

During these challenging and difficult times everyone, especially members of the healthcare team, will need help coping and managing at work and at home. Learning to manage anger will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Please continue to be healthy and be safe.

WHEN WE'RE ANGRY, THERE ARE EMOTIONS HIDDEN UNDER THE SURFACE.

Anger is one of the basic human emotions, and is related to the “fight, flight, or freeze” response of the sympathetic nervous system; it prepares humans to fight. Often, what we see stems from the build up of other thoughts and feelings.

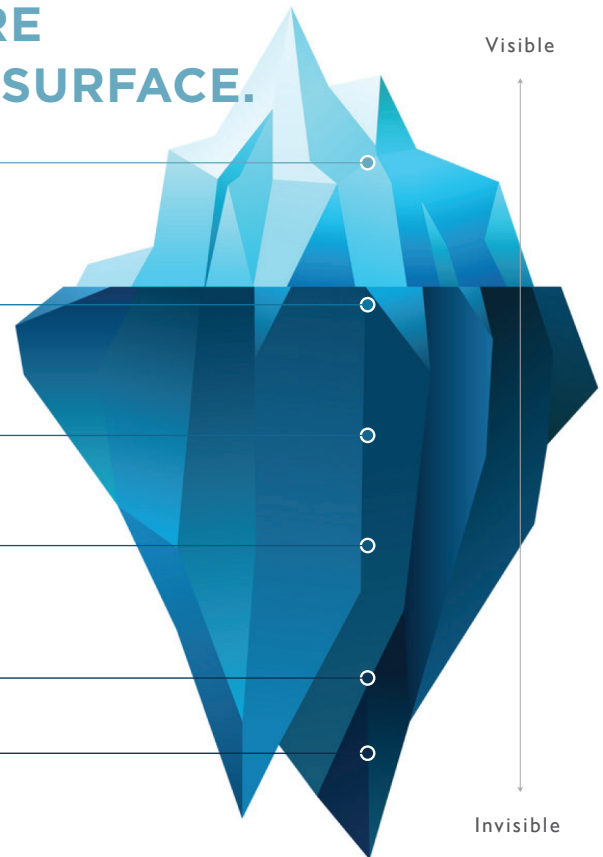
Fear is a reaction to a perceived threat. It can be a biochemical instinct where you may experience sweating, increased heart rate, and high adrenaline levels; or an emotional response.

Frustration comes from the perceived resistance to the fulfillment of an individual's will or goal and is likely to increase when a will or goal is denied or blocked.

Embarrassment is a public emotion that makes you feel exposed, awkward, and filled with regret for whatever your wrong doing happens to be and usually result from accidental behaviors that lead you to feel negatively about yourself.

Hurt is the physical or emotional feeling that comes from pain.

Sadness is an emotional pain that comes from feelings of disadvantage, loss, despair, grief, helplessness, disappointment and sorrow. This can cause you to become quiet or lethargic, and withdraw from others.



TIPS FOR LISTENING TO OTHERS AS THEY EXPRESS ANGER



Don't take it personally

Someone else's anger is usually not about you. It's about their feelings. To not take someone else's anger personally requires a high level of emotional intelligence. One way to do this is to become curious about why they're angry. Thinking, “Wow, this person is angry, why is that?” can lead you on a journey to discover the dreams or feelings within the anger. This brings us closer together.



Try not to say “calm down”

Saying “calm down” or “you're overreacting” communicates to the recipient that their feelings don't matter and are not acceptable. The goal here is not to change or fix a person's emotions, but rather to stand with them (unless, of course, their anger is harmful or destructive to your well-being). Communicate that you understand and accept their feelings, and often anger subsides.



Identify the obstacle

Anger is often caused by an obstacle blocking a goal. Identifying the obstacle will give you insight into the root cause of why someone is angry.

A MESSAGE FROM SR. PATRICIA MENNOR, SC, VICE PRESIDENT, MISSION



I don't know about you but I have many questions I'd like to ask God. This is especially true during this COVID-19 pandemic. Like everyone else, I'd like to know: "Why are you allowing so much suffering and death?" "Why are there so many people dying alone?" "Why do we have to continue this lock-down" And of course, "When will it all end?"

Am I angry with God? You bet I am. In addition to feeling angry, I also feel a deep sense of loss. I miss socializing in the usual way with family and friends. I miss going to my local church and worshiping with a community, and I miss the freedom of going out and doing whatever I want. I am grieving the loss of so many people who have died: patients, family, friends and co-workers. I also have a sense that when all this has passed, life will be very different. In essence, I am grieving my old way of life. I think many of us are feeling anger and loss. What comforts me is knowing that I am not the first person to feel these emotions. There are many examples of people expressing anger and loss in the Bible. Take for example the Book of Job. Job was a rich farmer who had great faith in God. But in spite of his faith, Job loses all his livestock and then all his children die. If that is not bad enough, Job develops terrible, painful sores all over his body. In the end, Job curses his life and asks God, "Why me?"

What the Book of Job teaches me and from what our Chaplains tell us that anger is a very human emotion. It's a normal reaction to "what's happening to me" and is part of the grieving process. In Job's case, I am sure he was grieving the loss of his children and his former way of life.

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Wouldn't we be angry if we lost our family, our livelihood and had boils covering our body? Of course, we would. Who wouldn't be? But that's not the end of the story. If we look a little closer, we see that Job deals with his feelings of loss and grief in a very effective way. He was not shy about voicing his feelings with God. He was honest and direct in his expression of these feelings. He didn't mince words; he just stated his feelings outright. Chaplains suggest that this is the best approach when dealing with anger and God. They suggest praying (or talking with God) honestly and openly, placing no judgment on the feelings being expressed. They say, go ahead, rant and rave to God. God can take it. God is bigger than all our problems!

I am grateful to believe in a God who is bigger than my problems; a God who is bigger than this pandemic. Am I always peaceful about it? No! Do I still rant and rave about it? Yes! But in the end, I believe honest prayer and conversation with my higher power will help me to wait it out and, to trust that better days are on the way.

Remember, we are all in this together!

St. Joseph's Health has a 24-hour crisis hot-line: 973-754-2230.

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like harming yourself or others, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK or call 911.