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for young minds

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Trainer's Manual

Anger Management Lab

Help prevent radicalisation by learning how to equip youths with anger management skills

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The contents of this manual are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

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Executive Summary

Anger is a fundamental emotion. It is considered a natural and mostly automatic response to adverse acts. Anger management, on the other hand is neither something we are born with or inherit. Learning to manage anger properly is a skill that must be learned, instead of something we are born with. Anger management does not come by instinct. It is related to how we place a threshold to a complex interplay with other emotions. At the same time, taking into account that the emotion of anger is one of the most cited push factors towards radicalisation (Stout, 2002), together with a sense of identity described as a 'quest for significance' (A. W. Kruglanski, 2014), 'search for identity contributing to a sense of belonging, worth and purpose' (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008b), personal fulfilment (Silverman , 2017), lack of self-esteem (Borum & Fein, 2017) (Chassman, 2016) (Christmann, 2012) (Dawson, 2017) (Lindekilde, 2016) (Senzai, 2015), individual frustration and insult (Larry E. Beutler, 2007), cognitive-social factors like risk taking and reduced social contact (Taylor & Horgan, 2006), personal victimization (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011), displacement of aggression (Moghaddam, 2005), one can only acknowledge the need to address anger as a push factor that can be tackled with both distinctively and in combination to all other push and pull factors of radicalisation.

The present document will, therefore, investigate how to better teach anger management as a form of psychoeducational intervention. It comprises a series of exercises that, if used in convergence, can help first line professionals working with young people vulnerable to radicalisation use anger management strategies and techniques to help divert them from violent and destructive behaviour. The techniques described have been inspired by the work of coaches and therapists in teaching and promoting anger management.

Experimental Lab 'Anger Management'

Why teaching anger management?

Teaching anger management is not psychotherapy. It is however a form of psychoeducational intervention, in which the leader "functions as teacher and coach" (Thomas, 2001, p. 42). In itself, this form of intervention creates premises for behavioural change while offering a safe space to exercise new ways of handling emotions.

According to same author, **"clients best learn to express their angry feelings when others are available to support, empathize, provide feedback, and role-play problematic conflicts in encounters".** Behavioural practice in the safety of a group gives clients greater confidence that they can enact new anger behaviours in real-world situations. (Idem, p. 43)

Exercises included in this manual should be taught so as to encourage not only understanding and control of own emotions, but also how to best react when the interlocutor experiences an outburst of anger, so as to facilitate understanding, tolerance and de-conflicting.

The trainer should also make participants aware of the positive effects of anger so as to facilitate acceptance and integration of this emotion (venting tension and stress, generating a significant load of energy which can be put to action for change, feeling of personal empowerment etc.).

Manual rationale

This manual is aimed to provide the curricula and actual content of the experimental lab dedicated to anger management techniques **applicable in interventions targeted at young individuals that are either vulnerable to or in the process of radicalisation. It targets the internalisation and further replication of practical, hands-on – strategies and personal skills** desirable in managing anger which may function as an underlying motive of radicalisation, allegiance to extreme ideologies, destructive personal narratives, and violence. **The hands-on strategies proposed by the experimental lab address both risk factors for violent and anti-social behaviour, as well as protective factors.**

The curricula and content of the lab should be used in direct correlation with the support material provided in the present document.

Key competences to be developed

> Social competences – handling conflictual situations while harnessing own anger and being able to respond in non-conflicting ways to other people's display of anger, channel anger positively etc.

> Problem solving - capacitating young people to engage in reflexive processes while experimenting anger and their ability to handle frustrating situation in non-conflicting ways

> Emotional competence and autonomy building (impulse control, emerging feeling of efficacy)

Methodology

This experimental lab is based on developing knowledge and skills though **the cognitive-behavioural instructional model and the learning by doing model.** Its main aim is to provide trainees with **an essential set of skills and behaviours easily usable and adaptable when dealing with young individuals displaying anger symptoms.** The lab is designed to be used as a safe chamber where participants can learn and experiment **alternative ways of responding to contexts** where anger is displayed or experienced by young individuals in connection to social isolation, polarisation and extremism. **Participants will also be encouraged to learn and replicate these techniques in working with young people, whenever adequate within communities.**

The lab proposes techniques that help teach young individuals respond to anger stimuli in concrete situations. It equips professionals involved in interaction with young people with solutions to encourage them how to control behaviour by making choices that satisfy their needs in non-destructive ways and resolve conflicts in principled ways.

Educational techniques	
Instruction	✕
Demonstration	
Role play	✕
Rehearsal in pretend scenarios	✕
Feedback	✕
Reinforcement	✕
Extended practice	✕
Guided discussions	✕
Cognitive modelling through mentor think aloud	✕
Free discussions	✕
Covert self-instruction (student inner speech)	✕

Experimental Lab Scenario

Theme

Anger management techniques – understand, learn how to use, integrate into everyday professional interaction with individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and violence those strategies and techniques that can empower young people effectively manage anger generated moods, attitudes, behaviours.

Target audience

First line professionals working with youth vulnerable to radicalisation – teachers, school councillors, social workers, police, and security officers.

Core questions to be answered

- What is anger?

- Can anger be contained, controlled, ignored?

- How can we harness anger into positive emotions?

- What is the relationship between anger and narratives?

- What are the best strategies to address anger in your personal life?

- What are the best strategies to address anger in vulnerable individuals?

- How much can a teacher or a social worker help and where do we need to address professional help (e.g. individual therapy, group therapy)?

Core concepts to be addressed

Anger, anger triggers, primary/secondary emotional triggers, anger vs. irritation vs. hostility, anger threshold, anger management.

Key learnings

> Recognise sings of anger in themselves and in others

> Understand origins of anger, how it affects the biology and psychology of the individual, how it can be contained and harnessed towards positive expressions

> Understand how they can offer support in the short term and advice anger troubled individuals on the psychological support they might need in the long run

> Develop social responsibility and social skills to address individuals with anger management issues

> Reflect on how strategies and tactics used in addressing anger management can be integrated and adapted to their professional routine

Exercises

Types of exercises to be developed:

> Recognize the issue – e.g. anger

> Spot the problem

> Identify tactics used to solve the problem

> Improve tactics: What was the problem? What was the goal? What was the barrier? How was the problem solved? How could we have solved it better?

> Provide alternative solutions

> Follow up test

1   Brainstorming – free associations

Exercise No. 1	Icebreaker – What do we know about anger?
Objective	To get a preliminary scan on participants beliefs and knowledge on anger
Target audience	Age groups – any, with adaptation of language used according to each age target group
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Flipchart, markers and/or computer, video-projector screen, smartphone
Description	**Icebreaker 1:** Trainer asks participants to answer the following questions by writing no more than three words on a sheet of paper. • "How do I know when I am angry?" • "What events/people/places/things make me angry?" • "How do I react when I'm angry?" • "How does my angry reaction affect others?" Then, each participant chooses a partner and shares answers with him/her. Then, a 2 minute roundup discussion is used by the trainer to collect possible answers on a flipchart. **Icebreaker 2: What is anger?** The question shall be addressed by writing on flipchart the key word (anger) and then encouraging participants to brainstorm and give associated words in terms of what anger is, how it manifests at psychological level, what are its physical expressions, what its implications are for health, social and family life, personal development etc.

Then, the trainer uses the words given by participants to summarise main features of a tentative definition of anger.

Observation

> In case the exercise is replicated with young people, it might be helpful to integrate technology into the exercise – e.g. use the Pooleverywhere.com platform to create a word cloud in real time.

> For young audiences, it is recommended to adapt language and use simple words and situations that relate to their every day routine

Learning method	Guided discussion, covert self-instruction (student inner speech)
Visual support	Flipchart/Word cloud

Exercise No. 2	Clarify what anger really is
Objective	To get a better understanding of anger
Target audience	Age groups – over 14/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	PowerPoint slide and/or handout and/or puzzle chart with parts of definitions to be matched in teams
Description	**Clarify what anger really is** Participants are given a set of statements on anger and are asked to work in pairs to assess the definitions and the way they reflect characteristics of anger (see below). They are encouraged to discuss which part of the definitions they consider most accurate and relevant. Then, ideas are shared with the whole group.
Learning method	Guided discussion, cognitive modelling as mentor thinks aloud, extended practice, teamwork
Visual support	PowerPoint, handout, cards

Tips:

● Anger is a fundamental emotion. It is also one of the basic human emotions, namely one that is experienced by all people. Fear, anger, sorrow, joy, disgust, acceptance, anticipation and surprise are all emotions in the basic emotions range (Picard, p. 6). Anger is considered a natural and mostly automatic response to adverse acts.

