

Anger Management Workbook and Curriculum

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The Anger Management Workbook and Curriculum is divided into twelve Modules. The first, Getting Started, introduces anger (and anger problems). What is anger? How do people typically deal with their anger? What s the difference between healthy and unhealthy anger? All these questions are answered carefully, with an eye to the reality that anger is a complex topic and that no two people s anger are exactly alike. Dr. Pfeiffer then tackles the latest research on the angry brain. He describes what happens inside our brains when we become upset and how the newer parts of our brain can help us control our more primitive reactions. He also summarizes the most exciting topic of brain study, namely how we can consciously change its internal structure by strongly and repeatedly focusing upon what we want to do and how we want to think. This type of change is essential if you have been angry so long that your anger has become an automatic habit. The third module is entitled Anger Awareness. I suggest you take a peek at his use of the iceberg analogy on page 35 to see how you can make use of your imagination and creativity to help you better understand and handle your anger. Then comes Calming Techniques, including a wide range of exercises such as diaphragmatic breathing, body relaxation and meditation. Any one of these techniques is useful. Taken together, someone with significant anxiety issues (which easily trigger anger flare-ups) can learn how to feel much more calm and peaceful inside. Module Five describes how shame, often hidden from conscious awareness, may be the single greatest cause of a person s excessive anger. Shame can make people call themselves names, become paranoid, and attack others in a total rage. These shameful rages are quite dangerous. They often lead to physical aggression, murder and suicide. Fortunately, Dr. Pfeiffer presents ways to become more aware of one s hidden shame as well as ways to lessen that feeling. Modules Six and Seven cover the essential anger management topics of altering dysfunctional thinking and learning how to be less critical and more accepting of others. Included here is material on empathy, basically the ability to put yourself into another person s shoes. I believe that people who try anger management techniques without developing empathy will eventually fall back to their old critical patterns. Only when we really take the time to enter into another person s world can we truly lay aside negative judgments about that other person. Modules Eight and Nine deal with conflict management and assertiveness training. These skill-focused chapters, along with the last unit entitled Practical Solutions are full of specific ways you the reader can share your feelings, ask for what you want, and protect your interests, while staying in control of your behavior at the same time. Module Ten describes stress reduction techniques. Dr. Pfeiffer suggests several different ways to lessen one s stress that range from redirecting attention and gaining social support to learning how to accept your anxiety instead of fighting it and practicing gratitude. Finally, Module Eleven is about Mindfulness. Although mindful awareness has been increasing in Western society over the last couple decades, this area has only recently been suggested as a way to help people with anger problems. Dr. Pfeiffer quickly but carefully describes what mindfulness is, how it can help with anger, and how to get started practicing mindfulness meditation techniques.

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