

## Develop an Anger Management Plan

- **Set positive goals and a time frame to reach them.** The goal should address a specific behavior and your response. For example, over the next month you can communicate your angry feelings at work by using “I” statements. Set different goals, but not too many at one time.
- **Get support.** Tell family, friends and co-workers about your goals. They can offer encouragement and advice. Seek their help if you’re having trouble with your anger, or consider seeing a mental health professional.
- **Track your progress.** Consider keeping a daily log. Note the times you avoid getting angry or handle anger well. Seeing improvement over time will help you from feeling discouraged.
- **Reward yourself.** Treat yourself to something special when you reach a goal.

## Alexandria Community Services Board

- 24-hour emergency crisis intervention services
- 24-hour detoxification services
- Evaluation and assessment
- Individual, family and group counseling
- Day support and vocational services
- Residential services
- Inpatient services
- Prevention and early intervention services
- Service fees are based on ability to pay or without charge
- Multi-language availability

*The Alexandria Community Services Board is a group of 16 citizen volunteers appointed by Alexandria’s City Council. The CSB oversees the city’s publicly funded services for mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse.*

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B-MEN-0159



## Anger Management



Department of Mental Health,  
Mental Retardation and  
Substance Abuse



**(703) 838-6400**  
**24 hours a day**  
**TDD: (703) 838-5054**

[www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa](http://www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa)

## What is anger?

- Anger is a natural emotion. It is nature's way of preparing us to protect ourselves and to respond to emergencies.
- Everyone gets angry sometimes, but not dealing effectively with it can cause problems at work, in relationships with family and friends, legal and financial troubles, and physical and mental health problems.

## What gets you angry?

- **Stress**- Stress related to work, family, health and money problems might make you feel anxious and irritable.
- **Frustration**- You may get angry if you fail to reach a goal or feel as if things are out of your control.
- **Fear**- Anger is a natural response to threats of violence, or to physical or verbal abuse.
- **Annoyance**- You may react in anger to minor irritations and daily hassles.
- **Resentment**- You may feel angry when you've been hurt, rejected or offended.
- **Unrealistic Expectations**– You think things/people should be a certain way and they are not.

## How your body tells you when you're getting angry:

- Heart beats faster
- Muscles tense
- Eyebrows scowl
- Hot flashes
- Extra energy or strength
- Hearing is fuzzy or ringing
- Physical pain does not hurt
- Tunnel vision

## How do you talk to yourself?

Negative self-talk can cause anger to escalate, and make it difficult to manage. This includes criticizing yourself and blaming yourself and others.

Examples: "My co-worker tries to make me look stupid every chance she gets." " The next door neighbor parked in my space on purpose." "I'm an idiot. I can't do anything right."



## Learn to use positive self talk

Replace the negative thought with a positive one. Be compassionate with yourself and talk to yourself the way you would comfort a friend.

Examples: "The boss is probably having a bad day, and that's why he snapped at me." " I guess that driver who cut me off didn't see me, I'm sure it wasn't on purpose." "I won't take it personally. She probably didn't mean anything by it or is just having a bad day."

## Ways to cope with anger:

- Stop what you're doing. Remove yourself from the situation. Give yourself time to think more clearly.
- Try to relax. Count to ten, take slow deep breaths, or take a walk.
- Exercise, meditate.
- Take a shower or run cool water over your hands & wrists.
- Write about what angered you.
- Talk to someone to vent your feelings.
- Talk kindly to yourself with positive self talk.
- Reinterpret the situation that angers you. Perhaps you aren't seeing things as they were intended.
- Understand why you are angry and think of ways to better cope with the situation.