● Typically triggered by an emotional hurt, anger is usually experienced as an unpleasant feeling that occurs when we think we have been injured, mistreated, opposed in our long-held views, or when we are faced with obstacles that keep us from attaining personal goals" (Mills).

- Anger is originated in the basic reaction to a stressful situation, most likely *"a response to a condition of physical constriction as an ultimate way for the individual to free itself from a predator or to an external condition causing pain or irritation"* (Williams, 2017, p. 5). This basic protective role of anger is then integrated in and supported by the *fight—flight response*.

- Anger is "a strong, uncomfortable emotional response to a provocation that is unwanted and incongruent with one's values, beliefs, or rights" (Thomas, 2001, p. 42).

Group definition of anger:

_____
_____
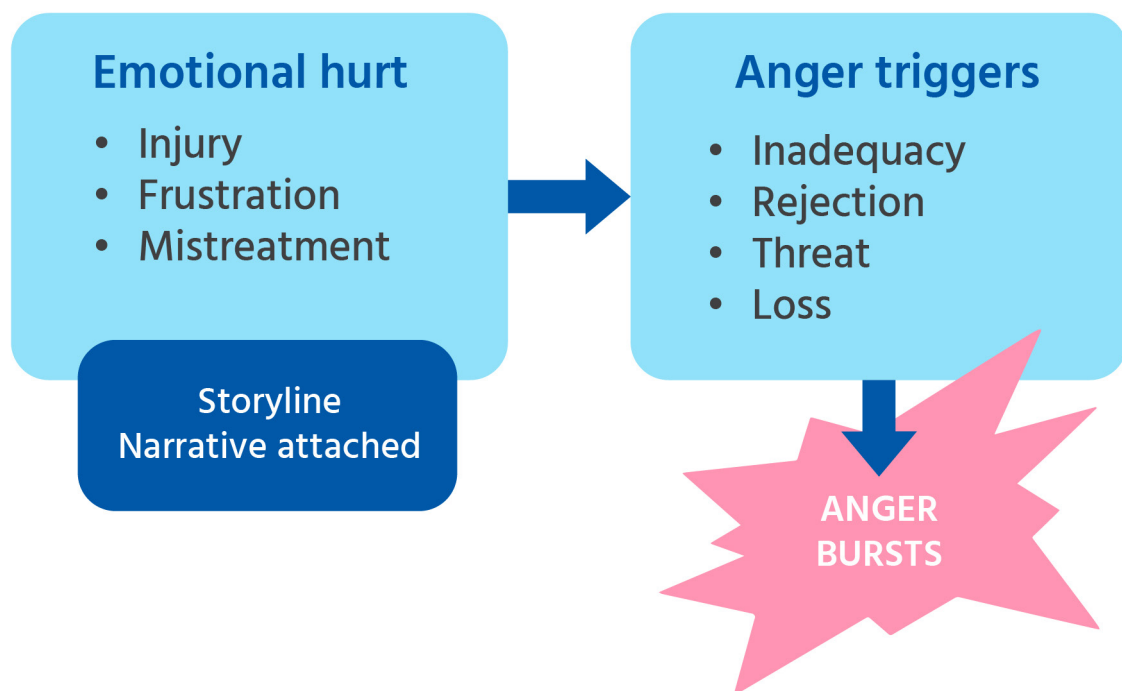_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Emotional hurt
- Injury
- Frustration
- Mistreatment

Storyline Narrative attached

Anger triggers
- Inadequacy
- Rejection
- Threat
- Loss

ANGER BURSTS

Figure 1. Anger as second-hand emotion

Spot the problem

Exercise No. 3	Spot the problem
Objective	To identify triggers of anger and related emotions
Target audience	Age groups – over 16/adult
Timing	15-30 minutes (depending on the time allotted to watch videos)
Input	TV station to watch Ted Talks
Description	A Ted Talk is used to help clarify triggers of anger as well as related emotions (shame, feeling of injustice etc.). Participants are instructed to watch one Ted Talk of Brene Brown and, subsequently, a group discussion is encouraged to delineate anger from shame and feeling of injustice. Reactions to shame and the emergence of anger are discussed both in terms of biological reactions and coping strategies.
Learning method	Discuss triggers of anger, dissociate between anger and humiliation, shame, feeling of injustice (being wronged)
Visual support	Relate definition to *Figure 1 'Anger as a second-hand emotion'*

Tips:

„Anger is also a critically important part of what might be called the self-preservation and self-defence instincts. People who are incapable of getting angry are also incapable of standing up for themselves. It is important then that people learn how to express anger appropriately. People need to learn healthy and socially respectful ways to express angry feelings, and to not to let anger get out of control to the point where it negatively affects relationships, employability and health" (Mills).

The difficulties in spotting and handling anger come from two different directions:

a. Anger can be generated by a negative stimulus (e.g. hurt, frustration) and directed towards solving tensions;

b. Anger behaviours can result in behaviours that are similar with those sustained by positive emotions (personal empowerment, agency etc.) (Panksep apud Williams, 2017, p.5).

Notes for trainers to give emphasis to:

- It is more satisfying to feel angry than to acknowledge the painful feelings associated with vulnerability.

- You can use anger to convert feelings of vulnerability and helplessness into feelings of control and power.

- Some people develop an unconscious habit of transforming almost all of their vulnerable feelings into anger so they can avoid having to deal with them.

- The **problem** becomes that even when anger distracts you from the fact that you feel vulnerable, **you still at some level feel vulnerable.**

- **Anger cannot make pain disappear - it only distracts you from it.**

- Anger generally *does not resolve or address the problems* that made you feel fearful or vulnerable in the first place, and it can create new problems, including **social** and **health issues.**

- To clarify concepts, if time allows, you can watch together and discuss the Brene Brown Ted Talk on:

  Listening to shame, https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame

4   The emotion wheel

Exercise No. 4	The emotion wheel
Objective	To distinguish anger from chronic hurt and dis-adaptive behaviour
Target audience	Age groups – any
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Chart, infogram
Description	Participants are first instructed to randomly pick one feeling in the emotion wheel and role play (mime) its expression for others to recognise.
	Note: For age groups younger than 14, there will be used a simpler version of the emotions wheel.
	Participants are instructed to choose 2 second and third hand emotions associated with anger from the chart in *Figure 2* that they experience most often and describe how they handle them when occurring.
	The trainer facilitates with examples from own experience and models think aloud strategies used for coping. Then, participants are divided in 4 groups and discuss adaptive mechanisms to each of the four sections in the wheel corresponding to negative emotions: fear, anger, disgust, and sadness. Special attention is placed to the interdependencies established between them.
	Then, each group chooses a spokesperson to report to the class findings in the n-group discussions.
Learning method	Extended practice, cognitive modelling through mentor think aloud, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Figures 2.1-2.3 on emotion wheels, Figure 3 'Anger trigger chart'

Tips:

It is important to distinguish anger from **irritation, hostility, aggression** and **violence**. According to Thomas, anger is "a strong, uncomfortable emotional response to a provocation that is unwanted and incongruent with one's values, beliefs, or rights" (Thomas, 2001, p. 42). By contrast, Thomas describes hostility as "a chronic mistrustful negative attitude", while aggression moves forward to "actual or intended harming of another" (Thomas, 2001, p. 42).

Other authors, however, treat this range of feelings in a continuum.

"Some researchers consider that hostility, anger and aggression can represent the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of the same multidimensional construct (Buss & Perry, 1992). Thus, the construct could consist of three basic dimension: a) affective, made up of emotions such as anger or loathing; b) cognitive, consisting mainly of negative thoughts about human nature, resentment, and cynical distrust; and c) behavioural, defined by various forms of aggression, such as physical or verbal aggression. All these factors seem to be related to each other, varying in intensity, frequency, and duration" (Valizadeha*, Berdi, Davaji, & Nikamal, 2010).

