



UNIT-3

Managing Anger

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Learn some techniques for managing and dealing with anger.

Unit 3

Managing Anger

Coping Strategies

Too many people are angry. Workplace violence is an extreme example, but there are examples everywhere. Even without violence, every day we hear of managers and co-workers who are mad at each other, their co-workers, their employees, their bosses, their customers, the company, and the world itself. Anger interferes with teamwork and productivity. It also contributes to an environment that is negative, hostile, and frightening.

Companies face legal pressures to prevent this type of environment. From employees' points of view, anger takes the fun out of work. Because anger is a natural emotion, it would be unrealistic to ask people not to feel it. Instead, the goal is to help (and sometimes, require) that people deal with their anger appropriately.

Problems don't come from anger. Problems come from the negative ways people express anger.

Dealing with Other People's Anger

As you prepare for conversations, and if you find yourself in an angry encounter, use these tips to help you.

- Use positive self talk.
- Check your body language.
- Acknowledge the other person's feelings.
- Share your own feelings and fears (carefully, of course).
- Show that you are listening.
- Make a conciliatory gesture.
- Express your own needs and wants calmly and persistently (like a broken record).
- When trying to work with hostile colleagues, keep in mind that their self-esteem may be in the dumps. Sincerely compliment them whenever possible. Avoid arguing with them, even though that's often what they want. Sometimes the challenge is preventing an exchange from escalating into anger.

Guidelines for Assertive Anger

We know that you won't have this list handy during an encounter, so we encourage you to read through this information several times to lock it into your memory. Talk about the tips provided here to others, modify them to work for you and to match your natural style of speaking with people, and speak with your colleagues about them so that you can remember and apply them when needed.

Start Positively

- For example: “I want to let you know how I am feeling because I believe that it will clear the air between us.”
- You could share an appreciation, but make sure it is sincere. “Over the past year, I have really enjoyed working with you. However, I’ve noticed that lately...”

Be Direct

- Use the first person point of view and say, “I’m feeling irritated/annoyed/angry.”
- Don’t distance yourself from your feelings with impersonal, third-person statements and generalizations such as, “When people...” or, “It can be annoying when...”
- Use “I” messages instead.

Specify the Degree of Anger

- This can vary from, “I’ve been getting slightly irritated,” to, “My fury is reaching the boiling point.”
- Giving this information often helps the other person listen more carefully.
- If you just say, “I am angry with you,” you may unnecessarily freeze the other person with fright or prompt them into aggressive defensive behavior.

Don’t Accuse Others of Making You Angry

- Remember that your irritation might be my pleasure!
- No one has the power to make us feel anything. So instead of saying, “You make me feel angry,” say, “I get angry when you...”

Share Your Feelings of Threat and Fear

- For example: “I’m frightened of saying this to you because you may think I am being very petty or you may reject me/fire me/ hit me, but...”
- This will help you to feel more in control of your feelings and may get you some welcome and helpful reassurance. (For example, they may respond with, “No, I promise that I will try and listen to what you have to say without walking away or punishing you.”)

Acknowledge Your Responsibility

- Tell the other person what part you see yourself playing in the situation.
- Examples:
 - “I appreciate that I should have said something earlier.”
 - “I am the kind of person who has very high standards.”
 - “I may be overreacting because I am managing a lot of deadlines right now.”

Avoid Self-Put Downs or Invitations to Criticism or Retaliatory Anger

- Don't say things like:
 - "I know that I'm a bit of a nag..."
 - "I'm over-sensitive."
 - "I'm too soft."
 - "You'll probably scream at me/want to kill me when I tell you..."
- You could be putting unhelpful and inflammatory ideas into otherwise quite amenable heads!

Self-Protective Techniques to Block Criticism

Criticism is one of the chief weapons of an angry person. Often it is used indiscriminately and is well off target. However, you can learn to cope with this behavior. In order to protect yourself, stop the flow, and keep criticism from escalating, use these techniques.

- **The broken record:** You keep repeating more or less the same statement over and over again, in a calm, controlled voice.
- **Fogging:** Agree that there may be some truth in what the person is saying.
- **Negative assertion:** Simply, calmly agree with your critic using a serious, matter of fact tone of voice, without adding any put downs or unnecessary justifications.

Dealing with Problems

Sometimes we are so busy with other things that we don't see (or don't want to see) a problem that is growing. When it explodes, it can catch us broadside. Has that ever happened to you? What do you do?

Let's take a look at some suggestions and see if we can make sense of them.

Test Your Knowledge

Assess the Situation

Meet the Difficult Behavior Head-On

Stay Calm and Objective

Be Up-Front

Make It a Two-Way Conversation

Put Yourself in Their Place

Be Flexible

Be Tolerant

Causes of Difficult Behavior

There are no simple answers about the causes of difficult behavior, because we human beings can be very complicated. We do know that some causes include fear (of failure, humiliation, losing power,

and/or rejection) and poor self-esteem. If you add people who are working with drug or addiction issues, illness (theirs or someone else's), as well as some people having limited coping skills, we start to get a good idea of what can provoke difficult behavior. Sometimes, of course, you'll run into a combination of factors.

Further Reading: