



Dr. Tracy's Counseling Services

20 years of experience

Q: I cannot seem to control my anger outbursts and it is effecting my relationships, what can I do?

A: Lashing out in anger can damage relationships but is can also be harmful to you. A study done by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute found that people who outwardly expressed anger and hostility were at greater risk for heart attack or coronary artery disease. Learning to manage anger can foster better relationships and may also improve your health.

There are practical tips that can help you control your anger outbursts which include but are not limited to:

- **Distance:** taking time out from the anger-inducing situation can help you calm down and get a better perspective on the situation. If you are in a direct confrontation with someone you should take a drive or a walk. If you are in the office try to turn your attention to a different task or subject to de-escalate the situation.

- **Writing:** keep a journal to record your feelings, including anger. You may also want to keep a calendar to document when your anger occurs. It is related to your monthly cycle? Are you impacted by monthly deadlines at work? If there are regular cycles of anger you can prepare in advance on how to manage these events. You may also want to write a letter to the person who made you angry. You do not have to mail it but writing it can make you feel better.

- **Relaxation:** deep breathing, meditation, and other calming activities can help distract you from the immediate feelings of anger. For some people, listening to music can also help you deal with anger.

- **Exercise:** it releases stress and increases endorphins, hormones that make you feel better. Exercise also gives you and escape from the person or situation that made you angry. You can return to the situation feeling calmer and stronger.

If you believe your anger is out of control and these practical tips do not help you, seek the help of a mental health professional. A licensed mental health professional can work with you to develop techniques for changing your thinking and your behavior. You can learn to deal with your anger in an appropriate way.

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The goal of counseling is to increase the zest and enthusiasm for living and to strengthen a person's ability to make healthy choices.

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