Our emotions can be trusted friends

Anger

It gives us the energy we need to counter problems in difficult situations

Fear

It works well for our self-preservation / survival

Anticipation

It gives us the courage to dream and plan the future

Surprise

It gives us a fresh perspective on things

Joy

It makes life good to live

Sadness

It signals what needs to be overcome or left behind for change to happen

Trust

It gives us balance and confidence of not being alone

Disgust

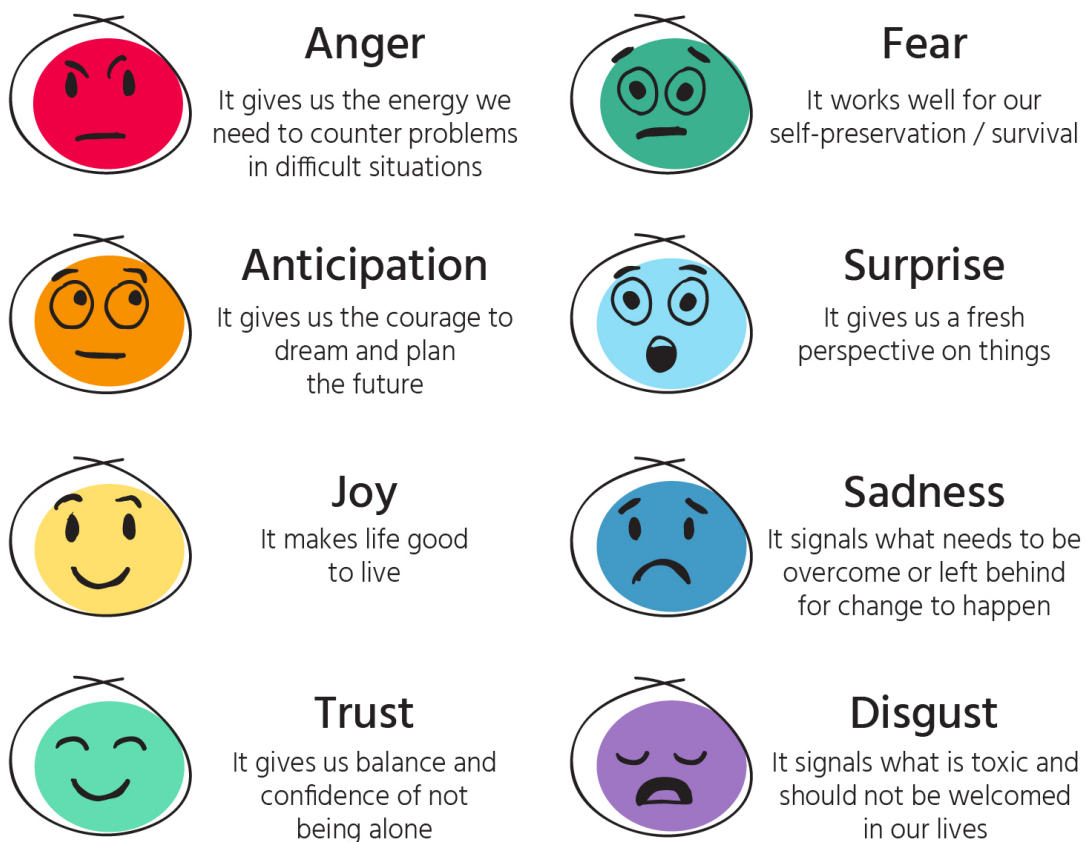It signals what is toxic and should not be welcomed in our lives

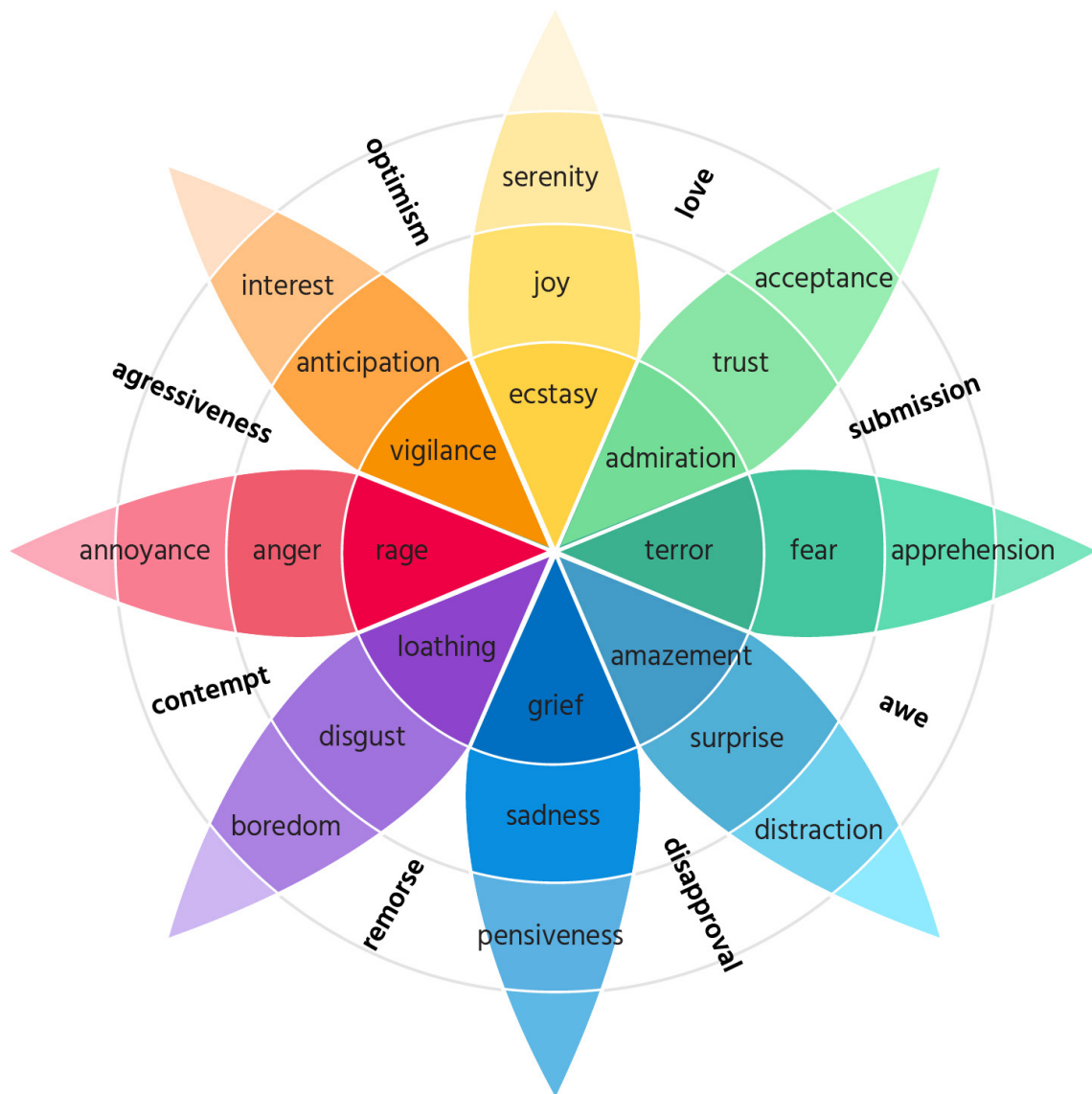*Figure 2.1. Basic wheel of emotion (beginner)*

