

**Assessing and Working With
Angry People and Chronic Callers
Resource Center Training
December 1, 2006**

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A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving,compassionate one." The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The grandfather answered, "The one I feed."

From Timeline, a publication of the Foundation for a Global Community

Basic Emotions

- Acceptance
- Anger
- Curiosity
- Disgust
- Fear
- Joy
- Sadness
- Surprise

Psychology of Anger

Interpersonal

- **What is anger for?**
 - Gets people to listen/attend
 - Gets people to back off/distance
 - Gets people to respond

- **What are the consequences of anger?**
 - People stay away

Adapted from Lorna Benjamin and Jill Reshke

Psychology of Anger

Intrapsychic

- **What effect does your own anger have on you**
 - **Tiring**
 - **Blocks enjoyment**

Lack of Specificity

- **Turns off extraneous information**
- **Limits options**
- **Helps you “win”**
- **Your point of view is correct-PERIOD**

Adapted from Lornal Benjamin and Jill Reshke

What Makes You Angry?

What Makes You Angry?

- **Not being listened to**
- **Being threatened**
- **Being made to feel you were stupid**
- **Being made that you did something wrong**
- **Having someone disagree with you**
- **Being frustrated that no one believes you**
- **Getting confused about what is going on**
- **Having people lie to you**
- **Having people talk about you behind your back**

What Makes You Angry?

- **Anger spilling over from someone or something else**
- **Being tired**
- **Being drunk**

Intoxication and Violence

Intoxication

- increases impulsivity**
- Increases disinhibition**
- Increases confusion and misperception**
- Increases mood lability**

Anyone who is intoxicated is potentially and unpredictably violent

Other reasons for anger

- **Anger as habit, as an ongoing coping mechanism**
- **Anger from impulse control problems**
- **Chronic anger**

What do you want when you are angry?

- **To be heard**
- **To have someone on your side**
- **To have something happen soon**

- **Generally, you do not want your friend and support to be “reasonable” while you are being furious**

Working with someone who is angry

- **Calibrate yourself**
 - How are you feeling?
 - How does anger effect you?
 - We tend to get scared by anger. What is your experience with anger?
- **Are you feeling safe?**
 - If not, why not?
 - What would it take for you to feel safe?
 - You cannot listen if you are worried about safety

Working with someone who is angry

- What does the person want?
- **Assumption: Everyone wants something**
- Does the person want to make you scared?
 - If yes, why? How will making you scared help him or her get what he wants?
 - If not, how can the person help you become less scared so you can better help him get what he wants?

Working with someone who is angry

- **How to side with the patient**
- **What does the patient want**
- **What part of that can you help with or agree with**
- **Make sure the patient feels heard**
- **Concentrate on areas of agreement rather than areas of disagreement**

Active Listening

- **Avoid being judgmental**
- **Give undivided attention**
- **Focus on feeling- what is being said**
- **Use silence - when to stop talking**
- **Use restatement**

Caraulia and Steiger
Nonviolent Crisis Intervention

1997

Pacing

- **Speech kinetics**
- **Non-verbal cues**
- **Content of conversation**

Avoid Power Struggles

- **What do we need?**
- **What does the client need?**
- **What can we give in on?**
- **Arrange for both sides to “win”**

Working with Angry people

Role of medication: what can it accomplish?

- **Short term**
- **Long term**

Role of co-therapist

- **Avoid being defensive**

De-escalation Key Points

- **Overdose: Use Agreement**
- **Be Flexible**
- **Listen Actively**
- **Reflect Empathy**
- **Gentle Attitude**
- **Gentle Tone**
- **Redirect: don't Resist**

Greg Van Rybroek

Chronic Callers

- **Why is this person calling?**
- **Why do you think he or she is calling**
- **What is the person saying about why he or she is calling?**
- **Why else might the person be calling?**

Traditional approach:

- **Set limits**
- **Give advice**
- **Try to get the person be calm down and become reasonable**
- **Then listen**

Suggestion:

- **Allow a real connection to be made**
- **Try to understand this person's desperation**
- **Listen and “be with” the person**
- **Be clear about how much time is available**
- **Give advice only if it seems this will help [advice can help, or can interfere]**

Chronic callers need a plan to better meet the person's life needs

- **Plan should be developed by the ongoing treaters, with the collaboration of the client**
- **Each call is part of an ongoing event, not a separate event.**

Chronic callers:

- **Do not try to fix more than you can fix**
- **Help as much as you are able**
- **The client's pain is not your responsibility**
- **Do not feel compelled to do more than you can**
- **Monitor your own feelings**
- **Control your own behavior, do not try to control the client's behavior**

**Pleasing
customers
is our
number one
goal.**

