Tunnel Vision: You only see the negative aspects of a situation.

Example: “My professor can’t do anything right. He’s critical, insensitive, and a lousy lecturer.”

All or Nothing Thinking: You view a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum. Things are either good or bad; you are either perfect or a failure.

Example: “My friend doesn’t agree with me on this issue, so he’s completely non-supportive.” I just know I’m going to get an “F” on that exam!” (when a “B” is most likely).

Fallacy of Fairness: You feel resentful because you think you know what’s fair, but other people won’t agree with you.

Example: “Why can’t my professor see that I deserve an “A”?”

Blaming: You hold other people responsible for your feelings.

Example: “It’s my roommate’s fault I’m so angry.”

Fallacy of Change: You expect others will change to suit you if you pressure them enough.

Example: “If you just hear me out one more time, I’m sure you’ll agree with me.”

Being Right: You are continually trying to prove that your opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and you will go to any length to demonstrate your rightness.

Example: “I was totally justified in yelling at my friend for what he did!”

When you are angry, it’s likely that many of your thoughts will fall under one of these categories. In order to overcome some of these thoughts, it may be helpful to develop an Angry Thought Record. In the first column, write down the anger producing thought. In the next column, write down the type of distortion it represents. In the third column, write down a different, more accurate, adaptive way to think about the situation.

3. The next step is find more accurate, adaptive ways of thinking about the situation.

For each distorted thought you have written down, try a different way of thinking about the situation—one that is more accurate and does not make you feel as angry. This may involve exploring the positive aspects of a person or a situation, identifying other possible reasons for the person’s behavior, or looking at “the big picture” rather than focusing on one relatively small incident.

4. The last step is to practice identifying anger-producing thoughts, finding the distortions, and developing more accurate ways of thinking every day!

This final technique to reduce anger must be practiced every day in order to be effective. It is necessary to write down angry thoughts regularly and to practice refuting them. As this becomes easier, you can better identify your thoughts when you are in a situation and begin to feel angry. By identifying distorted thoughts and replacing them with more adaptive ways of thinking, you can keep yourself from becoming overwhelmed by anger in difficult situations.
If Direct Confrontation/Expression of Anger Is Appropriate:

- Take a deep breath
- State your position calmly, using “I” (i.e., “I feel angry because...”)
- State what you want, again beginning with “I” (i.e., “I want...”)
- Listen to the other person’s response and do not get involved in back and forth bickering.

If Direct Confrontation/Expression is not Appropriate:

- Talk to a friend about it.
- Write about your feelings.
- Draw or paint a “mad” picture.
- Write a “mad” letter. DO NOT SEND IT!!!
- Some people like to hit a “mad” pillow or punching bag.
- Try picturing in your mind yourself yelling, screaming, shouting, jumping up and down, saying, and doing all the things you’d like to do with your anger if you could get away with it.
- Physical exercise can be helpful.
- Some people like to go to a quiet place where they are all alone and talk to themselves about how they feel. If you are alone, you can also yell, scream, and shout if that makes you feel better.

Always: Stop and Think! Evaluate!

- What am I angry about?
- What are the possible consequences of my acting out my anger?
- What are the possible consequences of my confronting the person directly?
- What do I want?

Some Anger *‘Donts*:

- Yell, scream, shout, or raise your voice at the other person (or anyone else).
- Use “you” messages. (You make me...)
- Use “always”, “never”, and other extreme words.
- Blame the other person.
- Bring up issues from the past. (Stay focused on the here and now.)
- Use name-calling.
- Confront when you’re really angry, out of control, or haven’t thought about what you want and what are the likely consequences of confrontation.
- Act out anger on someone or something else (i.e., the dog, your best friend, a co-worker).

Some Things to Consider About Anger When You’re Not Angry:

- If you find yourself feeling angry much of the time, it may be that you’ve learned to feel angry instead of other emotions, such as fear, hurt, disappointment, rejection.
- Think about some times you’ve been angry recently. What were the reasons? Do you detect any common themes? What other emotions are possible?
- How was anger expressed/responded to in your family when you were growing up? Is this what you want for yourself?
- How rational are the things that make you angry? Which ones are realistic? Which ones aren’t? What would your life be like without all the anger?
- Learn relaxation techniques. Practice exercises, such as deep breathing (slowly breathe in to the count of ten, then slowly exhale; repeat.) Clench your fists and arms tightly against your body to the count of five. Then, suddenly relax them. Focus on the sense of relaxation; repeat.)
- Imagine yourself in a situation that really makes you angry. Picture yourself acting in an appropriate manner. Visualize how nice it feels to be in control of yourself and your emotions.
- Get out of unproductive triangles. If you are angry about what someone did to someone else, you are involved in a triangle. The anger rightfully belongs to the wronged person, not you (whether they are willing to accept it or not)
- Be aware of “hooks” – those words or phrases that can instantly trigger an intense reaction in you, likely uttered by a particular someone. Practice not responding with anger. Defuse their power over you! You CAN choose what you will feel and express anger about. Tell yourself, “This doesn’t matter. I choose NOT to get angry about this. I choose not to let others control me in this way.
- Practice assertiveness skills. Know what you want and ask for it! Sometimes people feel angry because they secretly (possibly even without awareness) resent denying their own needs in favor of meeting the needs of others.

Anger Management: How can you deal with your angry thoughts and feelings more effectively?

1. Try to remember one or two situations when you became angry and trace each situation step by step. Can you remember what you were thinking right before you became angry? The next time you get angry at someone, stop yourself and make a note of your thoughts about the person and the situation. Start writing down each situation and your thoughts until you have several examples.

2. The next step in effectively managing anger is to evaluate your anger-producing thoughts. Sometimes the thoughts we have are accurate and sometimes they aren’t. It is important to carefully examine your anger-producing thoughts to see if they are accurate or somewhat distorted. Distorted thoughts are inaccurate or less adaptive ways of thinking about a situation.

Labeling: You put a fixed negative label on others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead you to qualify your angry feelings is to examine the thoughts you to a different conclusion.

Example: “He’s an idiot.” “She’s two-faced.”

Magnification: When you evaluate another person, you unreasonably magnify the negative and minimize the positive.

Example: “My teacher gave me one low grade mark (and several high ones), she’s so unfair!”

Personalization: You believe others are behaving negatively as a reaction to you, without considering more plausible explanations for their behavior.

Example: “That guy is being cold to me because he thinks he’s better than I am.” (You are unaware that he just received some upsetting news from home.)

“Should” or “must” statements: You have a precise, fixed idea of how others should behave and you overestimate how bad it is that these expectations are not met.

Example: “She should have called me by now. She must not care about our friendship.”