

"I'm so mad ... I could just explode!"

Unresolved conflict can severely limit closeness and communication. Walls go up. Anger simmers until it becomes open rage or private depression. Perhaps life has taught us that anger and rage are the same, so we live in fearfulness of our own anger and of someone else.

The good news is that we can learn a lot about handling conflict in ways that are fair and safe. Counselors can help us explore such questions as: What happened here? How do I feel about it? What am I *really* angry about? What do I want? Sorting out unclear messages makes it easier for us to communicate. Partners or friends can't read our minds ... nor can they respond to built-up anger or a whole "laundry list" of angry concerns at one time.

A counselor can help us clarify issues, learn to listen respectfully and develop ways of negotiating differences. As we practice these skills, conflicts cease to be a battle zone but become an opportunity to understand each other better. We can grow together in sorting out conflict instead of growing away from each other!



Lutheran Social Service
for changing lives

Call 612.642.5990 or 1.800.582.5260
for the counseling office nearest you.

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Dealing with Anger

Most of us find it hard to handle anger and conflict. Yet, anger is a normal human response to a real or perceived threat. Feelings get hurt, needs don't get met, or something just plain irritates us.

Check your own response when dealing with anger:

- Keep stone-faced ... but harbor resentment.
- Yell, demand that the other person "shape up" or respond.
- Blame, analyze, criticize.
- Overeat, over-drink or overspend.
- Argue to prove I'm right.
- Smile and try harder to "be nice."
- Take off ... leave the situation.

Our feelings exist to tell us things. Stuffing or ignoring anger doesn't erase it or make it go away. Unexpressed feelings often surface later in unrelated situations. We can learn to identify what we are really angry about and express our feelings in an appropriate manner at an appropriate time.

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