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Acknowledgements

Anger Management Series
Choices

This document would not have been completed without assistances from the following organizations:

VISN 16 MIRECC
VAMC Fayetteville, AR

And the support of our immediate supervisors

Carol A. Phillips, MD, Chief of Psychiatry

AND

Mr. Walter R. Rather, LCSW, Chief of Social Work

We extend our THANK YOU to all.

To our colleagues: If you have comments, or questions to ask, or would just like to converse with a mental health colleagues, we would be pleased to hear from you. Feel free to write or call any time. We may be reached at 501-444-5048 or via email via VISTA or Outlook. For additional copies contact Michael.kauth@va.gov.

Very Respectfully,

Eddy L. White, LCSW

JoAnn Smith, LPC
Introduction

WELCOME... we’re glad you are here today
   The one thing we all have in common today is that we all asked for help concerning our anger. We all have had a temper problem, and someone referred you to this group. Thanks for coming.
   This booklet is for you to use throughout the series. Each session I’ll be handing out information that pertains to that day’s topic. I encourage you to hang onto this information, take it home, and tell it to your family, especially with wives and children, so you can all be learning together.

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP
   The purpose of this group is to look at ways to manage your anger; to make it work for you. We want you to learn healthy ways to manage your feeling of anger, and constructive ways to express yourself.
   We will not tell you to not be angry. Anger is a natural emotion. We all came with the ability to be angry. Infants cry when they are hungry. They quickly learn to display anger when they don’t get what they want, when they want it. Look at their faces. Anger is a natural, normal expression of displeasure or dissatisfaction. We want you to learn how to make it work for you.
   One of the ways you will learn to manage your anger is by learning to manage your stress level. So, each session I’ll take 5-10 minutes and introduce to you what we call a Stressbuster. Each one will be different, so by the time you have completed the group, you will have been introduced to a minimum of eight different ways to manage your stress levels. I encourage each of you to practice these and find one or two that are comfortable and helpful for you.

GOAL: MANAGEMENT OF ANGER
   Excessive anger destroys relationships. We want you to learn how to express yourself so that your relationships remain intact. Our goal is for you to learn healthy ways to manage your feelings of anger, to have mental and behavioral tools available to you so you can make choices about how to express yourself, and to express yourself in beneficial ways.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU:
   While you are in this group, we do ask that you conduct yourself in such a way that the group remains a safe place for all of us. The following is information we have learned over time that helps us ensure group is a safe place.
Ground Rules for Group Sessions

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** What you say in the group stays in the group. You can talk about your own experiences outside the group, but it is unacceptable to talk about others’ experiences outside the group.

2. **LEAVING THE GROUP:** The group usually lasts an hour and a half. There are no formal breaks during this time. Restroom breaks are sometimes necessary. We ask that you quietly leave the room and return.

   The group exists to assist you in working through your feelings and we do you a disservice if we do not address your feelings. Should you become angry in-group, we would like for you to stay and discuss the issue in-group if at all possible.

3. **TREATMENT ISSUES:** You are here because you desire changes in your life. You are responsible for your treatment issues. It is not the responsibility of the therapist or group members to drag the issues out of you. No one will make you be here and no one will make you participate.

4. **FOCUS OF THE GROUP:** The primary focus of this group is to explore ways to manage your stress levels, and behavioral responses, especially angry responses. You are responsible, as a part of the group, for keeping the focus there.

5. **PARTICIPATION:** You are responsible for your individual level of participation in the group. Know that your progress toward wellness depends on your participation, and not the group or leader. Everyone in the group is a leader and a helper.

6. **ATTENDANCE:** Completion of the group means attending a minimum of 6 out of 8 sessions. We strongly encourage you to attend all 8 sessions, if at all possible, because we have found that those who complete all 8 sessions receive the most benefit from the group.

7. **RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER:** As a group member you can expect to be heard when you speak. We know it is important for you to express your ideas. You want to be heard, and we want you to have the Opportunity to be heard. Thus, it is best for one person to speak at a time. Please give your attention to the speaker.

8. **GOALS FOR THIS GROUP:**
   a. When this group is finished we would like for you to have expressed no physical or verbally assaultive behavior to other group members and you to have demonstrated no behavior, which warrants legal action during the course of the group.
   b. When this group is finished, you will be able to:
      (1.) identify your individual anger cues
      (2.) identify passive, assertive and aggressive behaviors
   c. You will have developed a personalized anger control plan.
   d. You will be able to make CHOICES for the behavior you express to others.

   Thank You for being here today. We appreciate you.
Session 1: What is anger?

OBJECTIVES:
- To introduce the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of anger.
- To define and discuss our Personal Anger Expression.
- To introduce the Anger Control Plan.

KEY QUESTION:
- How do I respond when I’m angry?
- What is my body’s response to an angry situation?
- How do I begin to manage my angry response?