Figure 2.2. Emotion wheel (intermediate)
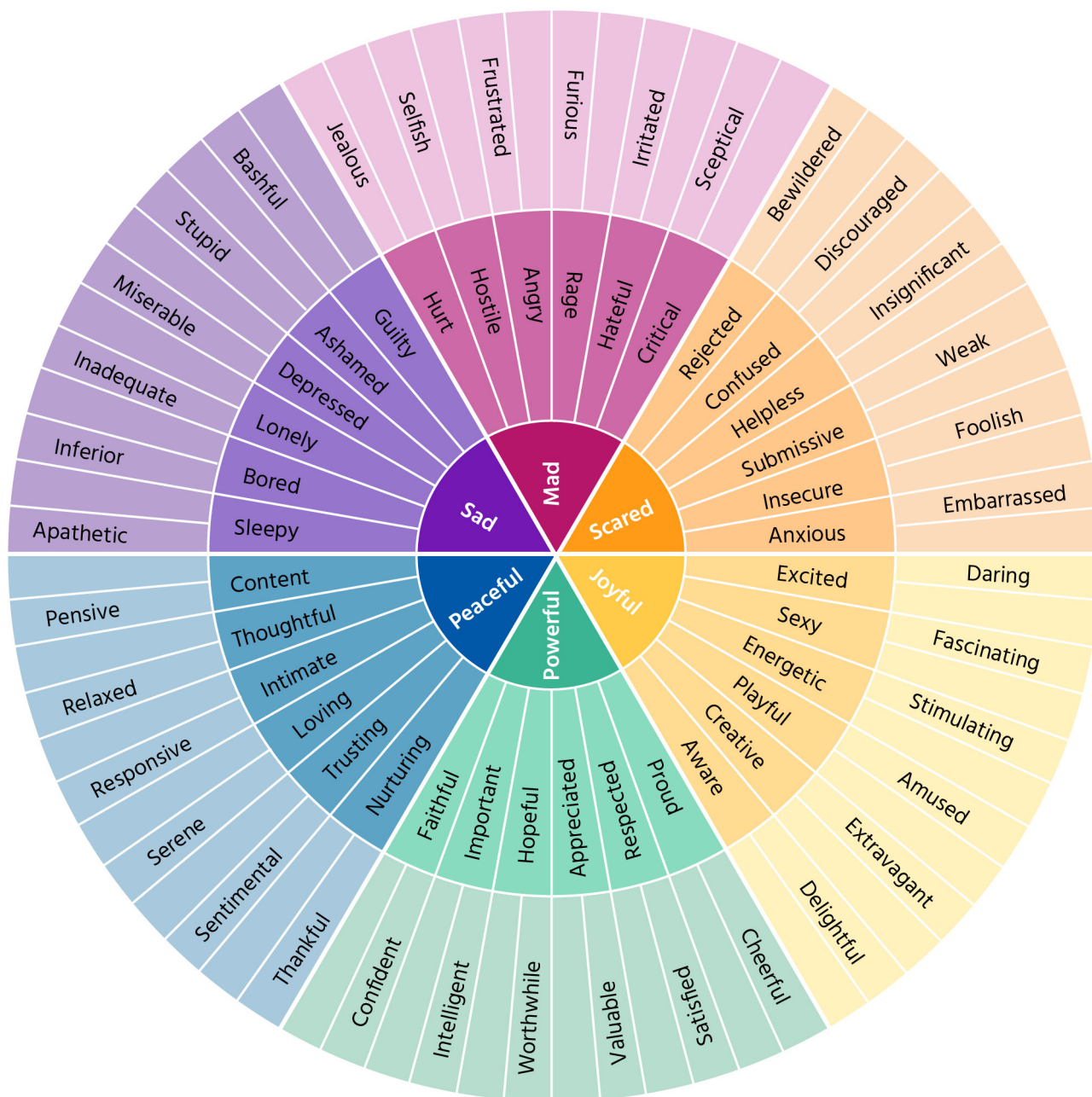*source : Wheel of Emotion by Robert Plutchik, 1958; image source: Wikimedia Commons)*

Figure 2.3. Emotion wheel (advanced)
(source: Colored Feeling Wheel by Feeling Wheel; based on a work at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1177/036215378201200411)

Never press this button!

Each person has a number of triggers, e.g., situations, contexts, gestures that make us feel irritated, frustrated or mad (perhaps because they recall similar events in the past and we subconsciously relive a wound).

Go through this list of annoying buttons and identify which of them represent for you a low, medium or high intensity anger trigger.

Trigger 1
low   medium   high intensity
▶ When someone bosses me around

Trigger 2
low   medium   high intensity
▶ When colleagues talk about me behind my back

Trigger 3
low   medium   high intensity
▶ When people borrow things from my desk without asking for permission

Trigger 4
low   medium   high intensity
▶ My family treats me as I were still a child

Trigger 5
low   medium   high intensity
▶ I get criticised openly during meetings

Trigger 6
low   medium   high intensity
▶ People don't accept other people's ideas in a brainstorming

Trigger 7
low   medium   high intensity
▶ I lose a sports competition

Trigger 8
low   medium   high intensity
▶ People are disconsiderate with their peers

Trigger 9
low   medium   high intensity
▶ People cancel a meeting in the last minute

Trigger 10
low   medium   high intensity
▶ People take my parking lot without leaving a phone number

Figure 3. Anger triggers chart

> (optional) When young learners are involved, the situation chart can also be used to illustrate feelings.

5   Cultural relativism of anger expressions

Exercise No. 5	Cultural relativism of anger expressions
Objective	To become aware of the distinctions imposed by culture in expressing anger
Target audience	Age groups - teenage/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Good, bad expressions of anger
Description	• Participants are divided into groups of 5-6 persons; • Then, each group is instructed to think of a situation in which they felt angry and describe it; • Then, group members provide examples of how they would have reacted and why; • A list of 'adaptive' and 'disadaptive' mechanisms of coping with anger is created with the help of the trainer; • Then, each group reports to the class and together, participants decide which best 5 strategies for coping with anger are (strategies that they would normally advise to use in their cultural context); • Finally, experiences with other cultural contexts and norms in expressing anger are discussed.
Learning method	Extended practice, cognitive modelling through mentor think aloud, covert self-instruction, free and guided discussion
Visual support	-

Tips:

Theories of emotion recognise that "people are generally more accurate at judging emotions when the emotions are expressed by members of their own cultural group, rather than by members of a different cultural group" (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003).

Hence, when dealing with expressions of anger from individuals of different ethnic origin and cultural backgrounds, one should be careful in assessing and look for further evidence and clarification before making a statement and/or assessment of intentions.

Fundamental evidence in this sense has been provided by studies on the perceived expressivity. Thus, researchers have demonstrated that people in different countries and most of all of different race, have difficulties in "reading" the expressivity of another group (Matsumoto, 2001).

Secondly, studies in cultural anthropology have shown that anger can be stimulated and harnessed in different social and cultural contexts including fighting a war, responding to social conflict and injustice etc. In different cultures and social contexts, anger expressions can be accepted, tolerated or even fostered to induce change. According to Williams, "behaviours accompanied by anger and rage serve many different purposes and the nuances of aggressive behaviours are often defined by the symbolic and cultural framework and social contexts" (Williams, 2017, p. 1).

6   Anger expression mechanisms

Exercise No. 6	Anger expression mechanisms
Objective	To understand the psychological and social impact of anger
Target audience	Age groups - teenage/adult
Timing	15 minutes
Input	Flipchart, markers and/or computer, video-projector screen, smartphone
Description	Participants are asked to name/ write strategies used to express anger - e.g. action, venting, burial, denial - use the Pollseverywhere.com platform to create a word cloud in real time. Strategies that are named by more participants are then carefully described. Participants are asked to pinpoint what strategies are socially acceptable in their community (profession, ethnic, institution etc.). Then, the trainer provides information and askes for feedback on - psychological containing, denying enforced by social taboos, collateral expression of anger with the destruction of relationships, impact on physical and emotional health and wellbeing etc., what happens when anger is used as a substitute emotion to hide pain etc.
Learning method	Instruction, guided discussion, cognitive modelling through mentor think aloud, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Word cloud

Tips:

As a highly negative emotion, anger is experienced by all individuals, yet the strategies used for its expression – action, venting, burial, denial etc. – are differently valorised and instrumentalised depending on social and cultural context.

Psychological containing and later on denying of anger, for instance, can be encouraged and enforced by social taboos, yet it can have very serious consequences in personality disorders as "…everyday life experiences as well as clinical insights into psychopathic, narcissistic and borderline personality pathology clearly illustrate the necessity to correctly interpret and give answers to the basic questions raised around the topic of anger as a basic emotion" (Williams, 2017, p. 1).

Among the effects highlighted by Williams, we state collateral expression of anger, destruction of relationships, impact on physical and emotional health and wellbeing. It is also associated with early mortality, alienation of family, friends, co-workers.

