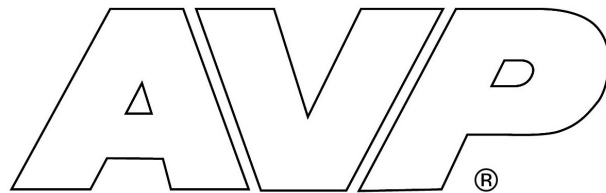




# **ANGER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**



# Anger Management Workshop Manual



## **ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT**

Developed by John Shuford for the AVP program in Delaware  
with additional material from Fred Feucht, Nic Fine, Nancy Nothhelfer,  
Margaret Lechner, Nancy Shippen and Deb Wood

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## ANGER MANAGEMENT MANUAL

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# Introduction to the Anger Management Workshop

## Design and Structure of the Workshop

This is a workshop that not only involves verbal communication but also written communication and visual communication with images and diagrams so that the workshop engages all the senses.

### Goals

The goal of the workshop is to help each participant to understand their own anger as well as the anger of others, and then give them a toolkit that they can use to deal with anger in the future.

### Themes for Sessions

The workshop is designed with a theme for each session and the sessions are arranged so there is a natural and logical flow from one theme to the next.

The themes for the sessions are:

- Session 1 – Introduction and Community building
- Session 2 – Awareness of Anger
- Session 3 – Sources of Anger
- Session 4 – Responses to my Own Anger and the Anger of Others
- Session 5 – Grudges and Forgiveness
- Session 6 – Closure

The workshop begins with a guided fantasy about meeting someone with whom they may have had a conflict or grudge and the workshop ends with the same guided fantasy, There is usually a change in in the attitude about the person they met between the first and second guided fantasy. This helps to measure the effectiveness of the workshop.

*(For a seven-session workshop, Session 4 may be divided into two sessions.)*

### Individual Sessions

Each workshop session is also designed with a structure as follows:

- Gathering based on the theme of the session
- Brainstorm based on the theme of the session
- Experiential exercise on the theme of the session
- Talk and discussion in the key concepts and ideas of the session

The Gathering and Brainstorm explores the participants ideas about the theme.

The Experiential Exercise introduces new ideas about the theme. And the Talk clarifies the new ideas and concepts and provides the takeaway for the session.

The workshop includes a small AVP Toolkit Booklet for each participant that includes the key ideas and diagrams for use in the workshop and in the future.

This workshop structure was originally developed by John Shuford of AVP Delaware with additional exercises by Nic Fine, Fred Feucht and Margaret Lechner

### Handouts and Posters

Instead of a multitude of individual handouts, a mini-booklet has been prepared called “My AVP Toolkit.” This includes all the key concepts and diagrams for the workshop. Please prepare an AVP Toolkit Booklet for each participant. Instructions are included in the PDF.

# Anger Management Workshop Agenda

## SUGGESTED AGENDA

### Session 1

Theme: Introduction and Community Building

Introduction of Leaders

Opening Talk - Goals, Outline of Workshop, Expectations, Housekeeping, Meals, Hospitality

Introduction of Participants - Name and why you wanted to take this workshop

Adjective Name Game

Light & Lively

Concentric Circles

The way anger was handled in my family was...

A time my anger got me into trouble was...

A way I have used my anger constructively is...

A childhood experience where I felt hurt was...

A childhood experience where I felt acknowledged and affirmed was...

Evaluation

### Session 2

Theme: Awareness of Anger

Agenda Review

Gathering: □“A time my anger had serious consequences for me was...”

Guided Visualization One - Walk on the beach from the Carefronting Exercise

Light & Lively

Brainstorm on Anger – Feelings about anger

Getting in Touch Exercise: Anger

Anger Thermometer Talk

Your Brain on Anger Talk

Evaluation

### Session 3

Theme: Sources of Anger

Agenda Review

Gathering: “Something that really upsets me is...”

Buttons Exercise

Brainstorm on Roots of Anger - From Roots of Anger Exercise

Sources of Anger Talk

Light & Lively

Personality Structure Talk

or Feelings and Needs Exercise

Anger Iceberg Talk

Anger Iceberg Exercise in small groups - From Roots of Anger Exercise 2

Evaluation

## **Session 4**

Theme: Response to my Own Anger and Dealing with Other People's Anger

Agenda Review

Gathering: "The way I lower my stress level is..."

Stress Levels Talk and Stress Whip

Response to Anger Talk or Brainstorm

Buttons Exercise

or Commo n Ground Exercise

or Signals and Sidetracks Exercise

Light & Lively

Whip: " A way I deal with other people's anger is..."

Brainstorm on Dealing with Other's Anger

Understanding the Anger of Others – Anger Iceberg in small groups

Transforming Anger - Joyce's Story

Discussion: Ways that I have transformed my own anger

Evaluation

## **Session 5**

Theme: Grudges and Forgiveness

Agenda Review

Gathering: "A grudge I'm having difficulty letting go of is..."

Addiction to Grudges Exercise

Light & Lively

Meditation Exercise

or Anger and Forgiveness Flow Chart Talk

Anatomy of an Apology Exercise

Evaluation

## **Session 6**

Theme: Closure

Agenda Review

Guided Visualization Two - Walk on the beach from the Carefronting Exercise

Lifeline Exercise

Written Evaluation of Workshop

Unanswered Questions

Peace Pledge

Certificates

Closing Circle



## **Guided Visualization 1** *from Nancy Nothhelfer's Carefronting Exercise*

**Introduction:** 1. Tell group to find a comfortable position, relaxed, feet on the floor and to try to clear your heads of everything but the awareness of your own body. Close your eyes, be comfortable, be aware of breathing, breathe deeply to slow count of 4-2-4 (inhale, hold, exhale).

**Visualization** 2. Say (slowly): 'You are walking alone by yourself, there is no one else around, it is a warm, sunny day, you are feeling good. In the far distance, you see someone approaching... As the person becomes closer, you recognize that this is someone whom you care about ... And with whom you have unfinished business or an unresolved conflict . . . What are your thoughts, assumptions? . . . How do you feel? . . . As you come face to face, what do you say or do? (Pause for at least 10 seconds) ... How does the other person respond? . . . (Again pause for 10 seconds) You each continue on your way. Be aware of how you feel . . . When you are ready, return to the room.'

**Processing** 3. Put people in groups of three. For two minutes, each may share as she chooses:

- What happened? and
- How satisfied did you feel as you passed on.?

(Write these questions on newsprint for guidance of group in sharing.)

## Brainstorm: Feelings About Anger

**Objective:** To explore a variety of attitudes and feelings about anger. To help participants understand what they have in common with their group and why other groups have different attitudes and feelings.

**Time:** About 20 minutes

**Sequence:** 1. Put up three signs in different parts of the room. Then ask participants to stand under the sign that is closest to their feelings about anger.



2. As the participants remain standing and in front of their sign. Ask the participants in each group why they chose their sign and how they feel about anger and how it has affected their lives.

After the members of each group have spoken, ask them to sit down and discuss what they have learned in the exercise.

