



# PERTH PSYCHOLOGISTS

## Anger Management

Anger is a common emotion, which can range in intensity from mild annoyance to rage. Anger is frequently seen as a negative emotion, however it can be a normal and healthy response depending on the context and the way it is expressed. It can also be helpful to motivate a person to take positive action to change a situation.

Anger is often triggered when a person feels wronged, that something is unfair or that important things in our lives are not being respected or are under threat.

Holding in or suppressing anger is not a helpful solution. A range of health and emotional problems can occur when the sources of anger are not addressed and there is no healthy release.

### Problem Anger

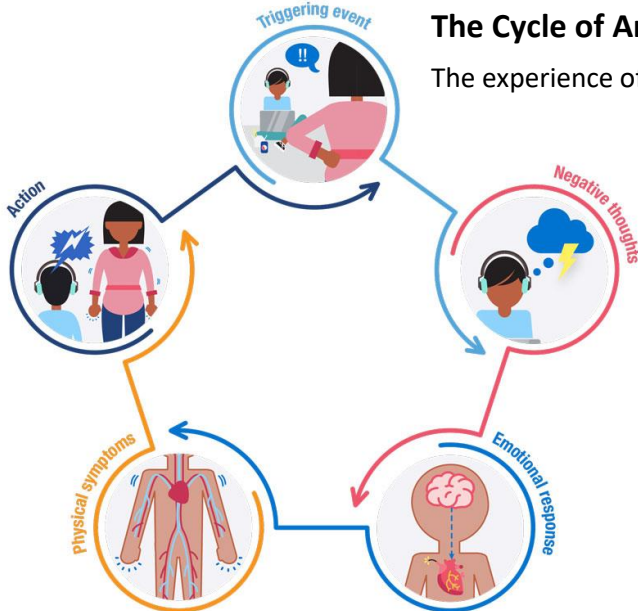
Although everyone experiences anger, some individuals are at greater risk for experiencing problem anger and its associated behaviours. Whether someone gets angry typically depends on the person's mood, perspective, and physical well-being, ability to manage stress, coping skills, and available supports.

Problem anger is typically frequent, intense, and enduring, and can lead to physical aggression, hurtful putdowns, and a number of other harmful consequences. It is associated with a range of negative behaviours, particularly aggression and violence, which cause further difficulties for the person and his or her relationships



### The Cycle of Anger

The experience of anger involves a **Triggering Event** which starts a cycle of:



- **Negative Thoughts.** The cognitive component of anger involves thoughts of being wronged, harmed or treated unfairly by others, and these thoughts can often be exaggerated.
- **Emotional Response.** Anger involves an emotional response, related to the person's thoughts and beliefs about a situation.
- **Physical Symptoms.** The sympathetic nervous system is activated during anger, raising the heart rate, increasing muscle tension, and creating the sensation of feeling hot. The neurotransmitter serotonin, which helps control mood, sleep, appetite, learning, and memory, also seems to be involved in the expression and experience of anger.
- **Action (Behavioural).** A range of behaviours are associated with anger including changes in facial expression and speech.

### Treatment

Treatment aims to develop more helpful responses to situations that typically provoke anger. Significant anger may be experienced as part of other lifestyle or mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, or trauma, among others; therefore, the psychologist will also assess and help address any problems that might be contributing to the anger. Different types of anger problems can be addressed by a range of strategies including:

- Learning to monitor and be aware of the negative consequences of problematic anger
- Managing physiological arousal by decreasing bodily tension, learning relaxation techniques
- Developing more flexible, realistic, and accurate perceptions of events
- Learning effective communication and conflict resolution skills
- Behavioural change aimed at learning and practicing new and calmer responses to situations
- Learning effective problem-solving
- Incorporating forgiveness



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
IMPROVE  
YOUR  
WELL-BEING**