



ANGER VS. AGGRESSION

What is anger?

Anger is a normal emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation and frustration to rage. It is a reaction to a perceived threat to us, our loved ones, our property, our self-image, or some part of our identity. Anger is a warning bell that tells us that something is wrong.

What is Aggression?

Aggression refers to any behavior that is hostile, destructive, and/or violent. Generally, aggressive behavior has the potential to inflict injury or damage to the target person or object.

Three basic approaches to responding to anger and aggression: expression, suppression, and management.

Expression

Expressing anger/aggression can range from having a calm, reasonable discussion about your feelings to blowing up.

Suppression

Suppression involves holding anger in, letting it go, or changing your focus to something else. Suppression can mean seething and bottling up your emotions, and refusing to talk to someone and ending a relationship. It can lead to a sense of something “eating away” at you inside. It can also be a positive choice to let something go and forget about it, take a time-out, or avoid and ignore the irritation.

Management

Neither extreme -- blowing up or holding it in -- is healthy. Managing anger well is about acknowledging anger as a normal emotion, paying attention to it, and making choices that allow us to improve our situations.

Anger is harmful when:

1. You get angrier than the situation calls for.
2. You can't cool off quickly, making it hard to move on
3. You feel angry all the time or many times a day
4. You're not always sure why you're angry, or with whom
5. You have a 'hair trigger' response and find yourself angry with those closest to you for very little reason

Everyone experiences anger, and it can be healthy. It can motivate us to stand up for ourselves and correct injustices. When we manage anger well, it prompts us to make positive changes in our lives and situations.

Mismanaged anger, on the other hand, is counterproductive and can be unhealthy. When anger is too intense, out of control, misdirected, and overly aggressive, it can lead to poor decision making and problem solving, create problems with relationships and at work, and can even affect your health.

Tactics for anger management

- ✓ Delay, such as counting to 10 to allow the arousal from anger to dissipate (Thomas Jefferson said if you are really angry, count to 100!)
- ✓ Relaxation, such as taking deep breaths or listening to calming music
- ✓ Distraction, such as working on a crossword puzzle or taking a walk to get your mind off the situation causing the anger
- ✓ Doing something incompatible with anger and aggression, such as petting a puppy, watching a comedy, or helping someone in need

1. [HTTP://WWW.PBS.ORG/T
HISEMOTIONALLIFE/TO
PIC/ANGER/WHAT-
ANGER](http://www.pbs.org/t/hisemotionalife/to/pic/anger/what-anger)

2. [HTTP://BPD.ABOUT.COM
/OD/GLOSSARY/G/AGGR
SSION.HTM](http://bpd.about.com/od/glossary/g/aggression.htm)