



heretohelp

Mental health and substance use  
information you can trust



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
British Columbia  
*Mental health for all*

# anger

Part of the Plainer Language Series

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)





anger

Anger is a normal feeling. We all feel angry sometimes. Different people feel and show anger in different ways.



### Anger can mean:

- We cannot get something we want.
- We see something that is not fair.
- We are upset about something.
- We are hurt.
- We are scared.
- We are tired.
- We are feeling too much stress.

Call the crisis line if you need help or need to talk to someone. Call 310-6789. Do not put 604, 778 or 250 before the number. You can talk to someone right away.



anger

## When is anger good?

Anger can help us when we are threatened. It makes our bodies ready to fight. It helps us move quickly or fight strongly when we are in danger. Anger can help us make a change. Anger can also help us speak up for ourselves.

## When is anger a problem?

Anger is a normal feeling. Everyone feels angry sometimes. But feeling angry all the time can cause problems. Acting out in anger can also cause problems. We can hurt ourselves and we can hurt other people.



## There are signs that show anger may be a problem.

If you notice these signs, you may need help

- You often hold in your anger. This can make you feel badly about yourself and other people. You may also get sick if you do this a lot.
- You often get into fights with other people like your friends and family members. You may yell and say hurtful things.
- You often threaten to hurt other people or damage other people's things.
- You start fights or hurt other people.
- You feel like you can't control yourself when you get angry.
- Your anger lasts a long time or scares you.
- You have problems with the law.

## How can I manage my anger?

Anger is a feeling we all have. It is never "wrong" but we can do things we regret when we are angry. We all have to learn how to cope with anger. These skills are also called "anger management." Anger management helps you find new ways to deal with your anger.

You can learn a lot of anger management skills on your own. Here are three anger management skills to practice:

### 1. Learn how to solve problems.

It is easy to get angry when something is not working. But acting out in anger usually makes things worse. Keeping anger inside is not healthy either. Solving problems means that you find helpful ways to deal with things that make you angry. Here is one way to solve problems:

- Decide what the problem is.
- Decide what the end goal should be.
- Decide how you will reach your goal.
- Follow your plan.
- Look back to see if your plan worked.



Sometimes it is hard to fix a problem when you are in the middle of it. Maybe the bus was late and you are mad. Wait until you are calm to solve the problem. That is the best time to think of a plan in case the problem happens again.



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## 2. Learn how to be assertive.

Being assertive means that you directly talk about what you think and what you need. But you also think about the other person's point of view. You are honest with people but you are not mean. This can be very hard to do. It helps if you practice what you will say before you say it.



Here is an example of assertiveness. Pretend your friend is always late. To be assertive, you might say: "I see that you are very busy, but it makes me angry when you are late. It makes me feel like you do not respect my time. Next time, please call me and tell me if you are running late."



### 3. Learn healthy thinking skills.

Healthy thinking is balanced thinking. It means figuring out what really happened and not letting your feelings tell you what happened.



Pretend that you are upset because your friend canceled plans to see a movie. An angry thought might be, “My friend ruined my afternoon!” You might not want to talk to your friend after that. These thoughts might make you feel even worse. A more balanced thought would be, “I’m disappointed, but I should find out what happened before I get mad at my friend.”



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### Skills to try at home

You can practice these skills on your own.

- Use words to describe how something made you feel. This helps other people understand how you feel. It is not very helpful to shout, “Why can’t you show up on time!” If you say, “I feel angry when you are late,” it tells the other person why you are angry. Putting your feelings into words also shows you what the problem is. Then you can use your problem-solving skills to make changes.
- Learn ways to relax like deep breathing or yoga. Take time to do things that help you feel relaxed. Good things to try are listening to music, walking or writing about your thoughts.





- When you feel like you are getting very angry, try doing something different. Try counting to ten or imagining a very peaceful place.
  - Try to get some exercise every day. Exercise is a good outlet for anger.
  - Try to get enough sleep. It is easy to feel upset when you are tired.
  - Put yourself in the other person's place. This can help you see that someone was not trying to make you mad on purpose.
- It is a good idea to practice these skills for a few minutes every day. Remember to reward yourself for your hard work!



## When to find help

Talk to your doctor or community nurse if anger is causing a lot of problems in your life. Problems with depression, stress or anxiety can also make people feel angry more easily. It is good to make sure your doctor or nurse knows about other feelings you may be having.

## How to find help

Talk to your doctor first. Not all doctors have special training for anger problems, but your doctor can help you find someone with special training.

## Where do I go from here?

You can learn more about anger from these resources:

### **Wellness Modules on Here To Help**

Visit [www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca) for the Wellness Modules. The Wellness Modules are short booklets that discuss different ways to build good health. You can learn more about anger management, problem-solving and healthy thinking. Here To Help is the website of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information.

## Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division

Visit [www.cmha.bc.ca](http://www.cmha.bc.ca) for information on the Bounce Back program. Bounce Back is for people dealing with low mood, stress or anxiety. Part of the program teaches you skills that help with anger. You learn skills from a DVD or you can talk to someone on the phone. The program is free. Talk to your doctor if you want to sign up for Bounce Back.



### Your local crisis line

A crisis line can help you when you are very upset. But they can help for a lot of other problems. They can help you find services in your community. They can help if you are angry because someone is hurting you. You can also call if you just need to talk to someone. Call 310-6789. Do not put 604, 778 or 250 before the number. When you call 310-6789, you can talk to someone right away.

# www.heretohelp.bc.ca

This booklet was written by the Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division. It is based on current research and resources. We also check key facts with doctors and other mental health experts. Please contact us if you want to know what resources we used.

primer fact sheets 2012



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HeretoHelp is a project to the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. The BC Partners are:

- AnxietyBC
- BC Schizophrenia Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division
- Centre for Addictions Research of BC
- FORCE Society for Kid's Mental Health
- Family Services of the North Shore, Jessie's Legacy Program
- Mood Disorders Association of BC

We work together to help people manage mental health and substance use problems. We are funded by BC Mental Health and Addiction Services. It is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.