

ANGER MANAGEMENT: WHAT TO DO WHEN I AM REALLY MAD

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• **What is Anger?:**

-An emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong

-Anger can be a good thing

-It can give you a way to express negative feelings, or

-Motivate you to find solutions to problems

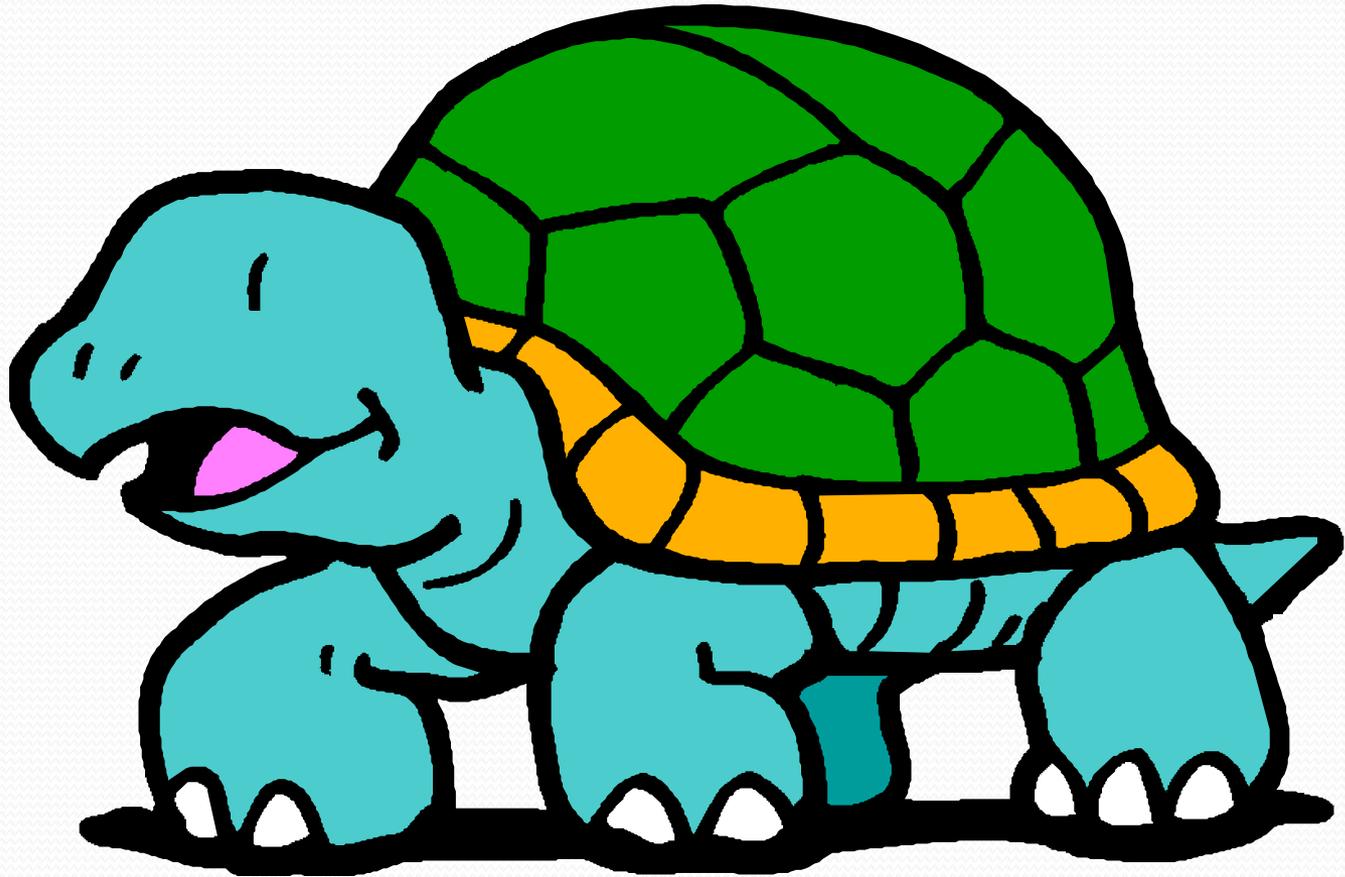
-But excessive anger can cause problems (physically, emotionally, interpersonally):

e.g. Increased blood pressure and other physical changes that make it difficult to think straight and harm your physical and mental health



