ANGER 101

Understand. Regulate. Respond.

FREE STARTER WORKBOOK / 2027

Make room for better responses.

Practical tools for understanding anger, regulating emotions and communicating with confidence.

Understand. Regulate. Respond.

Your name (optional)

START HERE

Welcome to Anger 101

Anger is a normal emotion. The goal is not to erase it, but to notice it and choose actions that protect you and the people around you.

Use this workbook at your own pace. Write privately, skip prompts that feel too personal, and return to exercises as often as you need.

Your roadmap

Understand anger 3–7

Regulate your response 8–13

Communicate and repair 14–19

Build a lasting plan 20–23

Resources and attribution 24

This is general education, not mental health treatment, diagnosis, crisis care or proof of course completion.

01 / UNDERSTAND

Anger is a feeling, not a behavior

Anger can signal frustration, unfairness, hurt or a crossed boundary. Aggression is an action that harms, threatens or intimidates. You can feel angry without acting aggressively.

> The feeling is real. The action is still your responsibility.

What does anger usually feel like for you?

What do you tend to do when you feel angry?

What would a healthier response look like?

What anger costs you

An angry reaction may bring quick relief or make someone back down. But short-term relief can come with long-term costs: damaged trust, stress, regret or conflict.

Think about a recent everyday situation, not necessarily your most difficult experience.

What did I hope my reaction would accomplish?

What actually happened afterward?

What would I want to happen next time?

01 / UNDERSTAND

Know your triggers

Triggers are situations that tend to activate anger. Common examples include delays, criticism, interrupted plans, feeling ignored or feeling treated unfairly.

A trigger helps explain a reaction; it does not excuse harmful behavior.

Three situations that often trigger me:

What feels especially important in those situations?

What can I prepare for before the next trigger?

Spot the early warning signs

Anger often shows up in several ways before we act. Learn your own signals so you can intervene earlier.

Body — Tight jaw, warmth, racing heart, tense shoulders

My signs:

Actions — Pacing, interrupting, raising your voice

My signs:

Feelings — Hurt, fear, embarrassment, frustration

My signs:

Thoughts — Assuming bad intent, replaying an argument

My signs:

Your anger meter

Rate the intensity of your anger from 1 (calm) to 10 (extremely intense). High anger does not have to lead to aggression. Choose a safe response early.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Calm — Building — Very intense

At what number do I first notice warning signs?

At what number will I stop the conversation and use a calming tool?

What is my safe next step if I feel close to losing control?

02 / REGULATE

Interrupt the escalation

Anger can build from a trigger into rising tension, an impulsive reaction and consequences. The earlier you notice the pattern, the more room you have to choose.

Notice → create space → choose a response. If anyone is unsafe, prioritize distance and safety, not finishing the conversation.

What tends to happen as my anger builds?

What are the consequences when I react impulsively?

Where could I interrupt the pattern?

Take a constructive time-out

A time-out is a deliberate break from an escalating interaction. Say you need space, move to a safe place, and return only when it is safe and appropriate.

Try: “I’m getting frustrated. I need a break. Can we revisit this later?” Never use a time-out to intimidate or punish someone.

My time-out phrase:

Where can I go safely to settle?

What will I do during the break instead of replaying the argument?

How will I arrange a respectful return if appropriate?

02 / REGULATE

Breathe and release tension

Sit comfortably. Let your shoulders soften. Breathe gently and slowly, without forcing the breath. Notice the air moving in and out. Continue for a minute or two if comfortable.

Try relaxing your hands and jaw. Stop if you feel dizzy or uncomfortable; there is no need to hold your breath or tense painful muscles.

My anger rating before practice (1–10):

What changed in my body?

My anger rating after practice (1–10):

Where could I practice this regularly?

Check the story in your head

Our interpretations can intensify anger. A delayed reply might feel like disrespect, but there may be other explanations. Checking assumptions does not mean dismissing real harm.

Separate what you observed from what you inferred. Look for a realistic interpretation, not forced positivity.

A: What actually happened?

B: What did I tell myself it meant?

C: How did that thought affect my feelings and actions?

D: What is a more balanced thought or helpful next step?

02 / REGULATE

Build your calming toolbox

Different tools work in different situations. Choose immediate strategies for the moment and preventive habits for ordinary days.