HANDOUTS
- Stressbuster #1: Deep Breathing
- Anger Booklet
- How do you really feel today?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
- Become aware of and learn the following things about yourself:
  - Your anger level when you awake in the morning.
  - Where you carry anger tension in your body.
  - How much personal space you need around you to be comfortable.
  - How you respond when someone enters your personal comfort space.

Thought for the day: THINK BEFORE YOU VENT
Session 1: What is anger?

OUTLINE

1. Opening remarks/Housekeeping information

2. Definition of anger
   - normal emotion
   - range of feeling
   - frequency

3. Responses to anger
   - physical
   - emotional
   - behavioral
   - total behavior

4. Anger Control Plan
   - introduce concept
   - start plan

5. Personal Anger Expression
   - definition
   - illustration
Session 2: Dimensions of Anger

OBJECTIVES:
- Self-knowledge about predictable patterns of anger responses.
- Identification of the nature and habitual responses of his/her anger.
- Explanation of the dimensions of anger.

KEY QUESTIONS:
- How will understanding the dimensions of my anger help me manage my anger responses?
- What are my habitual anger responses?
- What role do physical, mental, and behavioral management skills play in developing my personal anger control plan?

HANDOUTS:
- Stressbuster #2: Meditation
- Hi and Lois cartoon
- Emotional Umbrella

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
- Be aware of situations, people, thoughts and other specifics that are the sources of your anger and what you are doing to generate and promote it?

Thought for the Day: Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. (Charles Swindoll)
Session 2: Dimensions of Anger

OUTLINE

1. Review of previous session.

2. Self-awareness
   • Achieved by self-monitoring.
   • Takes mystery out of anger.

3. Dimensions of your anger.
   • Habitual responses
   • Belief System
   • Learning & Culture
   • Situational

4. How often are you angry?
   • How intense on a scale of 1-10 is your anger?
   • How long are your anger episodes?
   • How do you express your anger?

Knowing the above takes the mystery out of anger. Now, you are ready to begin personalizing your anger control plan.
Session 3: Anger Expression

OBJECTIVES:
- Review Sessions 1 and 2.
- Today’s focus: Expressing angry feelings in a successful manner.
- Discuss control issues in terms of total behavior and basic human needs.

KEY QUESTION:
- How can I express I’m angry in such a way that I can be heard, and so others can respond in a favorable manner?

HANDOUTS:
- Stressbuster #3: Self Talk
- Practicing Anger Management

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
- Continue Practicing Deep Breathing and Meditation
- Monitor your self-talk
- Change negative self-talk to positive or neutral responses

Thought for the Day: EVERYBODY WANTS TO CHANGE HUMANITY BUT NOBODY WANTS TO CHANGE THEMSELVES.
Session 3: Anger Expression

OUTLINE

1. Review of previous two sessions
   • Anger definition
   • Personal anger expression
   • Anger control plan

2. Control Theory
   • Total behavior
   • Basic needs

3. Self expression
   • Verbal vs. non-verbal
   • Aggressive vs. assertive
   • Self-talk
Session 4: How Your Thoughts Affect Your Anger

OBJECTIVES:
• To identify the way your perceptions, values and social rules determine the way your anger is expressed.
• To explore the impact of power differential in determining the way your anger is expressed.
• To recognize and confront your belief systems which contribute to anger dyscontrol.

KEY QUESTIONS:
• How do my perceptions, beliefs, gender, and power influence my anger expression?
• What can I do to change my anger response?

HANDOUTS:
• Anger Summary Classes 1-3
• Cognitive Restructuring
• Stressbuster #4: Laughter

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
• Continue to identify your personal physical response to anger feelings
• Observe actions of others in social situations and notice how they respond
• Become aware of and learn the following things about yourself:
  o Identify what social situations are potentially anger producing for you.
  o How your mood influences the intensity and duration of your anger
  o Learns how your mood and physical response changes as you observe communication styles across gender and power differentials
  o How you respond when someone enters your personal comfort space

Thought for the day: When all else fails—Laugh.
Session 4: How Your Thoughts Affect Your Anger

Outline

1. Review previous sessions.
   - Homework
   - Total behavior

2. Thoughts that affect your feelings
   - Use ‘I Can’ group discussion
   - Control theory
   - Perceptions: A-B-C

3. Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT)
   - Irrational thinking
   - Cognitive distortions
Session 5: Mental & Behavioral Skills

OBJECTIVES:
• To personalize the Anger Control Plan.
• To discuss methods to reduce anger arousal.
• To reinforce the power of practice.
• To encourage the exercise of Choice.

KEY QUESTIONS:
• What can I do to reduce my anger arousal?
• What beliefs will reduce anger triggers?
• Can I do this?

HANDOUTS:
• Stressbuster #5: Progressive Muscle Relaxation
• Stressed Duck
• Personal Bill of Rights

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
• Schedule stress reduction techniques into your day.
• Take your personalized Anger Control Plan home, and use it this week. Make note of what works and what doesn’t. Plan to report back to the group next session.

