

CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 9

• Anger Management and Male Myths

Although anger is one of the most common emotions that people have, it is the least understood. These phrases are probably familiar to you:

- "If someone hits you, hit 'em back."
- "Turn the other cheek."
- "Don't get angry; get even."

Have you noticed how they contradict each other? That's because anger is a very complex emotion. Attempts to simplify it result in the following MISPERCEPTIONS:

1. That all anger is unhealthy or destructive
2. That anger is an all-or-nothing phenomenon
3. If you don't let your anger out, it builds up and explodes out
4. That angry people yell and scream a lot
5. That anger management means keeping your mouth shut

Here are the facts:

Not All Anger is Unhealthy or Destructive

Sometimes anger is definitely justified. For example, if you have been betrayed by a friend, or if you have been physically attacked by someone, or if there is a major social injustice -- these are all times where anger is appropriate. Biologically speaking, anger gets your adrenalin going, and spurs you into action.

On the other hand, the hissy fits that people throw over minor irritations are both unhealthy and destructive. Anger has serious implications for your health. Research shows that among all the risk factors for heart disease, chronic anger is the most significant predictor -- more than smoking, obesity and high blood pressure. Temper tantrums and other fits of anger are rarely useful. In fact, they erode not only people's respect for you, but also your own self-respect.

Anger is Not an All-Or-Nothing Phenomenon

Anger typically occurs in degrees, ranging from mild annoyance to intense rage. Some people have a problem labeling negative feelings. They consider any experience of hostility as an intense, urgent crisis, even if it's just a momentary frustration. Such people tend to have an over-active "inner brat" that makes mountains out of molehills.

It is Not Always Necessary to Let Your Anger Out

Anger does not work like steam in a teakettle. It is not necessary to release it in order to avoid explosion. While it's true your stress level does increase when you dwell on angry thoughts, you can reduce the stress without having to resort to an outburst or tirade.

Not All Angry People Yell or Scream

In fact, many people keep their anger to themselves, or so they think. Even though they don't come right out and say, "I'm mad at you," they show it in their behavior -- by being "passive aggressive." They sulk; they have a "tone" to their voice; they slam doors, etc. Such

people have an inner brat that is called "The Smolderer." You kind of know they're angry, but you don't know exactly what they're angry about.

Anger Management Does Not Mean Keeping Your Mouth Shut

Anger management involves keeping your inner brat from saying or doing something that you'll later regret. It involves calming yourself, making cool-headed assessments of the situation, and finally taking sensible action. With practice, this can be accomplished in a matter of seconds.

Effective anger management means learning to differentiate what is truly a situation worth getting angry about, and what is just your inner brat over-reacting. It also means learning to express your anger directly and constructively, without losing emotional control. Not only will you be less stressed by your anger, but you will also get better results.

Anger Control Methods

It is normal for people to express anger. In fact, anger is healthy when the person experiencing it is able to control the emotion. We ordinarily express our anger through words. However, people who are unable to control their anger express it physically. A person whose anger often takes on a physical form (e.g., hitting, physical rage, punching, slapping, etc.) develops problems in his personal and work life.

When you are angry, your anger may be directed at one person or situation. You may even become angry when you have a problem that frustrates you and worries you. A memory can also make you angry. When you are angry, your body experiences physiological and biological changes. Your heart beats faster, your blood pressure shoots up, and your energy hormones (adrenaline and noradrenaline) increases.

Typically, people express anger in an aggressive manner. You've probably seen two angry people and expressing their anger towards each other through fighting. However, it is not always the case that anger results to physical attacks. There are norms of social behavior that need to be followed.

If you are angry, there are three ways you can approach the emotion: express the anger, suppress the anger, or calm the anger. Expressing anger in a controlled manner is a healthy approach. However, this approach is often difficult to do because it involves a balancing act -- getting your needs met without hurting others. In short, controlling anger involves respecting both yourself and other people, especially those who are the cause or object of your anger, while still being able to express it.

The second approach is suppression. Suppressing anger can backfire. When a person tends to suppress his anger, he can develop high blood pressure, hypertension or even depression. It can also cause the individual to develop either a passive behavior or an aggressive one. Either way, he is unlikely to build good relationships with other people.

The last approach is calming the anger down. A person who is able to calm his anger down is able to control his outward behavior. However, if he is unable to calm down, he may hurt someone or even himself.

If you feel yourself getting angry, there are techniques you can use to control your anger. For instance, you can make use of relaxation tools like deep breathing and repeating calming words to calm you down and reduce the intensity of your anger. They aren't guaranteed to make your anger go away, but what they will do is reduce your angry feelings so that you can take better hold of your emotions.

Another way you can control your anger is to change your way of thinking. For instance, have you noticed how some angry people resort to cursing or swearing when they are angry? If you tend to do this, you may want to make a conscious effort to stop cursing or swearing, and instead start thinking more rationally and reasonably. Also remember that anger makes people assume wrongly or do stupid things because anger can cloud their judgment. Thus, whenever you find yourself angry, slow down and think carefully before you say or do anything.

Anger Control: Keeping Anger in Its Place

Anger is a basic emotion that is good when it's controlled and ugly when it isn't. If how you vent is costing you jobs, relationships, and more, you might want to consider anger-management training.

Anger can be a pulse-raising response to other people's behavior, but it can also be triggered by your own thoughts and memories. It is rooted in a basic, biological instinct that empowers us to defend ourselves from a threat. But in the modern world, anger must be controlled or it can result in dire consequences.

People who have a hard time coping with anger may need — or be ordered to — anger-management training.

Anger Control: Evolutionary Consequences

“Anger is generally recognized as a fundamental emotion that everyone experiences as a consequence of evolution,” says Charles Spielberger, PhD, distinguished research professor emeritus at the University of South Florida in Tampa. “As an emotional state, anger varies in intensity as a response to perceived danger in situations in which a person is attacked, criticized, or feels frustrated. As a personality trait, anger refers to the frequency [with which] the emotion is experienced over time.”

Spielberger and colleagues developed the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI), which is often used to evaluate anger. It is a written test that measures, among other things, the components of someone's anger, in terms of normalcy and abnormalcy.

Anger: A Learned Response

Anger is often a secondary emotion, says George Anderson, an anger management trainer with Anderson and Anderson Anger Management in Los Angeles. That means it comes as a result of another emotion — most often stress. Anger can be an unpleasant emotion with unpleasant results, including an increased risk of heart disease, if it is not handled correctly. Many people learn how to cope with anger from the environment in which they grew up. Research suggests that people who have poor anger control grew up in homes that were chaotic and with people who had difficulty expressing anger well.

“What that means is if how you cope with anger can be learned, it can be unlearned,” says Anderson, who provides anger management training to a variety of professionals, including doctors. “Unfortunately, the person who has the problem is usually the last to recognize it.”

Anger: Signs That You’re Losing Control

“Anger is a problem when it is too intense, occurs too frequently, lasts too long, affects health and relationships, or leads to person- or property-directed aggression,” says Anderson.

You may have an anger-control problem if:

- People in your life tell you that you seem constantly angry, touchy, or irritable
- You respond with violent words or actions out of proportion to the situation
- Your supervisor, human resources department, or a judge has ordered you into anger-management training
- You have a lot of broken relationships
- You lose jobs often

Anger Control: Common Thought Processes

Researchers know that there are some thought processes that are common to people with poor anger control. Consider the examples of road rage and parents who become violently enraged at their children’s sports events.

Both situations demonstrate out-of-control anger, but both are due to a person’s unreasonable desire to control others or belief that events reflect poorly on them.

Anger Control: One Big Button

“I think I was probably a little too sensitive,” says 51-year-old Gary Galvan, a former elementary school principal who was referred to anger-management training by his district administrator. “I probably didn’t read the social cues as well as I may have. I was one big button; people were able to push and I’d respond.”

