

Training module 4

Anger management

In this module you will:

- Learn about the effects of alcohol
- Understand what anger is and when it's a problem
- Identify your anger triggers
- Learn how to express anger appropriately
- Understand the thinking styles that cause anger
- Learn some techniques on how to manage your anger.

Training module 4: Anger management

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Part A: Description of module

How can this module help me?

You may feel that there is little you can do to control your anger – but there are things you can do to make a difference. This module aims to help you cope with anger. If you feel that you are not fully in control of your anger or if you find it difficult to express yourself when you are angry then you may find this module helpful.

How does this module work?

This module covers the following key areas:

- What is anger and when is it a problem?
- The three main causes of anger
- Challenging unhelpful thinking
- How to remain calm when feeling angry
- How to respond to anger appropriately

Throughout there are boxes to help guide you:

What do you think?



The yellow boxes ask you questions to see what your thoughts are.

Action box



The blue boxes ask you to complete an exercise

Example

e.g. The purple boxes give an example to help illustrate what is being said

Part B: Anger and anger management

What is anger?

Feeling angry is part of being human. Anger can vary from mild irritation to intense fury and is a natural response to feeling attacked, insulted, deceived, or frustrated. Anger can tell us that we need to take action to put something right – it is a problem-solving emotion that gives us strength and energy and motivates us to act.

But anger can also be frightening. When something makes you angry, adrenalin causes your body to prepare for “fight or flight” – this gives you energy, and makes you feel tense. It can be difficult to release this energy and tension in ways that are constructive and the instinct to fight back or run away usually isn’t helpful and often makes situations worse rather than better.

While we all feel angry at times, it can lead us to say or do things that we later regret. Anger can reduce our inhibitions and make us act inappropriately. One person in five has ended a relationship because of the way the other person dealt with anger.

Being angry isn’t a problem in itself. It’s how you deal with it.

When is anger a problem?

Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or people around you. This can depend on whether you express your anger, and how you express it.

Often if you feel angry it’s about something that is happening to you at the time. This is usually something that is over quite quickly; for example, sounding your horn if another driver causes you to brake suddenly. Something happens that makes you angry, you express your anger and then move on.

When you don’t express your anger, or express it at inappropriate times or in unsafe ways, this is when it can damage your health and your relationships.

Anger can be a problem in terms of overly expressing it – e.g. violence and aggression, or constant shouting at or criticising others. Anger can also be a problem if you are unable to express it, and it turns into resentment. Trying to suppress your anger may lead to other types of behaviour, such as responding in a “passive-aggressive” way, e.g. being sarcastic or unhelpful, or refusing to speak to someone.

Being unable to express anger in a safe, constructive way can be bad for emotional, mental, and physical health, causing problems such as:

- Depression/anxiety
- Sleep problems
- Alcohol/drug addictions
- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviour e.g. excessive cleaning, over-working
- Self-harm

- May affect heart and circulatory system
- High blood pressure

What is Anger Management?

Anger management does not mean internalising or suppressing anger. It is about recognising triggers for anger as early as possible and expressing these feelings and frustrations in a reasonable way. We often have learnt behaviours as to how to deal with strong emotions, so anger management is about unlearning ineffective coping mechanisms and re-learning more positive ways to deal with the problems and frustrations associated with anger.

Action box



Try completing the anger management quiz on the next page to see how you manager your anger.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Anger Management Quiz</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">How well do you express anger? Answer the following true/false questions to discover how well you express anger:</p>			
		True	False
<h1>Set 1</h1>			
1	I build up resentments over time, and then let them all out in one big blow up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I sometimes cut people out of my life when they make me angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	It's unsafe to express anger. I internalise it and then end up feeling depressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	If I told someone I was angry at him/her, I'd make myself too vulnerable. The other person would then be angry at me and might end the relationship, or, somehow, I'd pay for it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I lose it when I get angry, I've been known to yell, break objects and say horrible things that I later regret	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I have a tendency to be sarcastic or "leak" my anger rather than be open and direct about my feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<h1>Set 2</h1>			
1	Anger lets me know that something isn't sitting well with me. I allow myself to fully feel and acknowledge my feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I express my anger after I've had some time to acknowledge it and release excess energy. I may beat a pillow, whack a tennis ball, go running or rant and rave in my journal. Then I can calmly give voice to my feelings without saying things I'd later regret	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	To prevent resentments from building up, I express my feelings of anger as soon as I can do so calmly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I use "I" statements when communicating my anger. That way, I avoid blaming and telling other people what they feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I hold a safe, respectful space for others to express their anger towards me, trusting that honest communication leads to greater intimacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	When bad things happen that I have no control over, I find ways to let off steam: I might cry on a friend's shoulder or take five minutes to rant about my frustrations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered **TRUE** more often in **Set 1** and **FALSE** more often in **Set 2**, you may wish to learn some more effective ways to safely release and express your anger.