Thought for the Day: MORE OF THE SAME GETS MORE OF THE SAME. WHAT I PRACTICE I BECOME.
Session 5: Mental & Behavioral Skills

OUTLINE

1. Review previous sessions
   • Anger Control Plan
   • Anger Self-Monitor
   • Usefulness of REBT

2. Control Theory
   • Basic psychological needs
   • Pictures in our heads
   • Total behavior

3. Mental Skills
   • Thought-stopping techniques
   • Disputing irrational beliefs
   • Response Rehearsal
   • Rewriting scripts

4. Behavioral Skills
   • Time-out
   • Exercise
   • Organize problem solvers
   • Write

5. Other stress reduction techniques
   • Humor
   • Music
Session 6: Conflict Resolution

OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce communication and behavioral skills that facilitates successful conflict resolution.
• To introduce seven steps to fair conflict resolution.

KEY QUESTIONS:
• How do my perceptions influence how I view a possible anger-producing event?
• How can I prepare myself mentally and physically to manage a likely conflictual situation?

HANDOUTS:
• Stressbuster #6 Stretching
• Stress Triangle
• Seven Steps to Fair Conflict Resolution
• Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
• Practice viewing situations from another’s perspective.
• Initiate a change in your habitual response to anger-producing events.
• Identify a past anger-producing event and share with the group how you may have reached a more positive outcome by using some of the problem-solving skills discussed.

Thought for the Day: The secret of walking on water is knowing where the stones are.
Session 6: Conflict Resolution

OUTLINE

1. Review previous sessions.
   • Homework from last session

2. Negotiation
   • Crucial elements
   • Negotiation styles

3. Conflict resolution skills
   • Address the conflict early
   • Speak to the key person
   • Expect some discomfort
   • Focus on the desired outcome, not the problem
   • Treat the person as a most important person
   • Agree on a plan

4. Five basic methods for conflict resolution
   • Denial or withdrawal
   • Suppression or smoothing over
   • Power or dominance
   • Compromise or negotiation
   • Collaboration or win-win
Session 7: Forgiveness

OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce the concept of forgiveness.
• To identify ‘letting go’ behaviors.

KEY QUESTIONS:
• How does anger in the form of bitterness and resentment continue to influence my life?
• How can I defuse hurtful, bitter memories, thoughts, and/or feelings?
• What’s holding me back from a healthier lifestyle?

HANDOUTS:
• Stressbuster #7: Self-Massage
• Poem: Healing Through Forgiveness

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:
• Use at least one ‘letting go’ behavior in the coming two weeks.
• Continue to practice stress reduction techniques.
• Use your anger control plan this week.

Thought for the day: THERE IS NO HAPPINESS WITHOUT PEACE; AND NO PEACE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS.
Session 7: Forgiveness

OUTLINE

1. Review previous sessions.
   - Basic human needs from Control Theory
   - Personal belief system and perception

2. Forgiveness
   - What it is
   - What it isn’t

3. Discuss ‘Letting Go’ behaviors
   - Tell your story
   - Participate in self-help groups
   - Develop healing rituals
   - Find opportunities to help others
Session 8: Making Choices

OBJECTIVES
- To review previous key points.
- To review individual anger control plan.
- To answer questions.
- To complete patient satisfaction questionnaires.
- To complete ANGR checklist.
- To give out CHOICES medallion to group participants.

KEY QUESTION
- What stress reduction techniques have I become comfortable with using?
- How can I continue to address my needs for anger management?

HANDOUTS
- Stressbuster #8: Exercise
- 101 Stress Relievers
- CHOICES Medallion
- Summary Sessions 1-8

FINAL HOMEWORK
- Continue to work the problem.

Thought for the day: THINK HEALTHY
Session 8: Making Choices

OUTLINE

1. Review Key Points from previous sessions
   • Total Behavior
   • Perceptions and Personal belief systems
   • Mental and Behavioral Skills
   • Conflict Resolution

2. Review their individual anger control plans

3. Conduct a question and answer session

4. Concluding Remarks
   • ANGR Checklist
   • Patient satisfaction survey
   • CHOICES medallion
Recommended Reading

Bennett, B. (1993). Breathing into life, recovering wholeness through body~ mind and breath. Center City, MN: Hazelden Educational Materials


Handouts

Anger Booklet

CHOICES medallion
Cognitive Restructuring
Emotional Umbrella
Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict
Healing Through Forgiveness
Hi and Lois cartoon
How do you really feel today?
Massage Techniques You Can Use at Home
Meditation
Personal Bill of Rights
Practicing Anger Management
Seven Steps to Fair Conflict Resolution
Stressbusters:
  #1: Deep Breathing
  #2: Meditation
  #3: Self-talk
  #4: Laughter
  #5: Progressive Muscle Relaxation
  #6: Stretching
  #7: Self-Massage #8: Exercise
Stressed Duck
Stress Triangle
Summary of sessions 1-3
Summary of sessions 1-8
101 Stress relievers