Galvan says anger-management training gave him skills he needed — he just wishes he had learned them earlier in his life. “It would have saved a lot of heartbreak,” he says.

Anger Control: I-Statements

One of the skills Galvan treasures is a new way of speaking about his feelings. He’s learned to use a formula called I-statements: “I feel ___ when ___ because I need ___,” he says. He offers the example: “I feel mad when you don’t acknowledge my achievements because I need to know my work is valuable.”

Anger Control: Strategies

If you are having trouble controlling your anger, try these strategies to keep anger in check:

- **Slow down.** “If you can recognize in advance a situation that is going to make you angry — if you can slow the process right down — you can prevent it from getting to the stage of rage,” says Anderson.
- **Empathize.** Sometimes the people who are triggering your anger have their own problems and emotions to cope with. Empathizing with their situation can help you, too.
- **Solve a problem.** If a situation is making you angry, come up with a plan and then take action to change some of the angering aspects.
- **Make a change.** Elements in your day or environment may be making you more likely to lose control. For example, if you tend to get angry when you are stressed, try to find a way to de-stress before you hit the time of day when you are most likely to lash out.
- **Change your thinking.** If you can’t change your environment, you might want to change the way you think about events. Seek help from a cognitive-behavioral therapist who can teach you coping skills.
- **Use humor.** A good laugh can break the tension or just give you a better perspective.

And, if there is a way you can avoid a person or situation that consistently makes you angry, do so.

10 Anger Management Strategies to Help You Keep Calm

Anger is a normal emotion that all people experience from time to time. Different people will experience different levels of anger, and for most, those levels will remain in the normal range. Some individuals, however, have excessively high levels of anger. While that in and of itself may signal a problem, it is the inappropriate expression of anger in an aggressive manner that can lead to additional problems. Anger does not have to be avoided, but it does have to be managed properly to keep it from spiraling out of control. Although some doctors recommend mood altering drugs to treat anger problems, there are several simple techniques that can be used to manage anger without the use of medication.

Walk Away

Take a breather and remove yourself from the situation that is causing you to become angry. Anger causes your heart rate to go up and raises your blood pressure. This causes a spike in adrenaline and other energy hormones. Walk away and count to ten, to reverse those physiological and biological effects. Concentrate on taking deep breaths and focus on your body every time you inhale and exhale. When you feel yourself starting to calm down, make a mental note of how your body felt as you relaxed and focus on that feeling the next time you find your anger level elevating.

Know Your Warning Signs

Anger doesn't appear out of nowhere. However, you may not pay attention to the specific warning signs that your body is putting off as you are becoming agitated. By the time you realize you are getting angry, you may already have reached your boiling point. Learn how to tune into the physical signs that your body is expressing to you when you are becoming angry. Physical signs develop as a result of our internal "fight or flight" reflex. As your anger levels increase, so does your desire to "fight". The key to keeping this reflex under control is to head anger off at the path by listening to your body. There is universal warning sign, anger affects people differently. Learn to recognize your physical symptoms, which may be a pulsing heart, tingling in the fingers, feeling flushed or rapid breathing. Knowing your warning signs will help you take steps to manage your anger before it escalates.

Get Some Exercise

When you feel yourself getting ready to boil over with anger, get out and get some exercise. Not only will it take you away from the situation at hand, but exercise is a way for you to release pent up energy and any negative emotions that may be stored up. Exercise also stimulates the production of chemicals in the brain that are responsible for calming the body and improving your mood. Go for a jog, shoot some hoops or just hit the gym.

Work on Your Communication Skills

Often times, poor communication skills can lead to confrontation when in reality, the disagreement can often be chalked up to a simple misunderstanding. When emotions are running and tempers are high, you can quickly say something that you would not have said under normal circumstances. Not only can this escalate the situation at hand, but it can lead to further problems down the road, such as regret or feelings of guilt about what you said. This works both ways during an argument. Try to give the other person the opportunity to express himself clearly. Don't interrupt, yell or hang on his every word. Don't jump to conclusions and don't speak without first thinking about what you're going to say. Take the time to listen to what the other person is trying to communicate to you. Try not to become defensive about what is being said. Instead, try to hear the message in the words. When it's your turn to speak, assert yourself without becoming confrontational. Keep your cool and try to work through the situation calmly.

Redirect Your Focus

Don't focus on the negative. Look at the bigger picture and try to focus on a way to resolve the conflict in a non-aggressive manner. Pay close attention to the underlying issue rather than the events that led to your anger. Look for a simple way to remedy the situation rather than escalating it out of anger. For instance, if your child is constantly whining about being hungry during homework, offer him a light snack rather than insisting that he finish the task at hand first. Pick your battles and fight them fairly. Remember that anger will never solve any problems but instead, will likely make them worse.

Avoid Stressful Situations

Pay attention to the situations in your life that lead you to become angry and avoid them as best as you can. If you hate crowds, avoid shopping during busy hours. If rushing around in the morning causes your blood pressure to rise, set your alarm for 30 minutes earlier so that you have ample time to get ready without feeling pressured. Schedule some time for you

to take a break at least once during the day. A quick 15 minute breather is often all it takes to redirect your focus and release stress that may have accumulated throughout the day.

Learn To Forgive

Holding a grudge will likely cause more problems for you than if you had simply forgiven the person you are angry with. By remaining angry, you feed into negative thoughts and emotions which can perpetuate feelings of anger. When you allow yourself to truly forgive someone, you essentially are letting go of all of the negative emotions surrounding that person. Know your limits and accept that we all make mistakes. Releasing anger and negativity opens up room for positive emotions.

Lighten Things Up

Rely on humor to lighten the mood and loosen things up during tense situations. If you feel yourself angered by an inappropriate comment, refrain from firing back with a nasty comment of your own. This will just escalate the situation. Instead, use humor to deflect any negative comments. Most people will respond to humor by laughing, or at the very least, by easing up on their aggressive remarks. Be careful not to use sarcasm or make personal jokes, as this can actually escalate the situation. Keep things light and on the surface at all times.

Use Relaxation Methods

When you feel like an outburst coming on, try some relaxation techniques to calm your mood and diffuse anger. There are many types of relaxation techniques. Find one that works for you and stick with it. Try deep breathing, imagery or chanting during the heat of the moment to help stop anger in its tracks. Relaxation methods such as Reiki, yoga and meditation have been shown to have an overall calming effect on people, and practicing these methods daily is a proactive way to help prevent outbursts from developing.

Change the Way You Think

Take an emotional inventory of your overall personality traits. Take note of the types of words you use and thoughts you have on an everyday basis. Do you swear often or speak with a negative tone most of the time? Are you a glass half empty personality? Do you often mock, ridicule or try to intimidate others? These are all traits of angry people. Try to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Continue to pay attention to both your inner and outer voice. Stop yourself when you are about to say or think something negative and insert a positive phrase instead. It is difficult to be angry when your thoughts are filled with positive emotions.

Anger Management: How to Keep Your Temper in Check

It's just a fact of life that sometimes you're going to get angry. But if your anger is excessive, you may require anger therapy to help keep your emotions in check. How do you know whether your anger is over the top and if anger management might be helpful to you?

"I would say that what is really important is for a person to really know themselves," says Elena Moser, LCSW, a therapist in private practice and clinical director of the Women's Therapy Center in El Cerrito, Calif. "If you have tended to get in trouble, interpersonally, by impulsively expressing anger, I would say hold off on expressing anger and give yourself time to cool off or talk it over. If you are the kind of person who has held back and rarely expresses anger, then you really need to think about why you are so hesitant and to practice expressing your angry feelings."

