

## Technical sheet

# ANGER

Anger is an emotion that we identify, rightly or wrongly, as being responsible for frustration. This frustration may be linked to an unfair or threatening situation that prevents us from satisfying our desires.

**We're angry when we can't control what's causing the frustration.**

Anger is always felt towards someone, something or ourselves.

It can be a person, a situation, an act or an idea. We can also feel anger against ourselves.



- Anger allows us to re-establish our rights.
- Anger gives us energy to fight injustice.

**Words for anger:** irritation, annoyance, resentment, exasperation, fury, rage, outrage...

**Physical sensations associated with anger:** increased breathing and heartbeat, feeling hot, tense muscles.

Anger is a natural emotion that gives us information about what we're experiencing. It can be useful. It can lift us out of a passive state or a state of resignation regarding what's happening to us or in the face of injustice. It's what drives us to take action to defend our values.

You can feel anger towards someone you love. An emotion is not the same as what we feel deeply, emotionally and permanently for someone!

Anger, which is an emotion, should not be confused with « getting angry » or aggression, which is a form of behaviour.

## Anger can be inappropriate

Anger is adapted when it prepares the individual for an active response (fight), it supports our actions and gives us a feeling of control.

Feeling angry is sometimes ill-suited to the situation, driven by irrational thoughts: scapegoating: blaming the wrong person. We attack the wrong target.

Poor satisfaction goals: we set the bar too high with too many expectations for ourselves, others and life.

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Anger at ourselves is usually inappropriate. Treating ourselves with kindness, as you would treat your best friend, is far more effective. We can be angry about something we've done (or not done) but not at who we are.

## Poor anger management

Serious problems are caused by too much control or not enough control:

- Too much control: too much withholding of anger causes problems:
  - The more you deny something, the more you make it happen.
  - To control or avoid anger, it's risky to use false equivalences.
- Not enough control: anger causes problems when it is inappropriate and poorly managed, leading to uncontrolled, destructive, violent and aggressive behaviour.

## When you've been through a trauma...

Anger is an appropriate response to trauma. However, anger becomes problematic when it's directed at people or situations not linked to the trauma, or expressed through violence directed at oneself or others. It can have harmful long-term consequences.

In order to use anger appropriately, its presence must be acknowledged, moderated, and directed fairly. Strategies for coping with anger often include delaying its expression (counting to 10, stepping away from the situation); reducing its intensity (breathing, exercising, going for a run); reflecting on the consequences of any actions (what are the consequences of this action? Is it in line with my objectives?); and identifying the source of the anger (who am I angry with? what made me angry in this situation?). Skills involve identifying the link between emotions and objectives, especially in terms of interpersonal goals.

## How to manage anger

- I consciously observe what I'm feeling and note my physical sensations.
- I name my emotion precisely and with nuance: « I'm angry ».
- I welcome the anger, I accept it, I let go. It's my experience at that moment because it's the information I need to have. If I try to avoid this emotion, not experience it, I'll be in pain later - it's too risky!
- I don't try to make the anger go away quickly.

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- I have the right to be angry.
- I fill in my emotional self-observation notebook.
- As far as possible, I try to be assertive rather than aggressive.
- I say « I'm angry », « when you do that, it makes me angry... in the future I'd like... (what I want) » even if I'm not sure I'll get what I want!

