affects your life depends entirely upon the effort you put into these worksheets. Make a serious effort to complete the following worksheets. Completion should take at least 4 weeks. Once you're done, contact JP4 at 512-352-4155 and ask to speak with the Juvenile Case Manager. You do not have to turn in your completed worksheets but you do need to discuss what you've learned and share any success stories.

***This packet is not intended to completely replace therapy and anger management classes. The goal is to provide tools for you to begin to learn how to recognize your issues with anger, your triggers and some basic management skills. We encourage you to seek classes and/or a therapist as appropriate.***

Start with the Introduction to Anger Management worksheet. Think about times you've felt angry, what you do when you get angry and ways your anger has impacted your life.

Move on to the worksheet titled, "When is anger a problem?". Everyone experiences anger. It helps us stand up for ourselves when we've been wronged, and protect our own needs. However, in many circumstances, anger can have unwanted consequences. When completing this worksheet, you will learn about how anger can negatively impact physical and emotional health, school or work performance, relationships, and more.

Next, complete the Triggers worksheet. Understanding what makes you angry is key to countering negative behavior. After identifying triggers, you will be prompted to develop strategies to either avoid or cope with your triggers.

Review the worksheet Anger Warning Signs. How many of these apply to you? Try to identify the early warning signs as they apply to you.

Next, work on The Anger Diary. Before successfully managing anger, you will first need to develop the ability to recognize your temper before it has reached explosive levels. One common and effective strategy for improving emotional awareness is by recording relevant events in an Anger Diary. This task may be challenging the first time around, so we suggest that you discuss this diary with a trusted friend, spouse, parent or counselor to help you identify instances of anger.

Now that you've learned to recognize your behavior, what things make you angry and are more aware of how your response to anger affects yourself and others, it's time to start on anger management skills. Review the Anger Management Skills, Coping Skills, Deep Breathing and Fair Fighting worksheets. These offer tips on how to respond to your anger and improve interactions.

Apply these ideas and keep another Anger Diary to document how successful you are with using them. Again, discuss the diary with whomever you feel most comfortable with to help you see where you can make changes and when you've been successful.

Practice your deep breathing and other coping skills regularly. Find a safe physical outlet to distress. Talk to a friend, pastor, or counselor to help you stay on track with your anger management. Track your moods with the daily mood chart.

The coping skills in this packet take commitment to work. Changing your responses to anger won't happen overnight, but improving your relationships at home, school and work are worth the effort.

# 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.

**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)


**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)

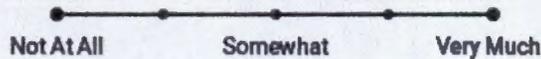

**Have you ever run into problems because of your anger? If so, list them:**  
(ex. damaged relationships, reprimanded at work, public altercations)


# When is Anger a Problem?

In small doses, anger is an appropriate, normal, and healthy emotion. Everyone experiences anger. It helps us stand up for ourselves when we've been wronged, and protect our own needs. However, in many circumstances, anger can have negative repercussions. Below are examples of how anger can be harmful, or cause unwanted consequences.

**Anger is a problem when it negatively affects others.** Anger drives people to act in a way that's unpleasant or harmful to those around them. This can result in straining or losing important relationships. It can be difficult to maintain healthy relationships when anger is out of control.

How much does this problem apply to you?



How has your anger impacted other people?

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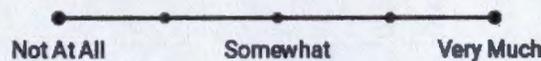
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**Anger is a problem when it hinders performance at work or school.** Anger can lead to breakdowns in communication, making it difficult to work with others. Additionally, being preoccupied with anger harms one's ability to concentrate on work or school tasks.

How much does this problem apply to you?



How has anger negatively affected your performance at work or school?

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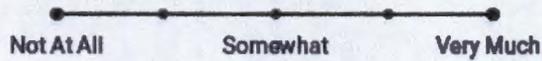
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# When is Anger a Problem?

**Anger is a problem when it negatively affects health or well-being.** Anger affects both physical and emotional health. Physically, anger contributes to problems such as high blood pressure and heart attacks. Emotionally, anger contributes to anxiety, depression, and drug and alcohol use.