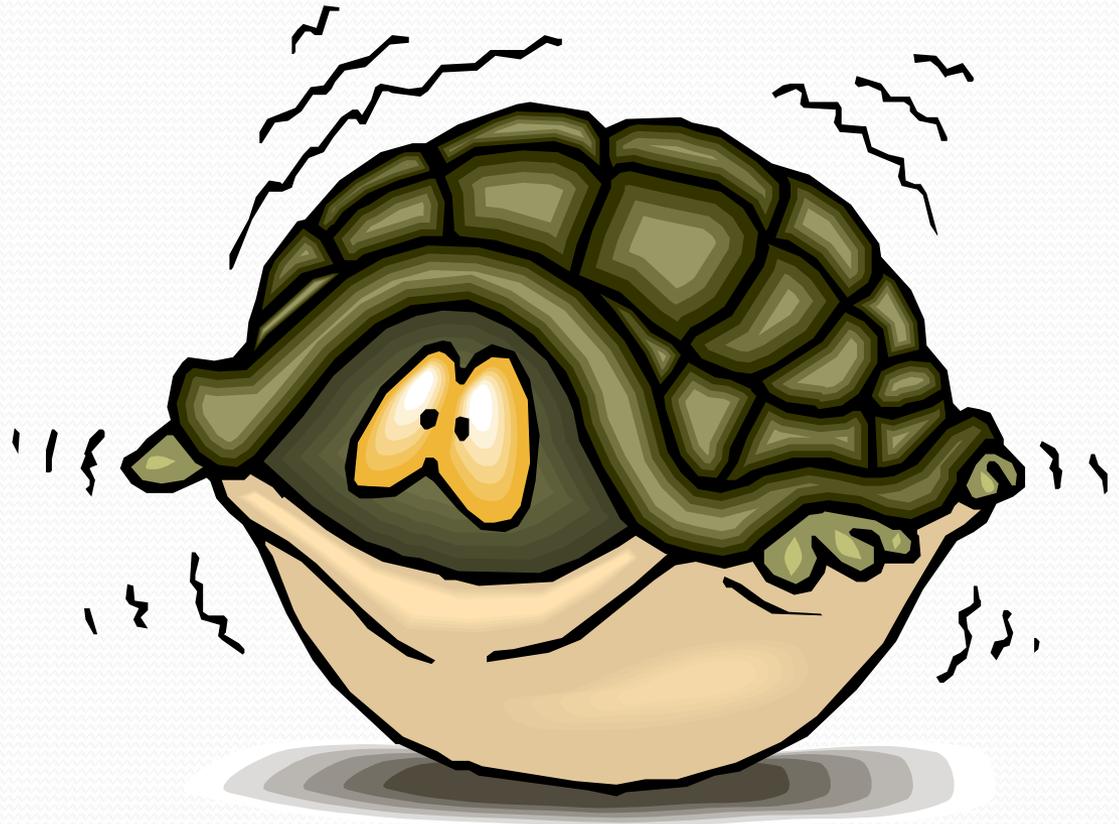
Tips for Kids (but grown ups can benefit too!)