On the other hand, the experience of pain, once associated with an anger triggering thought leads to the experiencing of anger; anger triggering thoughts include, according to Mills, personal assessments, assumptions, evaluations, or interpretations of situations that **make people think that someone else is attempting (consciously or not) to hurt them.**

However, since anger is a secondary emotion that can only be experience once associated with a certain storyline, the good news is that once the individual becomes aware of his stereotypical thought pattern, or of his/ her tendency to interpret reality in a certain threatening way, the story can be reversed and the energy unleashed by anger rechannelled for self-assertiveness, effective self-protection and positive social change.

Anger can also be featured **as a substitute emotion.** People get angry so as not to feel pain, a change which can be done consciously or unconsciously. This way, one is distracted from feeling pain and channels thoughts toward harming those that have caused them pain (Mills). Hence, we can better understand the link inherently created between anger and the process of radicalisation. Based on the existence of an individual or social trauma, collective empathy and feeling of loss, radicalisation implies stigmatisation of another that needs to be scapegoated so as to revenge a perceived injustice. Hence, anger affliction towards a designated collective or individual enemy.

"Anger thus temporarily protects people from having to recognize and deal with their painful real feelings; you get to worry about getting back at the people you're angry with instead. Making yourself angry can help you to hide the reality that you find a situation frightening or that you feel vulnerable" (Mills).

7   Where is anger born and felt?

Exercise no. 7	Where is anger born and felt?
Objective	Enhance awareness by locating anger
Target audience	Age groups - any (if adapted to target group audience level of understanding)
Timing	5 minutes
Input	Role play
Description	Participants are asked to locate where they think anger is born and where it is felt (Pollseverywhere.com can be used to write down answers). After the group discussion, scientific evidence provided by the trainer is used to clarify insight – see chart and tips section below.
Learning method	Instruction, guided discussion, cognitive modelling through mentor think aloud, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Word cloud, chart

Tips:

Where is anger born? „Emotions more or less begin inside two almond-shaped structures in our brains which are called the amygdala. The amygdala is the part of the brain responsible for identifying threats to our well-being, and for sending out an alarm when threats are identified that results in us taking steps to protect ourselves. The amygdala is so efficient at warning us about threats, that it gets us reacting before the cortex (the part of the brain responsible for thought and judgment) is able to check on the reasonableness of our reaction. In other words, our brains are wired in such a way as to influence us to act before we can properly consider the consequences of our actions" (Mills).
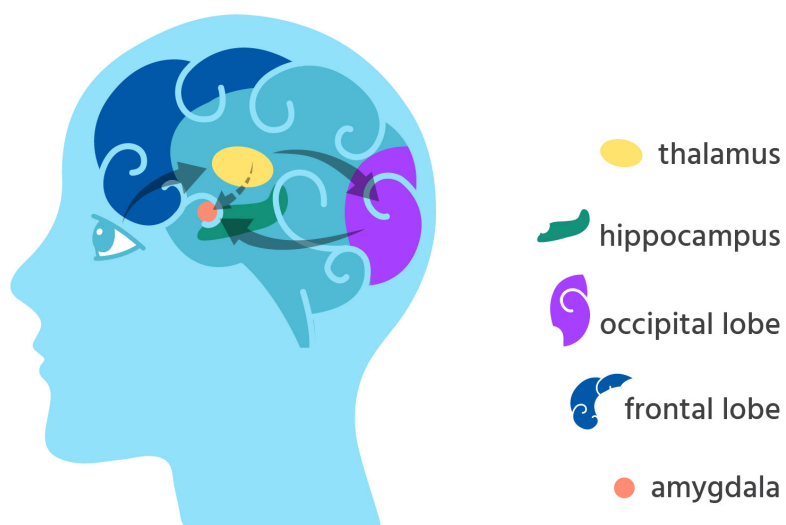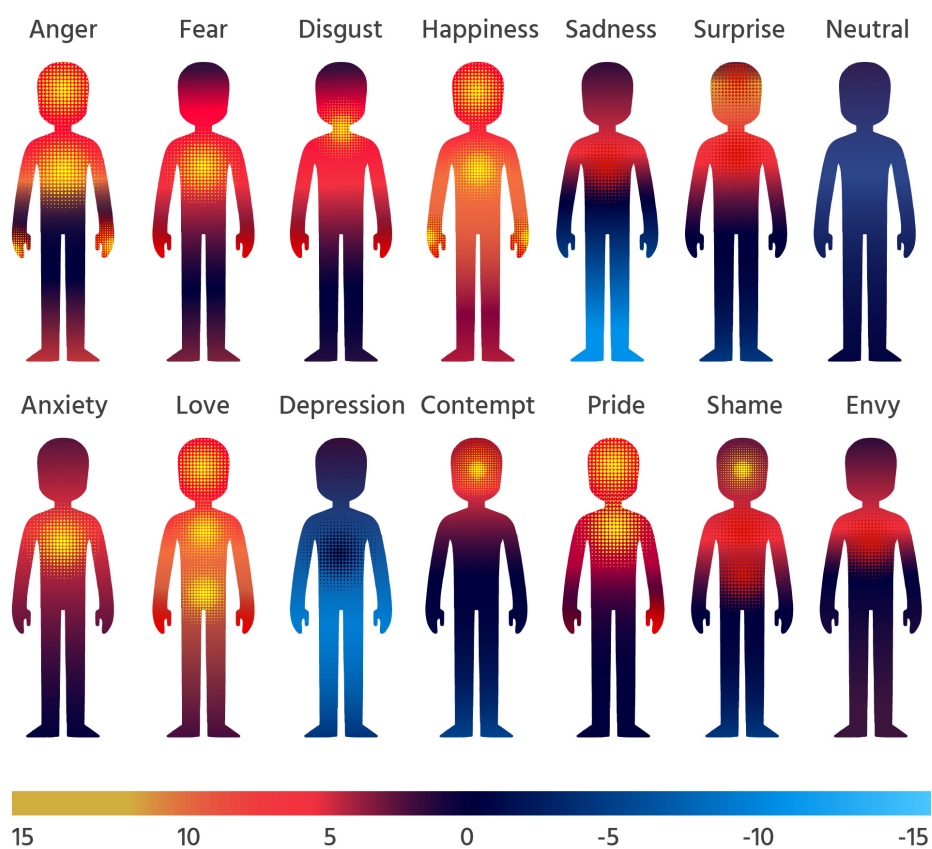
Figure 4. Location of the amygdala

Figure 5. Where emotion is experienced in the body
(based on a work at https://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646)

8 Improve anger management

Exercise No. 8	Improve anger management
Objective	Identify and understand anger coping mechanisms and their effects in our psychological, emotional, biological and social wellbeing
Target audience	Age groups - 16+/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Definition puzzle, role play
Description	Participants are divided into five groups. Each group is given a term (anger displacement, anger repression, anger suppression, ineffective expression of anger, effective expression of anger). Each group gets a pool of alternative definitions and is asked to identify and match the correct one. After each group chooses one definition, the trainer lists all terms on flipchart, without providing any hints to their meaning. Then, each group is asked to create, and role play an imaginary situation, while remaining participants will have to guess the right anger coping mechanism expressed in the roleplay. Finally, definitions are evaluated, discussed and clarified.
Learning method	Instruction, role play, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Word puzzle

Tips:

Learning to manage anger properly is a skill that must be learned, instead of something we are born with. Anger management does not come by instinct. It is related to how we place a threshold to a complex interplay with other emotions.

Anger can be either a constructive or a destructive emotion, depending on its goal setting system manifestation. When well harnessed, anger can be an effective fuel of self-empowerment, "healthy narcissism" (Ronningstam apud Williams, 2017, 6), fostering autonomy and agency towards achievement of goals, managing conflicts, defending own boundaries and integrity etc. Anger and rage have also been noted as "necessary instruments to re-establish a feeling of personal consistency and autonomy or to endure in a goal pursuit when a failure is experienced" (Williams, 2017, p. 6).

When asking what to do with our anger, researchers pinpoint to different mechanisms of coping which include: displacement, repression, suppression, ineffective expression, effective expression.

