

National Health Observances

October

Bullying Prevention Month
 Celiac Disease Awareness Month
 Domestic Violence Awareness Month
 Down Syndrome Awareness Month
 Dyslexia Awareness Month
 Emotional Wellness Month
 Financial Planning Month
 Health Literacy Month
 Positive Attitude Month

Week of October 1–5

Customer Service Week

Week of October 1–7

Financial Planning Week

Week of October 7–13

Fire Prevention Week
 Mental Illness Awareness Week
 Great Books Week

Week of October 14–20

National Food Bank Week

Week of October 21–27

Bullying Bystanders Unite Week

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** service that can assist you and your eligible family members with **ANY** personal concern, large or small.

Employees and family members can call Cascade 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can help! Call Cascade to schedule an in-person appointment or get the resources you need. For more information, please call us at:

800.433.2320

www.cascadecenters.com



this issue

What is the EAP **P.1**

How to Manage Your Anger **P.1**

Anger Report **P.2**

How to Manage Your Anger

Think back to the last time you were angry, really angry. Did you fume silently, imagining revenge against the person who upset you? Or did you explode, sending everyone scurrying out of the room? Whatever your response to anger, your body reacted the same way: stress hormones surged, your heart rate and breathing sped up, and your blood pressure rose.

This fight-or-flight response is automatic. It is the body's way of providing the strength to deal with dangerous situations. The problem is, the things that make us angry these days are rarely dangerous. Traffic jams, long lines and difficult coworkers require patience and good humor, not physical strength. Yet whenever your brain signals anger, your body reacts. And over time, all that heart-pounding turmoil can take a toll on your health in the form of heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke.

Anger can be a confusing emotion -- it's not easy to know how to handle it. So we asked Virginia Williams, Ph.D., coauthor of "Anger Kills" (HarperCollins, 1993) and president of Williams LifeSkills

in Durham, N.C., for advice on how to manage anger.

Channeling the Force

It's impossible, of course, to never get angry. Anger is a normal, natural feeling. And despite its bad rap, anger can be a good thing. It can prompt us to speak out against unfairness or mistreatment. The trick is knowing how and when to effectively express this emotion.

"Anger can be our friend or our enemy. It depends on why we get angry and what we do with those feelings," says Dr. Williams. "When you're angry, it's important to look at the situation and decide whether or not you should take action. It's not effective to blow up at everything that makes you angry -- or to do the opposite and accept everything."

In the heat of the moment, how do you decide if your anger will help, hurt or do nothing for the situation?

(continued on page 2)



CASCADE CENTERS
INCORPORATED



Anger Report

Studies show that people who repeatedly become angry over everyday stresses are setting themselves up for health problems. Chronic anger increases your risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. And it's not just people who loudly express their hostility who are at risk. Bottling up or denying your anger can also cause heart disease and problems such as stomachaches, headaches, anxiety and depression. What's more, there is evidence that short-fused folks tend to calm themselves in unhealthy ways, such as overeating, smoking and drinking alcohol. This can make them likely to die early of other causes. These are good reasons to manage anger.

Dr. Williams suggests immediately asking yourself these four questions:

- Is this truly important to me?
- When I look at the facts, is my anger appropriate?
- Can I change this situation?
- Is it worth it to take action?

Four "yes" answers means you need to do some problem solving.

"Stay focused on what you want," advises Dr. Williams. "Do you want to blow up -- or do you want to change the situation?" A helpful approach is to use "I" statements to review the facts, explain how you feel, and make a specific request. For example, if a coworker failed to give you an important report, you might say something like this: "You promised that I would have the report Tuesday. It's two days late. I feel concerned because I don't have the information I need for my report. Would you please have your report to me by the end of the day?" You can use this model to assertively express your feelings in many situations.

When to Chill Out

If you answered no to any of the four questions above, then it's time to let your anger go. Here are some mellowing strategies.

- Think it through. "Stop for a moment," suggests Dr. Williams. "Ask yourself why you're letting this get to you." A few slow, deep breaths may also help you relax.
- Stop your thoughts. Silently tell yourself "Stop!" when you find yourself stewing. If you're alone, say it out loud. Repeat this often enough and your mind will obey.
- Distract yourself. Recall a pleasant memory -- a great vacation, a funny story, a loved one's smile. Or busy yourself with another activity, such as reading or gardening.
- Exercise. A brisk walk or any other exercise will lower your stress and make you feel stronger and healthier.

- Meditate. Dr. Williams calls this the most powerful strategy for helping to reduce anger. She recommends practicing every day for 10 minutes. Meditation allows you to take a mental time-out, so you can calm down.

To try it, find a quiet spot to sit. Focus your attention on slowly breathing in and out. As you breathe in, think of a relaxing word, such as "Calm" or "Peace." With practice, you can use this technique whenever you feel yourself getting angry.

Healthy Habits to Reduce Stress

In addition to learning how to manage anger, the following healthy lifestyle changes can help reduce anger.

- Cut down or eliminate caffeine in your diet. If you smoke, work on quitting. Nicotine and caffeine can intensify stress and anger.
- Identify what triggers your anger and, if you can, avoid that situation or person.
- Find activities or hobbies that give you pleasure and participate in them often.
- Reach out to friends and family. Explain that you're working on managing your anger, and ask for their support. Their encouragement will reinforce your efforts.

No Excuse for Abuse

If you or your spouse resorts to hitting, shoving or slapping when expressing anger, you need extra help that anger management alone can't provide.

"When anger reaches the point of abuse, that's a signal that there are other deep-seated problems that need to be addressed," says Dr. Williams.

Abusers and their victims need professional counseling. Call your EAP we can help you find a mental health professional or agency in your area. You can also visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline Web site at <http://www.ndvh.org/>.

Krames Staywell