Moser believes that expressing anger is necessary for your emotional health. But if you are having problems doing it tactfully, here are some tips to help you control your anger when it flares. Before reacting:

- **Think about your goal.** Do you want to tell someone to stop a particular behavior that's making you angry, or are you trying to get them out of your life for good?
- **Consider any power differences.** Expressing anger at your boss is different from doing so with a peer or an employee. You want to tailor your approach to the person you're talking to.
- **Strive for clear communication.** "Blasting someone rarely gets you what you want," says Moser. Instead, try and highlight your ideas about how you may be able to resolve the situation.
- **Practice.** If you need a dry run with a neutral listener before talking to the person who's made you angry, ask a friend to help and go for it. Anger therapy can also be a good place to role play such a situation.

Health and Anger Management

Faced with conflicting news and advice about how healthy it is to express anger, many women don't know whether to throw a plate at the wall, take a walk, or reach for a glass of wine. There are some very good reasons to learn how to manage your temper, including:

- **Anger management could prevent injury.** Data from 2,517 people who were admitted to the hospital due to injury in 2006 showed that about one-third felt irritable before the injury occurred, and one out of five admitted that they felt either angry or hostile. Men were at greater risk of injury while angry than women, though it's something to be cautious about no matter your gender.
- **Anger management could help your heart.** A recent study of 62 people with implanted defibrillators demonstrated that recalling anger-sparking events increased the chance that their heartbeats would become uneven (a condition known as arrhythmia) over the next three years. Other studies have shown that frequent and intense feelings of anger increase the risk of heart disease over the course of a decade.
- **Anger avoidance.** Of interest to those who have a tendency to swallow their anger but then brood about the situation later: continuing to replay the events can actually lead to more anger and depression, according to a study of 52 married couples in Washington State. This is more likely to be a problem for women than men, however.

Do You Need Anger Therapy?

Getting angry when the situation calls for it is one thing; excessive anger is quite another. But how do you know if you need therapy for a problem with anger and aggression? Here are some signs that you may need help:

- You have had trouble with the law because of impulsive actions.
- You have unstable or broken relationships because of how you speak to people.
- You lose jobs because of poor communication skills.

"If you think you have a problem, talk to someone you trust — a friend or family member," says Moser. Then consider talking to a therapist. "Therapy is a great place to come in and reflect on your personal situation," she says.

Remember, expressing anger is important and healthy, but you have a choice about how you do it. If anger is a problem for you now, a little anger management therapy can help you gain control over your emotions so you can react more appropriately as an anger-inducing situation arises.

Mad as Heck? Try a Time Out in the Anger Room

A Dallas-based business where customers smash things to pieces is a hit.

MONDAY, Mar. 12, 2012 — About to blow because your boss just won't get off your back? Sick of being badgered by your partner about the same little things over and over again? Going go ballistic if that Starbucks barista messes up your order again? Life is full of annoyances, and even people with the patience of the Dalai Lama can sometimes get worked into a furious rage. It's enough to make you want to break stuff, right? But we can't go around giving in to our anger, having tantrums like toddlers—society would cease to function.

No one wants to end up on the evening news (and then YouTube) as the latest example of an "angry person behaving badly." But then again, keeping your anger all bottled up isn't really healthy either. This enduring human conundrum is what sparked Dallas entrepreneur Donna Alexander to open The Anger Room, a space where (for a smallish fee) you can don some safety gear, grab a bat, and let your anger go wild as you smash things like, printers, desks, and mannequins to bits.

Recognizing that like death and taxes, anger is a certainty of the human condition, Alexander opened The Anger Room on the premise that "sometimes it's better to just do what you feel and lash out when you need to," as the company's website says. Clients select one of three different time options (the five minute "I need a break!" \$25; the 15-minute "Lash out" \$45; or the 25-minute "Total demolition" \$75), choose a themed room (office, kitchen, or living space), and then go to town. Custom-themed rooms are available on request, and Alexander books private parties (divorce celebration?!) as well as corporate functions.

Think this all sounds a bit wacky? Alexander understands. "It might sound crazy at first," The Anger Room website says, "but we assure you once you've tried this method of stress relief, nothing else will compare!" Whether going on a destructive binge is your thing or not, The Anger Room has without doubt tapped in to one fact about Americans' lives today: we need to de-stress and somehow control our boiling blood—or else. In a 2010 study published in the American Heart Association journal *Hypertension*, researchers from the National Institute on Aging reported their findings that angry people have greater thickness to the carotid arteries in the neck as compared to less angry people (thickened carotid arteries are a known risk factor for heart attack and stroke). A previous study by Ohio State University researchers published in a 2007 edition of the journal *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* found that anger led to delayed wound healing.

Still, Alexander is conscious that her business isn't a magical cure-call for psychological distress. A disclaimer on the company site clearly states The Anger Room doesn't "provide medical therapy of any kind," and advises customers that "if you feel that you have any mental or medical issues that need to be treated please see a licensed physician or obtain a referral." No one under 18 is allowed and pregnant women will have to wait until after birth to get their anger out.

Wondering how The Anger Room keeps a full stock of destroyable stuff on hand? In a word: donations. The company offers free pick up of such items as laptops, printers, dishes, sheet rock, cubicles, radios, and small trash cans. And what better fate to befall that annoying old printer you can't stand, or that TV just taking up space in the basement, then having it picked up for free and brought to The Anger Room, where you can rest assured it will make someone's day to destroy it.

Think 'It's Not Me, It's You,' When Dealing With Angry Person **Study participants felt better when they 'reappraised' images of angry faces.**

SATURDAY, Nov. 19 (HealthDay News) — Telling yourself that an angry person is just having a bad day and that it's not about you can help take the sting out of their ire, a new study suggests.

This strategy of finding another way to regard an angry person is an approach commonly suggested in cognitive behavioral therapy. For example, you can tell yourself that the angry person has just lost his dog or received bad news and is taking it out on you.

Stanford University researchers conducted two experiments to examine the speed and efficiency of this process of reappraising others' emotions.

In one experiment, participants were upset when they were shown a picture of an angry face. But when some of them were told to consider that the person had had a bad day and saw the same angry face again, it had less impact.

Participants who were told to just feel the emotions triggered by the angry face continued to be upset when they saw it again.

In the other experiment, the researchers monitored participants' brain activity and found that reappraising another person's anger eliminated the electrical signals associated with negative emotions when seeing angry faces.

The study will appear in an upcoming issue of the journal *Psychological Science*.

"You can see this as a kind of race between the emotional information and the reappraisal information in the brain: Emotional processing proceeds from the back to the front of the brain, and the reappraisal is generated in the front of the brain and proceeds toward the back of the brain where it modifies emotional processing," researcher Jens Blechert said in a journal news release.

"If you're trained with reappraisal, and you know your boss is frequently in a bad mood, you can prepare yourself to go into a meeting," Blechert suggested. "He can scream and yell and shout but there'll be nothing."

Overcoming Frustration and Anger

If you struggle with frustration and anger related to trauma or loss, you may try to hide your feelings in the hope that they will go away. Unfortunately, intense feelings must be recognized and dealt with; they don't just go away on their own.

You may become angry and blame others for what has happened, even though it is not their fault. This is called displaced anger. You may get angry with a higher power, such as God. Frustration and anger affect people emotionally and physically. You may work out these feelings by talking with someone or through physical activity (such as running, cleaning house, or punching a pillow). Working out frustration and anger in a physical way helps relieve muscle tension and may reduce restlessness and irritation.

Unresolved frustration and anger may grow until you are not able to deal with them. You may then yell, scream, or hit someone or something. Unexpressed frustration and anger can also cause other problems, such as physical illness or depression.

The first step in overcoming frustration and anger is to recognize that you are feeling these emotions. Many people were taught as children not to express frustration and anger. If you are feeling bottled up inside and are not sure what to do about it, try:

- Talking with someone you trust. Talking may help you become clearer about what you are feeling.
- Talking out loud to yourself. You can even use a tape recorder and play back what you've recorded. This helps you hear yourself express your feelings as though you were listening to someone else.
- Writing about your feelings. It may be helpful to make a list of everything that is bothering you. You can then decide which items you can change and write down ways that you can change them.
- Recognizing things that you cannot change. There may be things that you can do nothing about. Simply writing them down is often helpful. Reminding yourself that some things are beyond your control also helps. Letting go of the wish that you could change them may be hard to do; you may need to remind yourself daily or many times throughout the day that these things are beyond your control.
- Making changes to help reduce your anger and frustration. For example, if your child's television programs bother you, move the television into a room where you can shut the door. Or you can wear earplugs if noises, such as the television or radio, seem louder than usual.

