**Anger - Supporting Information**

**What is anger?**

* Anger is an emotion designed to alert us to something that needs our attention or needs to change.
* Anger is an ‘END’emotion which arises to protect us when we feel vulnerable.

We often feel something else before we get angry – but our anger dominates and we miss the underlying feeling. Anger is a complicated emotion and often serves as a protector or mask for other deeper emotions of vulnerability. It’s easier to feel angry than ashamed, embarrassed, sad, jealous, anxious, disappointed or hurt. Our subconscious wants to protect us so it sends in its defence team - anger!

The ‘anger iceberg’ and ‘anger umbrella’ are both helpful visual metaphors that illustrate this - they can help build self-awareness. Any given day we all experience events and stressors that create feelings that lie under the surface of what others can see. When we are able to identify the link between these events or stressors and our hidden feelings it becomes easier to problem solve what we might do without being overwhelmed and getting angry.

**The nature of anger -** is lots of energy that sometimes can feel intense and uncomfortable; and sometimes can feel energising and empowering.

And as with ALL emotions anger has both an upside and a downside.

**Anger is helpful** when we use it to:

* Alert us to actual or possible harm … this then enables us to protect ourselves.
* Create and maintain clear boundaries … about what’s ok and what’s not OK for us… which can keep us mentally and physically healthy and safe.
* Protect others … this could be their sense of self, their rights or position by correcting injustice.
* Motivate us to change and improve a situation … if we find that our needs or wants are not being met in some way.
* Empower and energise us and create healthy self-esteem … e.g. not turning our anger in on ourselves/blaming ourselves; this can help us let go of the hurt rather than carry it with us.

When we use it in these ways Anger is **PROTECTIVE** – and can help us to de-stress and become calm and assertive.

**Anger is unhelpful** when we use it to:

* Block our emotional, physical and mental pain when we feel attacked by another … we can end up accuse or put the blame back on the other person.
* Become a victim and behave self-righteously … believing we are in the right and not recognising or remembering there are always to sides to a story/experience.
* Intimidate or punish someone who triggers our vulnerability … ways we can do this is attack someone who criticises us; or invalidate someone else’s point of view; or dismiss another’s feelings or thoughts.

When we use it in these ways Anger is **DEFENSIVE -** we feel vulnerable so we try and hide our vulnerability with our anger. When we use our anger to defend ourselves it often comes across as **OFFENSIVE** to others which does not help the situation. We typically react without thinking and at worst can become aggressive.

**Anger - A Summary**

* It is a normal and vital emotion - it doesn’t need to be cured - ANDwhat we do with it matters.
* It is a coping mechanism against threats to things we value.
* It is often an ‘END’emotion that protects us from feeling other emotions of vulnerability
* We use it either PROTECTIVELYor DEFENSIVELY**.**

SELF AWARENESShelps us recognise the difference.

**What Can Trigger Our Anger -** remember it is an emotion designed to alert us to something that needs our attention or needs to change – to deal with any challenge or threat to something we value so any number of things can trigger us. What might trigger one person won’t trigger another and vice versa – reinforces the need for each of us to learn about our anger and the vulnerability our anger might be masking in different situations with different people.