**Processing:** 3. Back in the large group discuss

- Feelings about anger
- Situations creating anger
- Actions resulting from anger

**Quotation:** Interview with the Dalai Lama in Time Magazine on June 14, 2010

Q. Do you ever feel angry or outraged?

A. Oh, yes, of course. I'm a human being. Generally speaking, if human being never shows anger, then I think something is wrong. He's not right in the brain. *(Laughs)*

## **Anger Styles Exercise** *From John Shuford*

**Objectives:** To begin to recognize ways that we deal with anger.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Four Anger Management Styles posters on the wall in various areas of the room:

**YELL/EXPLODE;**

**WALK AWAY/SUPPRESS;**

**DEFUSE;**

**TRANSFORM**

**Sequence:** A. Deals with anger. Ask for volunteers under one poster to share conflict situations where they have used or might use this way to deal with the anger provoked. Then move on to the next one, until all of the posters have been visited.

**OR**

B. Read a scenario and have people stand under poster that represents how they respond to that situation. Have people return to the center of the room. Then read a different scenario, and have them move to the style they would be likely to use in that situation. Repeat 3 – 6 times.

**Processing:**

- How did that exercise go for you?
- How do you feel about the style(s) you tend to use?
- What insights did you get of situations that provoke your anger and your style for dealing with them? Could you think of other styles that you might use to deal with conflict situations?
- If you could wave a magic wand and be capable of any style you wanted, which style(s) would you use more often?
- Which TP Guidelines might help you use that style?

**Background:** Exploding has obvious consequences and it does not reduce stress. It momentarily releases tension, diverts attention from a less comfortable primary emotion to a more acceptable one [anger] and it releases endorphins in the brain, which render a sense of pleasure. Suppressing can lead to explosions, however, it shows up in many other ways, e.g., hypersensitivity, inflexibility, over achieving, over controlling, habitually impatient, overly suspicious, complaining, cynical, and difficulty accepting love from others.

Defusing reduces tension by diverting attention, but it does nothing about what got you angry. The next time you are faced with a similar situation, you will get angry again. Some examples are shopping, drugs, exercise, eating, sleeping, etc.

Transforming not only reduces tension, but changes your relationship to what got you angry. With this change, your stress level lowers. The next time when faced with a similar situation, your response will be completely different. You may not get angry at all but respond with understanding or empathy. Transforming responses are talking to their person, talking to someone else, talking to yourself, prayer and meditation. These responses can be combined with other activities, e.g., self talk while exercising or going for a walk or drive.

## **Getting in Touch with Anger Exercise** *From the Advanced Manual*

*Becoming more aware of anger*

- Objectives:** To help participants explore and share their sources of anger.
- Time:** 45 Minutes
- Materials:** Four cards or 4 x 6 slips of paper per person, a pencil or pen and a strip of masking tape for each person.
- Questions:** Post the following questions on newsprint:
1. I feel angry when...
  2. I feel my anger is...
  3. When I feel other people's anger directed at me, I feel...
  4. I feel that other people's anger is usually.
- Sequence:**
1. Distribute the four cards, writing instruments and strip of tape to participants. Ask the participants to write each of the four questions at the top of a card or paper and then complete the sentence with the first response that occurs to them. They should not censor or modify the response. Ask them to write clearly so others can read.
  2. When the participants have completed all their cards or slips of paper, ask them to tape the slips to their chest.
  3. When everyone has taped the cards to his or her chest, ask the group to stand up and walk around the room, and read each other's response. This should be done in complete silence.
  4. After everyone has had an opportunity to read the cards of the other participants, ask the group to return to the large circle to discuss their responses.
- Process:**
1. Was it easy or difficult to share these feelings about anger?
  2. When you read the responses of others, did you learn anything new about dealing with your own anger?
  3. Did you learn anything new about dealing with the anger of others?
  4. Did you learn anything about managing anger in the exercise?
  5. What does this exercise have to do with alternatives to violence?



# Anger Thermometer Talk *From John Shuford*

**Objectives:** To help participants explore and share their sources of anger.

**Time:** 20-30 Minutes

**Materials:** Anger Thermometer Diagram and the Brain on Anger Chart

**Demonstration:** Stand up and explain to the group that you are standing in the line for chow and holding your tray as follows:

Action: Bumped from behind

Response: None (Perhaps it was an accident)

Action: Bumped from behind again

Response: "Hey" (Irritation)

Action: Bumped from behind again

Response: "Cut it out!" (Anger – Change person's behavior)

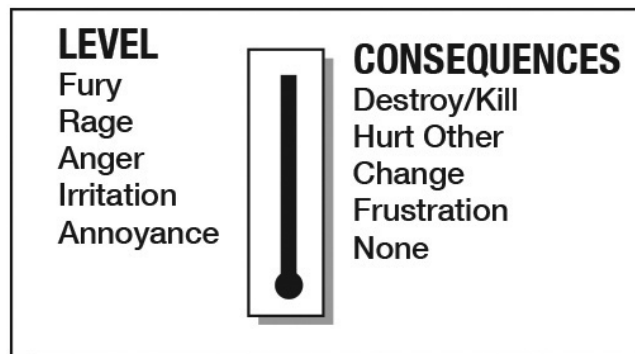
Action: Bumped from behind again

Response: "What's wrong with you!" (Rage – Attack the person) Action:

Bumped from behind again

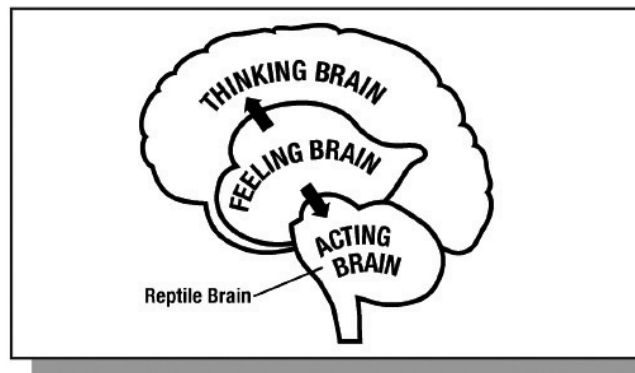
Response: Swing tray at person's head (Rage – Hurt or kill the person)

**Talk:** Show the Anger Thermometer Chart and discuss the levels of anger and the consequences for each level.



## Brain on Anger

Show the Brain on Anger Chart and describe the pathways in response to the stimulus.



*(Brain on Anger continued)*

Explain that emotions are felt in the Feeling Brain or limbic system. We have a switch in our Feeling Brain and that it can either connect to the Thinking Brain or the Feeling Brain.

At the lower levels such as Annoyance, Irritation and usually Anger, we have access to our Thinking Brain and we can make choices about our behavior. However, when we reach the level of Rage and Fury, we no longer have access to our Thinking Brain and lose control of our behavior.

In order to manage our anger, it is very important to make choices about our behavior before we reach the level of rage. Our Acting Brain does not feel, it only acts.

## **Discussion**

- Is anger a primary or a secondary emotion?
- Do you have choices about what you do with it?
- How is a resentment or grudge different from anger?