Part C: What causes anger?

Broadly speaking, causes of anger can be broken down into two groups: external and internal.

1. External causes

External causes of anger are those life events which happen to us or around us and which are often outside our control. There may be specific situations which are more likely to trigger an angry reaction from you. Encountering a particular situation or environment might be a trigger.

Example

e.g. For some people driving can be a trigger. If they think that someone has deliberately cut them up this can cause considerable anger and even road rage.

2. Internal causes:

▪ Behavioural explanations

If you have not had opportunities to learn effective ways of managing and expressing emotions, then anger can arise as a result of specific learnt behaviours. For example, you might find it difficult to sit with and tolerate frustration due to past experiences and what you have come to regard as 'normal' or 'acceptable' behaviour. A pattern of angry behaviour can build up.

▪ Thinking styles

Our interpretation of, and thoughts about, a situation can result in anger, especially how we perceive the intention of other people. Situations in which we feel wronged in some way can be particularly difficult, or where we feel we have been treated unjustly. How we *perceive* a situation strongly affects how we *feel* about it. And our perception is not always correct.

Over the next few pages, we will look at each of these causes of anger in turn. There will be exercises throughout to help you get a better understanding of what makes you angry.

Section 1: Causes of anger – external events

In life we all will experience events which make us angry and there will be specific types of events which make us angrier than others. Obviously, we are not fully in control of external events. We can, however, gain a better understanding of how different events affect us personally and the more we understand the more we can control how we choose to respond. The idea here is not to try and control everything that happens in the outside world, but rather to control our response to it.

Action box



Below are some examples of the sorts of situations which are likely to trigger anger (the list isn't comprehensive – it's just to give an idea). For each situation, indicate how angry you think it might make you feel. Once complete, fill in the sheet on the next page to see if you can identify any patterns to your anger.

For each situation below tick one box to describe how angry it might make you feel			
	Not very angry	Quite angry	Very angry
▪ Facing a threat to yourself or your loved ones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Being verbally or physically assaulted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Suffering a blow to your self-esteem or your place within a social group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Being interrupted when pursuing a goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Losing out when money is at stake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Someone going against a principle that you consider important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Being treated unfairly and feeling powerless to change this	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Feeling disappointed by someone else or in yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Having your property mistreated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Identifying patterns

Looking at your answers to the previous exercise, see if you can identify any patterns to the types of situations which make you most angry. This sheet may help you:

From the situations on the previous sheet, what three do you think would make you most angry – list them below.

1.

2.

3.

Are there any similarities between these three situations? Some examples of constants that you might identify are:

- Feeling wronged or disrespected
- Feeling protective of others
- Feeling threatened
- Feeling frustrated

Why do you think these situations anger you more than others?

Are there any specific types of situation which have not been mentioned which you think are more likely to trigger your anger? Write them below:

Learn your triggers

So far we have looked at *general* life events which might trigger anger. It is very helpful to have a clearer idea as to what *specific* situations are likely to trigger anger in you. It also helps if you learn to recognise the physical warning signs of anger, such as: adrenaline rush; heart beating faster; breathing more quickly; body becoming tense; feet are tapping; clenching fists.

Recognising these triggers and signs gives you the chance to think about how you want to react to a situation before doing anything. This can be very difficult if you feel angry, but it is possible to train yourself to pause before expressing your feelings.

To start recognising your triggers and warning signs you might find it helpful to keep a diary or notes about the times you have felt angry, particularly what were the circumstances, or whether someone said or did something to trigger your anger.

Action box



On the next page is a sheet where you can log your feelings of anger. Ask your keyworker to print out a few copies for you. Each day reflect on any situations which made you feel angry and fill out the details in the sheet. If you like, you can bring these sheets to keywork and discuss them or, if you would prefer, they can be purely for your own use. Just by reflecting and filling in the sheet will make a huge difference to your personal insight and awareness.

