Anger Management and Problem-Solving Tips

Anger Management

We have talked about misusing alcohol to try and cope. We have also talked about sleep and stress and given you some sleep hygiene tips to help with sleep problems. Another emotion that can emerge during stressful times is irritability and anger.

Stress leads to greater irritability and, potentially, becoming angry more quickly

- These reactions may not be typical for you
  - Anger itself is not "bad." It becomes a problem when we don't address/work through those feelings or if we continue to engage in destructive behavior

At RESTORES, we use an acronym known as **BRISC -** a series of five behavioral strategies that help people harness their emotions and channel them constructively.

BRISC stands for:

- **B**reak
- **R**e-evaluate
- **I**dentify
- **S**olve; and
- **C**ommunicate

Break

- This gives us the opportunity to pause and really evaluate the situation
  - Taking a pause (e.g., count to ten, take three deep breaths, or withdraw temporarily from a situation), and cool off, before reacting.
- The key is that the break is temporary with the full intent to come back and address.
- For this to be effective, it's important to communicate your need for the break with other parties involved.
- It is physically impossible for us, as humans, to be agitated and relaxed at the same time

        o Taking a pause – whatever that looks like or works best for you – is a crucial first step to counteracting stress and anger

<u>Re-evaluate</u>

When we become very emotional, it's natural for us to not think as clearly, so it's really helpful to take the time to re-evaluate when anger comes into play. Some questions you might want to ask yourself …

- Why am I angry?
- Is my anger proportionate to the situation?
- Is this other person to blame?
- What can I do to help manage the problem?

<u>Identify</u>

Be proactive in identifying potential trouble spots or situations and plan ahead for the next time.

<u>Solve</u>

Sometimes we have to be creative with our solutions and think outside of the box

- This can be tricky in the heat of the moment, but that's why we emphasize practice so the skills become more intuitive
- When we talk about "solving" a problem, we're not looking at the symptoms – we're looking for permanent solutions, not quick fixes
- Think through all possible solutions
  - Like in any brainstorm, there are "no bad ideas"
- This step is crucial to really learning the skill of problem-solving; by engaging in the solution brainstorming step, you can prepare yourself better to face the next anger-provoking situation in which you find yourself (the importance of planning ahead)

<u>Communicate</u>

No precise formula for all situations – each experience and individual is unique

- However, assertive communication is generally considered to be one of the most effective means of expressing your dissatisfaction and proposing a solution.
  - Assertion = ability to stand up for your rights without violating the rights of others.
  - The goal = focus on an individual's unacceptable <u>behavior</u>, not an individual's personal qualities.

<u>Problem-Solving</u>

Problem-solving is systematic. It is a process that we can learn.

- Step back, asses the problem your decisions will be based on facts, not just feelings.
- Problem solving also looks at the root of the problem, not just the symptoms.
- It leads to long-term, more permanent solutions, not just quick fixes

There are 4 steps

Let's use this example of a problem:

> **You are at the fire station having dinner. It's been a stressful day and your co-worker calls you a loser**

1. Define the problem:

   a. So in this case you would, name the problem, focusing on the five W's: Who? What? Where? When? And Why?

2. Brainstorm:

   a. Think of as many solutions to the problem that you can. Don't evaluate the solutions at this stage – just list as many as you can.

3. Evaluate:

   a. This is when you start to look at the pros and cons of each solution you listed in step 2. Think of as many positives and negatives as you can for each solution.

4. Choose a solution and implement:

   a. Re-evaluate the outcome of the solution after implementing.