Feeling a Little Irritated?

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Blogs
"I'm just mad right now. I just don't get it..."

"I have decided that this damn disease is unfair."

"It's just not fair that it has come back so aggressively, and it pisses me off."

https://youtu.be/KSryJXDpZo

Anger - What is it?

- Emotional response to stress (fight or flight)
- Real threat or thought
- Emotion we can feel when frustrated, abused, neglected
- Masks other emotions such as fear
- Range of intensity: irritation...frustration...to rage
- Helps us to cope, to regulate, biologically programmed
- Not talking about aggression (physicality/destructive behavior)
Benefits

- Normal biological response (discharge of energy)
- Signal that there is a problem
- Indicates low on resources
- Can provide energy to help motivate into action
- Encourages expression of feelings
- Moves toward problem solving

What you see...

Physical
- Increased heart rate
- Tense muscles
- Flushed face
- Cold, sweaty palms
- Dilated pupils
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Confused thinking
- Trembling
- Clenched jaw
- Tears
- Pacing

What you feel...

Emotional
- Sadness
- Anxious
- Resentment
- Loss of humor
- Detached
- Guilt
- Depression
- Fear
- Vulnerable
- Shame
What you do...

Behaviors
- Yelling
- Terseness
- Complaining
- Slam doors
- Brooding
- Swear/curse
- Walk out/isolate
- Avoidance
- Denial
- Increase in alcohol/substance abuse

What you don’t see...

Physiological Effects
- Vasoconstriction
- Vasodilatation
- Increase in adrenaline flow
- Increase in heart rate
- Elevated cortisol
- Elevated glucose
- Increase in pro-inflammatory cytokines
- Decrease in immune function
- Gut shutting down
- Change in blood flow
- Depression
Impact Anger and Cancer

- Environment of high arousal which increases risk for misinterpreting information
- Potential to compromise care (anger-in and anger-out)
- People who lived longer were in touch and able to express emotions (not Type C)
- Suppression, displacement, passive-aggression, denial, repression may alienate others, increase isolation from caregivers, individul's cancer evolve unfavorably
- Anger suppression associated with lower NKC, Penedo et al. 2006
- Temoshok and Dreher, 1994; Weihs, Enright et al, 2000; Simmons & Reiss, 2000; Lindop and Cannon, 2001

Additional Consequences

- Hurt other’s feelings
- People avoid you
- Creates problems for loved ones
- Lose respect from others
- You don’t get your needs met
- Confuses people
- Impacts quality of life

Anger Self-Assessment Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I experience physically</th>
<th>What I feel</th>
<th>What I do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased heart rate</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Yelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense muscles</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Terseness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold, sweaty palms</td>
<td>Fatigued</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathless, rapid breathing</td>
<td>Shocked</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused thinking</td>
<td>Distressed</td>
<td>Wrinkled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trembling</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular heart rate</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Giggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Change in tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Increased in alcohol/substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faint</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Increased in alcohol/substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaphoresis</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Increased in alcohol/substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Increased in alcohol/substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Increased in alcohol/substance abuse</td>
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</table>
Learned Behavior

- What's in it for me?
- Goals: punish, teach lesson, get what I want, make life fair, can't admit something was my fault
- Varies from person to person
- New behaviors can be learned
- How one is treated by healthcare providers might trigger childhood issues

Family of Origin Assessment

- Who was angry?
- How was anger expressed?
- What was the response of other family members?
- What was my response?
- How is anger expressed in my family today?
- What similarities/differences do I see?

Different Intensities
Anger Intensity Exercise

Furious________________________________________

Angry________________________________________

Irritated______________________________________

Calm__________________________________________

Assessment

Personality Types

Type A
- Anger out
- Reactive
- Quick
- Low frustration level
- Projects violations
- Boundaries
- Attempts to control

Type B
- More relaxed
- Anger expressed and then let go
- Filtered through reason
- Consciously felt
- Purposeful

Type C
- Anger in
- Internalize emotions
- Self-sacrificing
- Unfailingly pleasant
- Suppression

Type D
- Indirect
- Sneaky
- Passive-aggressive
- Potter-Efron (adapted)
Personality Types

Type A
- Anger out
- Quick-tempered
- Low frustration level
- Projects
- Violates boundaries
- Attempts to control

Type C
- Anger in
- Internalizes emotions
- Self-sacrificing
- Unfailingly pleasant
- Suppression

What's My Style Exercise?

Physical Cues
Personality Style
Family of Origin
Triggers
Strategies

Poter-Efron (adapted)
Working Through Cancer Anger

Interventions and Worksheets

From our Patients

“I find the car a good place to go to just scream this stuff out sometimes.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>CUES (physical, behavioral, emotional, cognitive)</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Worksheet

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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**EVENT**

- Anger
- Uncertainty in relationships
- Loss of mobility
- Loss of independence
- Isolation
- Frustration
- Fear
- Disfigurement
- Uncertain future
- Financial burden
- Fatigue
- Pain

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Problem Solving

Problem

Plan A

Consequence

Plan B

Consequence

Consequence

Consequence

What does it take?
Event Assessment

- Needs at the moment
- Fears at the moment
- Stressors experienced
- What was not known at the time
- Physical limitations
- Beliefs that influenced behavior
- Prospects for rewards
- Resources that were not available

Give your brain something else to do!