When you are ANGRY and UPSET
remember... it's as easy as
1-2-3 TURTLE



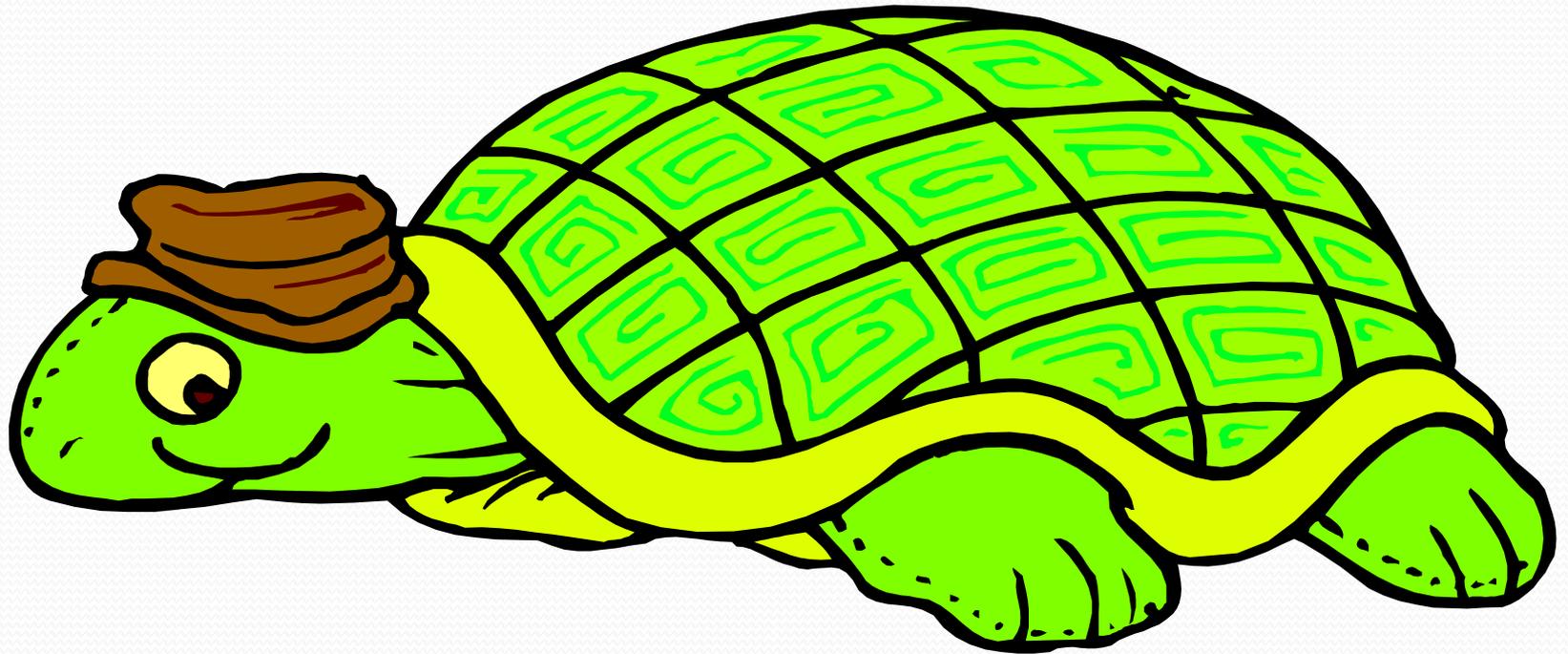
1 – Go inside your shell

- THINK before you ACT
- Take a “Time Out”



