

Lecture#5/June 11, 2012

Common Mental Health Problems

Anger

Causes, Symptoms, Management

Instructor:

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Anger-definition

- An emotional state that may range in intensity from mild irritation to hostility, aggression, and rage. Anger has physical effects including raising the heart rate and blood pressure and the levels of adrenaline.

Introduction

- Anger covers emotional pain and eventually makes emotional pain worse.
- Anger hurts children and causes them to be angry or fearful adults
- Long term consequences: loneliness, disappointment, health issues, violence, war, relationship problems, work problems
- Is learned and can be unlearned with commitment and effort
- Greatest predictor of satisfaction in marriage is how people learn to handle conflict and anger

When anger helps

- Physical threat – fight or flight
- Correcting injustice
- Thinking creatively

God and Anger

- Old Testament – 600 references to anger
- God's anger mentioned more than his love
- God's anger is "a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil."
 - James Packer, *Knowing God*
- Jesus was angry (Mark 3:1-6) –
Angry at stubborn hearts

Ephesians 4:26

- "In your anger do not sin."
- "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry"
- And, do not give the devil a foothold."

Biblical Teachings on Anger

- Anger is normal and not necessarily sinful
 - Anger may be the result of wrong perception
 - Anger often leads to sin
 - Vengeance - bitterness, revenge
 - Abuse – Verbal, emotional, physical, sexual
 - Subtle aggression – passive aggression, gossip
 - Withdrawal
- Can be used for good
 - Can be controlled
 - Must be acknowledged at least to ourselves
 - Outbursts must be restrained
 - Confession and forgiveness must be given and received freely
 - Resist ruminating and revenge
 - Cultivate love

--Collins, 2007

Summary on Bible Teaching

■ Anger:

- Universal emotion
- Good when expressed against real injustice
- Harmful when expressed for self-centered motives
- Needs to be controlled

Causes of anger

- Biology – Adrenaline flow
- Injustice
- Frustration (Powerlessness)
- Emotional hurt (rejection)
- Learning (family, TV, video games, role models)
- Personality and perception

Approaches to anger (not all are healthy)

- Holding back (can be helpful especially for a short time)
- Turning inward (leads to physical problems, fear, depression, helplessness, self harm, negative thinking)
- Acting out – aggression: direct, passive, redirected
- Facing the anger's sources –constructive approach, takes courage and maturity
- Bringing improvements – direct the anger in positive ways. "When I saw the injustice, I got angry and was motivated to do something to help."

Counseling and Anger

1. Help counselees admit anger
2. Help counselees express anger
3. Help counselees consider the sources of anger
4. Focus on humility, confession, and forgiveness
5. Teach anger management

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?

Anger payoffs

- Reduces stress temporarily
- Hides emotional pain
- Gets attention
- Used for punishment and revenge
- Helps change/control others

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)

Learning trigger thoughts

- Interpretations
- Assumptions
- Evaluations

Trigger Thoughts

- People don't understand me
- People demand too much
- People are impolite
- People are selfish
- People are stupid
- People disrespect me
- Many more.....

Anger diary (log)

- Column 1 – Pain/stress
- Column 2 – Provocative situation
- Column 3 – Trigger thoughts
- Column 4 – Anger rating 0-100
- Column 5 – Behavior
- Column 6 – Outcomes (-10 to +10)
 - Self
 - Others

What can I do instead of getting angry?

■ Worksheet

- Column 1: Provocative Situation
- Column 2: What did I expect from the other person?
- Column 3: How I can take responsibility? What is my part in this?

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)

Teach relaxation skills

- Deep breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Cue-controlled relaxation
- Combined relaxation skills
- Provocative scene exercise
 - Write scene
 - Practice relaxation

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)
- Identify thought distortions

Anger Distortions

- Blaming others and not taking responsibility for one's own part in the problem.
- Catastrophizing /magnifying-believing a small problem will lead to a disaster. Imagining a chain of negative events.
- Labeling people – “Raca” (worthless, Matthew 5:22)
- Wrongly describing person's motives – “mindreading”
- Overgeneralization – never, always, nobody, everybody
- Demanding/ commanding – “should” or “should not”, perfectionism, no grace.

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)
- Identify thought distortions
- **Problem-solving communication**

Problem-solving communication

- Identify “soft emotions” – sadness, fear, loneliness
- Use soft start up
- 3 F’s
 - Facts
 - Feelings
 - Fair request
- Example: “When you spend much of your time on the Internet, I feel lonely and resentful. I miss you. I would like you to spend some time with me each evening.”

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)
- Identify thought distortions
- Problem-solving communication
- Encourage positive, helpful thoughts (coping thoughts)

Coping Thoughts

- Reminder to use relaxation – “Breathe”
- Problem solving thoughts – Look for solutions
- Escape routes – You can walk away
- Self – confidence thoughts
- New explanations of other’s behavior
- See the whole picture
- Getting accurate – facts
- Preferences not “shoulds”
- People doing their best.

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)
- Identify thought distortions
- Problem-solving communication
- **Develop spiritual maturity**

Spirituality and Anger

- Prayer
- Developing fruit of the spirit
(Galatians 5:22-25)
- Developing a spirit of thanksgiving/
gratitude

Anger management steps

- What are your anger payoffs?
- Learn triggers (keep a log)
- Teach relaxation skills (keep log)
- Identify thought distortions
- Problem-solving communication
- Encourage coping thoughts
- Develop spirituality through prayer and fruit of Spirit

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