

## Navigating Anger and Mastering its Management

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### ABSTRACT

Anger is typically regarded as an extreme emotion experienced as reaction to threats, pain, dissatisfaction, frustration or other negative emotions. The beneficial effects of rage include conquering phobias and gaining confidence to deal with perilous situations or dangers that trigger the fight-or-flight reaction, whereas its drawbacks include excessive anger acting like a numbing substance on an emotional, physical, and cognitive level. According to State Trait theory of Anger there are two forms/types of Anger: **State anger** - is described as a subjective, fluctuating, and psychobiological feeling that changes over time. and **Trait anger** - Anger attribute is made up of ideas and behaviors that are consistent throughout time. Regarding individual variations in the frequency that state anger was felt over time, it may be considered a personality feature. The amygdala brain nucleus is thought to be the physiological origin of emotions. This region of the brain is in charge of detecting dangers to well-being as well as conveying an alert when such dangers are discovered, prompting us to take protective measures. It is important to understand techniques for Anger management and when used appropriately and methodically, behavioral and cognitive restructuring, relaxation techniques, communication skills training, Family or relationship-based interventions, problem solving and humor strategies have all been found to be efficient to be effective ways to reduce angry reactions. This paper examines the state trait theory of anger, nature of anger reaction, physiology, aspects, causes of anger and some techniques for anger management.

**Keywords:** Anger, State Anger, Trait Anger, Anger Management

In interpersonal conflicts and disagreements, people feel several fundamental emotions. Anger has become perhaps among the most debatable fundamental feelings or emotions, due to the challenges in defining and clarifying it throughout growth and development as well as its subjective & functional relevance (positive/good or negative/bad feeling?). Behaviors associated with wrath and anger serves an array of functions, along with the intricacies of violent behaviors that tend to be influenced by the symbolic, social and cultural contexts.

According to **Videbeck (2006)**, “anger is a natural emotion that entails a strong unpleasant and emotional reaction to a perceived provocation”. While **Spielberger et al. 1983** described anger as “an emotional state consisting of sensations ranging in intensity from mild irritation or annoyance to great wrath and rage”.

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Anger is an emotional response to either an internal or external occurrence that humans view as a danger, violation, perceived provocation or a discrimination. It is commonly assumed that rage is an adaptive reaction and a variant of the response of fight or flight, which is thought to have evolutionary significance in defending humans from danger. It can be an essential survival mechanism, but it can also pose considerable challenges in the long term by continuously pounding the mind connected with thoughts, emotions, behavior, and relationships.

Anger is elicited when an individual feels they have been mistreated by someone else, an incident that was disproportionate or unfair occurred to them, as well as when their personal well-being & status in society have been disregarded or threatened. Nobody can make people furious; rather, anger is impacted by thoughts of others, perceptions of incidents, ability to cope, and accessible resources.

According to the **Mental Health Foundation (2008)**, one in every four persons have concerns about their level of anger, and one in every 10 people has problems in regulating their anger. Furthermore, one in every five persons reported having difficulty in their social connections as a result of their style of expressing and regulating anger (**Mental Health Foundation 2008**).

However, rage is commonly regarded as a negative emotion, it may be a positive emotional reaction when handled forthrightly and politely. Anger may be useful at times; it can push a person to take constructive steps in order to improve a situation or attain one's goals.

Anger shouldn't be disregarded on a regular basis. Anger flare-ups may lead to anxiety, remorse, or issues at work, in relationships, and in one's health for themselves as well as others. Sometimes anger drives somebody towards violence, bodily harm and even death might result. Angry individuals frequently feel remorse for their flare-ups and regret they could've represented themselves differently.

### *State-Trait theory of Anger*

According to the State-Trait theory of anger by **Spielberger**, State anger is the mental state of being angry is an ubiquitous transitory situation composed of subjective emotions of anger which varies in strength and duration that creates a physiological reaction which rises with the intensity of subjective angry sensations (**Spielberger et al. 1983**). Trait anger is considered to represent an enduring type of personality which leads an individual to experience greater frequent rage outbursts than those who don't have the trait anger. According to (**Spielberger and colleagues 1983**), those with high trait anger encounter the identical situational consequences of anger having greater strong, persistent, and more activated state anger compared to people with low-trait anger (**Quinn et al. 2013**).

### *Nature of Anger reaction*

It typically follows biological as well as psychological alterations.