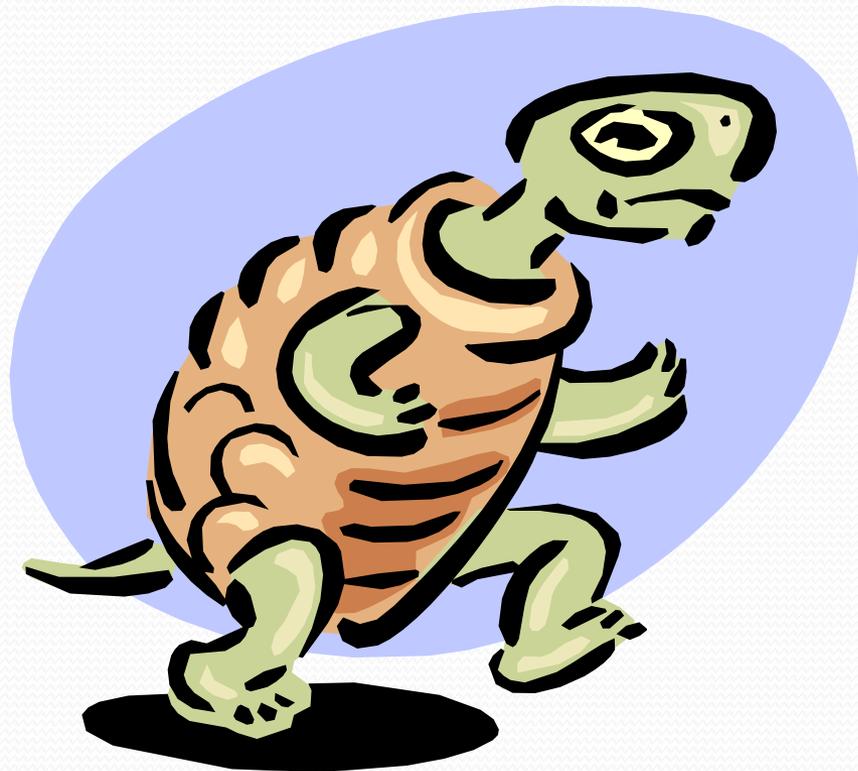
2 – Take 3 Deep Breaths

- Time to RELAX
- Calm yourself down



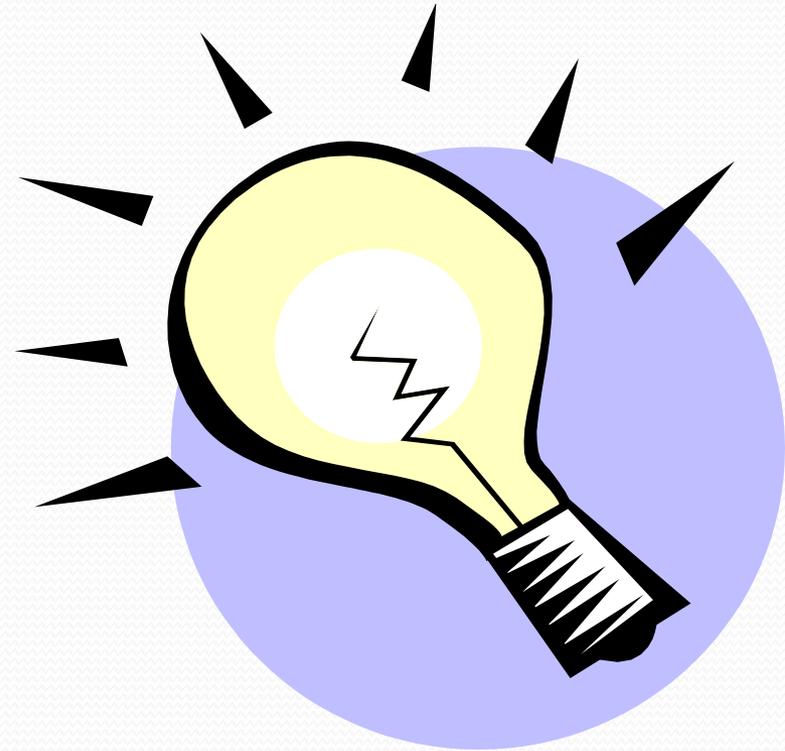
3 – Walk Away

- Think of a good solution



Good solutions other kids have used (or have been told to use)

- Tell a teacher or an adult
- Talk it out
- Ask for advice
- Be honest about your feelings



Easy... Right?

- **NOT!**

ANGER MANAGEMENT

- Controlling anger before it controls you
- Know the difference between anger and aggression.
 - Aggression is acting out inappropriately and is not ok.
 - Learn to check your aggression and express your anger appropriately.
- Anger is a normal human emotion.
 - It is ok to be angry.
 - But when anger gets out of hand, it can cause problems at home and at work.

Proven techniques

- 1) Identify what is truly the source of your anger
 - Why is this so upsetting? What is the underlying issue?
- 2) Calm your self to be able to think rationally
 - Deep breathing
 - Exercise
 - Meditation
 - Sleep
 - Moment alone

Managing Anger

- 3) What do I want to do about it? What is my goal?
 - Think through pros and cons of each situation
 - How will that make me feel if I?
 - Can I get closure on this feeling?
- 4) After some time, do I feel better?
 - What would I like to do now?

Common Pitfalls

- Impulsive reacting and then regretting
- Giving in to the physical energy
 - Fighting, yelling, road rage
- Stuffing one's feelings
- Misdirecting one's anger
- Not addressing the source

Consequences of mismanagement

- Impulsive reacting
 - Many regrets
- Giving in to the physical energy
 - Physical harm to self or others making it more difficult to repair
- Stuffing one's feelings
 - Somatic complaints, drug/alcohol abuse
- Misdirecting one's anger
 - Hurting those closest to you, relationship issues
- Not addressing the source

What to do with angry clients

- Chronic anger/irritability is often a sign of depression and needs to be treated accordingly
- Clients that are always angry need to look for the route of this anger
 - Sometimes this is a projection of self-loathing
 - Sometimes medication is needed to think clearly
- Clients can be taught how to monitor their thoughts which control their emotions and behaviors
 - Anger is most often maintained by our self-statements

What to do with angry clients

- The first step to resolution is regaining control
- Angry people are often blamers
 - By accepting their role in the problem, they can also begin to see their role in the solution
- Before they can do this, they need to feel heard
 - Venting is important, but it should be time limited
- The ultimate success is transforming this energy into a positive outcome

What to do with VERY angry clients

- Always be mindful of your safety and of the safety of those around you.
- You should be closest to the door.
- You should have back-up who knows to monitor you.
- Listening is the first step to building a connection.
- Many clients will de-escalate if they feel heard.
 - Do not prematurely rush this process.

What to do with VERY angry clients

- Do not be condescending or say that you know what they are thinking or feeling. That will likely only escalate them.
- Give them your full attention. Stay calm.
- Reflect back what you hear.
- Do not be drawn into a splitting game.
- Give some indication of what you will be able to accomplish today
 - Ask what they need from you today

What to do with VERY angry clients

- Come up with a plan.
- Assess for their safety and the safety of those around them.
- Focus on making sure their basic needs are met.
- For many people, they simply need you to hear their distress and to contain it.