## **Helpful Quotes:** *from John Shuford*

- Hurt people hurt other people
- Long term anger = Resentment
- “Resentment is emotional cancer”
- “Resentment is like holding hot coals in your hand and trying to decide where to throw it.”
- “Resentment and grudges are like letting other people rent space in your head.”
- “Resentment is like taking poison and hoping that the other person will die.
- “I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.” James Baldwin



## Buttons Exercise *From the Advanced Manual*

*Becoming more aware of anger*

### Objectives:

To help participants become more aware of situations that “push their buttons” so that they “lose their cool” or “are out of control.” To discover ways that we can calm ourselves in these situations and learn other options.

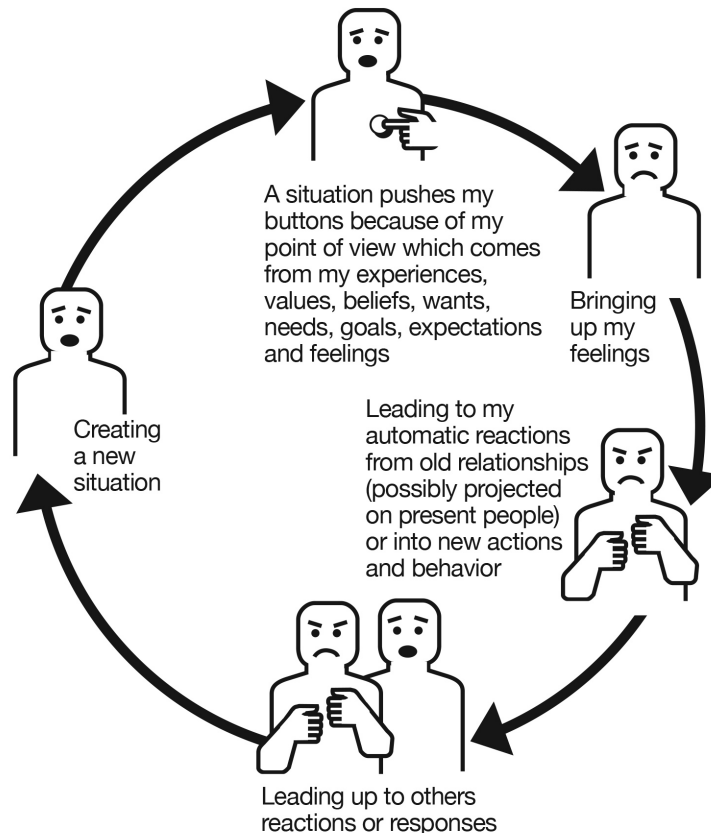
### Time:

30-45 Minutes

### Materials:

Buttons Circle Poster

# BUTTONS CIRCLE



### Sequence:

1. Form small groups of three or four people. Ask participants to share a situation that “pushes their buttons.” Allow 10 to 15 minutes for this.
2. Explain the Buttons Circle poster. Mention that probably most people shared a situation and the feeling connected with it. For example, “If people start to tell me what a great time they had when they got drunk, I get angry.”

## **Buttons Exercise** *(continued)*

3. But why? What lies between the situation and the anger? It's my "point of view." I value not getting wasted myself. Also, my brother's an alcoholic and I hate it when he tells supposedly funny "war stories." It's my old experiences. Underneath my anger, I'm sure that there's hurt and fear.
4. Back in small groups, have people consider what in their "point of view" comes between their situation and their feelings. Allow about 10 minutes.
5. After each person has shared his or her situation and feelings, ask other members of the group to suggest ways to calm or defuse their "buttons."
6. Return to the large group and ask participants to share solutions.

### **Process:**

1. What insights did you gain?
2. Are these methods to defuse your "buttons" helpful in real life?
3. What does this have to do with anger management?
4. What does this have to do with alternatives to violence?

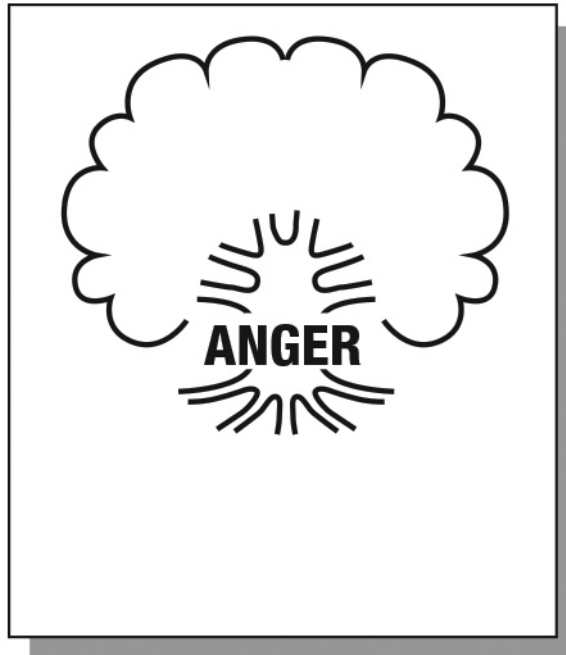
## Brainstorm: Roots of Anger

*From Nic Fine's Exploring the Roots of Anger*

**Objectives:** To help participants explore the deeper roots and causes of their anger.  
For the group to come to a general consensus about the common personal and social causes of anger

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Newsprint, markers and a diagram of a tree as shown below



**Sequence:**

- Brainstorm the behavior that comes from anger, and record them in the leaves and branches.
- Brainstorm the roots, the sources of anger.
- Using a marker, ask participants to connect some of the roots with the behavior.

**Processing:**

- What are the main roots that feed the anger?
- Are some of the fruits of anger similar to the roots and causes of anger?
- What are ways that help you deal with the causes of anger?

## Sources of Anger Talk *From John Shuford*

**Anger is the result of two factors; a stressor and trigger thoughts.**

- Stressor – a real or perceived stress, threat or loss to our body, property, self-esteem, values or control [don't get what we want].
- Trigger Thoughts about a stressor or its impact on us, which ignite a hostile response.

**Basic Needs – We frequently get angry when there is a threat to our basic needs, which are:**

- Need to survive: food, safety, shelter
- Need for connection: fulfilled by loving, sharing and cooperating with others.
- Need for meaning in life: fulfilled by achieving, being recognized and respected.
- Need for control or power over one's life: fulfilled by having/making choices in life.
- Need for fun: fulfilled by laughing and playing.

**Anger comes from:**

- the past – reminds you of past event/experience/person.
- the present – a reaction to a real or perceived violation.
- the future – an imagined or anticipated violation expected to occur.