- **Biological changes:** Increased respiration rate, rise in heart rate, raised energy level due to increased blood circulation throughout the muscles, higher blood pressure, hormonal actions (adrenaline and noradrenaline), a rise in body temperature and heightened muscle tension or muscle contraction (skeletal muscles), are all examples of biological changes occur during the Anger reaction. Therefore, it has an impact on all of the human body's essential functions.

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- **Psychological changes:** Additionally, numerous psychological alterations occur with an angry reaction. Some of these changes include lower tolerance and lower patience, loss of attention, impaired capacity for making decisions, greater restlessness, and increased stress feelings. If an angry reaction lasts for a long period, it might cause alterations in our health's physiological and psychological functions.

### *Physiology of Anger*

Arousal of Anger is characterized by stimulation of the cardiovascular, limbic and endocrine systems and, in addition to other central nervous system and autonomic system regions, as well as contraction in the muscles of the skeletal system.

The amygdala, which is shaped like almond limbic system portion found deep in the brain's temporal lobe, has been widely recognized for its stimulation in identifying threats, its connection via trauma, and anger-activated behaviors that are aggressive (Novaco, 2017; Blair 2011). The interconnections between the ventromedial as well as orbital frontal cortex, that are activated throughout angry state, contribute to regulating behavior as well as modulate how anger influences violent or aggressive responses. (Novaco, 2017; Potegal, 2012). The amygdala is regarded to be the center of the key-unpleasant motivational framework, and rage is an adversely valenced feeling or emotion generated by unpleasant events. In a similar way, anger/rage is said to be the result of a defensive, "outrage" mechanism. Anger, on the other hand, is related with asymmetry left-prefrontal cortex operation, which has been linked typically to beneficial/positive outcomes as well as approach motivation (Novaco, 2017; Harmon-Jones et al. 2010).

Anger can occur when triggered to the extent of anger, which means that the left prefrontal cortex, which deals with judgement automatically, regulates rage emotions within proportions. Maintaining anger in control requires acquiring methods to assist the left prefrontal cortex acquire an advantage upon the amygdala, lowering or suppressing rage/anger reactions to ensure that one maintains control over rage feelings. Among the various methods for making the prefrontal cortex dominant are methods of relaxation (which reduce arousal and lower amygdala activity) and the application of methods that regulate thinking/cognition, which assist practice applying judgment to overcome rage psychological or emotional responses. (Yadav et al., 2017; Potegal, 2012)

It is critical to understand the physiological repercussions of rage, particularly with regard to the harm that this emotion may inflict to physiology. Additionally, it is crucial to understand ways to vent/ express anger responsibly, as well as appropriate, culturally and healthy acceptable techniques for releasing anger. Understanding ability to manage one's anger may have a significant influence on relationships, career, as well as issues related to family. (Yadav et al., 2017)

### *Anger's Facets/ Aspects*

Anger issues are frequent, severe, as well as long-lasting. Anger impacts an individual's ideas, emotions, bodily reactions, & behaviors.

### **Thoughts:**

Thoughts might be unreasonable or excessive. When individuals feel furious, they are more prone to place the blame on others and fail to recognize their own role in the problem or situation in hand. Thoughts may also turn to bringing down the other person or seeking vengeance.

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### **Physical reaction/responses:**

Chemicals in the brain that govern mood, hunger, sleep, memory and learning are considered to be involved in the expression and experiences of anger, and as a consequence, these parts of behavior might be severely impacted.

### **Emotions:**

Anger is also an emotional response to a circumstance that is tied to the person's opinions and beliefs. It might vary from moderate annoyance or irritation to anger or fury.

### **Behaviors:**

Problem of anger is associated with the negative/bad behaviors, which involve violence & aggressiveness, that generate additional obstacles for the individual as well as their relationships with others, such as workplace violence, domestic violence, harassment and bullying. Problem of anger has also been linked to difficulties such as assault, aggressive driving and substance abuse.

### **Causes of Anger:**

Although no one knows what causes anger, the way it is perceived and expressed might develop a habit. Understanding the causes of anger might therefore assist in the selection of a courteous and assertive expression. Anger risk factors include the following:

- **Anger-related experiences/memories and pictures:** Anger-related experiences and pictures, including those associated with a traumatic experience, can fuel and contribute to the sense of rage.
- **Fixed methods for thinking** about the outside world, as well as creating rigid norms, standards, and requirements, could raise the chance of anger whenever circumstances fail to go according to plan.
- Additional **Psychological illnesses**, which include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and other disorders of personality, can manifest as anger. Persistent outbreaks of rage may suggest underlying psychological issues and deserve to be investigated.
- **The family and sociocultural variables**, in which families teach appropriate behavior as well as societies or cultures decide what is perceived as a normative, acceptable and suitable reaction to stressful circumstances.
- An **individual's genetics** may impact their capacity for reacting to stressful situations with rage, hatred, or aggressiveness.

