

RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO ANGER

It's probably fair to say we all get angry sometimes.

If you find yourself getting angry, particularly on a regular basis, you might have identified ways to cope or manage, such as going to the gym or hanging out with mates. However, these options might not be possible all the time.



THE ICEBERG

A good starting point is to either think about, or talk about, anger as an 'iceberg'.

We use the image of an iceberg to think about anger as a 'secondary emotion'. This means that someone might be feeling something, such as anxiety, fear or, let's face it, boredom, but the bit that everyone sees is anger.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF ANGER

This diagram gives us a sense of how our thoughts, mood, bodily reactions and behaviour can influence each other when we're angry.

OUTSIDE WORLD THOUGHTS

- Problems with others
- Debts and practical problems
- Frustrating events or situations
- Stress - no time for yourself

INNER WORLD THOUGHTS

'Hot' thoughts, for example:
'he is putting me down'

ANGRY BEHAVIOUR

- Attack/argue
- Run away/damage

MOOD

- Irritable
- Angry
- Enraged

FEEL BODILY SYMPTOMS

- Heart racing
- Tense
- Hot
- Breathless



TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO ANGER MORE POSITIVELY

1. VALIDATE

Anger is always a genuinely felt emotion at the time, it might not be an appropriate response, but dismissing it as a problem generally doesn't help.

Try using phrases such as:

“Ok, you're allowed to be angry if you want”

or

“I can see this has upset you, why are you upset?”.

2. RESPOND CALMLY:

Although it might feel like the best way to get your point across, responding with more anger or an increasingly raised voice will generally make the situation worse. **Try to maintain a level volume.**

3. DEFUSE THE SITUATION:

Suggest taking a time out if possible, in order to defuse the situation. Use your daily exercise to go for a walk or a run, and revisit the issue later when the dust has settled a bit.

The 'Thoughts, feelings, bodily reactions and behaviours' diagram can be found in an NHS guide, along with a more in-depth look at anger, which can be found here:

<http://www.youthlineuk.com/wp-content/uploads/Controlling-Anger-Self-Help-Guide.pdf>

As well as this, for some interesting alternative perspectives on anger, or if you just want to do a bit more learning on the topic, here are a couple of recommendations:

[Ted Radio Hour Podcast: Rethinking Anger](#)
[Ted Talk: Why some anger can be good for you](#)