If you continue to have trouble overcoming your frustration and anger, or if you have had problems with anger in the past, talk about your concerns with someone you trust, such as a clergy person or a health professional. You may decide to join a self-help group or seek counseling.

How Couples Can Move Past Anger

There is a healthy way to express anger, and it's a skill you and your partner need to master to be a truly happy couple.

Couples often struggle when it comes to expressing anger. Many people don't know how to approach difficult discussions or tackle stressful situations without losing control and letting their tempers get the best of them.

That was the case with Mark and Linda. Mark has a volatile temper and concedes that sometimes it gets the best of him. His partner, Linda, suffers the brunt of his angry outbursts. Even though Mark is never physically or verbally abusive to her, being around his anger is damaging to her spirit, her mood, and their relationship. Fortunately, there are certain healthy behaviors and responses that can assist any couple dealing with anger issues. And, thankfully, Mark was more than willing to admit that his temper was not healthy. Together, we were able to work out some ideas to help fix their relationship and get his moods under control. Here are some of the strategies used and other top tips that can help you and your partner move past anger in a healthy way.

Examine your emotional history

Talking about your different childhoods and the different ways you each handle stress can be an invaluable step toward improving your communication. Once you understand where your partner is coming from, you can better understand why he or she reacts in certain ways, and you can fine-tune your own reactions. For example, while some people grew up in loud, expressive households, others were raised in quiet, calm homes. And while a vocal and dynamic partner might find nothing strange or frightening about his dramatic outbursts, his partner might find his loudness to be confusing or even scary. Look at the different ways you both communicate and try to figure out what works best for you as a couple.

Don't hold anger in

While it is essential that anger never be used against your partner, you do have to find healthy ways to express the issues that are troubling you. Unexpressed anger and resentment can be lethal to a relationship. Holding it in can be as bad as unleashing it in an uncontrolled outburst. This is because when issues fester, they can take on a life of their own and anger can grow tenfold. It's better to tackle problems and express your emotions honestly.

Find the right time to deal with challenges

If you're in the midst of an argument but feel it's spiraling out of control, ask your partner to put the fight on hold for a second. Go into the next room and do some deep breathing. Come back in when you are clearheaded and calmer. Also, though people often say not to go to bed angry, if you are both utterly exhausted, it might be a good idea to get some sleep and then tackle the issue the next morning when you are both rested. It's better to put things on pause and collect yourself than it is to say hurtful things that you will likely regret.

Realize anger is not "bad"

It's okay to feel angry. Life is very frustrating at times. Everyone has a bad day occasionally. People often think of anger as a negative emotion, but it's actually a natural part of life. It becomes negative only when you cannot control it or when you get stuck in your angry mood.

Find a healthy physical release for your anger

Punch a pillow or scream into it, or let your anger motivate and empower you during an intense workout session. Feel the emotion, move it through you, and then let it go. Just don't take it out on your partner or those around you, and don't let your anger escalate. Remember, you are in control of your mood, not the other way around.

Don't accuse or assume

Rather than name-call or jump to conclusions, wait to learn the facts. For example, if your partner is late to dinner, you might assume it's because he doesn't care about your date night or your feelings. However, maybe he just got stuck in a meeting or unexpected traffic. Don't automatically believe the narrative you make up in your head.

Create joy after a fight

Once the argument is over and you're no longer angry, generate positive feelings by doing something nice for your partner or for yourself. Makeup sex is always a great option, but you can also just do something to clear your head, like going for a walk or booking a massage together.

Anger might not be "bad," but it sure isn't fun. After the storm clouds have cleared, and on a regular basis, make sure to schedule things in your relationship that bring you both continued joy.

Anger, Hostility, and Violent Behavior Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

Anger signals your body to prepare for a fight. This reaction is commonly classified as "fight or flight." When you get angry, adrenaline and other hormones are released into the bloodstream. Then your blood pressure goes up, your heart beats faster, and you breathe faster.

Many people mistakenly believe that anger is always a bad emotion and that expressing anger is not okay. In reality, anger can be a normal response to everyday events. It is the right response to any situation that is a real threat. Anger can be a positive driving force behind our actions. Anger can also be a symptom of something else, depending on how often a person feels angry and how angry the person feels.

Hostility is being ready for a fight all the time. Hostile people are often stubborn, impatient, hotheaded, or have an "attitude." They are frequently in fights or may say they feel like hitting something or someone. Hostility isolates you from other people.

Anger and constant hostility keep your blood pressure high and increase your chances of having another health problem, such as depression, heart attack, or a stroke.

Teens who say they often feel angry and hostile also more often feel anxious, stressed, sad, and fatigued. They have more problems with alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, and eating disorders than teens who do not have high levels of anger.

Violent behavior often begins with verbal threats or relatively minor incidents, but over time it can involve physical harm. Violent behavior is very damaging, both physically and emotionally. Violent behavior can include physical, verbal, or sexual abuse of an intimate partner (domestic violence), a child (child abuse), or an older adult (elder abuse).

Violence causes more injury and death in children, teenagers, and young adults than infectious disease, cancer, or birth defects. Murder, suicide, and violent injury are the leading causes of death in children. Violence with guns is one of the leading causes of death of children and teenagers in the United States.

If you are angry, hostile, or have violent behavior, it is important to find help. You can learn ways to control your feelings and actions. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline toll-free at 1-800-799-7233 or the National Department on Mental Health at 1-888-793-4357 to help you find the help you need.

Anger, Hostility, and Violent Behavior - Home Treatment

If you are angry, hostile, or violent, it is important to find help. You can learn ways to control your feelings and actions. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline toll-free at 1-800-799-7233 or the National Department on Mental Health at 1-888-793-4357. These agencies can help you find the help you need.

You can control your feelings of anger or hostility and avoid violence.

- Think before you act. Take time to stop and cool down when you feel yourself becoming angry. Count to 10 or practice some other form of mental relaxation. When you have calmed down, you will be better able to deal with your conflict thoughtfully.
- Recognize feelings that often lead to angry outbursts. Do you have trouble dealing with feelings of sadness, confusion, or helplessness? Identify these feelings and develop positive ways to express them.
- Come up with a reasonable explanation of why you are angry. If a person triggers your anger, suggest to yourself that perhaps the person is having a bad day.
- Avoid situations that trigger your anger.
 - If you have trouble coping with heavy traffic, try to adjust your work schedule so that you do not have to travel in peak traffic hours.
 - Do errands at less-busy times if standing in line bothers you.
- Evaluate your lifestyle choices. Anger and hostility may be a symptom of unhappy feelings or depression about your job, your relationship, or other aspects of your personal life.
- Notice when you start to become angry and learn to express your feelings in a positive manner. Don't just ignore your anger until you "blow up." Express anger in a healthy way:
 - Give yourself a "time-out." Go someplace quiet to allow yourself time to calm down.
 - Try screaming or yelling in a private place, not at other people.
 - Go for a short walk or jog.
 - Talk about your feelings with a friend. Avoid gossiping about the person you are upset with.
 - Draw, paint, or listen to music to release the anger.
 - Write in a daily journal.
- Develop assertive skills to replace your aggressive behavior. Use "I" statements, not "you" statements, to discuss your anger. Say "I don't feel valued when my needs are not being met" instead of "You make me mad when you are so inconsiderate."
- Listen to what the other person has to say. This can be hard. Try to understand his or her point of view. Seek to understand, then to be understood.

