

INTRODUCTION:

Research shows that anger exists on several levels and spectrums and can be split into 12 types. Anger can be expressed in many ways, and the causes of anger can differ as well. Figuring out the source and type of anger you're experiencing is a great first step in learning to control and manage it.

12 TYPES OF ANGER

1. Assertive Anger

Assertive anger is considered a constructive form of anger expression. Rather than avoiding a conversation or being prone to outbursts of screaming or yelling, assertive anger is used as a healthy and productive expression of frustration to make positive change. This can look like expressing how you feel in a positive, safe way.

For example, you might start a statement with, "I feel angry when..." or, "I think...". Assertive anger is combined with appropriate body language and, sometimes, pre-set expectations about methods to resolve or process the situation. This gives you the chance to express your anger in a way that enables positive change.

2. Behavioral Anger

Behavioral anger is a physical reaction and is common in men with anger issues. This can be dangerous as it may be expressed through violence, potentially slipping into destructive or displaced anger. Behavioral anger is impulsive and unpredictable, sometimes ending with unhealthy legal or interpersonal consequences.

Behavioral anger can present as intimidating behaviors (e.g., cornering someone or raising your voice), throwing or shoving things, breaking things, or attacking someone. It's important to identify whether your anger is slipping into this area due to potential legal or interpersonal consequences.

3. Chronic Anger

Chronic anger is typically directed towards other people, situations, and even yourself, which can impact self-esteem. Sometimes, it can fly under the radar while simultaneously causing a lot of damage. Chronic anger often looks like a continuous, low-level feeling of anger, resentment, irritability, and frustration. Because of how you experience anger, you may have difficulty processing and expressing your needs, which can impact your health, stress levels, and relationships.

4. Destructive Anger

Destructive anger is a significantly unhealthy experience of anger that can have multiple negative impacts. While there is limited research on this type of anger, it's often seen in connection with the extreme end of behavioral anger. This may include extreme irritability or hatred of others, even when it isn't warranted.

Destructive anger can look like verbal or physical actions used to hurt others such as throwing and breaking something that is important to the person you're angry with. In relationships, this can sometimes present as stonewalling or shutting out your significant other emotionally. Destructive anger can impact many areas of your life in extremely unhealthy ways, potentially destroying important social connections.

5. Judgmental Anger

Judgmental anger is often a reaction to some perceived slight, someone else's flaws (if you feel they impact you), or an injustice against you or someone else. Judgmental anger is identified in people's core beliefs and basic perspective or understanding of the world. This core belief is generally one of feeling like you're better or worse than others, leading you to judge them and become angry about their actions or expressions.

Judgmental anger primarily looks like what people call "justified fury," when you or someone else is angry due to a perceived injustice or slight. This type of anger can also look like putting others down or ranting about a perceived injustice. This can have negative impacts on your interpersonal interactions and may limit your ability to maintain a support system. In addition, you may experience feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem.

6. Overwhelmed Anger

Overwhelmed anger is unpredictable and can impact your mental health over time. This type of anger builds up, especially when you don't find ways to express or communicate how you feel. It may show itself when things hit a "boiling point," or your ability to cope with anger and stress has been overwhelmed due to certain situations, feelings, or interactions.

Overwhelmed anger can look like a sudden snap of irritability and resentment following a long stretch of repression. While the expression of overwhelmed anger appears different for everyone, it will come on suddenly and may be preceded by a stressful event.

7. Passive-Aggressive Anger

Passive-aggressive anger is an avoidant form of expression. This kind of anger occurs when you suppress how you feel and attempt to avoid all types of conflicts. This can be dangerous, as your self-esteem levels are often impacted by anger. As such, passive-aggressive anger can have a negative influence on your relationships.

Passive-aggressive anger, which can be verbal or physical, includes emotional repression and avoidance of conflict. This may present as passive-aggressive comments (e.g., "I like your outfit, even though it doesn't fit you"), sarcasm, or an intentional lack of response. Passive aggression is most common in the verbal form, but it can also look like closed-off body language or continuous procrastinating at work.

8. Retaliatory Anger

Retaliatory anger is a common reaction and an instinctive response to being attacked. It can be influenced by a need for revenge after experiencing perceived hurt. This kind of anger is usually deliberately aimed at someone who hurt you and can be influenced by a need to gain control over an event. You may find yourself targeting your anger at specific people after feeling verbally or physically attacked. Retaliatory anger can potentially increase discomfort and anger levels in relationships.

9. Self-Abusive Anger

Self-abusive anger tends to relate to shame. This type of anger is seen in people experiencing low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness. Self-abusive anger is commonly used to help cope with these feelings, even though it only pushes people further away.

Self-abusive anger can affect you internally and externally. It can look like internalizing negative feelings and taking them out on yourself through self-harming behavior, alcohol or drug use, unhealthy and disordered eating, or negative self-talk (e.g., “You are a failure.”). On an external level, this may include lashing out or attacking others verbally.

10. Silent Anger

Silent anger is a non-verbal, internal way of experiencing anger. Although you may not verbally express it, it is possible for others to read that you are angry. People who experience silent anger tend to keep these feelings inside and allow them to build up, which can lead to increased stress, tension, and behavior related to overwhelmed anger.

Silent anger can be an internal or external experience. Internally, this type of anger can create a build-up of uncommunicated frustration, anger, and resentment, causing undue stress and low levels of ongoing tension. Externally, it can present as closed-off body language and facial expression and restricted or minimal speech and tone.

11. Verbal Anger

Verbal anger is an aggressive type of anger that can become abusive. Those who experience this type of anger are noted to feel remorseful after lashing out at the target of their anger and may even apologize after an episode. Verbal anger can present as lashing out or “going off” on someone verbally. Specific behaviors can include loud shouting, threatening behaviors, sarcastic comments, continuous and intense criticism, and ridicule. Keep in mind that verbal anger can transition into verbal abuse and also keep you from being able to maintain stable, healthy relationships.

12. Volatile Anger

Volatile anger is an explosive type of anger that is sometimes called “sudden anger.” It can happen when someone experiences an annoyance, big or small, and explodes verbally or physically, potentially becoming destructive. This type of anger makes it difficult for the individual to express themselves, process, and communicate.

Volatile anger can look like a rapid progression from status quo to outrage over real or perceived slights. It is frequently destructive and can include shouting, yelling, throwing things, and physical aggression. This type of anger may keep you from being able to maintain stable and trustworthy relationships.