How much does this problem apply to you?



How has anger negatively affected your physical or emotional health?

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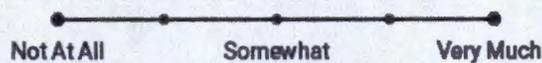
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**Anger is a problem when it is too intense.** Even when anger is justified, it can be a problem if it goes too far. For example, physical aggression can lead to severe consequences such as physical harm to one's self or others, property damage, and legal trouble. A verbal outburst that's out of proportion to a situation may lead to losing a job, permanently damaging a relationship, or other consequences.

How much does this problem apply to you?



When was a time that your anger was too intense?

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# Triggers



In this section, you will develop a plan for dealing with your three biggest triggers. Review your plan regularly, and practice each of the strategies.

**Describe your three biggest triggers, in detail.**

Trigger	#1	
	#2	
	#3	

**Describe your strategy for *avoiding* or *reducing exposure* to each trigger.**

Trigger	#1	
	#2	
	#3	

**Describe your strategy for dealing with each trigger head on, when they cannot be avoided.**

Trigger	#1	
	#2	
	#3	

# Triggers



**Trigger:** A stimulus—such as a person, place, situation, or thing—that contributes to an unwanted emotional or behavioral response.

## The Problem

Describe the problem your triggers are contributing to. What's the worst-case scenario, if you are exposed to your triggers?


## Trigger Categories

Just about *anything* can be a trigger. To begin exploring your own triggers, think about each of the categories listed below. Is there a specific emotion that acts as a trigger for you? How about a person or place? List your responses in the provided spaces.

<b>Emotional State</b>	
<b>People</b>	
<b>Places</b>	
<b>Things</b>	
<b>Thoughts</b>	
<b>Activities / Situations</b>	

## Tips for Dealing with Triggers

- Oftentimes, the best way to deal with a trigger is to avoid it. This might mean making changes to your lifestyle, relationships, or daily routine.
- Create a strategy to deal with your triggers head on, just in case. Your strategy might include coping skills, a list of trusted people you can talk to, or rehearsed phrases to help you get out of a troublesome situation.
- Don't wait until the heat of the moment to test your coping strategy. *Practice!*

# 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.*

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

# Anger Diary

Anger has a way of sneaking up and taking control of our thoughts and actions before we realize what's happening. Fortunately, with practice, you can get better at catching your anger long before it takes over. Keeping an *Anger Diary* will help you achieve that goal.

**Instructions:** Either at the end of the day, or a few hours after your anger has passed, take a moment to reflect on a situation where you felt angry, or even just a bit frustrated. By following the example, take a few notes about the event. After recording five events, complete the review.

<b>Example</b>	Trigger	"My husband tracked mud all over the carpet and didn't even notice. I had just mopped a few days ago, so I lost it."
	Warning Signs	"Before I got really angry, I noticed that my hands were shaking and I was argumentative. Then, as I got angrier, my face felt really hot."
	Anger Response	"I screamed at my husband. I wanted to throw something, but I didn't. I couldn't stop thinking about how selfish he is."
	Outcome	"My husband ended up getting really angry too, and we argued for hours. It was miserable. I went to bed feeling guilty and sad."

<b>Event One</b>	Trigger	
	Warning Signs	
	Anger Response	
	Outcome	

<b>Event Two</b>	Trigger	
	Warning Signs	
	Anger Response	
	Outcome	

# Anger Diary

<b>Event Three</b>	Trigger	
	Warning Signs	
	Anger Response	
	Outcome	

<b>Event Four</b>	Trigger	
	Warning Signs	
	Anger Response	
	Outcome	

<b>Event Five</b>	Trigger	
	Warning Signs	
	Anger Response	
	Outcome	

<b>Review</b>	Do you notice any patterns related to your anger?	
	Generally, how would you like to react differently?	

# Deep Breathing



**Deep Breathing:** a relaxation technique performed by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced regularly, deep breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

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## How Deep Breathing Works

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During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the **stress response**. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the **relaxation response**. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and the symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.