**Some important dynamics of anger are:**

- We become more angry when we are stressed and our body resources are down.
- We are rarely ever angry for the reasons we think.
- We often become angry when we see a trait in others we can't stand in ourselves.
- Underneath many current angers are old disappointments, traumas and triggers.
- We get angry when a current event brings up an old unresolved situation from our past
- We often feel strong emotion when a situation has a similar content, words or energy that we have felt before

## Sources of Anger Talk *(continued)*

*From John Shuford*

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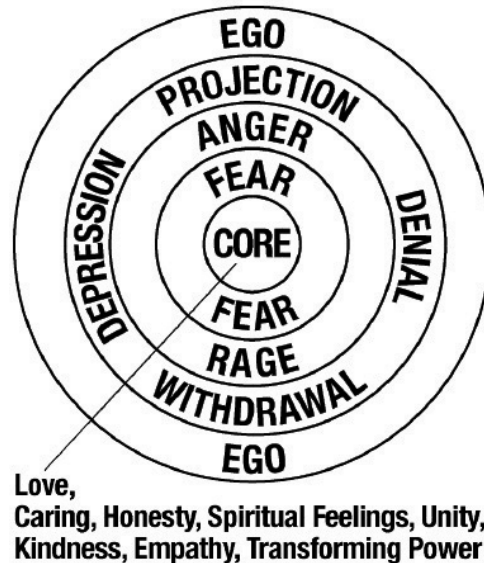
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## Personality Structure Talk *From Nancy Nothhelfer*

**Objectives:** To provide an introduction to the Anger Iceberg Exercise and to help the participants see that we all have a positive core at our center in spite of any mistakes that we have made in life

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Personality Structure Diagram as shown below



**Talk:** Present diagram and say this is one of many ways of looking at our inner personality. Then discuss each layer.

The core is the source of love and caring. It is the part of my personality that enables me to connect with others and with my inner sources of power. It is the source of Transforming Power. WE all have a positive core in spite of any mistakes we have made in our life.

However, when I am in my core, I have a tendency to feel vulnerable. As a result I often cover my positive core with fear.

But, since I feel weak and powerless when I am fearful I cover up my fear with anger. Anger enables me to feel powerful.

But, since I don't like to go around angry all the time, I cover up my anger with defense mechanisms. For example, if I am angry at you, I project that anger onto you and say, "I'm not angry at you but you're angry at me."  
"Denial, depression and withdrawal are other defense mechanisms.

And then, I cover it all up with my ego, which is the image I present to the world

**Discussion:** Open up discussion and ask for any comments or suggestions.

## Anger Iceberg Exercise *From John Shuford and Nic Fine*

**Objectives:** To help participants explore the levels of their own anger and come to a deeper understanding of their own anger so they can manage it more effectively.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Anger Iceberg Diagram as shown below, pencils and paper or index cards.



**Sequence:** Present the diagram and discuss the hurt feelings that underlie the anger. We do not become angry unless we feel hurt first. We all have basic human needs such as shelter, safety, respect, love, etc. And if any of these basic human needs are seen threatened we become fearful.

1. Divide the participants into small groups of three or four.
2. Pass out index cards and pencils. Ask each participant to think of a particular situation about which they are feeling angry (one from the past will do if there is no current situation). Have them record their responses on index cards.
3. Share the idea that anger and hurt are two sides of the same coin.
4. Ask each participant to share what they are angry about.
5. Then ask them to look at the hurt feelings under the anger. For example, "I felt hurt because no one valued my opinion."
6. Now ask them to identify the unmet needs under the hurt feelings that they experienced. For example, "I needed to be respected by my colleagues."
7. Now ask for people to identify the hidden fear under their needs. For example, "I feared that they would never respect me."

## **Anger Iceberg** *(continued)*

### **Processing:**

Gather in the large group and process the exercise.

- Were you able to identify the hurt feelings under the anger?
- Were you able to identify the basic human needs that were not being met?
- Were you able to discover the hidden fear under the anger?
- What does this exercise have to do with conflict resolution?
- What does this exercise have to do with Transforming Power?
- Did you find this exercise helpful?

Nic Fine comments, “We found that the exercise helped us to discover the hurt, needs and feared underlying a personal experience of anger. We could make a start by expressing other emotions, rather than sticking with the anger. We thought it was an important step in facing the anger of others to understand what lies beneath our own anger. We could respond to the hurt, needs and fears of the other person rather than focusing on the anger.



## Stress Levels Talk *From John Shuford*

**Objectives:** We live in a stressful society and prisons are especially stressful. It is best to lead into this talk by using a gathering that focuses on stress such as: “A way that I lower my stress level is...”

Finding ways to lower stress levels are a very important tool in anger management.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Stress Levels Diagram as shown below.

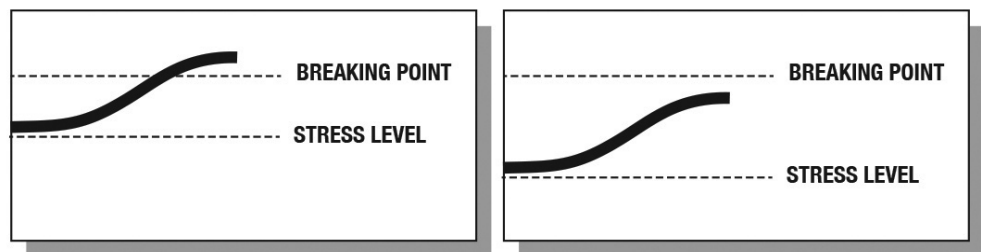


Diagram A

Diagram B

**Sequence:** Show Diagram A above. We all have a breaking point. Discuss ways that minor stresses may build up until we reach a breaking point. The event that triggers the breaking point may not be major but produces a major response.

Then show diagram B. Lowering stress levels may help to keep anger from reaching the breaking point.

**Discussion:** Open a discussion about the stresses the participants are experiencing in their lives and how they are dealing with their stress.

How do you avoid reaching your breaking point?

## Responses to Anger and Stress Talk

*From John Shuford*

**Alternatives:** These are four common options for dealing with anger and stress. (Post list on newsprint.)

1. **Express/Explode** – Does not reduce stress, creates feeling of power, releases endorphins
2. **Suppress Anger** – May increase stress, creates sense of frustration, creates feeling of powerlessness
3. **Defuse** – Releases tension but does not change cause of anger
4. **Transform** – Change your relationship with what caused the anger

Then discuss feelings and needs underlying anger.

What are the ways to transform stress and anger?

## **Stress Whip** *From Margaret Lechner*

- Objective:** Demonstrate the usefulness of reduced base-level stress and stress-reduction techniques
- Time:** About 10-15 minutes
- Materials:** Stress poster(s) (demonstrating 2 levels)  
2 Balloons (surgical gloves work), one blown up & one limp; pin to pop balloon
- Sequence:** Show diagram A, and discuss how small incidents accumulate stress, till a breaking point is reached. The incident that puts you over the edge may be relatively trivial.
- Show diagram B - with the same series of stress accumulation, but beginning at a lower stress level and therefore not going past the breaking point.
- Balloon demonstration: Blow up the balloon, with each breath being an example of an event which increases stress. Demonstrate the explosion of a full balloon. Demonstrate releasing air (stress), so the balloon does not reach the stretched point at which it explodes easily.

# Signals and Sidetracks Brainstorm *From Deb Wood*

**Objectives:** To help participants recognize the signals that our bodies and minds send as we are becoming angry and then to find sidetracks to avoid responding violently

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Newsprint and markers

**Sequence:** Prepare two sheets of newsprint: **“SIGNALS”** **“SIDETRACKS”**  
Brainstorm the following:

## **Signals**

Ask the participants to think about how we feel *before* we act violently.