- Explore other resources that may be available through your job or your community.
 - Contact your human resources department to see whether you have services available through an employee assistance program.
 - Contact your local hospital, mental health facility, or health department to see what types of programs or support groups are available in your area.
- Read books on anger and how to handle it.
- Forgive and forget. Forgiving helps lower blood pressure and ease muscle tension so you can feel more relaxed.
- Take care of yourself.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Eat a balanced diet. Do not skip meals.
 - Try to get 8 hours of sleep each night.
 - Limit your use of alcohol and do not use illegal drugs.
- Practice a relaxation technique such as yoga, meditation, or tai chi.

Anger, Hostility, and Violent Behavior – Prevention

To prevent anger, hostility, and avoid violence:

- Seek non-hostile ways to resolve conflicts. Arguing is fine, even healthy, as long as it does not turn violent.
- Prevent violence with guns and other weapons.
 - Do not provide your children or teenagers with unsupervised access to guns or other dangerous weapons.
 - Do not keep guns in your home.
 - If you have guns in your home, unload them and lock them up. Lock ammunition in a separate place.
 - Do not keep guns in a home where there is someone who has a drug or alcohol problem, is prone to violent behavior, or has threatened suicide.
 - Make sure that no one in your home will have access to guns or other weapons unless they know how to use them safely.
- Take steps to lead a healthy life.
 - Engage in some type of regular physical activity. Exercise is one of the best ways to release all types of stress, including anger. A brisk walk is a good way to start. For more information, see the topic Fitness.
 - Eat a balanced diet. Remember to drink plenty of water.
 - Establish a healthy sleep pattern. Try to get the same amount of sleep each night.
 - Limit your use of alcohol and do not use other drugs, such as cocaine, crack, or methamphetamines. Alcohol and drugs may make your feeling of anger and hostility worse and make them even harder to handle.
 - Practice a relaxation technique such as yoga, meditation, or tai chi.

- Consider your feelings before you become angry:
 - Talk about your feelings with a friend.
 - Draw or paint to express your feelings.
 - Write in a daily journal.
 - Think about your relationships with others. Don't spend time with people who are apt to make you angry or who add negative energy to your life.

- Think before you act. Take time to stop and cool down when you feel yourself becoming angry. Count to 10 or practice some other form of mental relaxation. When you have calmed down, you will be better able to deal with your conflict thoughtfully.

- Teach your children that anger is not a solution.
 - Give your children consistent love and attention.
 - Settle arguments without yelling or hitting.
 - Do not use physical discipline, such as spanking or other forms of corporal punishment. If you need help controlling your children, consider taking a course in parenting skills.
 - Limit your child's exposure to TV, movies, and video games. Watch television with your children to discuss or limit violent content.

Alcohol and Drug Problems Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

The overuse or abuse of alcohol (alcoholism) or other drugs is called substance abuse. It can cause or worsen many medical problems and can destroy families and lives.

Alcohol

Alcohol abuse causes over 100,000 deaths in the United States and Canada each year. It is the drug most commonly abused by children ages 12 to 17. Alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in teenagers. People who drink alcohol are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual behavior, have poor grades or job performance, use tobacco products, and experiment with illegal drugs. Alcohol and drug use may be an unconscious attempt at self-treatment for another problem, such as depression.

You have an alcohol problem if your use of alcohol interferes with your health or daily living. You develop alcoholism if you physically or emotionally depend on alcohol to get you through your day.

Long-term heavy drinking damages the liver, nervous system, heart, and brain. It can lead to high blood pressure, stomach problems, medicine interactions, sexual problems, osteoporosis, and cancer. Alcohol abuse can also lead to violence, accidents, social isolation, jail or prison time, and problems at work and home.

Symptoms of an alcohol problem include personality changes, blackouts, drinking more and more for the same "high," and denial of the problem. A person with an alcohol problem may gulp or sneak drinks, drink alone or early in the morning, and suffer from the shakes. He or she may also have family, school, or work problems or get in trouble with the law because of drinking.

The use of alcohol with medicines or illegal drugs may increase the effects of each. Alcohol abuse patterns vary. Some people drink and may be intoxicated every day. Other people drink large amounts of alcohol at specific times, such as on the weekend. It is common for someone with an alcohol or drug problem to call in sick for work on Monday or Friday. He or she may complain of having a virus or the flu. Others may be sober for long periods and then go on a drinking binge that lasts for weeks or months.

Someone with alcohol dependence may suffer serious withdrawal symptoms, such as trembling, delusions, hallucinations, and sweating, if he or she stops drinking suddenly ("cold turkey"). Once alcohol dependence develops, it becomes very hard to stop drinking without outside help. Medical detoxification may be needed.

Drugs

Drug abuse includes the use of illegal drugs—such as marijuana, methamphetamines, cocaine, heroin, or other "street drugs"—and the abuse of legal prescription and nonprescription drugs. Some people use drugs to get a "high" or to relieve stress and emotional problems.

Drugs like ecstasy (MDMA), ketamine, GHB, Rohypnol, and LSD, which are known as "club drugs," may be found at all-night dances, raves, trances, or clubs. Club drug use accounts for increasing numbers of drug overdoses and emergency room visits. Inhalants like nitrous oxide may also be used at these clubs. Drugs come in different forms and can be used in different ways. They can be smoked, snorted, inhaled, taken as pills, put in liquids or food, put in the rectum or the vagina, or injected with a needle. Teens and young adults may be at risk for becoming victims of sexual assault or violent behavior in situations where these drugs are used.

Some nonprescription medicines, such as cold medicines that have dextromethorphan as an ingredient, are being abused by teens and young adults as a way to get a "high." Glue, shoe polish, cleaning fluids, and aerosols, are common household products with ingredients that can also be used to get a "high."

In the United States and Canada, approximately 40% of adults will use an illegal drug at some time during their lives. This does not include the use of alcohol or prescription medicines. Many people abuse more than one illegal substance at a time.

Drug dependence or addiction occurs when you develop a physical or emotional "need" for a drug. You are unable to control your use of a drug despite the negative impact it has on your life. You may not be aware that you have become dependent on a drug until you try to stop taking it. Drug withdrawal can cause uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous symptoms. The usual treatment is to gradually reduce the dose of the drug until you can completely stop using it.

High-risk groups

Some groups of people are more likely than others to have problems related to alcohol or drug abuse. These groups include:

- **Teenagers and young adults.** Approximately one-half of all high school seniors in the U.S. admit to having used alcohol or an illegal drug. Substance abuse in this age group increases the risk of involvement in crime, high-risk sexual behavior, accidents, and injuries. Teens that use alcohol and drugs are more likely to have poor school performance and have higher dropout rates.
- **Women**
 - Although women are less likely than men to abuse alcohol, they are more likely to have alcohol-related health problems, such as liver disease.
 - Women are more likely to have problems with prescription medicines. More than two-thirds of all tranquilizers are prescribed for women. Tranquilizers, sedatives, pain medicines, and amphetamines are abused most often by women.
 - Alcohol and drug abuse in women increases the risk of developing other health problems, such as osteoporosis or depression.
 - Women who abuse alcohol and drugs attempt suicide four times more frequently than non-abusers.
- **Adults older than age 65.** Drug abuse in this age group is a problem because of the high number of prescription medicines and the lack of coordination between doctors. Signs of alcohol or drug abuse may be mistaken for other disease problems or simply overlooked as a symptom of "aging." Many older adults "self-medicate" with alcohol to help relieve sleep problems, depression, and other problems. Alcohol abuse is more common than drug abuse in older adults. Alcohol contributes to car accidents and other types of severe injury in this group of people.
- **Low-income populations.** Drug and alcohol abuse is a problem for many minorities, including disabled adults, the homeless, and minority populations.
- **Babies.** Drug and alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects and increase the risk of infant death. Babies are more likely to have learning disabilities and social and behavioral problems when their mothers use alcohol or drugs during pregnancy. Babies with mothers who use alcohol are at risk for problems from fetal alcohol syndrome.
- **Children.** Studies show that children who are exposed to drug abuse in the home, especially methamphetamine, have higher rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, anger, and alcohol and drug abuse. They also are more likely to have learning problems and do poorly in school.

