

WHAT TO DO WHEN ANGER BECOMES PROBLEMATIC

INFORMATION FOR VETERAN FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES

Do you ever feel like you are walking on eggshells around your loved one? As a family member, it can be difficult to navigate a loved one's problematic anger. While anger is a normal emotion that assists us in difficult situations, it can be a problem if it's expressed in harmful ways or persists for a long time.

ANGER MAY BE A PROBLEM IF YOUR LOVED ONE:

- angry a lot of the time
- has a 'short fuse'
- has 'explosive' outbursts of rage, or difficulty controlling their anger
- goes silent and seems numb to those around them
- seems irritable and resentful for a long time
- has anger seemingly out of proportion to the trigger (e.g. when cupboards bang or a dog barks)
- takes a long time to calm down after getting angry
- expresses anger with verbal and emotional abuse (e.g. threats, intimidation, criticism)
- expresses anger with violence towards you, others or property (e.g., breaking things, punching holes)

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

CFMWS Family Information Line website: <https://cfmws.ca/support-services/family-information-line>

Phone: 1-800-866-4546 (North America), 00-800-771-17722 (International),

E-mail: FIL-LIF@cfmws.com for information and/or video appointments

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS ANGRY

Stay calm

Take a breath, speak in a calm voice.

Try not to meet anger with anger.

Listen and validate their emotions

Allow them space to express their feelings. Say “I can see you are really angry now.”

Give them space

Give them time to calm down and reflect.

Take some time away

Let your loved one know that you need some time and you will continue the conversation with them later.

Keep yourself and others safe

Remove yourself or others from the situation if you don't feel safe.

Remember that you are not responsible

When someone is angry, they can attempt to place blame for their angry actions on you, and perhaps cite mental illness as an explanation. The truth is that hurting other people, even when a person has mental illness, is never justified.

Help them seek professional help

When they are calm, encourage them to talk to their doctor about getting counselling and professional help. While they may have doubt, therapy provides a private and confidential space for them to understand their anger and feel more in control of their reactions.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

It's vital to take time each day to look after your own mental health. It's not a weakness or a luxury. Self-care helps you manage your own emotions and responses – it helps you cope.

If you, a child or another person are in immediate danger, call 911. If you are feeling stressed and finding it hard to cope, talk to your doctor about getting counselling and professional help.

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