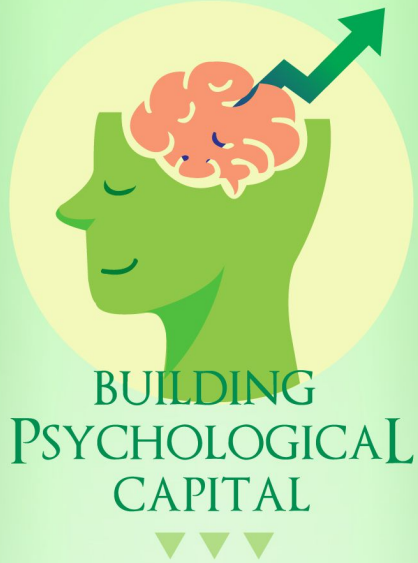


WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2021

MENTAL HEALTH IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD



ANGER MANAGEMENT



آغا خان یونیورسٹی

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

ANGER - A BASIC EMOTION

All of us experience anger. It is a natural emotion ranging from mild annoyance and irritation to strong feelings of rage and aggression. People have different triggers of anger, but generally it arises out of frustration in undesirable situations, or out of perceived mistreatment by others. While we may relate shouting, screaming and hitting to anger, some express it in indirect ways, such as through sulking, sarcasm, eye-rolling, or other subtle gestures.

From an evolutionary perspective, anger serves a protective function by gearing us to halt immediate threats to our own wellbeing or of those who we care about. When evoked by personal values or compassion, it mobilizes people to create support for a cause or to strive for justice.

"The world needs anger. The world often continues to allow evil because it isn't angry enough"
- Bede Jarrett

Why, then we feel bad about being angry?

UNHEALTHY ANGER

Anger becomes a problem when it is:

- extreme and inappropriate,
- frequent to a point where you cannot enjoy things,
- triggered by past events or memories,
- lingers for a long time,
- makes you violent or aggressive,
- affects your personal and professional life,
- or affects your physical health.

Unhealthy anger makes common occurrences such as disagreement or mild criticism appear as personal attacks causing people to be violent, argumentative, vengeful or withdrawn.

SHOULD WE KEEP ANGER INSIDE?

The physiological reactions accompanying anger create arousal. Suppressing anger over a long time leads to several illnesses including hypertension, cardiac issues, bronchitis, depression and increases the likelihood of an earlier death. Emotionally, it fosters self-pity and a victim mindset by feeling mistreated and helpless. This results in poor interpersonal relationships and use of negative coping strategies like drugs or other addictions.

UNHELPFUL THOUGHT PATTERNS

Sometimes, faulty patterns of thinking evoke anger by distorting our perceptions and presenting situations as more negative than they are. These include:

Putting unrealistic demands on oneself or others that need to be fulfilled. Rather than realizing that this is how we want things to be, we believe that this is how they "should" be.

Personalizing by thinking that the other person wants to put 'me' down or cause harm to me. Hence, mildly upsetting situations appear as threats and lead to blaming behaviours.

Overgeneralizing one or two unpleasant incidents as if they happen all the time or with everyone, resulting in overreaction and withdrawal.

Using feelings as evidence to make assumptions about a situation. Feeling angry by not hearing from a friend for some time becomes enough to justify that your friend was never sincere to you.

Predicting future based on your own fears and acting as if it has already happened. You may assume that your boss will turn down your request for a raise, and you get angry before asking for it.

Want to check your anger as compared to other people? [Click here.](#)

MANAGING ANGER

Control the arousal: Anger is like a wave and would break down eventually given some time. Pause. Count with long breaths till you start feeling calmer. Drink a few sips of water. Say a positive mantra to yourself e.g., "take it easy", "it is going to be okay".

Recognize your triggers: Note the situations that increase your chances of getting angry. Do you act out when you feel hungry or tired, or when you feel unheard, or wrongly accused? See how you can proactively reduce these triggers.

Understand your level of control: Realize the difference between events that you can influence and those that are not in your control. If you have some control, see how you can communicate your annoyance in a way that leads to your desired outcome.

Check your thoughts: Check if you engage in the unhelpful thinking styles given above. Do you feel entitled? Or a victim? Do you lose perspective? Distract yourself if negative thoughts keep bothering you and later try to replace them with realistic ones.

Manage your emotion: Picture yourself in a relaxing environment or keeping calm in a triggering situation. Text yourself what you are feeling and process it later to have a better perspective. Use humour and acceptance.

Take it out of your system: Venting your feelings out in front of a trusted person helps to feel better. Exercising vigorously is the best way to divert attention and release negative energy. Use a pillow to punch away the bottled-up anger.

Develop a positive mindset: We tend to ignore what's good around us in a negative frame of mind. Make effort to note what needs to be appreciated in people and life in general.

Be Assertive: Develop a communication style that clearly states your point of view without blaming or hurting others. Start by expressing your feeling and stating the reason for it. Suggest what you would want instead.

#WorldMentalHealthDay
#MentalHealthForAll

Counselling Services And Wellness Office.
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