

ANGER • WORKSHEET

# Anger Management Worksheet

Work through a recent anger episode step by step, from trigger to aftermath, and build a concrete plan for handling the next one better.

Reviewed by **Michael Callans, MSW** · Published June 27, 2026

## What this tool does

Anger management is not about never feeling angry. Anger is a normal, healthy emotion that tells you something feels unfair, threatening, or important. The goal is to change how you express it, so that it does not damage your relationships, your health, or your sense of control. This worksheet walks you through a single episode the way a therapist might, because understanding one episode in detail teaches you more than vague resolutions to "be calmer."

The approach draws on cognitive behavioral therapy, the most studied treatment for anger problems. CBT shows that anger is shaped not just by what happens, but by how we interpret it and what we do next. The same traffic jam enrages one driver and barely touches another, because of the meaning each gives it. By examining the trigger, the thoughts, the feeling underneath, your warning

signs, and your response, you find several different points where a small change can shift the whole outcome.

The plan you build at the end is the payoff. Knowing your earliest warning sign, your most useful coping skill, and a fairer way to read the situation turns anger management from a wish into a rehearsed routine. Like any skill, it improves with repetition, so working through a few episodes over time is far more useful than reading about it once.

If, as you work through this, you notice that your anger regularly leads to aggression, regret, or harm, that is worth taking seriously rather than managing alone. Persistent or explosive anger responds well to professional help, and reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness.

## How to use it

- 1 Pick one recent episode**, while it is still fresh, and write down just the facts of what happened: where, when, and who.
- 2 Rate the intensity and trace the signs**, ticking the body warning signs you noticed and naming which one arrived first; that first sign is your earliest alarm.
- 3 Write the angry thoughts**, then look underneath them for the softer feeling, hurt, embarrassment, feeling unheard, and what you really wanted in that moment.
- 4 Record what you did and how it turned out**, honestly, then draft a fairer, more balanced reading of the situation.
- 5 Build your plan for next time**, naming your earliest warning sign, the coping skill you will use, and how you will say what you need.

#### A COMPLETED EXAMPLE

What happened? *Saturday, August 29, 2026, at home. My flatmate left the kitchen a mess again after agreeing the night before to clean up.*

Anger intensity (0-10): *6*

Body warning signs: *Clenched jaw, tense shoulders*

Angry thoughts at the time: *He doesn't respect me. I'm the only one who cares about this place.*

Underlying feeling: *Not heard*

How did you respond? *Banged the pans around and made a sarcastic comment, then went quiet for the rest of the morning.*

How did it turn out? *He got defensive, and the actual conversation about cleaning never happened. I regret the sarcasm.*

A more balanced thought: *He's careless in the mornings, but he pulls his weight in other ways. This is a habit to fix, not proof he doesn't respect me.*

The coping skill I'll use: *Step outside for two minutes and slow my breathing before saying anything.*

#### 1 The situation

Pick one recent time you got angry. Describe it plainly.

What happened? (where, when, who)

---

---

---

#### 2 Intensity and signs

How strong was it, and how did your body show it?

Anger intensity (0 = none, 10 = the angriest you can imagine)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Circle one.

Body warning signs you noticed

☐ Racing heart

☐ Clenched jaw

☐ Tense shoulders

☐ Hot face

☐ Shallow breathing

☐ Clenched fists

☐ Knot in stomach

☐ Trembling

Which sign came first?

---

#### 3 The thoughts

What was going through your mind?

Angry thoughts at the time

---

---

---

#### 4 The feeling underneath

Anger often covers a softer feeling. What was under yours?

Underlying feeling

☐ Hurt

☐ Afraid

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Disrespected

☐ Powerless

☐ Rejected

☐ Unfairly treated

☐ Not heard

☐ Ashamed

☐ Sad

What did you really want or need here?

---

---

---

#### 5 What you did, and the result

How did you respond?

---

---

---

How did it turn out? Any regrets?

---

---

---

#### 6 A fairer way to see it

Looking back, is there a more balanced interpretation?

A more balanced thought

---

---

---

#### 7 Your plan for next time

Turn this into something you can actually use.

My earliest warning sign to watch for

---

The coping skill I'll use

---

---

---

How I'll express it if I need to

---

---

---

## Looking back

Across episodes, which warning sign shows up first most often? That sign is your best early exit.

---

---

What softer feeling keeps hiding under your anger? Naming it changes what you actually ask for.

---

---

Compare the episodes where you used your plan with the ones where you didn't. What difference do you see in how they ended?

---

---

## Sources

- American Psychological Association. Controlling anger before it controls you. APA; 2023.
- Deffenbacher JL, et al. Cognitive-behavioral conceptualization and treatment of anger. Cognit Behav Pract. 2007.
- Kassirer H, Tafrate RC. Anger Management: The Complete Treatment Guidebook for Practitioners. Impact Publishers; 2002.

## Ready to get your anger under control?

A therapist who specializes in anger management can help you build skills that last. Free to search our directory. Start at [psychology.com/therapist](https://psychology.com/therapist).

This worksheet is an educational self-help tool, not therapy or a diagnosis. If your anger regularly leads to aggression, regret, or harm toward yourself or others, please reach out to a licensed professional. In an emergency, call your local emergency number or, in the US, call or text 988.

© Psychology.com · free to print and share

[psychology.com/tools/anger-management](https://psychology.com/tools/anger-management)