Examples: step away safely, walk, breathe gently, write a draft without sending it, call a trusted person, sleep regularly and plan breaks.

Three tools I can use in the moment:

Three habits that help me stay steady over time:

One tool I will practice this week:

Find your support team

Support can help you notice patterns and follow through on change. Choose people who encourage safety, accountability and respectful behavior rather than retaliation.

A counselor or other qualified professional may be helpful when anger feels hard to manage or conflict repeatedly becomes unsafe.

Who can I contact for encouragement or perspective?

What could I ask them to do?

What professional or community support could I explore?

03 / COMMUNICATE

Four ways to respond

Passive responses hide needs. Aggressive responses threaten or disregard others. Indirectly hostile responses express resentment through actions. Assertive responses state needs clearly while respecting others.

> Assertiveness is not about winning. It is about being direct, respectful and safe.

Which style do I use most often under stress?

What does that style cost me or others?

Rewrite a recent response in a more assertive way:

03 / COMMUNICATE

Say what you need

Use a specific observation, describe its impact, and make a clear request. Avoid labels, threats and assumptions about motives.

Example: “When plans change without notice, I feel frustrated because I need time to adjust. Could you text me when the schedule changes?”

When [specific situation] happens...

I feel / the impact on me is...

What I need or value is...

My respectful request is...

03 / COMMUNICATE

Listen without preparing a comeback

Listening does not require agreement. Let the other person finish, summarize what you heard, and ask a clarifying question before responding.

Try: “What I hear you saying is ____. Did I get that right?”

What makes listening difficult for me?

What could I say to show I understand without agreeing?

What will I practice in my next conversation?

Resolve one problem at a time

Choose one specific issue. Identify feelings and impact. Decide whether a conversation is useful and safe. Discuss a workable next step, if both people are willing.

If there is intimidation, violence or coercion, prioritize safety and seek appropriate support rather than attempting joint conflict resolution.

What is the specific issue?

What feelings and practical impacts are involved?

Is it safe and useful to address this now?

What is one reasonable next step?

Patterns we learned growing up

Families and communities can shape how we express emotions. Reflecting on those patterns can help you choose what to keep and what to change.

You do not need to describe painful experiences or share private history with anyone to use this exercise.

What messages did I learn about expressing emotions?

Which learned responses still show up today?

What new pattern would I like to model?

Repair and accountability

If you hurt someone, acknowledge the behavior without shifting blame. Respect their boundaries and give them space. Repair is about consistent changed behavior, not demanding forgiveness.

A useful apology names the action, recognizes its impact and describes a concrete change.

What behavior do I need to take responsibility for?

What impact might it have had?

What will I do differently, regardless of the other person's response?

Seven-day anger journal

Record your highest anger intensity each day and one useful observation. This is a learning tool, not a scorecard.

Day	Rating	Trigger / warning sign	Response / next step
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

What pattern did I notice this week?

04 / PRACTICE

Rehearse a better response

Choose a realistic situation, such as a frustrating email, a disagreement about chores or an unexpected delay. Practice the response you want to use before the next real encounter.

Try saying your response out loud. Keep it brief and specific.

The situation I want to prepare for:

My early warning signs and planned calming tool:

The words I will use and the action I will take:

My personal anger action plan

Bring together the tools that work for you. Keep this page somewhere private and easy to access. Revisit it regularly as you learn what helps.

If you believe you may hurt yourself or someone else, create distance if safe and seek immediate help. In an immediate emergency in the U.S., call 911.

My top triggers and early signs:

My immediate safe response:

My preventive habits and support contacts:

My commitment for the next seven days:

04 / PRACTICE

Keep moving forward

Progress comes through repetition. Notice small changes, learn from setbacks and keep practicing. This workbook is a starting point, not a test you pass or fail.

Choose one small, measurable action instead of trying to change everything at once.

One thing I understand better now:

One skill I want to strengthen:

How I will know I am making progress:

RESOURCES

Continue your learning

Anger 101 offers an eight-hour, live, interactive online anger management education course. Explore upcoming Saturday classes and free resources on our website.

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About this workbook

This free 2027 starter edition is an independently written educational adaptation of selected concepts from the source below, originally developed for a 12-week clinical group. It is not the original clinical workbook, a substitute for individualized care, or a certificate of course completion.

Source and attribution

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