Breath Exercise
PMR Muscle Groups

- Forehead
- Jaw
- Face
- Neck/Shoulders
- Chest
- Left Hand
- Left Arm
- Right Hand
- Right Arm
- Abdomen
- Buttocks
- Right Leg
- Right Foot
- Left Leg
- Left Foot

Exercise
Buddhist Psychology

“Peeling away the layers of anger moves us closer to life and empowers us to stand up for justice.”

Emily Horn

RAIN

- Recognize Anger: the many forms it takes, we sometimes fear intensity so we push it away, allows us to respond appropriately
- Accept Anger: non-judgemental acceptance cools the heat of active anger, welcome your survival instincts without judging or condemning them.
- Investigate Anger: What is this energy that morphs and changes, that can burn like fire and harden like ice, bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings, bring your curiosity
- Not Identify with Anger: set aside the stories, anger arises and passes, when we befriend anger it fuels empowerments, resilience and change.

Emily Horn Shambhala Sun Sept 2014
A real threat...or a thought
Cognitive Behavioral Approach

Situation → Thought → Feeling → Behavior

Challenging Thoughts

- What's the evidence?
- What's the effect of continuing to have this thought?
- What's another way to look at this?
- What could happen if I changed my thinking?
- What would I tell a friend in the same position?
- What should I do next?

Beck Institute

Productive Thinking

- "I need to leave it in this time and space and move on."
- "One day at a time."
- "This situation won't last forever."
- "Oh crap!"
- "I can't control this disease/situation, but there are other things I can control."
- "I can think different thoughts."
- "It's ok to feel angry sometimes."
- "I can ride this out and not let it get to me."
- "I'm not in danger right now."
Assertive Behavior

- Rehearse
- Be respectful
- Eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Gestures
- Voice tone and volume
- Be honest

- Timing of communication
- Assert your feelings as soon as possible
- Standing up for what you believe you need
- But also negotiate
- Ask for feedback

Type C Strategies

- Develop awareness of your needs
- Discover your inner guide
- Reframe your ideas about your feelings
- Learn skills for emotional expression with others
- Take charge of your medical care
- Get the social support you need
- Secure your legitimate rights
- Work through hopelessness
- Cultivate a fighting spirit
- Develop opinions

Lydia Temoshok, PhD

Conflict Resolution

- Identify the problem
- Identify the feelings
- Identify the impact of the problem
- Choose to decide or let go
- Address and resolve

*Do I want to be right or do I want to be happy.*
Forgiveness...Let it Go
- For self or others
- Not absolution
- Choice
- Unconditional
- Gift you give yourself
- Changes the narrative
- Leaves the past in the past
- Get on with your life

Fred Luskin & Robert Enright, Stanford Forgiveness Project

Forgiveness Strategies
- Make a list of how resentments harm you (wasted time/energy)
- Treat the person nicer
- Acknowledge that harm is ever-present
  - “I know your heart”
- Lower your expectations of others (people will break your rules)
- Cultivate empathy

Fred Luskin & Robert Enright, Stanford Forgiveness Project

Build Your Network

Barbara Anderson, OSU
Not so helpful

- Punching pillows
- Smash Shack
- Scream therapy

For loved ones...
What loved ones can do...

- Don't take it personally (use imagery)
- Speak when the angry person communicates that it is your turn to speak
- Listening to anger without responding in no way indicates you agree; you are allowing them to vent
- An angry person needs more personal space than a calm person
- Ask for specifics, encourage discussion
- Pay attention however don't stare
- Sit at 90 degree angle
- Model a calm breath
- Normalize, not minimize
- Express empathy
- Disengage

Know your listening Style

- Ask for their opinions
- Encourage
- Validate decisions and strengths
- Smile
- Good job, I like that
- Don't you take control
- Don't criticize outcome
- Help set timetables
Less helpful…

• Interrupting the angry person
• Not looking at the angry person (don’t stare)
• Rushing the angry person
• Showing interest in something other than the conversation.
• Getting ahead of the angry person and finishing his/her thoughts.
• Topping the angry person’s story: “You think your day was bad, let me tell you about mine!”
• Turning off difficult material

Strategies/Skills to Express Anger Without loss of Control

• Identify a range of feelings
• Identify triggers (environment)
• Identify cues (physical)
• Know your anger style
• Identify thoughts (threat driven?)
• Develop assertive techniques
• Create a plan, practice, get feedback
• Relaxation techniques
• Regular exercise
• Regular sleep schedule
• Humor
• Journal
• Nutrition
• Realistic expectations
• Stop blaming (self and others)
• Practice forgiveness (let it go)
• Build a network of support
• Gratitude list

Self-Assessment

Anger:

How does it help me?

How does it get in my way?
Triggers

What are my triggers?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

In what situations do I feel most triggered?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

What productive thoughts can I use?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

What strategies can I use to stay relaxed?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

What about music?

- University of Wisconsin
  http://people.uwec.edu/arasla/research/anger_management/index.htm

Maybe add dance?
Resources


Resources con't

Resources con’t