Anger displacement	When placed on a different person/object than the focus of anger itself – it happens when anger with the primary target considered unsafe; it provides a release in tension on the short term; may have strong negative consequences in the long term – spoil relationships, hamper effective learning, damage self-esteem, produce depression etc.
Anger repression	In order to be controlled, anger is buried in the subconscious and unconscious levels of the psyche. Then, anger affects behaviour, although we are unaware of its influence and involvement in causing angry outbursts
Anger suppression	The subject is aware of his/her anger but consciously chooses not to express it, e.g. for fear not to hurt someone or when this would place us in danger. Then, most likely, a mismatch will be generated between verbal and non-verbal messages and the non-verbal will be perceived as more powerful. Alternatively, it may burst later on. Hence, the need to learn appropriate ways to express negative feelings altogether

Ineffective expression of anger	Destructive and aggressive ways of expressing strong emotions. Escalates hostility and damages relationships. May result in danger to another person or to ourselves
Effective expression of anger	Expression with respect to other people's feelings and perspectives. It involves communicating concerns while still respecting other people's right to alternative views

Adapted from Faupel, Adrian; Herric, Elizabeth; Sharp, Peter M., Anger Management: A Practical guide for Teachers.

Learn healthy coping strategies

Exercise No. 9	Learn healthy coping strategies
Objective	Identify and understand anger coping strategies that empower the individual to contain and steer anger towards positive expressions
Target audience	Age groups - teenage/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Definition puzzle, role play
Description	Participants are divided into seven groups. Each group is given a term (relaxation-based interventions, cognitive interventions, self-instructional approach, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, social skills interventions, combined interventions).
	Each group gets a pool of alternative definitions and is asked to identify and match the correct one.
	After each group chooses one definition, the trainer lists all terms on flipchart, without providing any hints to their meaning.
	Then, each group is asked to explain what that term refers to.
	Then, to further clarify concepts, participants are asked to watch together and further discuss the Brene Brown TedTalks on:
	The Power of Vulnerability, https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame
Learning method	Instruction, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Word puzzle, TedTalk recording

Tips:

„Although it is possible for your emotions to rage out of control, the prefrontal cortex of your brain, which is located just behind your forehead, can keep your emotions in proportion. If the amygdala handles emotion, the prefrontal cortex handles judgment. **The left prefrontal cortex can switch off your emotions.** It serves in an executive role to keep things under control. Getting control over your anger means learning ways to help your prefrontal cortex get the upper hand over your amygdala so that you have control over how you react to anger feelings" (Mills). Hence, we may underline a few steps that are of paramount importance in handling anger:

- Understand the biological process behind

- Keep emotions in proportion by consciously observing them

- Determine whether what you feel is fear or anger by examining the contents of your thoughts – this makes you more conscious and gives you a sense of control

- Consciously choose not to shut down attention from other triggers

- Use relaxation techniques

- Use cognitive control techniques

10 — Learn how to contain, support, empathise, provide positive feedback by referring to root causes of anger

Exercise No. 10	Learn how to contain, support, empathise, provide positive feedback by referring to root causes of anger
Objetivo	Identify and understand root causes of anger
Target audience	Age groups - 16+/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Text – for reading comprehension
Description	Participants are asked to read the text and provide examples from real life situations in which they encountered anger manifestations in the spectrum described.
Learning method	Instruction, covert self-instruction
Visual support	Text for reading comprehension

Ways individuals learn an aggressive anger expression style during childhood:

Context	Mechanism
Exposure to the behaviour of angry people around them **who influence others by being hostile and making threats** **„For instance, children growing up in a household where one parent constantly berates and belittles the other learn to berate and belittle themselves, and then often recreate this behaviour when they grow up and enter into relationships by berating and belittling their partners" (Mills)**	Copying
Exposure to abuse and trauma → **makes the child desire for revenge or mastery and hence develop anger problems**	Reacting

„An abused child may vow at some level to never again let him or herself be vulnerable and start himself becoming hostile towards others on the theory that "a good offense is the best defence". Alternatively, abused or wounded people may overgeneralize and seek revenge against an entire group of people, only some of whom may have actually harmed them" (Mills).

Being reinforced and rewarded for being a bully

„People who bully someone once and then find others respecting or fearing them more for their aggressive actions become quite motivated to continue bullying. Bullies go on to use aggression more and more because they find that it helps raise their social status and position" (Mills).

Motivational effects for continuation of anger

Positive effects

A sense of power and control that compensates previous fear

Control and righteousness -- may motivate somebody to challenge difficult interpersonal situations and social injustice

Provides rest from feelings of vulnerability

Provides a way of venting tensions and frustrations

Provides energy to defend yourself when wronged

Negative effects

Can create and reinforce a false sense of entitlement, an illusory feeling of moral superiority that can be used to justify immoral actions

For instance, anger-motivated aggression can be used to justify terrorism, or to coerce and bully people into doing what you want them to do against their will. Angry people are likely to subscribe to the philosophy that "the end justifies the means" and then use unspeakable means of working towards their goals that defeat their purpose.

If you are a terrorist like Timothy McVey (who bombed the Oklahoma City Federal Building in 1995), a bully like television's Tony Soprano (lead character in the HBO drama "The Sopranos"), or a 'school shooter' like Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (who murdered fellow high school students in Columbine, Colorado in 1999), anger has led you to the dark side (Mills).

11 Stop and recognize anger!

Exercise No. 11	Stop and recognize anger!
Objective	Use physiological signs as early detection markers. Learn to stop and observe
Target audience	Age groups - teenage/adult
Timing	10 minutes
Input	Cards expressing signs of anger
Description	Participants are divided into 3-4 groups and then each group is given a set of cards. Each group receives the task to identify and cluster indicators of anger pertaining to one of the following categories: physical, emotional, behavioural, and attitudinal. Then, each group presents to the class the cluster of signs identified. Should one indicator be located by participants in different clusters, it will be discussed with the group and consensus will be sought.
Learning method	Instruction, covert self-instruction, learning by doing
Visual support	Cards with indicators and cards with cluster names

Handout

Please cut out in cards before using them. Make as many copies as groups of participants.

Cluster name	Indicator
Physical	• clenching your jaws or grinding your teeth • headache • stomach-ache • increased and rapid heart rate • sweating, especially your palms • feeling hot in the neck/face • shaking or trembling • dizziness
Emotional	• like you want to get away from the situation • irritated • sad or depressed • guilty • resentful • anxious • like striking out verbally or physically
Behavioural	• rubbing your head • cupping your fist with your other hand • pacing • acting in an abusive or abrasive manner • raising your voice • beginning to yell, scream, or cry
Attitudinal	• getting sarcastic • losing your sense of humour • craving a drink, a smoke or other substance that relax you
Any other?	Any other?