What do you think?

When you have completed a few entries, it will be possible to see if there is a pattern to your anger. For example:



- Does your anger always happen on a particular day or at a particular time?
- Do the same people/things make you angry?
- Do you always respond in the same way?
- Do your thoughts make a difference to how angry you become?

Discovering whether or not there is a pattern to your anger will help when developing strategies to manage it.

Anger Diary

Day of week and time	What situation made you angry?	On a scale of 1-10 how angry did you get (10 being furious)?	What were the physical symptoms of your anger?	What were you thinking when angry?	What did you do/how did you deal with your anger?
Example					
<i>Wednesday 2.00pm</i>	<i>Shop assistant was rude to me</i>	<i>6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Face went red</i> ▪ <i>Felt hot</i> ▪ <i>Tense throughout body</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Life is unfair</i> ▪ <i>This person is picking on me</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Kept quiet</i> ▪ <i>Seethed inside</i> ▪ <i>Shouted at friend later for no reason</i>

Section 2: Causes of anger – Behavioural explanations

How does past experience affect anger?

It is likely that the way you were brought up will influence how you feel about expressing anger. Many people are, as children, given messages about anger that may make it harder to manage as an adult. Such messages might make us more inclined to show excessive anger which might intimidate others. Other messages might make us inclined to avoid expressing anger, even when it might be justified.

- **Angry outbursts:**

You may have been brought up to believe that it is always OK to act out your anger, however aggressively or violently, and not taught how to understand and manage it. This could mean you have angry outbursts any time you don't like the way someone is behaving, or you are in a situation you don't like. You may have been brought up in an environment where shouting/swearing in a way that others see as angry was normal and may not be aware of how angry your general manner appears to others.

- **'Bottling it up' or transference:**

If life events have made you angry and you didn't or couldn't express your anger at the time that anger can get 'bottled up' or suppressed. This can have negative consequences in the longer term. You may find that, when something happens to annoy or upset you in the future, you feel extremely angry and respond more aggressively than is appropriate to the new situation. This disproportionate response to a situation is sometimes known as *transference*. It is where you *transfer* your feelings about a person or situation in the past onto an entirely different person or situation in the present.

For example, if you have witnessed your parents' anger when it was out of control, you may see it as something that is destructive and terrifying and to be avoided. Or you may have been brought up to believe that you shouldn't complain but should just put up with things and may have been punished for expressing anger as a child.

Example

e.g. Daphne has a particularly difficult weekend. She visits her parents who treat her like a child and don't listen to what she has to say. She doesn't know how to raise these issues as she was raised to never complain and as a result her frustration just continues to grow and grow. When she goes back to her own home, she finds that her flat mate hasn't cleaned up all weekend. Fuming, she shouts at this flat mate. All of the frustration and anger she had bottled up over the weekend toward her parents she takes out on her friend. Afterward she knows she has over reacted. She feels dreadful and doesn't know how she can make amends with her flat mate.

What do you think?



Can you think of an example like Daphne's where you bottled up anger from one situation and transferred it onto another?

- What was the situation?

- How did you react?

- In what way did the past affect your behaviour in the present?

- How did you feel afterward?

- If you encountered a similar situation again, what would you do differently?

Section 3: Causes of anger – Thinking styles:

The way that we think about things directly impacts on our stress levels and mood. Our thoughts appear to occur almost automatically, and we can equally automatically accept them as true. It is important to remember that thoughts are just that, thoughts. They are not facts and are not necessarily accurate. Sometimes thoughts can be negative or unhelpful. They can often occur without any real basis and are sometimes more based upon the sort of day we have been having, whether we have had enough sleep or how hungry we are than on anything concrete or real. It is therefore important to question our thoughts when we become angry to see if they are based on wrong assumptions.

Action box



On the next page are some examples of unhelpful thinking. Go through them and write examples where you think you might have had similar thoughts yourself.

1 Taking things personally/mind reading:

Anger can often be triggered by taking things personally and then feeling hurt. We can look for and expect criticism from others and then read it into any situation that occurs, even if no criticism was intended.

Example

e.g. Donald passes someone he knows in the street. He says hello to them, but they do not say hello back. He starts to think that they have deliberately ignored him, even that they dislike him. The truth, however, is that they were simply preoccupied with something and they just didn't hear him. The whole situation was not about Donald at all, but his thinking has turned it into a personal insult.

