

Active Listening

Communication Skill



Active Listening: Treating listening as an active process, rather than a passive one. This means participating in conversation, rather than acting as an audience. Active listeners show they are listening, encourage sharing, and strive to understand the speaker.

Show You're Listening

Put away distractions. Watching TV, using your phone, or doing other things while listening sends the message that the speaker's words are not important. Putting away distractions allows you to focus on the conversation and help the speaker feel heard.

Use verbal and nonverbal communication. Body language and short verbal cues that match the speaker's affect (e.g. responding excitedly if the speaker is excited) show interest and empathy.

Verbal:	"mm-hmm" / "uh-huh"	"that's interesting"	"that makes sense"	"I understand"
Nonverbal:	nodding in agreement	reacting to emotional content (e.g. smiling)	eye contact	

Encourage Sharing

Ask open-ended questions. These are questions that encourage elaboration, rather than "yes" or "no" responses. Open-ended questions tell the speaker you are listening, and you want to learn more.

"What is it like to ___?"	"How did you feel when ___?"	"Can you tell me more about ___?"
"How do you ___?"	"What do you like about ___?"	"What are your thoughts about ___?"

Use reflections. In your own words, summarize the speaker's most important points. Be sure to include emotional content, even if it was only communicated through tone or body language.

Speaker: *I've been having a hard time at work. There's way too much to do and I can't keep up. My boss is frustrated that everything isn't done, but I can't help it.*

Listener: *It sounds like you're doing your best to keep up, but there's too much work. That sounds stressful!*

Strive to Understand

Be present. Listening means paying attention to body language, tone, and verbal content. Focus your attention on listening, instead of other mental distractions, such as what you want to say next. When possible, save sensitive conversations for a quiet time with few distractions.

Listen with an open mind. Your job is to understand the speaker's point of view, even if you don't agree. Avoid forming opinions and making judgments until you fully understand their perspective.

Reflections

Communication Skill

Using a technique called **reflection** can quickly help you become a better listener. When reflecting, you will repeat back what someone has just said to you, but in your own words. This shows that you didn't just hear the other person, but you are trying to understand them.

Reflecting what another person says can feel funny at first. You might think the other person will be annoyed at you for repeating them. However, when used correctly, reflections receive a positive reaction and drive a conversation forward. **Here's an example:**

Speaker: "I get so angry when you spend so much money without telling me. We're trying to save for a house!"

Listener: "We're working hard to save for a house, so it's really frustrating when it seems like I don't care."

✓ Quick Tips

The tone of voice you use for reflections is important. Use a tone that comes across as a statement, with a bit of uncertainty. Your goal is to express: "I think this is what you're telling me, but correct me if I'm wrong." Your reflections don't have to be perfect. If the other person corrects you, that's good! Now you have a better understanding of what they're trying to say.

Try to reflect emotions, even if the person you're listening to didn't clearly describe them. You may be able to pick up on how they feel by their tone of voice or body language.

Switch up your phrasing, or your reflections *will* start to sound forced. Try some of these:

- "I hear you saying that..."
- "It sounds like you feel..."
- "You're telling me that..."

Focus on reflecting the main point. Don't worry too much about all the little details, especially if the speaker had a lot to say.

Reflections

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Practice

"I was in a bad mood yesterday because work has been so stressful. I just can't keep up with everything I have to do."

Reflection:

"I feel like I'm doing all of the work around the house. I need you to help me clean and do the dishes more often."

Reflection:

"I've been worried when you don't answer your phone. I always think something might've happened to you."

Reflection:

"I don't understand what she wants from me. First she says she wants one thing, then another."

Reflection:

Suicide Warning Signs

The following factors have been found to be related to the presence of suicidal behavior. No single risk factor can be used to fully assess risk.