Then, ask for and write down, on the Signals sheet, the signals our **bodies** send us? (These might include such things as: *gut instinct; sweating; tenseness; raised voice; a feeling of being closed in; “seeing red”; tunnel vision; eyes narrowed; etc...*)

Next, ask for the signals our **minds** send us. (These might include: *blaming; focus; everything else blotted out; feel victimized; fear; feel mean/hurtful; detached; defensive; etc...*)

## **Sidetracks:**

For this sheet, ask people to think about what we could do to “sidetrack” those violent feelings.

Ask, “What can we do?”, and write down the responses. (These might include: *take a time out; look away; imagine what they’re experiencing; apologize; change the subject; offer to listen (and, keep listening); pray; agree; stop and think; envision your aim; humor; drop your need to be right; breathe; etc...*)

Then ask participants to come up, three or four at a time, and circle one or two sidetracks that they haven’t done before that they think they could do. This part of the exercise allows a little quiet time to consider the exercise silently.

**Processing:**

- Does this exercise help you become more aware of the anger signals before you act?
- Does this exercise help you to sidetrack **your anger**?
- \* Does this exercise help you sidetrack the **anger of others**?

## Feelings and Needs Exercise *From Deb Wood*

**Objective:** A way to help us become aware of the relationships between our feelings and basic human needs, and ways the awareness can help us in conflict situations.

**Time:** 30 to 45 minutes.

**Sequence:** State the purpose of the exercise. Explain that we will be filling in all three areas of the poster.

Invite participants to share some **Life Events**, both positive and negative. You might give a few examples, e.g., getting a job, losing a job, accident. Don't give too many examples! End the brainstorm when energy is still high. The list does not need to be exhaustive.

Ask for the **Feelings** or **Emotions** that are associated with these, and record them in and around the human figure.

Move on to the **Needs** section. Humans have some basic **physical needs**: food, clothing and shelter, clean air and clean water. We also have **psychological, spiritual and emotional needs**: feel safe, purpose, having a voice, respect, living in community, variety/challenges to keep on learning, be in control, routine/structure, respect, and fun. Sex is also a human need, but may not be mentioned and in most groups I wouldn't add it to the list. Facilitators may add the above items if they are not offered by the participants.

Sometimes "wants" (electricity, showers) may be suggested as needs. To question these, ask if humans had survived without these items 200+ years ago. Money is a need only for what it can buy!

Ask participants, one at a time using a marker and words, to link life events with feelings/emotions, and needs that are being met or not being met. One can go from NEED (not being met) to FEELINGS to LIFE EVENT (why I divorced, murdered etc) or the reverse (begin with LIFE EVENT, and analyze the associated FEELINGS and NEEDS)

### **Processing:**

- What strikes you as interesting in these lists?
- Needs may be valid, but the means we use to meet them may produce conflicts. Select a NEED from list, and describe alternative means to meet the need in a win/win manner, (everyone's needs met). Might that path reduce violence?

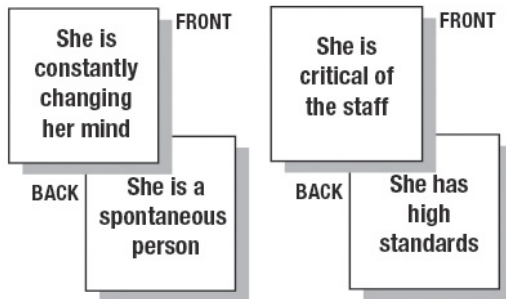
It may be important to point out that when our basic human needs are not being met, we find unhealthy and destructive ways to meet them. It should be easy to find an example in recent news stories that illustrate this. This is a good exercise to precede I Messages – inviting participants to be aware not only of their own needs that are not being met in a conflict situation, but also to be aware of and acknowledge the needs of the other person in the conflict.

## Common Ground Exercise

- Objectives:** To improve listening skills in an emotionally charged situation and to find common ground
- Time:** 30 – 40 minutes
- Brainstorm:** Post a sheet of newsprint with the heading, “Social Issues.” Ask the participants to brainstorm social issues dividing our society today. This may include issues such as: abortion, the War in Iraq, gun control, legalization of marijuana, the death penalty, gay marriage, gang membership, assisted suicide, legalization of prostitution, etc
- Small Groups:** After at least a dozen issues have been listed in the brainstorm, go down the issues one by one and ask for participants who are “pro” on the issue to raise their hands. Then ask for participants who are “con” on the issue to raise their hands. Form pairs of the “pros” and “cons.”
- Participants may choose to take roles that they do not support in real life if they wish. After all the participants are in pairs, explain the rules for the discussion:
- Discussion Guidelines:** The guidelines for the discussion are as follows:
1. Each person must paraphrase the points that his partner has made before speaking about their own point of view.
  2. Speakers must use “I Messages” as they express their point of view.
  3. Each person may speak up to two minutes.
  4. The listener may not interrupt the speaker unless the speaker uses “You Messages.”
  5. Look for the underlying issues from the Anger Iceberg including the feelings, needs and fears.
- Process:** After the pairs have had about 10 minutes to discuss the issue, gather in the large group and process the exercise.
1. Did you gain any insight about their partner’s point of view?
  2. Did you find any common ground?
  3. Were you really able to listen to their partner without thinking of how to reply or judging their partner’s point of view?
  4. Did you feel any anger or defensiveness in the discussion?
  5. Did you learn anything about managing anger in the exercise?
  6. What does this exercise have to do with alternatives to violence?

## Transforming Anger Story – You may use this story or have your own story.

**Materials:** Two cards with titles on the front and back as follows:



**Story:** Joyce works as a psychotherapist at a hospital outpatient clinic.

Joyce had a supervisor named Susan who was very critical of the staff members and she was constantly changing her mind about the instructions that she gave the staff. As a result, staff members were constantly complaining, some were quitting, and there was a great deal of turnover on the staff. Since Joyce had recently completed her MBA, she needed to be supervised by Susan as part of her training and she sees Susan at the office every day. (Joyce also recognized that the staff turnover provided a job opening for her.)

The staff was constantly complaining about their supervisor. Joyce decided that instead of getting angry and fighting with her supervisor, she would define the problem in a different way. She changed her perception as follows: (Use cards)

She is constantly changing her mind	—>	She is a spontaneous person
She is critical of the staff	—>	She has high standards

Shortly after Joyce changed her mind about Susan, Joyce was moved to a satellite office nearer her home and now she only had to see Susan once a week.

Joyce does individual therapy and leads therapy groups. She often takes cases that the other therapists do not want. Her clients seem to be feeling better and they seem to be making progress. They like having Joyce as their therapist. Joyce was confident in her ability as a therapist.

After Joyce has worked at the hospital outpatient clinic for three years, she came in for her annual evaluation by her supervisor, Susan said, "Joyce, I think your problem is that you are basically incompetent."

Instead of getting angry and defensive, Joyce replied, "That's really not a problem for me."

Joyce's supervisor was left speechless by her response.

Instead of being fired, Joyce's received an excellent evaluation and a raise.

A month later, her supervisor resigned due to pressure from the management.

Joyce transformed her relationship with her supervisor.