12   The anger thermometer

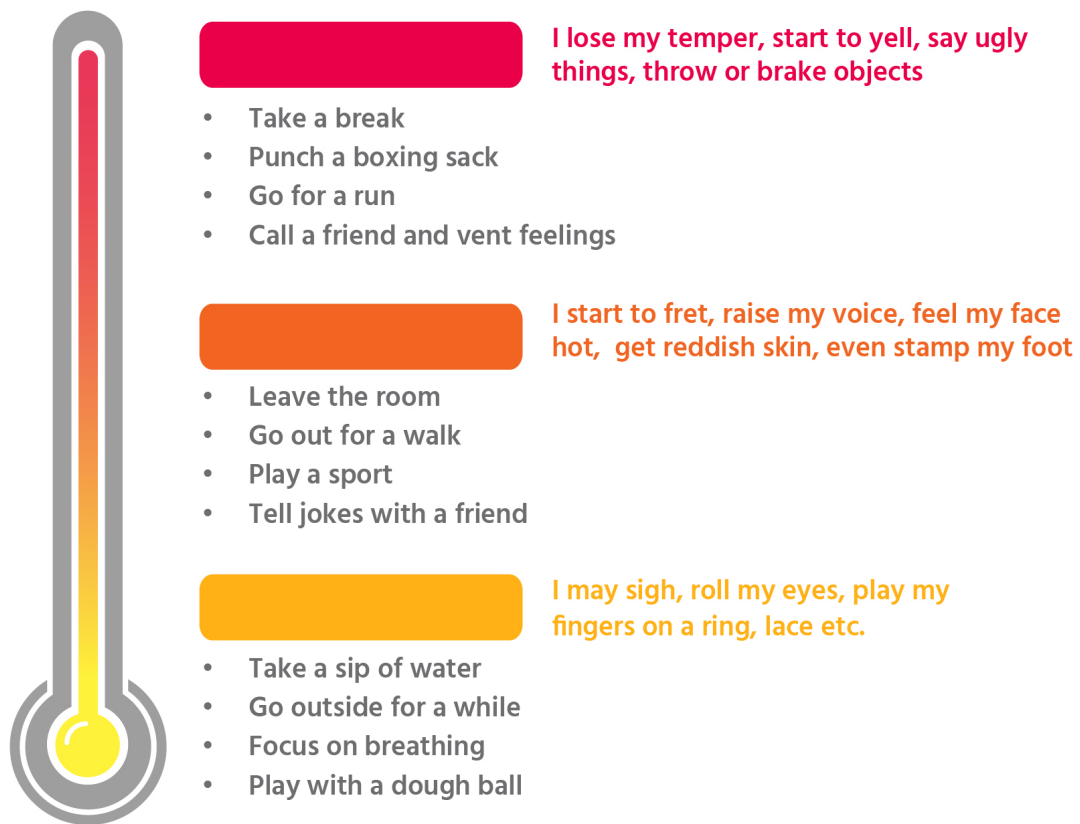| Exercise No. 12	The anger thermometer
Objective	To help maintain self-control by direct observation
Target audience	Age groups - any (if adapted to target group audience level of understanding)
Timing	3 minutes
Input	Picture/slide
Description	Participants are asked to picture a thermometer that measures the amount of anger they are feeling at any given moment: Imagine that when you are slightly irritated or frustrated, the mercury begins to rise out of the bulb of the thermometer. When you begin to feel the anger building but are still able to control it, the mercury rises about halfway up the thermometer. When you get really upset and your anger is boiling, imagine the mercury rising to the top of the thermometer. Rate your anger on that thermometer from 0 to 100 where zero means you are completely calm, and 100 means you are in a complete rage.
Learning method	Covert self-instruction, learning by doing
Visual support	Figure 6 'Anger thermometer', Figure 7 'Feelings thermometer'

ANGER Thermometer

I lose my temper, start to yell, say ugly things, throw or brake objects

- Take a break
- Punch a boxing sack
- Go for a run
- Call a friend and vent feelings

I start to fret, raise my voice, feel my face hot, get reddish skin, even stamp my foot

- Leave the room
- Go out for a walk
- Play a sport
- Tell jokes with a friend

I may sigh, roll my eyes, play my fingers on a ring, lace etc.

- Take a sip of water
- Go outside for a while
- Focus on breathing
- Play with a dough ball

Figure 6. Anger thermometer

Feelings Thermometer

10	**I am out of control**
9	**I feel like I can scream at any time**
8	**I need to vent**
7	**I breathe short and quick**
6	**My voice is brittle / I raise my voice**
5	**It is unfair, but I will control it**
4	**I acknowledge the difficulty and look for solutions**
3	**I know I can handle it!**
2	**I am chill and energetic**
1	**I have a good day**

Figure 7. Feelings thermometer

13   Make a plan!

Exercise No. 13	Make a plan!
Objective	To learn how to help contain and steer anger management issues
Target audience	Age groups - adult
Timing	30 minutes
Input	Text - Reading comprehension
Description	Participants are asked to read the text below and then make a top of the activities they find relevant in their daily work in terms of applicability and use. Activities should be structured on moments – before, during and after an anger outburst. Then, they should present results.
Learning method	Reading comprehension and guided discussion
Visual support	-

Reading comprehension

Before an anger outburst	
Mindmap and play the witness strategy game	Use dialogue to help student reflect on signs predicting the outburst of anger – make a mindmap; discuss it together and encourage him/her to develop an inner witness role to identify signs and inner dynamic - use questions (see description above) - recognise physiological and emotional signs - pay notice to associated gestures
Start a diary	Start an anger diary to help you predict what situations are likely to set you off

During anger stage	
Time out	Take a 'time-out' when you start getting upset; to temporarily remove yourself from the situation that is provoking you to provide yourself with a space in which to calm down
Change topic	Move the conversation away from what is bothering you and towards a more neutral topic
Controlled Deep Breathing and Muscle Relaxation	Focus on breathing, use a personal mantra Your breathing rate and heart rate both increase when you become emotionally aroused. You can learn to reverse these increases by **deliberately slowing your breathing** and/ or **systematically relaxing your tense muscles.** Relaxing in this manner will help you to maintain control. You may find yourself breathing quick, shallow breaths when you are upset. Allowing this shallow chest-only breathing to continue will only exacerbate your anger. Instead, **take action to redirect your breathing and relax your muscles so that you will calm down.** Set aside at least 15 minutes in which to do this exercise. Less time than this will not likely be beneficial!
Slow Breathing	1. **Start your relaxation efforts by taking several slow and deep breaths in a row, each time taking care to exhale for twice as long as you inhale.** 2. **Count slowly to four as you breathe in, and then breathe out slowly as you count to eight.** - As you do this, notice where the air in your lungs is going. Open your lungs and breathe deeply across the lung's full range. - Your breath should enter your belly first, then your chest, and finally your upper chest just below your shoulders.

	- Feel your ribs expand as your lungs expand.
	- Pay attention to how your ribs return to their original location as you exhale completely.
	- Continue this breathing pattern for several minutes, returning immediately to normal breathing if at any time you feel odd or out of breath.
	Slow, deliberate and controlled deep breathing in this manner will help return your breath to a more normal, relaxed pattern. Because all things in the body are connected to each other, it is very likely that as you control your breath, you will also cause your heart rate to slow down, and some of your muscular tension to abate too.
	Anger frequently manifests in the form of muscle tension. This tension can collect in your neck and shoulders which may remain tense long after your anger is gone. If your neck is tense, continue with the exercise by slowly and gently (and we mean GENTLY) roll your head toward one shoulder and then towards the other. Coordinate your head role with your breathing. Roll your head gently to one side as you exhale, back to the centre as you inhale and to the other side as you exhale again. Carefully repeat this technique several times until you feel the muscles in your neck relax a little.
	You can work out some of your shoulder tension by deliberately and carefully shrugging your shoulders and releasing them several times. Shoulder rolls backward and forward can also help. Using these techniques together will help you to relax.
	As your face, neck, and shoulders become more relaxed, see if you can identify tension in other parts of your body (your anger diary can help you to identify areas to focus on).
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	If relaxation techniques alone don't work, try the opposite: 1. Tighten and tense the stressed muscles for a slow count of ten and then release them. Be sure to release your tightened muscles immediately if you feel any pain!

	2. Move from one muscle group to the next until you have treated each section of your body to a cycle of tension and release. With a little practice, you can work your way down your entire body in a few minutes. Tensing and then relaxing your muscles can sometimes help you to achieve a better-quality relaxation than relaxation alone. All in all, you should give yourself 20 to 30 minutes to calm down. Keep your breathing very deep and very regular during this time. Tell yourself that you are calming yourself down and soon you will be feeling much calmer. Relaxation techniques such as described just above can help you to relax and have the positive side effect of helping you to stop focusing on being angry. They also give you time to think about the situation that has upset you; time that will help you generate fresh solutions to the problems you are facing.
Work to control your response to triggers	Anger-triggering thoughts occur automatically and almost instantaneously, so it will take some conscious work on your part to identify them and to substitute something more to your liking. For example, imagine you have just been cut off while driving on the freeway. Take notice of the physiological anger signs that tell you you're upset. **Take a deep breath and try to look at the situation rationally instead of going with your first impulse to attack**. Instead of automatically assuming the driver that cut you off did it deliberately (which might be your first thought), consider the possibility that the other guy did not see you. If you can consider that the provoking action was not aimed at you personally or was a mistake, it will be easier for you to tolerate. When you feel justified in your anger, you are giving yourself permission to feel angry, whether it makes sense for you to feel that way. The faster you stop justifying your anger, the sooner it will begin to recede. While all anger you feel is legitimate in that it is the reality of how you feel at a time, this does not mean that your choosing to act on your anger feelings is always justified. Remember that being angry is quite bad for your health, and destructive towards your important relationships with others.

