



Handling Your Own Anger Handout 3

Public Conflict Resolution

- When anger is experienced, adrenaline is released into the body. Blood rushes to our legs, arms, and head; we begin to sweat and to breathe quickly. Our heartbeat speeds up; we may have a strong urge to yell, scream, kick, hit, or run. We tend to react by fight or flight.
- Anger is either physically released at the time it is experienced, or it is suppressed. Since it is rarely appropriate to release anger physically for fear of damaging relationships, or causing bodily harm, it is often suppressed.
- If not released at the time it is experienced, then anger gets stored in our bodies as muscular tension. The particular part of the body affected varies considerably from person to person.

In what part of your body do you notice tension when angry?

- If this tension is not released, one of two things may happen. It may build up until it can no longer be suppressed, and we explode at (or "dump" on) someone who may have had nothing to do with the original anger. It may remain unreleased and, over a period of many years, cause chronic muscular holding patterns and possibly damage to our immune system.
- When deciding on a way to release our anger which is right for us, we need to remember that the tension is best released in a manner consistent with the intensity of the emotion (e.g. when we feel like hitting someone, swimming may be more appropriate than meditating). Many people prefer regular, on-going activities which prevent the excessive build-up of day-to-day tensions in the first place. As well, most of us may also need some techniques for releasing some of the tension in a one-off way, after a particularly strong experience of anger or frustration or upset.

What on-going tension release techniques do you use?

What one-off tension release techniques do you use?