According to **Deffenbacher 1999**, some persons are more "hotheaded" than other people. Certain individuals fail to express their rage openly. Others are easily angered and frustrated. There is evidence that certain kids are born annoyed, sensitive, and quickly agitated from their infancy or early age. This suggests that genetics or physiological factors may have an influence on the genesis of anger reactions. Further possibility is sociocultural: lacking the opportunity for learning ways to control an angry emotion in a healthy way (**Pashupati et.al 2011**).

According to studies, one's family history also matters. People who have trouble controlling their emotions often come from disruptive, disorderly households where emotion expression is not encouraged (**Pashupati et.al 2011**).

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### **Management of Anger:**

Anger management aims to lessen physiological arousals as well as emotional reactions it produces. The problems of rage and violence must be addressed with a complete management program. The selection of some of the fundamental interventions is dependent on the functional diagnosis of the existing anger or aggressiveness issue. Individuals with anger issues might benefit from mental health counselling, as well as treatment in order to modify their behavior to deal with circumstances that have made them furious. Strengthening an individual's drive for getting healthier is an important aspect of treatments. Some techniques efficient for management of Anger are as follows:

**Relaxation Technique:** Training in relaxation techniques aids in reducing bodily tension, which may be a crucial first step in managing anger issues. Deep breathing, Progressive muscular relaxation technique and relaxing imagery are easy relaxation techniques that can help reduce anger. The following steps: “Instead of taking deep breaths from your chest, try breathing deeply from your diaphragm. Softly reiterate calming words or expressions like ‘relax’ and ‘take it easy’. Whilst doing so, breathe deeply.” Utilize imagery to conjure up a soothing reminiscence or imaginative encounter. Slow, easy yoga-style movements can relax the muscles and assist to feel more peaceful. Regular use of such methods needs to be performed in order to develop the instinctive usage of them in challenging circumstances.

**Problem solving:** A decreased level of issue of anger might result from problem-solving that enables an individual to recognize problematic circumstances that can provoke an angry reaction and discover workable solutions.

**Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT):** CBT seeks to help the individual develop the skills necessary to continuously control their issue of anger by assisting them in changing negative thoughts, irrational beliefs as well as behavior that might fuel their rage. This requires a change of mindset, as people who are angry often use profanity, profane language, or both to express what they are feeling. Reducing or avoiding furious reactions can be especially helped by cognitive reappraisal, which is when a person alters how they see an incident (for example, perceiving a car that cuts them off as perhaps rushing to an urgent meeting rather than deliberately holding them up).

**Family or relationship-based interventions:** Interventions centered on families or relationships can aid families, couples, or other people in relationships in better comprehending anger & its detrimental effects. The implementation of family-based therapies has the potential to interrupt the cycle of anger and violence, enhance communication, problem-solving abilities, and conflict resolution, and also promote the expression of pleasant feelings as opposed to anger.

**Communication-skills training:** One of the main things that makes people angry is communication abilities (Wyer et al. 1993). Slow down and consider the answers before responding during a heated dispute. Instead of speaking immediately after having an idea, take time and consider words carefully. Take a moment to breathe before responding and pay close attention to what is being said.

By employing actual or as roleplayed circumstances, communication skills training teaches and practices peaceful methods of addressing situations that normally result in an angry outburst. Such instruction may concentrate on techniques like to enhance conflict resolution,

compromise and negotiation, as well as how to effectively and politely address their feelings of rage.

**Humor:** It is the antithesis of anger. It has been observed that using specific statements that have the capacity to make one laugh in a person's life's emotions is quite good in reducing anger.

### CONCLUSION

Anger can be summarized as an intense emotion experienced in a reaction to feelings of frustration, hurt, dissatisfaction, or even a reacting to threats that triggers the reaction of fight or flight. However, excessive anger has negative effects on our physical, emotional, and cognitive health, and failing to identify and comprehend the level of anger may result in serious negative effects on our health. In general, repressing anger and expressing it excessively may result in a detrimental impact on one's physical health and mental health. It's critical to acquire proper ways to vent anger as well as constructive, considerate social behaviors. Efficient anger management encourages people to develop strong assertiveness techniques and extends life expectancy. Recognizing the damage that anger can do to our bodies, it is crucial to understand the physiological ramifications of rage. Understanding how to manage the emotion of anger may have a significant influence on our relationships, professional lives, and well-being in especially.

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The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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