## Anger Iceberg Exercise II – Dealing with the anger of others

**Objectives:** To help participants understand the anger of others and develop some insight and empathy for people who express anger at them.

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** Anger Iceberg Diagram



**Sequence:** It is best to start the session with a gathering such as: A time I really had difficulty dealing with someone else's' anger was...

1. Divide the participants into small groups of three or four.
2. Ask each participant to talk about a time that someone was really very angry at them and ask them to describe what the anger was about (one from the past will do if there is no current situation).
3. Then ask each participant to identify the Hurt Feelings that the other person may have had. Then ask them to talk about the human Needs That May Not Have Been Met for the other person. And then ask them to look for the Fears that the other person may have had.
3. Now have people practice the things they might say in particular situations to de-escalate the tension and let the other person know that we want to understand the feelings behind the anger. Ask the groups to support and encourage each other in finding those responses which could communicate compassion when tempers are running high.

**Processing:** Gather in the large group and process the exercise.

- Did this exercise help in understanding the anger of others?
- What are some responses that helped to defuse the anger?
- What does this exercise have to do with conflict resolution?
- What does this exercise have to do with Transforming Power?

## **Dealing with Other People's Anger** – *From John Shuford*

**Talk:** After a brainstorm on ways of dealing with the anger of others, you may want to summarize the comments from the brainstorm and then make a few suggestions on how to deal with the anger of others.

- Suggestions:**
- Don't take it personally
  - Acknowledge your responsibility
  - Apologize if you were wrong
  - Validate the other person's feelings
  - Ask questions to help to understand the other person's anger
  - Do not become defensive
  - Hurt people hurt other people
  - Calm the other person by modeling calmness
  - Help the other person save face calmness yourself

This could be followed by role plays on dealing with anger



## **Addiction to Grudges Exercise** –*From Fred Feucht*

*Why we don't forgive*

- Objectives:** The exercise explores ways that hanging onto grudges hurts us physically and emotionally and asks the question, “why do we continue to hang onto grudges in spite of the fact that they hurt us.” Then the exercise discusses the blocks to forgiveness and helps participants let go of grudges and forgive others
- Time:** 30 minutes
- Gathering:** Pencils and paper and handout “Addiction to Grudges
- Materials:** Start with the gathering: "A grudge that I find it difficult to let go of is..." Then ask participants to write down one of their grudges in a slip of paper.
- Grudges are a very sensitive area. It seemed that it was nearly impossible to come through the criminal justice system without developing some grudges. Grudges at lawyers, prosecutors, judges, witnesses who testified against them, fellow defendants and many more. Some may have even been incarcerated as the result of their grudges.
- Introduction:** We have all been taught to forgive. Our parents taught us to forgive; Jesus taught us to forgive; St. Francis of Assisi taught us to forgive; Gandhi taught us to forgive; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us to forgive. We have all heard this message ten thousand times.
- We know how good it feels to be forgiven and to give up the guilt and anger. We all want to be forgiven for our mistakes.
- So why do we find it so hard to forgive? Why don't we want to forgive others?
- Before we can forgive someone, we must get rid of our grudges. Grudges are certainly a major ingredient of the violence we read about every day, such as, The Columbine Massacre, the Virginia Tech Massacre, Sandy Hook, Orlando, Las Vegas and Parkland. Grudges are an ingredient of most gang violence and drive by shootings. It is a key issue in family violence and stalking cases. I believe that grudges are an important issue to cover in AVP.
- Brainstorm:** Next brainstorm the "Ways that holding onto grudges hurts us." This may include everything from "high blood pressure" and "ulcers" to "dumping anger on my family and those who I love" and "getting more time."
- Then ask the question, "If grudges create all these negative effects, why do we want to hang onto them rather than forgive?"

## Addiction to Grudges (continued)

**Talk:** Why we hang onto grudges: Then begin to look at some of the reasons we hang onto grudges:

- 1. We believe that letting go of grudges and forgiving someone is a sign of weakness.** We might have to give up our tough, macho attitude and tell the truth. In fact, forgiving someone is really a sign of strength. I think you will find that it is usually the strongest and most mature individuals that are the first to forgive.
- 2. Letting go of grudges and forgiving someone means that we have to give up being a victim.** Sometimes we like to feel sorry for ourselves. This is a very human reaction. We may also want people to sympathize with us because we have been hurt or oppressed. Children often feel like victims when dealing with the adult world. But we are adults now and need to give up our childish ways. Taking responsibility for myself and forgiving others is the path to personal strength.
- 3. Letting go grudges and forgiving someone means we have to give up our anger.** Anger can be addictive. Anger may help us to feel powerful. Our anger may intimidate others. But we all know anger is not good for our emotional and physical health. Forgiveness is the step to inner health.
- 4. Letting go of grudges and forgiving someone means we have to give up our desire for revenge.** When we have been hurt, we often feel put down and disrespected. It is a natural urge to want to get back at the person who hurt us in an effort to put ourselves up. However, we all know that instead of correcting the balance, we may initiate a cycle of revenge which can escalate. Forgiveness is the tool to break the cycle of revenge.
- 5. Letting go of grudges and forgiving someone means we have to give up our attitude of self righteousness.** For many of us it is important to be "good" and "righteous" and to oppose anything we see as "wrong" or "evil." In some ways, it may be hard for us to maintain our position as being a "righteous" person unless there are "bad" people out there that we can oppose. In fact, we may need to hang on to the "bad" people out there as a way to maintain our feelings as being "righteous" Forgiving someone may mean that we need to give up our self righteousness and start being honest and real. Then the people we are in conflict with can become honest and real also.

**Small Groups:** Then divide into small groups. Ask participants to get out their slips of paper and share the grudge they would like to let go of. Then discuss these five reasons why people hang onto grudges and what they can do to get rid of their grudge.

## **Addiction to Grudges** (continued)

### **Processing:**

Then assemble as a large group and process the exercise.

- Were people able to let go of their grudges?
- What did they find was blocking their letting go?
- What are some things that people can do to get rid of their addiction to grudges?
- What does this have to do with Alternatives to Violence?

At the end of the discussion we found that the real problem with grudges is that they become addictive and we often hang on to them for dear life.

### **Notes:**

The Addiction to Grudges Exercise may be used as an important introduction to the subject of forgiveness, especially in Advanced Workshops. There are many AVP exercises on forgiveness that might follow grudges. The "Forgiveness Circle and Forgiveness Exercise focus on forgiving yourself. The Magic Carpet Exercise can provide a powerful experience in being forgiven. The Carefronting Exercise deals with differences and the difficult task of forgiving others.

The Addiction to Grudges Exercise may be followed by the Anatomy of an Apology Exercise.

Forgiveness is the ultimate goal when conflicts arise and when people have been hurt. It is the last step in the conflict resolution process. It is certainly an important aspect of our workshops.

Learning forgiveness in our personal lives will make us stronger people. We can then share our ideas to help those in our workshop lead more peaceful lives also.

