

Anger and Aggression

Paul H. VanValin, PhD, LCP

- Improvements can be measured in changes in Frequency, Duration and Intensity.
- Anger Expression Scale use with effective Time Outs limits Intensity and Duration. Brain Storming and SEARCH for Safety reduces Frequency.

ANGER EXPRESSION SCALE

- 10 = Murder
- 9= Physical wounding/major property damage
- 8 = Physical contact/minor property damage/threat of physical contact
- 7= Contempt - shrieking, cursing, name calling, eye rolling, silent treatment, judgment
- 6 = Yelling
- 5 = Observers would say it looks like a 4, but internally one is ready to move to 6 or above.
- 4 = Emotion is expressed but there is no fear or contempt
- 3 = True assertion, calm delivery, use of “I” messages, no judgment
- 2 = Brief mention of irritation
- 1 = Irritation or frustration that is so mild that it is not expressed

Rules for Applying the ANGER EXPRESSION SCALE

- Agree to limit expression to a 5.
- Take a “time out” above 4.
- 15 to 20 minutes calming self in order to avoid damage by intense anger expression. Philippians 4:9 “Whatever is pure... think on these things.”
- Use numbers to communicate intensity to break old patterns. This creates a new language and is received by others.
- Agree that the family member with the highest perceived rating will be accepted.
- Empower all family members to judge when to take a time out.
- “Landmines” are best avoided until a “demolitions expert” is on site.

Calm down before attempting to communicate. When both are calm:

- ECHO repeat the facts with good listening demeanor.
- VALIDATE is “I can see how you....”
- EMPATHY “You feel...”

Generally, when dealing with angry people, **first empathize**, and then validate and they usually calm down. If they don’t calm down, take a time out.

Statute of Limitations: Agree to not punish for behavior committed more than 6 months ago.
Double Indemnity: You don't punish someone twice for the same crime.