After an anger outburst	
Avoidance strategy	Avoid for a while provoking situations, if you can
Awareness raising and reflection through writing	Make daily entries into your diary that document the situations you encounter that provoked you. In order to make the diary most useful, there are types of information you'll want to record for each provoking event: - What happened that gave you pain or made you feel stressed? - What was provocative about the situation? - What thoughts were going through your mind? - On a scale of 0-100 how angry did you feel? (Rage Rating) - What was the effect of your behaviour on you, on others? - Were you already nervous, tense, and pressured about something else? If so, what? - How did your body respond? Did you notice your heart racing, your palms sweating? - Did your head hurt? - Did you want to flee from the pressure or perhaps throw something? - Did you feel like screaming or did you notice that you were slamming doors or becoming sarcastic? - What did you do? - How did you feel immediately after the episode? - Did you feel differently later in the day or the next day? - What were the consequences of the incident?
Observation	After recording this information for a week or so, review your diary and look for **reoccurring themes or "triggers"** that make you mad. Triggers often fall into one of several categories, including: - Other people doing or not doing what you expect them to do - Situational events that get in your way, such as traffic jams, computer problems, ringing telephones, etc.

	- People taking advantage of you - Being angry and disappointed in yourself - A combination of any of the above
Awareness	Prepare yourself with ways to minimize the danger of your losing control prior to entering your dangerous situations
Play the maze game	**Look for patterns** You'll also want to look for anger-triggering thoughts that reoccur again and again. You can recognize these thoughts because they will generally involve one or more of the following themes: - The perception that you have been victimized or harmed. - The belief that the person who provoked you meant you deliberately harm. - The belief that the OTHER person was wrong, that they should have behaved differently, that they were evil or stupid to harm you.
Recording	Use your anger diary to identify instances when you felt harm was done to you, why you thought the act was done deliberately, and why you thought that it was wrong. Tracking your thought patterns will help you begin to see the common themes in your experiences. Here are some examples of trigger thoughts to get you started: - People do not pay enough attention to your needs; they do not care about you. - People demand/expect too much of you. - People are rude or inconsiderate. - People take advantage or use you. - People are selfish; they think only of themselves. - People criticize, shame, or disrespect you. - People are cruel or mean. - People are incompetent or stupid.

	- People are thoughtless and irresponsible. - People do not help you. - People are lazy and refuse to do their share. - People try to control or manipulate you. - People cause you to have to wait.
Context	And here is a list of situations where these themes are likely to occur: - When stating a difference of opinion - While receiving and expressing negative feelings - While dealing with someone who refuses to cooperate - While speaking about something that annoys you - While protesting a rip-off - When saying "No" - While responding to undeserved criticism - When asking for cooperation - While proposing an idea At the base of all trigger thoughts is the notion that people are not behaving properly and that you have every right to be angry with them. Most people find a few thoughts that frequently trigger their anger. Look for instances of situations that trigger your anger and see if you can't identify the set of triggering thoughts that really do it for you.
Tips	Mediate on a mantra

Controlled thinking	People stop thinking clearly when they are angry. Angry people tend to make up their minds about a situation right away, and then spend so much time focusing on how they feel and how the situation affects them that they forget to pay attention to anything else. You have a much better chance of keeping yourself under control if you can manage to keep your attention from turning completely inward towards your hurt and/or angry feelings, and instead keep yourself focused on understand the situation you're faced with. Do what you can to 'squeeze the meaning' out of your angry impulses. Ask yourself what the anger is telling you and what you can learn from it. What about this situation is making you angry? How can you improve the situation and improve your anger at the same time? Then, use your relaxation techniques to reduce your arousal. Importantly, do not believe that you must respond to the anger-provoking situation right away. Most situations are flexible enough for you to take some time to gather yourself together, calm yourself down and really think about the situation before you must act. You might even take time to talk a troubling situation over with trusted advisers. The more you can approach a troubling situation in a prepared and relaxed manner, the greater are your chances of getting what you want from that situation.
Reality testing	Angry people blame others (or themselves) for things that have gone wrong. Underlying this blaming is an attribution that angry people make, which is that the target of their anger has caused things to go wrong. But this is not always the case! (…) In order to better manage anger, then, it is important for angry people to slow down and not simply act on their aggressive first impulses, and instead do some reality testing so as to know whether their anger is truly justified or not.

Anger Buster!

We can all develop strategies that can help us manage anger when it risks ruining our day. Below you can find some of these strategies that people report to be successful.

Go through this list of anger management simple strategies and identify which of them works for you. Then discuss it with your peers and the moderator.

Strategy 1	I take a long walk until I calm down.

Strategy 2	I go to a quiet place outside and listen to the sounds of nature.

Strategy 3	I choose a quiet corner and focus on my breathing.

Strategy 4	I keep repeating a mantra I developed for these situations: "I welcome my emotions. They come and go like clouds in the sky."

Strategy 5	I practice martial arts or play a game of box / kick-boxing etc.

Strategy 6	I keep a diary of what I feel. It makes me feel better when I put things down in writing.

Strategy 7	I get physiscal exercise. Most often I ride my bike for a while.

Strategy 8	I simply leave the room and wait to calm down. Then, I tell people what I think in a firm and assertive way!

Strategy 9	I take time to speak about the annoying situation with a trusted friend. It helps me vent feelings and identify solutions.

Strategy 10	I listen to music and stay away from the emotion trigger situation for a while.

Strategy 11	I remind myself that other people's wrong or aggressive attidudes come from their own emotional load and refuse to take it personally.

Strategy 12	I imagine the annoying person doing something funny, like stumbling and falling right on a plate of cake.

Figure 8. Anger Buster!

Further resources

⇒ Anger management worksheets:
https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://seasonstherapy.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/What-Causes-Anger.pdf

⇒ Anger management techniques
https://doc-0g-bk-apps-viewer.googleusercontent.com/viewer/secure/pdf/3nb9bdfcv3e2h2k1cmql0ee9cvc5lole/fp285kjvjalr15gjtqhmaqvb9e3suo0r/1561023150000/lantern/*/ACFrOgCKopfoFnKOoxcGIA_fTyA9ZEHJYRcfMN4cQAY4GnndPcD3bLvYpN0UwtFQY1-jpYgsR70xN8XeBG3CwOsmGEBUtnP2geRijf1H6M3bcj8mLSiblOKFOK7FC9q0iSXBVZ0bh8TfUrvyIZ9-?print=true

⇒ Anger management tests:
https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TMA05Aug-Anger.pdf&hl=en_US

⇒ Aronson, E. (2000). Nobody left to hate: Teaching compassion after Columbine. New York: Freeman.

⇒ Auerbach, J. E. (2006). Cognitive Coaching. From D. R. Stober, & A. M. Grant, Evidence Based Coaching Handbook (103-128). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

⇒ Baldry, A. C., & Farrington, D. P. (2000). Bullies and delinquents: Personal characteristics and parental styles. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 17-31.

⇒ Ekman, P., Friesen, W. V., O'Sullivan, M., Diacoyanni-Tarlatzis, I., Krause, R., Pitcairn, T., Tzavaras, A. (н.д.). Universals and Cultural Differences in the Judgments of Facial. Downloaded on 20 June 2019 from
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rainer_Krause2/publication/19479584_Universals_and_Cultural_Differences_in_the_Judgments_of_Facial_Expressions_of_Emotion/links/564c592008aeab8ed5e889ce/Universals-and-Cultural-Differences-in-the-Judgments-of-Facial-Ex

⇒ Epstein, J. L. (1991). Effects on student achievement of teacher's practices of parent involvement. From S. Silvern, Advances in reading/language research: literacy through family, community and school interaction (261-276). Greenwich, CT: Jai Press.

⇒ Thomas, S. P. (2001). Teaching Healthy Anger Management. Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 37, 41-48.

⇒ Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. The Journal of Educational Research, 1139-1151.

Logistics

⟩ Working space description: video projector and screen, laptop, chairs that can be placed flexibly around the room, flipchart, markers, cards, puzzle, white paper sheets, scissors, smartphones to access Pauliseverywhere

⟩ Lab support: Internet access, links indicated above

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