Strategies to keep anger at bay (APA, 2011)

- Take time between difficult sessions to breathe and transition.
- Think about your emotions/reactions.
- Process with a colleague.
- Listen to your body and how you are coping.
- Being a container is hard.

Relaxation

- Simple relaxation tools, such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery, can help calm down angry feelings
 - Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm
 - breathing from your chest won't relax you.
 - Picture your breath coming up from your "gut."
 - Slowly repeat a calm word or phrase such as "relax," "take it easy." Repeat it to yourself while breathing deeply.
 - Use imagery; visualize a relaxing experience, from either your memory or your imagination.
 - Nonstrenuous, slow yoga-like exercises can relax your muscles and make you feel much calmer.

Cognitive Restructuring

- Changing the way you think “stinkin’ thinkin’”
 - Replace with rational thoughts
 - Logic defeats anger
- Avoid words like “never” or “always”

Problem Solving

- Anger sometimes related to real problems in life
- Can be healthy
- Cultural belief that every problem has a solution
 - Rather than find a solution identify adaptive ways to handle and face the problem
 - Make a plan and review progress periodically
 - Don't beat yourself up if answer doesn't come up right away
 - Face problems with best intentions to deal with them head on to avoid losing patience and fall into "all-or-none thinking"

Better Communication

- Stop and think before you speak
- Listen carefully to others and take time before answering
- Pay attention to what's underlying the anger
- Patient questioning a must to seek clarification
- Use “I” statements to avoid defensive responses
- Take breaks “time-outs” when needed
- Keeping your cool can avoid disastrous situations

Humor

- Using humor can diffuse anger:
 - Silly humor can take the edge off the fury
 - Can be relied on to unknot tension
- Caution:
 - Don't just laugh off your problems
 - Use humor to face problems more constructively
 - Don't give in to sarcastic/harsh humor (that's just another form of unhealthy anger expression)

Other tips for easing up on yourself:

- Timing:
 - Pay attention to patterns of when your more “cranky”
 - i.e., at night maybe due to fatigue
 - Be sure to plan talks at better times to avoid turning into arguments
- Avoidance:
 - Shut the door to your kid’s messy room
 - The point is to avoid becoming angry not that your child needs to clean the room to make you happy
- Finding alternatives:
 - Take different routes to reduce road rage
 - Commute or take public transportation

Symptoms needing attention

- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Traumatization
- Burnout
- Traumatic countertransference

Signs that you are being affected

- Change in activity level
- Increase in eating pleasure foods, alcohol consumption, tobacco use
- Trouble communicating
- Irritability, emotional outbursts
- Unable to relax
- Feeling that job performance is poor

Trouble signs

- Frequent crying, worrying, feeling angry
- Headaches, stomach aches, tension aches
- Memory problems. Confusion
- Trouble making decisions, organizing thoughts/plans
- Isolating
- Not engaging in pleasurable activities

Signs of Vicarious Traumatization

Beverly Potter, *Overcoming Job Burnout*

- Negative emotions
- Interpersonal problems
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Avoiding work duties
- Health problems
- Below-par performance
- Substance abuse
- Feelings of meaninglessness
- Feelings of diminished self-worth.

BURNOUT

- Reduced effectiveness often accompanied by feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, frustration, anger, or cynicism

Prevention

- Increase supervision frequency and satisfaction
- Being aware of and managing feelings
- Staff support
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries
 - Stay emotionally involved without becoming overinvolved- Whose needs am I meeting?
- Setting realistic goals
- Social support
- Unwind on the way home and leave work at work

Prevention

- Self-care
 - Balance between home, work, self, and others
 - Know your personal limitations
 - Be compassionate with yourself, be selfish at times
 - Learn to say no
- Debrief after any stressful incident
 - Allow team members to share concerns and feelings without censure
- Watch morale and include relaxing and fun activities into the workplace
 - Friday socials, nights out, group lunches
 - Team building days

Coping

- Begin to eat right again and exercising
- Journaling
- Hobbies, religion
- Build in time for self-care, take breaks
 - 15 minutes at least each day
- Meditation, breathing, massage, aromatherapy
- Seek support
 - From colleagues, supervisors, a therapist
 - Recognize your limits

What to do with those still suffering

- Recognize your limits
- It is not your job to do for others, but to empower them to do for themselves
 - You have to leave them one day and they need to function without you
- You can assist with resources and compassion, but you need to know your limits
- Sometimes we have to focus on what was accomplished versus what was not.
- Look at the larger picture