Do you ever take things personally? If so, write an example below:

2 Ignoring the positive/Filtering:

This is where we focus on the negative or bad and ignore the positive. This style of thinking stops us feeling good about ourselves and can lower confidence.

Example

e.g. Daphne has a review meeting at her new job. The meeting is very positive, and she is told that since she started, she has progressed well. She is advised, however, that her computing skills could do with improvement and it is suggested she go on a course. Rather than feeling positive about all the progress she has made; she just feels angry and disappointed that her computing skills need improving.

Have you ever ignored the positive? If so, write an example below:

3 Black and white thinking/perfectionism:

This can occur when we swing between one extreme and another without finding any middle ground. We can expect perfection from ourselves and others and, when it doesn't happen, we can get angry and frustrated.

Example

e.g. Donald has loaned some money to Frank on the understanding that he will repay within two weeks. The two weeks pass, and Frank forgets to repay the money. Donald starts to get irritated but does nothing about it. After one more week Donald is furious and when he does speak to Frank he shouts and make threats. Donald goes from saying nothing to being threatening; he has missed the middle ground entirely.

Have you ever struggled to find the middle ground? If so, write an example below:

4 Over generalising/labelling

This is where we make assumptions about future events based on one isolated incident. This can include labelling ourselves such that because we might have failed at one thing, we assume we will fail at everything.

Example

e.g. Daphne sat one exam at school and unfortunately failed. Since then she has labelled herself as a failure when it comes to exams and has avoided ever sitting another exam since. This has seriously limited her work options.

Have you ever labelled yourself? If so, write an example below:

5 Predicting the future/catastrophising

When we are worried about something, we can spend a lot of time thinking about it. We can start projecting into a future where we *imagine* people doing the very things that make us angry. These things have not even taken place and may never take place, but we are still left feeling angry about it.

Example

e.g. Donald wants to ask Frank for a favour. He starts to play through his mind how this will go. He predicts a situation where, when he speaks to Frank, he gets bluntly refused. He starts to feel angry about the response he *imagines* he *might* get. As a result, when he does eventually speak to Frank, he does so in an aggressive, unpleasant way. Because he asks Frank in an aggressive way, he ends up getting exactly the blunt refusal he feared. This is sometimes known as a *self-fulfilling prophecy* – the very thing we don't want to happen we end up making happen because of the way we handle it.

Have you ever 'catastrophised'? If so, write an example below:

Challenging unhelpful thinking:

If you can relate to any of the examples of unhelpful thinking which have been given, then you might find it helpful to challenge some of your thinking when it occurs. On the next two pages are some questions which you can ask yourself to challenge unhelpful thinking. It might be helpful to print out a few copies of the sheet and fill them in when you become angry in the future.

Action box



Print out some copies of the "Challenging unhelpful thinking" sheet on the next two pages and complete whenever you think it might be helpful.

Challenging unhelpful thinking

Describe the unhelpful thought below:

Is there any evidence which contradicts your thought?

For example, the action which made you angry was out-of-character

What would you say to a friend who had this thought in a similar situation?

Would you challenge their thinking? If so, how?

What are the costs and benefits of thinking this way?

Do the costs outweigh the benefits? For example, does this type of thinking make you unduly suspicious or unhappy?

How will you feel about this in six months' time?

In the scheme of things, is it really that important or has it been blown out of proportion?

Is there another way of looking at this situation?

Can you come up with a more balanced or rational view? Describe it below:

Part D: Responding to anger

So far in this module we have looked at the triggers of anger and what can cause anger management problems. We have seen that anger is usually triggered by external events and that our ability to effectively manage our anger can be hampered both by unhelpful thinking and by behaviours learnt from the past. We will now start to look at what to do when you start to feel angry.

When you find yourself starting to feel anger bubbling up inside you, pause for a moment. Remind yourself of the consequences if you were to explode in a rage and think of the remorse you might feel after. Rather than respond in a kneejerk way remember the three stages when managing anger:

Stage 1 – the event

The event is the trigger for your anger. It might be somebody ignoring you, or swearing at you, or being late.

Stage 2 – calming down and thinking

The problem with anger is that it clouds our thoughts and our judgement. As a result, if we respond without due thought, our response can often be unhelpful and cause more problems than it solves. Before you respond to the event, give yourself time to calm down and think.

