

EMORY

HEALTHCARE

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Veterans Program

# Anger Management Skills

Anger and aggression are natural responses to threatening situations, but if left uncontrolled, anger can escalate situations and cause lasting harm to relationships and even your health. Learning to control anger can help you manage your thoughts and feelings in a productive way.

If you have noticed areas in your life where anger or aggression are affecting your health and relationships, try the two following strategies.

# Opposite Action Technique

On the next slide is a chart of aggressive behaviors and the opposite actions for each example. Read over the list in the first column and circle the examples of aggression that may apply to you. ***Are there any behaviors on the list that you would like to change? Are there any that you would add?***

Read over the opposite action of the listed aggression in the second column. Commit to practicing the opposite action throughout your day in place of the aggressive behavior. By making the opposite action a habit, it will become your first response in a moment of anger.

Aggression	Opposite Action
Hitting Throwing things Balling up your fists Clenching your jaw Expanding your posture (puffing up) Pacing Driving aggressively Ignoring someone Being short with someone Using sarcasm	Place hands in pocket Put things down gently Relax hands Relax facial muscles Lower your shoulders/sit down Sit/slowly walk/skip! Let foot off the gas Engage in a pleasant conversation Describe how you feel and why Be sincere/serious

**Example:**

If you drive aggressively when angry, practice driving slowly with a relaxed grip on the steering wheel.

If you find yourself pacing the room when in an argument, practice sitting down and discussing the issue at hand.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

It may be difficult to communicate in times of anger and frustration. The acronym DEARMAN is a helpful strategy to use during these moments.

<b><u>D</u>escribe</b>	Describe problems and requests in clear terms. Don't say: "please clean up." Say: "Please do the dishes before going to bed."
<b><u>E</u>xpress</b>	Clearly express your feelings. Don't expect others to read your mind. Say: "I feel _____ because _____." Scheduled family meetings are a great time to practice this.
<b><u>A</u>ssert</b>	Don't beat around the bush. Know what your needs are and describe them clearly. Being passive or avoidant will not help you reach your goals.
<b><u>R</u>einforce</b>	Reward people when they help you achieve your goals. This can be as simple as a "thank you." Punishment is less likely to be effective!
<b><u>M</u>indful</b>	Stay present and engaged. Don't bring anger from an earlier interaction into the current conversation. Ask questions and listen to stay present.
<b><u>A</u>ppear</b>	Consider your posture, tone, eye contact and body language. Try doing the opposite! If you are expressing anger with your body, know why and whether it's appropriate.
<b><u>N</u>egotiate</b>	We do not all share the same values or needs. We have to compromise. Help others in your life meet their needs so you can meet yours.

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