## Addiction to Grudges Handout

Why we hang onto grudges: Begin to look at some of the reasons we hang onto grudges:

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## **Anatomy of an Apology Exercise** – *From Fred Feucht*

*A step toward healing relationships*

- Objectives:** To help participants understand the ingredients of an honest apology and to help them improve their troubled relationships
- Time:** 20 –30 minutes
- Materials:** Pencils and paper and handout “Anatomy of an Apology Guidelines”
- Talk:** What is a genuine apology? When we have national leaders who refuse to apologize for their mistakes, it can create a national crisis..
- There was another national crisis in 1974 when Congress was considering the impeachment of President Nixon. In President Nixon's resignation address he said:
- "I deeply regret any injuries that may have been done in the course of events that led to this decision. I would say only that if some of my judgments were wrong, and some were wrong, they were made in what I believed at the time to be in the best interest of the nation."
- This "apology" was a failure. Nowhere in his speech did he say that he regretted his actions nor did he express how his actions had hurt others.
- Another example of a failed apology is Senator Packwood's speech after he was accused sexually harassing at least a dozen women:
- " I am apologizing for the conduct that it was alleged that I did."
- This "apology" did not specify what he had done that was wrong, he took no responsibility for his own actions nor the harm that he caused to more than a dozen women who were his dedicated employees. It was not accepted as a sincere apology.
- In contrast, the apology of Richard Clark before the 9-11 Commission had a much different effect. After all the other government witnesses had denied any responsibility for the tragedy, Richard Clark, turned his back on the committee and faced the audience which included many of the victims of the 9-11 tragedy. He then looked them in the eye and said, “I failed you; we all failed you!”
- This was a meaningful apology because he acknowledged the way 9-11 had hurt people, he took personal responsibility for it, and expressed deep regret for his failure to prevent the tragedy. The apology respected the dignity of the victims of 9-11 increased the public respect and good intentions of Richard Clark.
- An apology is called for when a person values a relationship. The purpose of an apology is to repair or restore a relationship with an individual, a group or even a nation. There has been a great deal of focus on forgiveness in AVP with a variety of forgiveness exercises and an Advanced Workshop on Forgiveness. True forgiveness may require an apology.

## **Anatomy of an Apology** – *(continued)*

**Guidelines:** Handout the “Anatomy of an Apology Guidelines” and discuss each of the steps in a genuine apology. Then open the group for questions and discussion.

**Small Groups:** Form groups for four or five and handout pencils and paper. Then ask the participants to:

- Write down the name of someone who they need to apologize to.
- Describe the incident that they need to apologize for.
- Describe the way that this incident hurt the other person.
- Explain why you regret this incident.
- How are you willing to change your behavior and compensate for their loss?

**Processing:** Apologies are about repairing relationships.

- Do you find it difficult to apologize?
- How do you feel when someone apologizes to you for a mistake?
- Do you feel better after you apologize to someone?
- What does an apology have to do with Transforming Power?

## **Anatomy of an Apology Guidelines** – *Handout for participants*

### **Some of the elements of a genuine apology are:**

1. The apology must acknowledge responsibility. The person making the apology needs to take responsibility for having done something wrong. It is an effort to right the balance between the offender and the offended. For example, saying, "I'm sorry that you're upset by what I said." is not taking responsibility for your actions and blames the other person for the upset.
2. The apology must be specific. It names the mistake that caused the harm. It is more than saying, "I'm sorry for what I did." It identifies the error that you've made. Generalities will not do.
3. The apology must express how the mistake hurt the other person. It should let the other person know that you understand their feelings. It should express some empathy for the other person. "I understand you were really worried that something might have happened to me when I was an hour late for dinner."
4. The apology may involve regret and guilt. The apology needs to express remorse. A real apology involves pain, suffering and soul-searching regret. It may express your concern that your mistake may have jeopardized your relationship and that you value the relationship.
5. The apology must express a willingness to change behavior. It lets others know that the mistake will not occur again. Sometimes some sort of restitution is called for. One way of handling this would be to say, "Let me know if there is anything I can do." Or if you broke something of value, you can offer to replace it.
6. If the offense was made publicly the apology should be public also. It is not fair to offend somebody publicly and then make an apology in private.

Most of all, an apology is a willingness to let go of the ego and treat another person with respect. It is an expression of honesty. It is a sign of strength rather than a sign of weakness.



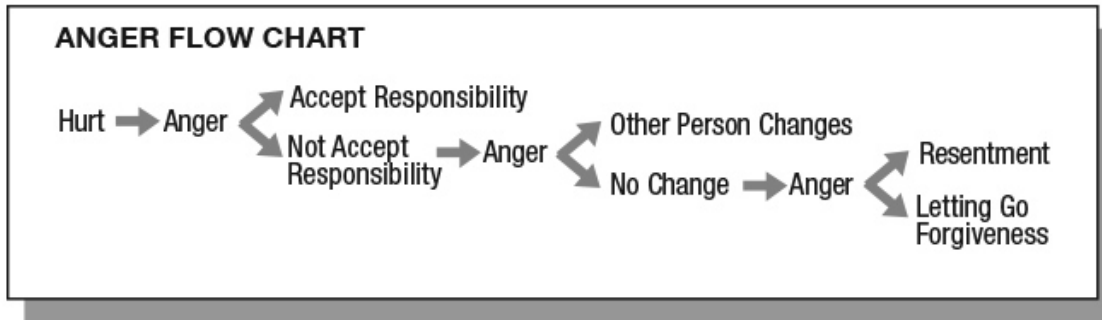


## Anger Flow Chart *From John Shuford*

**Objectives:** To provide an overview and summary of the Anger Management Workshop.

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Materials:** Anger Flow Chart as shown below.



**Talk:** Discuss options on the path to forgiveness and reaching the goal of true forgiveness

- Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation involves participation of the other person. You can forgive someone without reconciliation.
- Anger starts with feelings of hurt or pain. Perhaps some of our basic human needs have been threatened.
- The first step is to see how you may be responsible for the situation that created the hurt or pain. Perhaps this is the result of other stresses in your life.
- The second step is to ask the for others to change the situation.
- The third step is to let go of the anger. Perhaps you can talk to a friend, take time our for prayer or meditation, understand where the other person is coming from or change your relationship to the situation or person. Reaching forgiveness is fro your benefit, not the other person.

## **Anger Overview Handout – From John Shuford**

*This may be used with the Anger Floe Chart Exercise*

### **Anger is the result of two factors; a stressor and trigger thoughts**

- Stressor – a real or perceived stress, threat or loss to our body, property, self-esteem, values or control [don't get what we want].
- Trigger Thoughts about a stressor or its impact on us, which ignite a hostile response.

### **Basic Needs – We frequently get angry when there is a threat to our basic needs,**

- Need to survive: food, safety, shelter
- Need for connection: fulfilled by loving, sharing and cooperating with others.
- Need for meaning in life: fulfilled by achieving, being recognized and respected.
- Need for control or power over one's life: by having/making choices in life
- Need for fun: fulfilled by laughing and playing

### **Anger comes from:**

- the past – reminds you of past event/experience/person.
- the present – a reaction to a real or perceived violation..
- the future – an imagined or anticipated violation expected to occur..