Recognizing a problem

Alcohol is part of many people's lives and may have a place in cultural and family traditions. It can sometimes be hard to know when you begin to drink too much.

There is a strong connection between the use of drugs and alcohol and high-risk sexual behaviors. This increases a person's chance of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), hepatitis B, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Alcohol and Drug Problems - Home Treatment

If you are concerned about your own alcohol or drug use:

- Make an appointment with your doctor to discuss the problem.
- Attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA), self-help groups devoted to helping members get sober and stay that way. Call Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous for the times of scheduled meetings.

If you are concerned about another person's alcohol or drug use:

- Never ignore the problem. Discuss it as a medical problem.
- Let the other person know you will support his or her efforts to change.
- Ask whether he or she would accept help. Don't give up after the first "no"—keep asking. If he or she agrees, act that very day to arrange for help. Call a doctor for an immediate appointment, or call Alcoholics Anonymous for the times of scheduled meetings.
- Participate in confrontation if it is needed.
- Attend a few meetings of Al-Anon, a support group for family members and friends of alcoholics. Read some 12-step program information.

If you are concerned about an older family member's alcohol or drug use:

- Make an appointment for a medical evaluation if you notice a decline in the person's mental alertness or ability to perform self-care functions.
- Go to the appointment with the person and discuss recent and long-term drinking or drug use problems with the doctor.
- Participate in confrontation if it is needed.
- Provide support for the person during detoxification or other treatment.
- Help set up community services in the home, if needed. Older adults may benefit from such community services as home care, nutritional programs, transportation programs, and other services.
- Help with decision-making. Many older people with substance abuse problems are unable to process information or effectively communicate their decisions.

If you are concerned about a teenager's alcohol or drug use problem:

- Make an appointment for a medical evaluation for your teen if he or she shows signs of substance abuse.
- Go to the appointment with your teen and discuss recent and long-term drinking or drug use with the doctor.
- Participate in confrontation if it is needed.
- Provide support for your teen during detoxification or other treatment.
- Check out what services are available in your area.
 - Discuss the need for a referral to your employee assistance program with your human resources department, if you have the service available.
 - Speak with your teen's school counselor or resource officer.
 - Go to the website <http://drugstrategies.org/teens/programs> for information about teen drug treatment programs across the United States.
 - Contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 1-800-729-6686 or online at www.health.org for information about treatment programs in your area.

- Help with decision-making. Many teenagers who have alcohol or substance abuse problems are unable to process information or effectively communicate their decisions.

Alcohol and Drug Problems – Prevention

Some alcohol and drug abuse problems can be prevented.

- Do not drink alcohol or use drugs if you are pregnant. Drinking or using drugs before trying to become pregnant and during pregnancy increases your baby's chances of being born with birth defects and fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Talk to your children about the effects of alcohol and drugs. Children are less likely to use alcohol or other drugs if their parents teach them early (during the elementary school years) about the effects of alcohol and drugs. Set a good example for your children by not abusing alcohol or using drugs.
- Encourage your teenager to avoid alcohol and drugs. Drinking or using drugs during the teen years can harm growth and development. It can also cause some teens to develop substance abuse problems later in life. Drug use in this age group increases the chance that your teen will be involved in crime, high-risk sexual behavior, accidents, and injuries.
- Provide nonalcoholic beverages at parties and meals. Don't give your children the impression that you have to have alcohol to have a good time as an adult.
- Cut down on your drinking. Safe levels are: less than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women. One drink is 12 fl oz (360 mL) of beer, 5 fl oz (150 mL) of wine, or 1.5 fl oz (45 mL) of hard liquor. Do not drink every day.
- Look for signs of mental stress. Try to understand and resolve sources of depression, anxiety, or loneliness. Don't use alcohol or drugs to deal with these problems.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor whether any of your current medicines can cause dependence.
 - Be especially aware of pain medicines, tranquilizers, sedatives, and sleeping pills. Follow the instructions carefully and do not take more than the recommended dose.
 - Make sure that your doctors are aware of medicines prescribed by another doctor. Use only one pharmacy when getting your prescriptions filled.
- Do not regularly use medicines to sleep, lose weight, or relax. Seek nondrug solutions.
- Do not suddenly stop taking any medicine without your doctor's supervision.
- Do not drink alcohol when you are taking medicines. Alcohol can react with many medicines and cause serious complications.
- Do not smoke or use other tobacco products. Many people relate tobacco use to alcohol and drug use.

Domestic Abuse Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

Anger and arguments are normal parts of healthy relationships. But anger that leads to threats, hitting, or hurting someone is not normal or healthy. This is a form of abuse. Physical, verbal, or sexual abuse is not okay in any relationship. When it occurs between spouses or partners or in a dating relationship, it is called domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is also called intimate partner violence or domestic violence. It is not the same as an occasional argument. It is a **pattern** of abuse used by one person to control another. In addition to violence between intimate partners:

- Teens may experience dating abuse.
- Older adults can be targets of both domestic abuse and elder abuse.

Each year, women experience about 4.8 million intimate-partner-related physical assaults and rapes. Men are the victims of about 2.9 million intimate-partner-related physical assaults. It can happen to anyone, at any age, no matter what race or religion people are, no matter what their level of education is or how much money they make.

Signs of abuse

Does your partner:

- Embarrass you with put-downs?
- Look at you or act in ways that scare you?
- Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go?
- Stop you from seeing your friends or family members?
- Take your money or paychecks, make you ask for money, or refuse to give you money?
- Make all of the decisions?
- Tell you that you're a bad parent or threaten to take away or hurt your children?
- Prevent you from working or going to school?
- Act like the abuse is no big deal or is your fault, or even deny doing it?
- Destroy your property or threaten to kill your pets?
- Intimidate you with guns, knives, or other weapons?
- Shove you, slap you, choke you, or hit you?
- Threaten to commit suicide?
- Threaten to kill you?
- Prevent you from using birth control or from protecting yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/HIV?

If any of these things are happening, you need to get help. It's important to know that you are not alone. The way your partner acts is not your fault. There is no excuse for domestic violence. Help is available.

Domestic abuse and your health

Living in an abusive relationship can cause long-term health problems. Some of these health problems include:

- Physical problems, such as migraine headaches, arthritis, or long-term neck, back, belly, or pelvic pain.
- Mental health problems, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol or drug abuse.

Women who are sexually abused by their partners have a greater chance of having sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and other problems.

Violence can get worse during pregnancy. Abused women are more likely to have problems such as low weight gain, anemia, infections, and bleeding during pregnancy. Abuse during this time may increase the baby's risk of low birth weight, premature birth, or death.

How to get help

Abusers often blame the victim for the abuse. They may say "you made me do it." This is not true. People are responsible for their own actions. They may say they are sorry and tell you it will never happen again, even though it already has.

After abuse starts, it usually gets worse if you don't take steps to stop it. If you are in an abusive relationship, ask for help. This may be hard, but know that you are not alone. Your family, friends, fellow church members, employer, doctor, or local YMCA, YWCA, police department, hospital, or clinic can help you. These national hotlines can help you find resources in your area. Call:

- The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** toll-free **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**, or see the website at www.ndvh.org.
- The **National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline** toll-free **1-866-331-9474 or (1-866-331-8453 TTY)**.
- The **Childhelp Line** toll-free **1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)**, or see the website at www.childhelp.org

Domestic Abuse - Home Treatment

After abuse starts, it usually gets worse if steps are not taken to stop it. If you are in an abusive relationship, ask for help. This may be hard, but know that you are not alone. Help is available. Call:

- The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** toll-free at **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**, or see the website at www.ndvh.org.
- The **National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline** toll-free: **1-866-331-9474 or (1-866-331-8453 TTY)**.
- The **Childhelp Line** toll-free **1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)**, or see the website at www.childhelp.org

If you feel threatened, it is very important to develop a plan for dealing with a threatening situation. If your partner has threatened to harm you or your child, seek help.

