EVERYONE experiences anger. Anger is a human emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation and frustration, to rage. It is a reaction to a perceived threat to ourselves, our loved ones, our property, our self-image, or some part of our identity. Anger is a warning bell that tells us that something is wrong.

Anger can be healthy! Anger is a useful warning system for protecting ourselves. It can help us stand up for ourselves and correct injustices.

When we manage anger, it prompts us to make positive changes in our lives and situations.

Mismanaged anger, on the other hand, is counterproductive and can be unhealthy. When anger is too intense, out of control, misdirected, and/or overly aggressive, it can lead to poor decision-making and problem solving. Mismanaged anger can also create problems with relationships at home or at work, and can even negatively affect your health.

Anger has three components:

**The physical experience... the effects on our bodies**
- A rush of adrenaline
- Increased heart rate
- Changes in blood pressure and breathing
- Tightening of muscles

**The mental experience... how we think about anger**
- What we perceive about the triggering event
- Our interpretation of what is occurring

**The behavioral experience... how we express ourselves**
- A wide range of potential reactions

Sometimes, we mislabel our emotional experience. It may be that what feels like “anger” may be some other vulnerable emotion such as sadness, embarrassment, fear, jealously, insecurity, anxiety, and/or rejection. It is useful to try to uncover the “core” emotion so that we can deal with that emotion in the most effective way possible.
Anger Management Skills

Walk away: If your emotions are too high and you are concerned that your anger may escalate, simply leave the scene and then calm yourself down before you return.

Work it out with exercise: When you feel anger boiling up, get your blood pumping in a different way. Exercise releases endorphins, which are mind-boosting brain chemicals that can help lift the cloud of anger and help you see the situation in a more rational frame of mind. Do a set up push-ups, jumping jacks, run in place, dance, etc.

Also, remember that the Hamel Recreation Center is a great place for you to work out and participate in exercise classes. Regular exercise can help you stay more emotionally resilient.

Count: The age-old recommendation of counting can help manage your anger by giving you some time to pause before acting on your anger.

- You can count from 1 to 10 (one hippopotamus, two hippopotamuses, etc.)
- Better yet, you can count backward from 100… by 3s or 7s. This takes more mental effort, helping you focus more on the counting/breathing, and less on the anger issue – take a deep, slow breath between each number.

Use “I” statements: When expressing your anger, frame your statements with “I” instead of “you.” e.g., “You never listen to what I’m saying!” try “I feel frustrated, because I don’t feel heard by you.” Reframing your statements prevents the other person from going on the defensive and escalating the situation.

Recognize why: Consider why you reacted to a specific situation with anger; analyzing your reactions can help you control them in the future.

What feelings (sadness, embarrassment, frustration, disappointment, nervousness) were activated by the situation? Perhaps “anger” is not the core emotion you were feeling. Uncovering these underlying emotions and getting to the root of your anger can help you understand yourself and your actions more fully.

Resources:
