Anger

Anger arises when we experience injustice in our lives or when we do not get something, that we feel is important to us. In this sense, the feeling of anger helps us to be aware of what matters to us. You might want to think for a moment, for example, about important things that you feel you have missed out on in life. Could these things for instance, be related to a loss of your freedom, a lack of recognition and validation, or losing contact to people who were close to you? Anger sometimes can hold a person in it's grip to such an extent, that they are unable to identify other ways of getting what they want in life. How might it be possible for you, for example, to obtain what is precious for yourself without being overwhelmed by anger?

Anger sometimes acts as a substitute for other painful emotions, protecting us from feelings of grief or fear. For example, instead of being continuously angry with the past, it is also important for us to grieve for what we have lost or for what we cannot have anymore. Grief helps us to accept the reality of our situation and to continue on with our lives in the future.

ANGER AS AN EMOTION AND ITS EXPRESSION
- Anger is a natural emotion: It helps us to defend ourselves and protect what we consider to be important in our lives.
- It is a different thing to feel angry than to behave angrily.
- Anger can be expressed in many different ways. Some are useful, others harmful.
- Anger can easily result in a downward spiral. If we behave angrily, we may lose the respect of others, instead of receiving their understanding, even though this is something we might actually want. As a consequence, we become even angrier.
- The expression of anger through angry deeds doesn't ease the feeling of anger. Aggressive behaviour such as hitting, breaking objects, physically or verbally harming oneself or others can increase the feeling of anger and cause further problems.
- Beneficial ways of expressing anger are: talking about your feelings with a respectful listener, writing your feelings down, drawing about what you feel, having a conciliatory internal dialogue with yourself, searching for more positive solutions to a problem or accepting the reality of a situation and deciding to move beyond it.
- Sometimes we can turn anger on ourselves: hurting ourselves however, doesn't help us work through the circumstances surrounding our feelings of anger. There are many more empowering ways of regulating the feeling of anger.

HOW TO REGULATE ANGRY FEELINGS

Anger is an important and intense emotion, which is sensed in our bodies. Try and teach yourself to recognise the physical signs of anger, such as increased tension in your body, the tensing of your jaw, the clenching of your fist, increased heart rate or feeling physically hotter. In recognising the physical signs of anger, you can start to relax yourself before you might do something you regret. Remember, that even the most intense feelings of anger will fade away: they have a beginning, a middle and an end. In regulating anger the following techniques can be helpful.

- Anger creates a lot of energy in the body. Try to soothe yourself by releasing this energy, for example by running, doing push-ups, punching a pillow or bag, or by walking.
- Give yourself a time-out: When you notice that your anger is boiling over, exit briefly from the situation. Go out or leave to another room.
- Concentrate on your breathing. Count your breathing. Wait for the feeling of anger to lessen.
- When you are angry you may also have angry thoughts. In such situations, you can calm yourself for example, by saying to yourself that: "I have a thought that I want to harm myself or another, but it is just a thought ". The thought is just a thought, it is not the truth about the situation or about you.
- It is therefore good to learn to distinguish between emotions, thoughts and behaviour.