Stage 3 – response

Once you have had a chance to think, you can then decide how and when you will respond to the situation.

If you have completed the exercise in Part C of this module (“Learn Your Triggers”) then hopefully you will be starting to get a clearer idea as to Stage 1 (the event) and the sorts of issues which act as anger triggers for you. On the next few pages, we will look at some suggestions to help you with Stage 2 (thinking) and Stage 3 (response).

Section 1: Calming down and thinking

Probably the single most common problem in managing anger is to go directly from Stage 1 (the event) to stage 3 (the response), without stopping at Stage 2 (calming down and thinking). We can respond in the heat of the moment, often irrationally. It is absolutely crucial that you give yourself time to calm down and think before you react to an anger trigger. This, of course, is easier said than done. Anger makes us want to say something there and then, without considering the consequences. But it is never too late to take a step back and try and calm yourself. Below are some techniques that might help you with this.

Calming Techniques:

Take a timeout:

Before reacting to a tense situation, take a few moments to breathe deeply and count to 10. Slowing down can help defuse your temper. If necessary, take a break from the person or situation until your frustration subsides a bit.

Do something creative

This can channel your energy and focus towards something else. You might want to draw or write in a journal.

Listen to calming music:

This can help change your mood and slow your physical and emotional reactions down.

Use a relaxation technique

Such as yoga or meditation. You might want to imagine a relaxing scene or repeat a calming word or phrase such as "take it easy".

Distract yourself:

If you are finding it hard to calm yourself, then just try and engage in any activity which you find distracting. Play a game, read a book, go for a walk, watch TV, have a bath; anything which temporarily takes your mind off the anger.

Breathe slowly and relax

Try to reverse the physical symptoms of anger by practising some simple breathing exercises. Breathing exercises can help you to relax and slow your heart rate to more normal levels.

When you start to feel tense and angry, try to isolate yourself for 15 minutes and concentrate on relaxing and calm, steady breathing:

- Inhale and exhale deeply three or four times in a row
- Count slowly to four as you inhale
- Count slowly to eight as you exhale
- Focus on feeling the air move in and out of your lungs
- Concentrate and feel your ribs slowly rise and fall as you repeat the exercise

What calming techniques would help you? List them below:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Thinking:

Having used some of the calming techniques listed above, it should now be possible to think more rationally about how you are going to respond. You might find it helpful to discuss the situation with another person such as a friend, family member or your Transform keyworker when deciding how best to respond. If you are concerned that some of your thinking might be unhelpful, then you might find it helpful to work through the “Challenging Unhelpful Thinking” sheet in Section C.

When considering how you are going to respond, rather than focussing on what made you angry, work on resolving the issue at hand. Remind yourself that anger won't fix anything and might only make it worse. Be clear on what you are trying to achieve and look for solutions! The key here is clear and respectful communication, and this is covered in the next section.

Section 2: Responding

Once you are thinking clearly, you can then express your frustration in an assertive but non-confrontational way. State your concerns and needs clearly and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them. Some suggestions to help you do this are listed below:

Plan ahead:

Think through beforehand what it is that you are angry about. Ask yourself what you want to happen. Is it enough just to explain what you are angry about or do you want something to change? Ideally discuss what you plan to say with a person you trust beforehand.

Stick with “I” statements:

To avoid criticising or placing blame (which might only increase tension) use “I” statements to describe the problem. Be respectful and specific. For example, say “I’m upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes”, instead of “you never do any housework”.

Listen:

Try not to speak over the other person. Listen to what they have to say and be respectful. Try and avoid making assumptions. If you are not sure about anything, then ask a question to clarify.

Express yourself clearly:

Be as clear and concise as possible. Try your best to avoid becoming defensive. Instead, try and put yourself in the other person’s shoes and understand their point of view. Avoid raising your voice and try and stay calm

Be prepared:

Be prepared for the conversation to go wrong and try to spot when this is happening. If you feel yourself getting angry, you might want to come back to the conversation another time

Use humour to release tension:

It is easy to use inappropriate sarcasm when angry; resist the temptation to do this and instead work on introducing some good humour into potentially difficult conversations. If you can introduce some humour, then resentment will be reduced, and your mood lifted.

The simple act of laughing can go a long way to reduce anger, especially over the longer term. Be aware that although laughing can help you feel better you need to make sure that there is no danger of misinterpretation.