### **Some important dynamics of anger are:**

- We become more angry when we are stressed and our body resources are down.
- We are rarely ever angry for the reasons we think.
- We often become angry when we see a trait in others we can't stand in ourselves.
- Underneath many current angers are old disappointments, traumas and triggers.
- We get angry when a current event brings up an old unresolved situation from our past.
- We often feel strong emotion when a situation has a similar content, words or energy that we have felt before.

### **Ways of dealing with our own anger:**

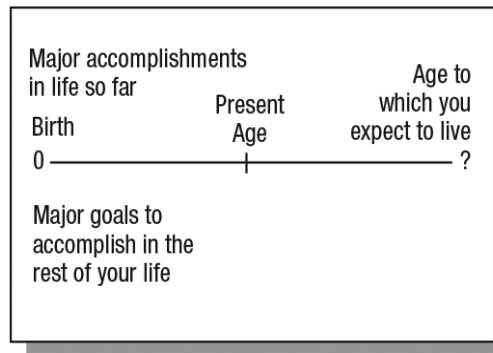
- Suppress it – Symptoms of repressed anger are: hypersensitivity; inflexibility; fear of rejection, conflict, abandonment, and disclosing feelings; over achievement and over control.
- Express it [explode] – Momentary release, which temporarily reduces tension but does not reduce overall stress.
- Defuse it – Reduces tension and stress momentarily, but does not deal with cause of anger.
- Transform it – Change your relationship to the cause of your anger so it will not have the same effect on you next time. This can be done by the following: prayer, meditation, talk to someone about it, talk to the person with whom you are angry and, finally, self-talk.

### **Dealing with others' anger:,**

- Don't take it personally [their anger is their responsibility].
- Acknowledge your responsibility [for your emotions and actions].
- Remember, "Hurt people hurt people."
- Calm the other person: model calmness, talk about it [rather than ignore it], listen openly, show understanding, reassure them and help them save face

## Lifeline Exercise *From Fred Feucht*

- Objectives:** To affirm accomplishments in life so far and to set major goals for the future.
- Time:** 20-30 minutes
- Materials:** A pencil, a sheet of 8 ½ x 11 paper and No. 10 envelope for each participant. Diagram of lifeline on newsprint as shown below.



- Sequence:**
1. Explain to each participant that whatever they write is for their use only and to be kept for their reference.
  2. Pass out paper and pencils.
    - Ask the participants to place the sheet of paper horizontally and to draw a horizontal line on the paper. Demonstrate on newsprint
    - Ask them to place a “0” on the left end of the line and a number on the right end indicating the age that they expect to live to. Explain that you believe that people have a choice about how long they will live but nobody lives forever.
    - Next, ask them to put a mark on the line indicating their current age.
    - Ask them to write above the line the major accomplishments in their life so far.
    - Then ask them to write below the line at least three things or goals that they want to accomplish in the rest of their life.
    - Next, ask them to choose the most important goal and then turn the piece of paper over and write down at least three steps to accomplish that goal.
    - Finally, ask them to write today’s date on the upper right corner of the paper, and then put the paper in the envelope and seal the envelope. Then, on the outside of the envelope write the date when they will be ready to open the envelope, perhaps a month, six months or a year from now.
- Processing:**
- How do you feel about what you wrote?
  - Did it help to clarify your talents and goals in life?
  - How might you use this contract with yourself?



# Meditation Exercise

*Adapted from Advanced Manual by Gail Rogers and Nancy Shippen*

**Objective:** To experience 4 types of meditation which have been shown to build healthy brain circuitry.  
To impart a sense of self-worth and encourage people to act according to the best in them.

**Time:** 30 Total, probably not more than 10 minutes of actual meditation time. Slow yourself down. Breath between phrases. Try to be sensitive to the comfort level of the group.

**Materials:** CD or tape cassette player for soft, calming music to be played in background.  
Handout on the 4 types of meditation to be shared after the experience.

**Time:** About 20 minutes

**Sequence:** Gather the group in a circle and ask them to relax and close their eyes.  
Read slowly: use the word love or compassion according to your assessment of the groups comfort:

1. Pay attention to your body.  
Feel yourself sitting in your chair. Straighten your body do you will be able to breathe more easily. Close your eyes of focus softly on a spot on the floor. Feel yourself begin to relax. Start with your feet, then your calves. (Pause for a breath or two) Now move on up to your thighs, hips, abdomen, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, face... (Pause for a breath or two)
2. Now bring your focus to your breath at the tip of your nose or in the rise and fall of your diaphragm. Just follow the breath in and out. (Pause for several breaths)
3. Now open your perception to the space around you. Be aware of the temperature, sounds... Be aware but don't be distracted by them. Let them come and go... open awareness... (Pause for several breaths)

In this state of openness hear what I will read. Just let it in without resistance, or judgment

I am me.  
In all the world. There is no one else like me.  
I have this one life to live.  
The way I live can make a difference.  
To the people close to me,

## Meditation Exercise *(continued)*

To those I live with — play with — work with,

To the community I live in,

And to people I may never see.

I can use the love/compassion given to me to help others.

Sharing this love/compassion makes me happier and others happier.

When I am unkind to others in words or actions, I destroy something in myself.

Love/compassion brings people together and builds.

Let my life be built on love/compassion.

Let me find the good in myself and the good in others.

Let me be a part of making this world a better place.

Let me be the REAL ME.

I am me.

I am a valuable person.

There will never be another me. (Pause for several breaths)

4. Now envision yourself bathed in a gentle light. Appreciate all you have attained. Know that you will go on growing in wonderful ways.

Think of those around you. Send them the same affirming energy.

Explore how you can enlarge this circle of affirmation... to your family...others living here... maybe even someone you find difficult. Gently recognize the struggles of all and wish them strength and community.

Pay attention to how you feel now. Recognize the feeling of relaxation and connection. This is a state you can return to, a place of calm and clear vision.

When you are ready, think about what you may be willing to share about this experience and return to the group.

### **Process:**

What was that like for you? If you grew sleepy, know your body is sleep| deprived.

Go over handout, 4 Meditation Practices. Point our each in the above sequence.

## **Peace Pledge** *From Sing Sing Prison*

**Purpose:** As a final step in the Anger Management Workshop ask each participant to make a personal commitment to manage their anger. The goal is to help to make their community a more peaceful place.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Make copies of the Peace Pledge on the next page for each participant

**Sequence:** Read the Peace Pledge slowly and then distribute copies to each participant. (There is a copy of the text of the Peace Pledge on the last page of their AVP Tool Kit Booklet.)

Ask each participant to sign the Peace Pledge. Place a box or other container in the center of the circle and ask each participant to place their Peace Pledge in the container.

Thank the participants for their help in making the world a more peaceful place.

# *Peace Pledge*

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ pledge to make my community a safer, more peaceful place for me and my brothers and sisters.
2. I pledge to think twice before reacting once.
3. I pledge to think how my fellow brothers and sisters, no matter what age, color or position would feel if I insulted them.
4. I pledge to find an alternative way to control my anger and not take it out on anyone else.
5. I pledge to speak to someone I trust when I have a problem.
6. I pledge to carry the word of peace to at least one other person.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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