

Anger Management

All behaviour is learnt and they have picked-up their anger from their parents.



Mike Fisher

Mike Fisher is the Head and founding member of The British Association of Anger Management and has been so for 7 years

Custodial Review What is the difference between people who can control their anger and people who can not?

Mike Fisher, There is possibly a whole range of different causes but fundamentally I would say an individual who is not able to control anger lacks empathy, compassion and emotional intelligence. All they are focusing on is what is being done to them and are not in a position to take a step back and think how come it is being done to them.

CR Does that mean they can't understand why someone is giving them a hard time?

MF Yes exactly, I would say that is primarily the problem because when a persons anger blows it happens in a nano-second especially if an exploder, they react rather than respond. In that moment of reaction they demonise and turn the other person into the enemy. The other person might consider that they are either very tired, they don't mean it, they are probably stressed out or a combination of all three. The other person might be empathetic but what happens if they are also an exploder? All hell breaks lose! When a person has no access to coping strategies, they just act out in an aggressive way. Exploders never consider consequences. They almost always speak before thinking. The imploder is somebody different, they harbour resentment, grievance and rarely say anything. The imploder usually suffers from low threshold depression and does not even know it. Although eventually the imploder explodes. its only a matter of time.

CR What is the difference, if any, between anger and rage?

MF Well, that's real easy.... anger is the controlled expression of feelings while rage is an anger with its eyes closed. Rage is out of control. People with anger problems often get very confused about that.

CR How can you get people who are without empathy and compassion to control their emotions?

MF You can't teach somebody to have empathy, that's a personal quality people develop over a period of time from experience and learning. By the time people come to me for anger management they are usually very desperate, their jobs are probably in ruins, their marriage is in disarray as

An individual who is not able to control anger lacks empathy, compassion and emotional intelligence.

are other relationship. People are scared to be near and have lost respect for them. They are isolated, hurt, depressed, confused and scared. As they approach an Anger Management Programme they are nicely primed because they want to

We have hard-wired into our DNA specific components which remind us whether we are experiencing justice or injustice.

be able to control their anger. They have tried one thing or another to emerge from their troubles but

nothing has worked and we see them first off all nicely desperate! If we asked them to put a hand in the fire or jump out of the window they would because they are so desperate. They will do whatever they can at that point to change their

behaviour and find their way out of the labyrinth. That's when an effective anger management conversion can take place. But if someone has been sent to us, that is not come of their own accord, been persuaded by wife/children/ boss/prison chaplain

then we can't do much for them. So we like 'em desperate, then we can introduce them to very closely

structured processes. First we help them to identify the source of their anger and then get them to recognise the different triggers that start it off and the drivers that maintain it. When they start to understand how the triggers and the drivers work then they have a little more control and start to respond instead of react. All behaviour is learnt and they have picked-up their anger from their parents or some relative of significance. They believe it doesn't hurt other people and they can display their anger, it's quickly over and they feel much better while the other person is smarting from wounds two or three weeks later. They are unable to understand that process.

CR Is modern society making people angrier by number and degree?

MF I look at it this way; if our constitutional rights, our freedoms, are being diminished that's when people start to respond and react. The problem is how do we push against big brother? So a lot of our frustration and anger gets taken-out on each other. The best example of this is road rage...perhaps a small thing like cutting-in a bit sharply or being beaten to a parking slot triggers a person's anger especially if

he left the house in a huff after an argument with his wife about son's school report and missed a business appointment as a result. He goes ape-shit and ballistic, takes up a baseball bat to take the other guy out, the police arrive and he ends up in a prison cell. So what happened?.... nothing at all to do with being cut-up or the parking slot, which was merely the trigger.

CR Do you remember the scene on Westminster Green when the citizens of middle England expressed their anger at the ban on hunting with dogs to the extent of fighting with the police? Was this, do you think, a symptom of people finding themselves hemmed-in and powerless and that it might happen more frequently?

MF Absolutely but may I put it a different way? Anger will always result eventually if something is not quite right, doubly true if our resulting protests are ignored. Anger is also a response or a reaction to something past, present or future. We have hard-wired into our DNA specific components which remind us whether we are experiencing justice or injustice. At the point when our alarm bell goes off, when we get angry, that is the time when we need to take a step back and take a look

at the big picture and decide how we want to act. So in a situation like the hunting people are in they feel an absolute 100% injustice has been

At the point when our alarm bell goes off, when we get angry, that is the time when we need to take a step back and take a look at the big picture and decide how we want to act.

done and they are reacting because they perceive their voices have not been heard. That's another definition of anger, it's a plea to take notice of me, respect me, this is my boundary. Here we need to understand the

Nobody is perfect, there will always be a period or a point when they cross the line, when tension in their personal lives interface with the tension inherent in their work.

difference between healthy and unhealthy anger. By all means demonstrate, be as angry as you want to be but when it develops into violence directed at hurting people

that becomes inappropriate. The hunting group had gone through all democratic channels to express their thoughts and their feelings and felt

they had not been taken seriously and that led to demonstrations and clashes with the police.

CR Let's change the scene to a police station and the domain of the custody sergeant who, on a day

to day basis, faces the anger of those about to be locked-up. Is there anything he/she can do to reduce the tension?

MF People who join the

police force have the ability to contain and manage their anger in spite of the nature of what they do that is working with heavy members of the public on a daily basis for many years. There is a code of conduct within a very structured environment which helps. At the point when they start to mismanage their anger they are reprimanded and/or sent on an anger management course. I have worked with many police officers and one of the things I've noticed is their ability to manage their anger which is excellent. Nobody is perfect, there will always be a period or a point when they cross the line, when tension in their personal lives interface with the tension inherent in their work. Remember the road rage incident we were talking about a short time ago. A person joining the Force with an anger management problem wouldn't last very long as a police officer. However, from time to time they have to prepare themselves, look at the big picture, appreciate the stresses and strains they have to cope with in their private and professional lives and set themselves up for it. In my experience the police officer is very good at that.

**LOSING YOUR COOL?
WE CAN HELP**

Contact BAAM, the British Association of Anger Management.

Discover how our acclaimed anger and stress management courses save marriages, careers, health and friendships.

If you or someone you know is struggling give BAAM a call today.

0845 1300 286
www.angermanage.co.uk