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## Instructions

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Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, if you would like to do so. When you're learning, try placing a hand on your stomach. If you breathe deeply enough, you should notice it rising and falling with each inhalation and exhalation.



- 1 Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- 2 Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
- 3 Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.  
**Tip:** Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- 4 Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

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## Tips

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- If it isn't working, *slow down!* The most common mistake is breathing too fast. Time each step in your head, counting slowly as you do so.
- Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose. It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.
- The times we use for each step are suggestions, and can be lengthened or decreased. Lengthen the time if it feels natural to do so, or decrease the time if you feel discomfort.

# Coping Skills

## Anger

### Be Aware of Triggers

Anger triggers are the things that set you off. Knowing your triggers, and being cautious around them, will reduce the likelihood of your anger getting out of control.

#### How to use triggers to your advantage:

- ✓ Create a list of your triggers and review them daily. Reviewing your triggers will keep them fresh in your mind, increasing the likelihood you notice them before they become a problem.
- ✓ Oftentimes, the best way to deal with a trigger is to avoid it. This might mean making changes to your lifestyle, relationships, or daily routine.
- ✓ Because it isn't always possible to avoid triggers, have a plan when you must face them. For example, avoid touchy conversations when you are tired, hungry, or upset.

### Practice Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.



### Keep an Anger Log

Following an episode of anger, take a few moments to record your experience. This practice will help you identify patterns, warning signs, and triggers, while also helping you organize thoughts and work through problems.

- ✓ What was happening *before* the anger episode? Describe how you were feeling, and what was on your mind. Were you hungry, tired, or stressed?
- ✓ Describe the facts of what happened. What events triggered your anger? How did you react, and did your reaction change as the event continued to unfold?
- ✓ What were your thoughts and feelings *during* the anger episode? Looking back, do you see anything differently than when you were in the heat of the moment?

# Coping Skills

## Anger

### Use Diversions

The goal of diversions is to buy yourself time. If you can distract yourself for just 30 minutes, you'll have a better chance of dealing with your anger in a healthy way. Remember, you can always return to the source of your anger later—you're just setting the problem aside for now.

go for a walk	read a book	play a sport	listen to music
watch a movie	practice a hobby	go for a run	clean or organize
do yard work	draw or paint	do a craft	cook or bake
play a game	go for a bicycle ride	write or journal	take a long bath
play an instrument	call a friend	lift weights	go swimming
go hiking in nature	take photographs	play with a pet	rearrange a room

### Take a Time-out

Time-outs are a powerful tool for relationships where anger-fueled disagreements are causing problems. When someone calls a time-out, both individuals agree to walk away from the problem, and return once you have both had an opportunity to cool down.

#### How to use time-outs effectively:

- ✓ With your partner, plan exactly how time-outs will work. Everyone should understand the rationale behind time-outs (an opportunity to cool down—not to avoid a problem).
- ✓ What will you both do during time-outs? Plan activities that are in different rooms or different places. The list of diversions from above is a good place to begin.
- ✓ Plan to return to the problem in 30 minutes to an hour. Important problems shouldn't be ignored forever, but nothing good will come from an explosive argument.

### Know Your Warning Signs

Anger warning signs are the clues your body gives you that your anger is starting to grow. When you learn to spot your warning signs, you can begin to address your anger while it's still weak.

sweating	can't get past problem	feel hot / turn red	clenched fists
headaches	becoming argumentative	raised voice	using verbal insults
pacing	aggressive body language	feel sick to stomach	go quiet / "shut down"

# Anger Management Skills

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **Exercise**

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

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## **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.

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## **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?

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## **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.

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# Daily Mood Chart

	Happy	Sad	Mad	Tired	Excited	Anxious	Other	Notes
6 AM – 8 AM								
8 AM – 10 AM								
10 AM – 12 PM								
12 PM – 2 PM								
2 PM – 4 PM								
4 PM – 6 PM								
6 PM – 8 PM								
8 PM – 10 PM								
10 PM – 12 AM								
12 AM – 2 AM								
2 AM – 4 AM								
4 AM – 6 AM								