- Anytime you are in danger, call 911.
- If you do not have a safe place to stay, tell a friend, a religious counselor, or your doctor. Do not feel that you have to hide what is happening.
- Have a plan for how to leave your house, where to go, and where to stay in case you need to get out quickly. Do not tell your partner about your plan.

For more help in developing your plan, call:

- The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** toll-free **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**, or see the website at www.ndvh.org
- Your local YMCA, YWCA, police department, hospital, or clinic for the local crisis line or for names of shelters and safe homes near you.

Here are some other things you can do:

- If you are seeing a counselor, be sure to go to all appointments.
- Teach your children how to call for help in an emergency.
- Be alert to warning signs, such as threats or drinking. This can help you avoid danger.
- If you can, make sure that there are no guns or other weapons in your home.
- If you are working, contact your human resources department or employee assistance program to find out what help is available to you.

If you are no longer living with a violent partner, contact the police to get a **restraining order** if your abuser continues to pursue you, threaten you, or act violently toward you.

If you have been a victim of abuse and continue to have problems related to the abuse, you may have depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

If you know someone who may be abused

Here are some things you can do to help a friend or family member.

- Let your friend know that you are willing to listen whenever she or he wants to talk. Don't confront your friend if she or he is not ready to talk. Encourage your friend to talk with her or his health professional, human resources manager, and supervisor to see what resources might be available.
- Tell your friend that the abuse is not her or his fault and that no one deserves to be abused. Remind your friend that domestic violence is against the law and that help is available. Be understanding if she or he is unable to leave. Your friend knows the situation best and when it is safest to leave.

- If your friend has children, gently point out that you are concerned that the violence is affecting them. Many people do not understand that their children are being harmed until someone else talks about this concern.
- Encourage and help your friend develop a plan for staying safe while in an abusive relationship. Help if she or he is preparing to leave a violent relationship. Learn about how the person can stay safe after leaving.
- The most dangerous time for your friend may be when she or he is leaving the abusive relationship, so any advice about leaving must be informed and practical.

The most important step is to help your friend contact local domestic violence groups. There are programs across the country that provide options for safety, support, needed information and services, and legal support. To find the nearest program, call:

- The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** toll-free **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**, or see the website at www.ndvh.org
- The **National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline** toll-free **1-866-331-9474 or (1-866-331-8453 TTY)**.

Domestic Abuse – Prevention

To prevent injury from domestic violence

- Be alert to warning signs, such as threats or drunkenness. Being alert may help you avoid a dangerous situation. If you cannot predict when violence may occur, know how to stay safe during an emergency.
- Learn how to get ready to leave a violent situation.
- Take steps to stay safe after you have left an abusive relationship. Contact the police to get a **restraining order** if your abuser continues to pursue you, threaten you, or act violently toward you.

It's also important to learn how to recognize signs of teen relationship abuse in your teen so you can help him or her with any problems.

Physical Abuse Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

Violence can happen to anyone—males or females, children, teens, adults, older adults, or people with disabilities. You are not to blame. No matter what happened, violence is not okay. Violent people usually have many problems that they find hard to deal with, which can cause them to act out with violence.

Physical abuse includes hitting, pushing, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, choking, strangling, and burning. Physical abuse may come from a stranger, acquaintance, or from a close friend or family member. Many victims of abuse know their attacker.

Violent behavior can also hurt you emotionally. You may feel sad or frightened. Feelings of guilt may prevent you from getting help. But it is important for you to seek help and continue to get help for yourself as long as you need it. Talk to your local child or adult protective

agency, the police, or a health professional, such as a doctor, nurse, or counselor. You can also call a local mental health clinic. Any of these people can help you deal with your feelings, get medical treatment if needed, and take steps to stop the abuser.

Physical Abuse - Home Treatment

If you feel threatened, you **must** have a plan for dealing with a threatening situation. If a family member or someone else has threatened to harm you or your child, seek help:

- If you need immediate help, **call 911**.
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)** or see the Web site at <http://www.ndvh.org> for free, confidential counseling and information about local community resources.
- Tell someone: the police, a trusted friend, a spiritual advisor, or a health professional. If the incident occurred at work, contact your human resources department for help.
- Find local resources that can help in a crisis. Your local YMCA, YWCA, police department, mental health clinic, or hospital has information on shelters and safe homes.
- Be alert to warning signs, such as threats or drunkenness, so that you can avoid a dangerous situation. If you cannot predict when violence may occur, have an exit plan for use in an emergency.
- If a child tells you he or she has been abused, stay calm. Tell the child that you believe him or her and that you will do your best to keep him or her safe. Report the abuse to the local police or child protective services agency.

If you are no longer living with a violent person, contact the police to obtain a restraining order if your abuser continues to pursue you and act violently toward you.

If you know someone who may be a victim of violent behavior

Here are some things you can do to help a friend or family member.

- Let your friend know you are willing to listen whenever she or he wants to talk. Don't confront your friend if she or he is not ready to talk. Encourage your friend to talk with her or his health professional, human resources manager, and supervisor to see what resources might be available.
- Tell your friend that the abuse is not her or his fault and that no one deserves to be abused. Remind your friend that violence is against the law and that help is available. Be understanding if she or he is unable to leave. She or he knows the situation best and when it is safest to leave.
- If your friend has children, gently point out that you are concerned that the violence is affecting them. Many people do not understand that their children are being harmed until someone else talks about this concern.

- Encourage and help your friend develop a safety plan. This plan will help keep your friend and her or his children safe during a violent incident, when preparing to leave, and after leaving.

The most important step is to help your friend contact local domestic violence groups. There are programs across the country that provide options for safety, legal support, support, and needed information and services. To find the nearest program:

- Call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**, or see the Web site at www.ndvh.org
- Call the **National Center for Victims of Crime** at **1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)**, or see the Web site at www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=dash_Home

The most dangerous time for your friend may be when she or he is leaving the abusive relationship, so any advice about leaving must be informed and practical.

Violence is learned behavior, so it is especially important to help your children learn that violence is not a healthy way to resolve conflict. Living in a violent environment increases your child's chances of developing behavior problems, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, poor school achievement, and lowered expectations for the future. People who are maltreated as children are more likely to abuse others. If you were ever abused, it is very important to get treatment so that you learn different ways to resolve conflict and use appropriate discipline.

If you have been a victim of abuse and continue to have problems related to the abuse, you may experience mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Physical Abuse – Prevention

Prevent violence in your home.

- Learn nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts. Arguing is fine, even healthy, as long as it does not turn violent.

Keep yourself safe from violence.

- Be alert to warning signs, such as threats or drunkenness, so that you can avoid a dangerous situation. If you cannot predict when violence may occur, have an exit plan for use in an emergency.
- Prevent violence with guns and other weapons. Do not provide your children or teenagers with unsupervised access to guns or other dangerous weapons.
 - Do not keep loaded guns in your home.
 - If you must keep guns in your home, unload them and lock them up. Lock ammunition in a separate place.
 - Do not keep guns in a home where there is someone who has a drug or alcohol problem, is prone to violent behavior, or has threatened suicide.
 - Make sure that no one in your home will have access to guns or other weapons unless they know how to use them safely.

- If you are no longer living with a violent person, contact the police to obtain a restraining order if your abuser continues to pursue you and act violently toward you.
- Teach your children that violence is not a solution. Settle arguments without yelling or hitting. Do not use physical discipline, such as spanking, pinching, ear pulling, jabbing, shoving, choking, or strangling. If you need help controlling your children, consider taking a course in parenting skills.
- Limit your child's exposure to TV, movies, and video games to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.
 - Participate in healthy alternatives, such as sports, interactive play, and reading, with your child.
 - Watch television with your children to discuss or limit violent content.
 - Use a "V-chip" to filter broadcast programming.
 - Do not glamorize weapon carrying or use guns in play.
- Learn how to recognize signs of violent behavior in your teenager.