Learn to be assertive:

Being excessively angry and aggressive can get in the way of communicating what you are angry about. People stop listening to you and focus on your anger instead.

Being able to express your anger by talking in an “assertive” way about what has made you angry produces better results for you. Being assertive means standing up for yourself, while still respecting other people and their opinions.

Talking about your anger assertively:

- Makes communication easier
- Stops tense situations getting out of control
- Benefits your relationships and self-esteem
- Helps to keep you physically and mentally well

If you are used to hiding your feelings, it will take time and effort to get into the habit of expressing your anger in a non-aggressive way that explains why you are annoyed.

Action box



When planning your response consider using the ‘Assertiveness sheet’ on the next page to help you. If you would like more help on being assertive, please speak to your keyworker about Transform’s Assertiveness Module.

Assertiveness Sheet

If you have a situation coming up where you will need to be assertive, then try using this sheet to help you prepare.

What do you want to achieve?

What would you like to say? If it helps, follow the four-stage approach below:

- **Event** – be clear about the situation you are talking about
- **Feelings** – let the person know how you feel
- **Needs** – let the person know what you need from them
- **Consequences** – tell the person what positive consequences there will be if your needs are met.

Below are some assertiveness techniques. Tick the ones you think might help you in this situation:

The broken record:

- Repeat your message until it is heard

“I” statements:

- Say how you feel rather than attack the other person

Assertive body language:

- Adopt a confident, calm manner to help convey your message

Saying “no”:

- Don’t be scared to say “no” if you don’t want to do something.

Workable compromise:

- Find a middle ground acceptable to both parties.

And remember ...

Above all, when planning how to respond to a situation which has made you angry, remember the following points:

Avoid holding grudges

We all need to accept that everybody is different and that we cannot control the feelings, beliefs, or behaviours of others. Try to be realistic and accept that people are the way they are, not how we would like them to be. Being resentful or holding a grudge against somebody will increase your anger and make it more difficult to control.

Solutions are More Important than Problems

It can be helpful to identify what made you angry in the first place. However, it is more important to focus on a way to resolve problems so that they don't arise again in the future.

Pick Your Time

Avoid conversations that may make you angry when you are feeling tired, distracted, or stressed. We are more likely to feel and behave in an angry way when there are other worries on our minds.

Section 3: Lifestyle

It might sound obvious, but there are some changes you can make to your lifestyle which will help you manage your anger more effectively and have a genuinely positive impact on your stress levels generally.

Take regular exercise:

The hormones that we release when we are angry – mainly cortisol and adrenaline – are similar to those produced when we are stressed to help us to escape from danger. When you exercise regularly your body learns how to regulate your adrenaline and cortisol levels more effectively. More generally, physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions, especially if you're about to erupt. If you feel your anger escalating, go for a brisk walk, or run, or spend some time doing other favourite physical activities. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that can leave you feeling happier and more relaxed than you were before you worked out.

Healthy eating:

Lack of certain nutrients can make you feel irritable and weak, and so a healthy diet is likely to help you feel more in control of your feelings. Try to have regular meals and drink plenty of water.

Sleep:

Sleep is an important part of life and good quality sleep can help combat many physical, mental, and emotional problems, including anger. When we sleep, the body and mind rest and rebuild damaged cells and neural pathways. We all know that people often feel better after a good night's sleep. The optimum level of good quality sleep is about seven hours a night, however everybody is different, and you may need more or less than this. To help you sleep, try, and avoid drinking caffeine for four hours before bedtime.

Structure:

Having a regular routine can help give structure to your days and weeks. Our bodies learn to adjust to our specific patterns, and this can help us to wind down at the end of the day and also to get up at a regular time each morning. Routines can help us to feel grounded and secure.

Talk:

Make good use of your support network. If you are feeling low, stressed or anxious then talk to family members or friends that you trust. Use your keywork meetings to discuss ways of coping with anger or low mood. Just the act of talking about a problem can do a lot to make it easier to cope with. On the next page are details of some organisations which you might find useful.

Part E: Useful organisations

1. The NHS has some useful resources on anger management online:
 - <http://www.nhs.uk>

2. Samaritans offer confidential emotional support 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on:
 - Phone: 08457 909090
 - Web site: <http://www.samaritans.org>

3. For support on issues relating to domestic violence, the following freephone number is available 24 hours a day:
 - England Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 200 0247