- Threats to hurt or kill self
- Previous suicide attempts
- Searching for means of suicide (pills, weapons, or other methods)
- Preoccupation with death and dying
- Recent losses
- Hopelessness
- Dramatic changes in mood
- Substance abuse (especially increasing use)
- Feeling as if there are no solutions to problems
- Withdrawing from social relationships
- Unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Family history of suicide
- Impulsivity or poor self-control
- Health problems (especially new diagnoses and worsening symptoms)
- History of psychiatric diagnoses

Safety Plan

STEP 1: Know When to Get Help

What are the warning signs that you are beginning to struggle with your problem? These can include thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.

STEP 2: Coping Skills

What can you do, by yourself, to take your mind off the problem? What obstacles might there be to using these coping skills?

STEP 3: Social Support

If you are unable to deal with your distressed mood alone, contact trusted family members or friends. List several people in case your first choices are not available.

Name	Contact Info

STEP 4: Seek Help from Professionals

If your problem persists, or if you have suicidal thoughts, reach out to your professional support system.

Local emergency number:	
Professional or agency:	
Suicide hotlines in the United States:	1-800-SUICIDE 1-800-273-TALK 1-800-799-4889 (for deaf or hard of hearing)

Local Emergency Number for Mobile Crisis: 423-634-8884

Tennessee Statewide Crisis Line: 855-274-7471

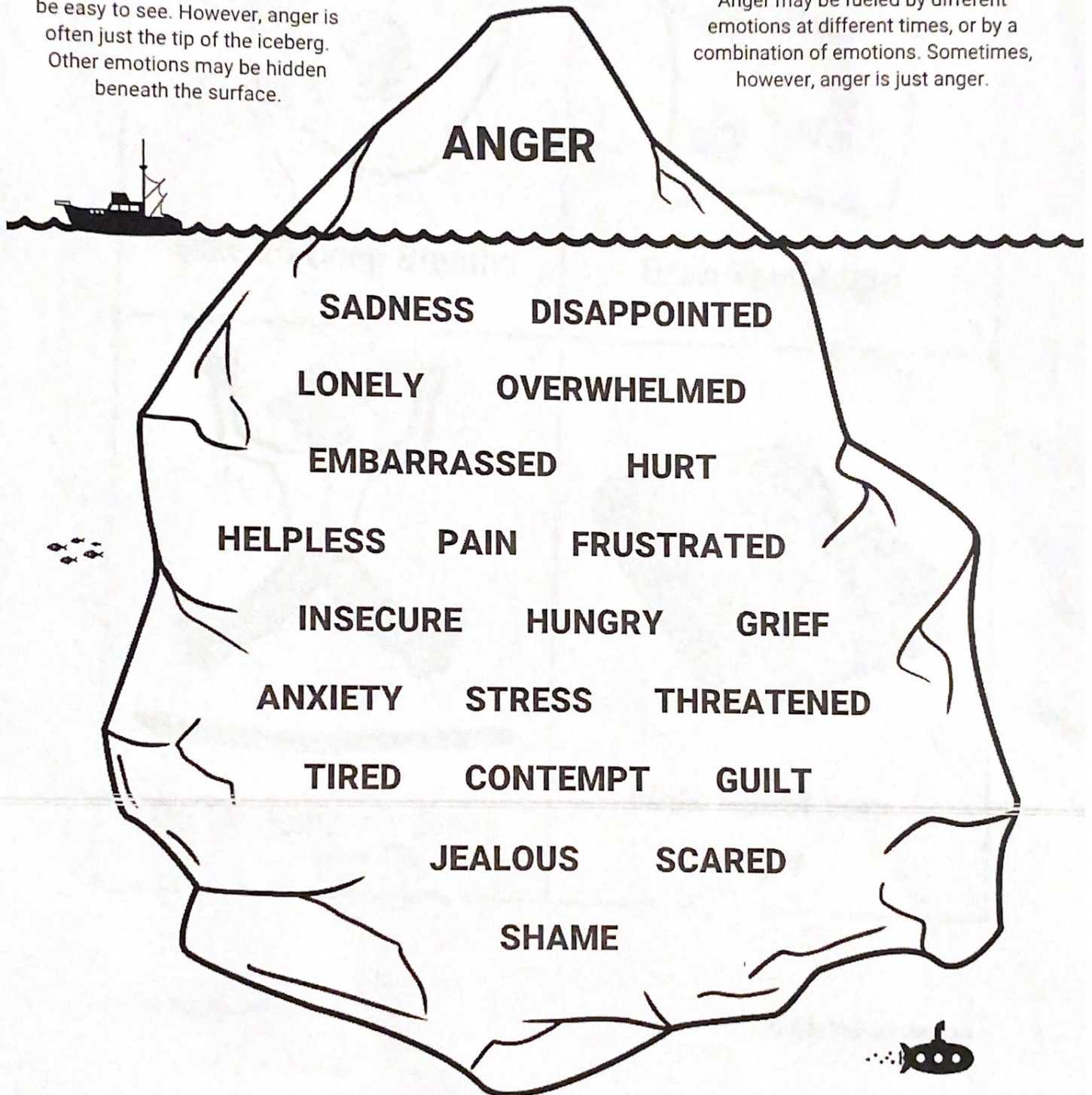
Anger Iceberg

In some families, anger is seen as more acceptable than other emotions. A person might express anger in order to mask emotions that cause them to feel vulnerable, such as hurt or shame.

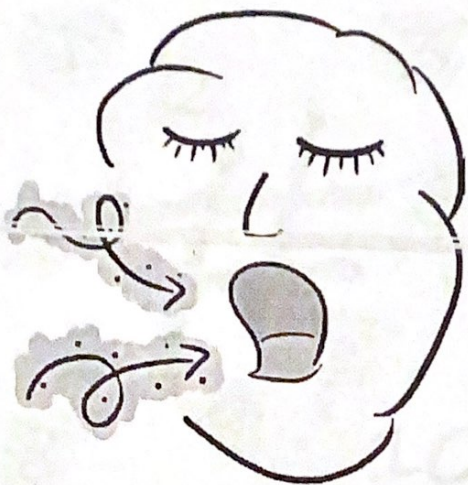
Anger triggers are people, places, situations, and things that set off anger. Your triggers can provide clues about the emotions behind your anger.

Anger is an emotion that tends to be easy to see. However, anger is often just the tip of the iceberg. Other emotions may be hidden beneath the surface.

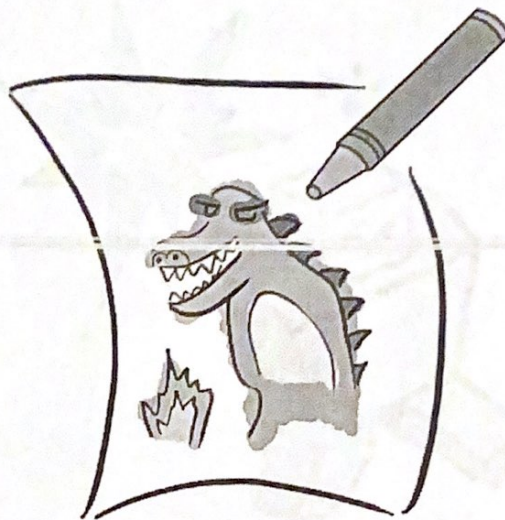
Anger may be fueled by different emotions at different times, or by a combination of emotions. Sometimes, however, anger is just anger.