Resources to help control anger

Use one of the following resources if you are a parent or caregiver having trouble controlling your angry feelings. Actions done in moments of anger can be harmful and abusive.

- **National Directory of Hotlines and Crisis Intervention Centers.** Call toll-free for a referral to services offered in your area: 1-800-999-9999 or TDD 1-800-999-9915.
- **Parents Anonymous.** Self-help groups serving parents under stress as well as abused children are available throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. To locate a group in your area, look in the white pages of your phone book under Parents Anonymous or contact National Parents Anonymous at 675 W. Foothill Boulevard, Suite 220, Claremont, CA, 91711, or call (909) 621-6184.
- **Childhelp Line.** The Childhelp line serves the United States and Canada to provide referrals and counseling at 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453).
- **Social service departments.** Many social service agencies involved with child abuse investigation also offer services to parents under stress. Agencies are listed in the phone book, usually under the state's Department of Social Services, Protective Services, Social and Rehabilitative Services, or Children and Family Services.

Herbal Program for Alcoholism

Taken from Footprints on the Path Binder

The compulsive consumption of and psychophysiological dependence on alcoholic beverages. A chronic, progressive pathological condition, mainly affecting the nervous and digestive systems, caused by the excessive and habitual consumption of alcohol.

Primary Formula:

- Kudzu/St. John's Wort (Alcoholism Formula) – Reduces cravings while lessening withdrawal symptoms

Cravings:

- Grapine, High Potency + I-Glutamine – Very Effective
- SAM-e – To eliminate cravings
- Stevia Powder Extract

Nerves/Withdrawal:

- Stress-Pack, Stress-J, Stress Relief or Nutri-Calm
- 5-HTP Power, Herbal Sleep or Chamomile Tea
- Kava Kava – Relaxation without dulling senses
- Hops – For beer drinkers

Blood Purifiers/Detoxifiers:

- Milk Thistle T/R, Milk Thistle Combination or Blood Build
- BP-X, Liver Cleanse Formula or Liver Balance
- E-Tea or Enviro-Detox (whole Body Cleanses)
- Essential Oils: Pink Grapefruit (To detoxify the body)

Blood Sugar Balance:

- Licorice Root or DHEA (Adults only)
- Chromium GTF – As a blood sugar regulator
- Pantothenic Acid – For the Adrenals

General Support:

- Ultimate Greenzone, Super Algae, Spirulina, Dulse Liquid or Syner Protein – For vital nutrition and high protein
- Thai-Go or Super Antioxidant – To fight free radicals
- Anamu – To protect cells and build the immune system
- Magnesium Complex – Alcohol depletes magnesium
- Krill Oil, Super Omega-3, Super GLA, Flax Seed or Black Currant Oil
- Food Enzymes (With HCL) or Proactazyme Plus (No HCL) – To process carbohydrates
- B-Complex – To support the Nervous System
- HY-C – To repair organ damage from drugs

Essential Oils:

- Lavender, Roman Chamomile, Helichrysum
- Thyme, Linalol or Rose Bulgaria (for hangover)

Homeopathics:

- Tobacco Detox, Detoxification, or Caffeine Remedies

Diet:

- Increase protein intake with Syner Protein.
- Eliminate cravings for sugar by balancing blood sugar levels and using Stevia Powder Extract.
- Develop healthy eating habits.

Herbal Program for the Nervous System

Taken from Footprints on the Path Binder

The system of cells, tissues, and organs that regulates the body's responses to internal and external stimuli. It consists of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, ganglia and parts of the receptor and effector organs. Nerves form a network of pathways for conducting information throughout the body.

Primary Formulas:

- Nutri-Calm, Stress Pack, Stress Relief, Nerve Eight

Herbals:

- Stress-J – For nervous tension/Colon
- Herbal Sleep, Hops, Valerian T/R or Passion Flower – To relax and as natural sleep aids
- KAVA KAVA – Promotes relaxation without dulling senses
- St. John's Wort – To repair nerve tissue
- Digestive Bitters Tonic – To soothe the Nervous System
- Chamomile, Ginger or Catnip – For nervous stomach
- X-Action for Men – To support the male nervous system
- SUMA Combination or Adaptamax – To balance the whole body

Vitamins, Minerals and Other Supplements:

- Focus Attention – To soothe the mind
- GABA Plus – To calm neurotransmitters in the brain
- Skeletal Strength, Calcium-Magnesium or Calcium Plus Vitamin D
- 5-HTP Power – As a precursor to serotonin
- Adrenal Support
- B-Complex or Liquid B12 Complete – To support Nervous System
- Potassium Combination – For nervousness
- Flax Seed Oil (Essential Fatty Acids) – For the nerve sheaths
- Lecithin (Essential Fatty Acids)
- Vitamin C, Super Trio (Antioxidant/Vital Nutrition)
- Melatonin Extra – As a sleep aid. For adults only
- DHA – Fatty acids

Essential Oils:

- Peppermint + Helichrysum (regenerates nerves), Lavender, Neroli, Clary, Sage, Rosemary, Sandalwood, Tea Tree or Thyme Linalol
- Roman Chamomile, Jasmine, Mandarin
- Marjoram/Sweet – For nerve pain

Homeopathic:

- Nervousness Remedy

Herbal Program for Stress

Taken from Footprints on the Path Binder

A mentally or emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition occurring in response to adverse external influences and capable of affecting physical health, usually characterized by increases heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, muscular tension, irritability and depression.

Primary Formula:

- Stress Pack (contains Stress-J, SUMA, Nutri-Calm, Hops)

Herbals:

- Stress-J, Stress Relief or Nerve Eight
- Nerve Control, Hops, Valerian T/R or Passion Flower
- Kava Kava – Promotes relaxation without dulling senses
- Nervous Fatigue Formula (Chinese “Burnout” Formula)
- Adaptamax – To adapt to stressful conditions
- Herbal Sleep (Natural Sleep Aid)
- Tei Fu Oil (Topical First Aid) – Rub on temples and back of neck
- Eleuthero (Stress/Balance)
- Herbal CA (Natural Calcium) – To calm and for the nerves
- Liver Balance (Stressed Liver Formula)
- SUMA Combination – To balance the whole body

Vitamins, Minerals and Other Supplements:

- Nutri-Calm (Anti-Stress Formula)
- Focus Attention – To provide nutrients that support the brain
- Skeletal Strength or Calcium-Magnesium
- Adrenal Support, Licorice Root or DHEA (Adults only)
- Vitamin C (Antioxidant/Vital Nutrition)
- Alpha Lipoic Acid - To offset cell stress
- Melatonin Extra – As a sleep aid. Adults only
- Nature’s Cortisol – To aid the adrenal glands

Essential Oils

- Lavender, Neroli, Frankincense, Sandalwood, Roman Chamomile, Marjoram/Sweet, Mandarin
- Pink Grapefruit – For stress that affects memory

Homeopathic:

- Nervousness Remedy

Other:

- Lifestyle changes are necessary to overcome mental stress.
- Exercise, laughter, deep breathing, and right attitude.

**CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 9
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____
PHONE: _____
FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

1. What are the "misperceptions" of anger?
2. What are the signs that you are losing control?
3. What are the 4 steps to keep your temper in control?
4. Give an example of an I-Statement
5. What are the 3 reasons to manage your anger?
6. What are the 5 steps to overcoming anger and frustration?
7. What is the difference between anger, hostility and violent behavior?
8. What are the 7 ways couples can move past anger?
9. What are the high-risk groups that are more likely to have problems with drug and alcohol abuse?