

The Cycle of Anger



Event Trigger An event or situation “triggers a person’s anger.

Negative Thoughts Negative and irrational thoughts result from the event trigger.

Emotional Response Negative thoughts lead to negative emotions, such as anger and frustration.

Physical Response The body responds automatically to anger, with several symptoms, such as pounding heart.

Behavioral Response The person reacts based upon thoughts, feelings, and physical symptoms.

Connecting Emotions, Thoughts, and Actions

When you face a tough situation, try this strategy for understanding your emotions and thinking them through.

1 Feel the emotion. Emotional states are strong but fleeting. An emotion may last only about 90 seconds, and then passes naturally (unless it is triggered again through thinking).

2 Notice your thoughts in relation to your emotions. I felt *that* and I thought *this*. Break thoughts and emotions apart into steps.

3 Apply reason. Write a few thoughts down. For each thought, consider: Is this thought true? Is it helpful? Is it necessary to think about this now?

4 Expand your thinking. Imagine another way of viewing the situation, a different, more helpful thought.

5 Notice the outcome. Be aware of your emotions might have changed.

6 Act positively. Choose actions in a way that will make the situation better rather than making it worse.

What?

What is the connection among emotions, thoughts, and actions? What have you learned about your own cycles of emotions?

So What?

Why is it important to be able to manage anger? In a difficult situation, how can you change how you think about or view a situation?

Now What?

What positive actions can you take using this new awareness of emotions and thoughts?