



## Two Steps in Managing Anger

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Anger is a basic human emotion that is often a response to frustration, adversity, or a sense of threat. In many ways, anger can be a self-serving emotion as it motivates, energizes, and empowers. It has disadvantages, too. It can cover depression, and in extremes of intensity, it leads to aggressive behavior. This aggression can be in the form of rage or revenge; it alienates love and ignores the pain of others.

Anger management has two fundamental components. **This first is awareness** and understanding of the true sources and impact of anger. **The second is a plan or system for containment** and for appropriate expression of the anger.



The more effectively and accurately we can detect and monitor our angry feelings, the more successful we can be at dealing with them at lower and more manageable levels. **Most all of our emotions are more easily and effectively dealt with at the lower intensities.** As they rise in strength, they tend to cloud and overpower reason and logic. So anger management uses awareness, "early warnings" as a means to ensure that "good sense" prevails over "raw emotions" in determining how we should behave. This does not mean that we mistrust our emotions or deny and avoid them, but when we examine how we make the best life decisions, our heads do much better than our feelings. Our emotions deserve consideration, but with direction from our rational judgment.



**Any plan to contain and manage anger effectively** must examine values and principles, the do's and don'ts as to what is acceptable and

correct in anger display. For instance, **is it ever appropriate** to verbally abuse another, or to physically assault another as a response to anger? Frequently people who respond to anger with aggression have witnessed this behavior within their family and have come to directly or indirectly accept it as a reasonable response. Effective anger management may require a healthier, more socially accepted set of values and responsibilities.

**Letting anger build up to high levels also takes a strong negative toll on the body, and can lead to increased illnesses and injuries. Learn to practice these two basic steps -- awareness and containment --** to keep anger from hurting yourself, your family, your friends, or your career. If you would like help in developing these and other more effective ways to deal with frustrations and anger, contact your EAP to schedule an appointment.