Anger Management Skill Cards



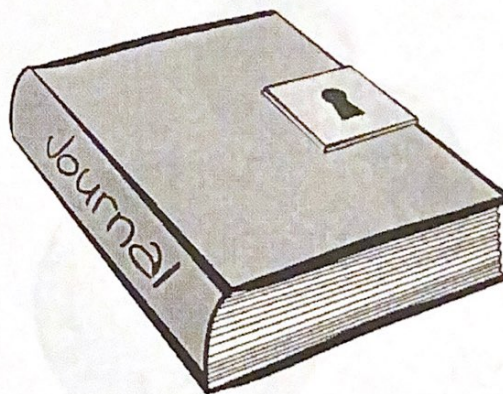
Take 20 Deep Breaths



Draw Your Anger



Do 50 Jumping Jacks

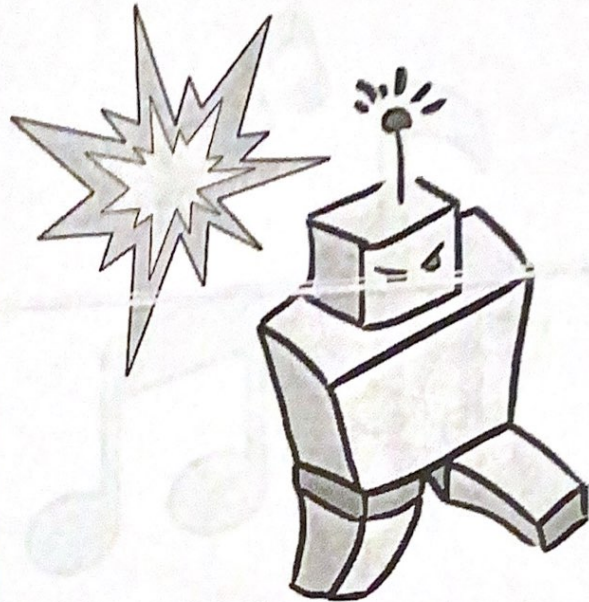


Write About Your Anger

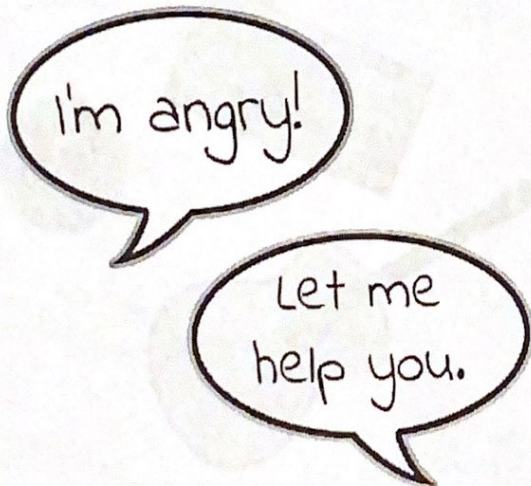
Anger Management Skill Cards



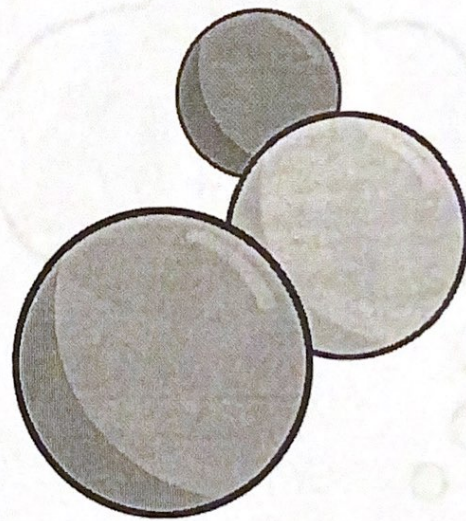
Count to 100



Walk Away

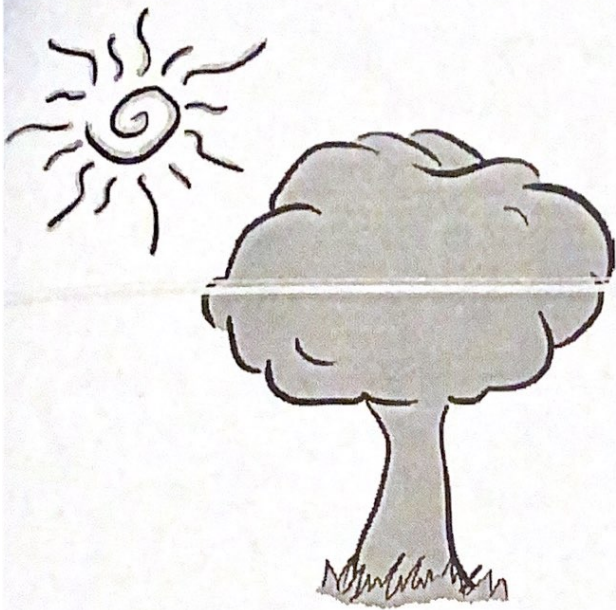


Talk to Someone about
Your Problem



Your Own
Squeeze a Ball

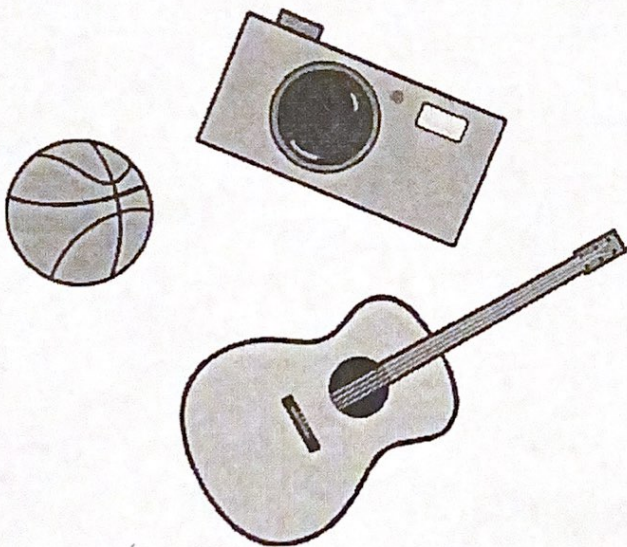
Anger Management Skill Cards



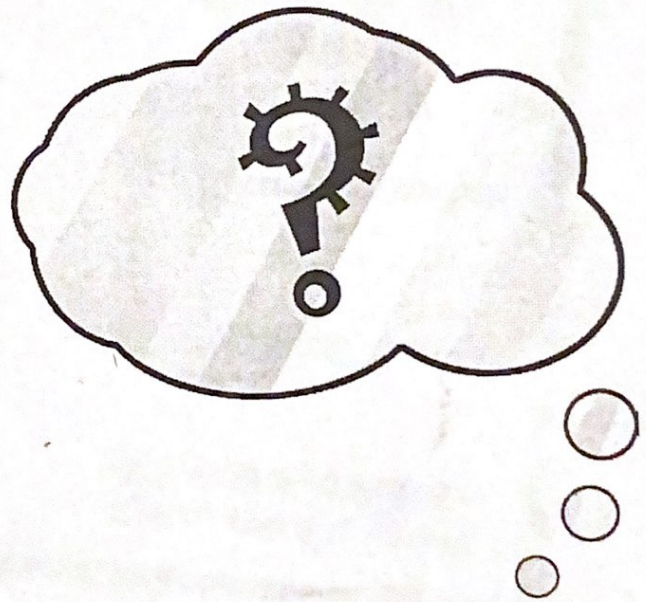
Play Outside



Listen to Music



Practice a Hobby



Your Own Idea:

Anger Warning Signs

Sometimes anger can affect what you say or do before you even recognize how you're feeling. You may become so used to the feeling of anger that you don't notice it, sort of like how you can hear the sound of an air condition, or the humming of a refrigerator, but block it from your mind.

Even if you aren't aware of your anger, it influences how you behave. The first step to managing anger is learning to recognize your personal warning signs that will tip you off about how you're feeling.

How do you react when you feel angry? Some of these warning signs might start when you are only a little irritated, and others might start when you are very angry. *Circle the warning signs that apply to you.*

Mind goes blank	Insult the other person	Face turns red
Body or hands shake	Start sweating	Throw things
Heavy or fast breathing	Stare at the other person aggressively	Scowl or make an angry face
Scream, raise voice, or yell	Clench fists	Feel sick to the stomach
Punch walls	Feel hot	Become aggressive
Become argumentative	Go quiet and "shut down"	Crying
Pace around the room	Headaches	Can't stop thinking about the problem