

Dealing with Angry People



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Dealing with Angry People

Program Goals

Understanding Angry People

- The Angry Person
- Public's Perceptions and Expectations
- Your Agency as Resource Facilitator

Strategies for Dealing With Angry People

- Communications Process
- Listening/Speaking Skills
- Telephone Techniques
- Knowing Your People
- Administrative Policies & Procedures



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Rules for Dealing with the Angry Public

Rule #1: members of the public may be angry for a variety of reasons, disclosed or undisclosed.

Rule #2: sometimes all your resources and tact may be unable to change Rule #1. (This doesn't mean you don't try.)



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Anger Defined 

Webster:

"...A strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism."

Synonyms which deal with intensity of anger.

Ire - Rage - Fury - Indignation - Wrath



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Anger Defined 

Webster:

Ire: more intense than anger with display of feelings

Rage: loss of self-control from violence of emotion

Fury: overmastering destructive rage; can verge on madness



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Anger Defined 

Webster:

Indignation: righteous anger at what one considers unfair, mean or shameful

Wrath: ... likely to suggest a desire or intent to revenge or punish



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Understanding the Angry Person



- The Angry Person
 - Rules for Dealing with the Angry Public
 - Profile of Affected Population
- Components of Anger
- Life Change Units
- Social Changes and High Tech
- Active Listening



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The Angry Person



Displays a disruption of balance; an intrusive situation occurs in a person's life to which they cannot react or stabilize or one to which they refuse to react

Is unable to rectify or remedy the situation which they feel they did not create or author themselves; they become angry

If this disruption is not properly addressed, if anger results, it may trigger revenge in the extreme

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Angry People



People feel threatened by:

1. Manipulation;
2. Erosion of their self-esteem;
3. Life changes;
4. Challenges to their security.



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Angry People 

What makes you angry and why?

How do you handle your anger?



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Profile of Affected Population 

1. Age
2. Mind Set
3. Awareness and Perception
4. Physical & Mental Needs



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Age 

Children
Adults
Elderly

Differences in the way anger is caused and handled may be a generational thing.




Boomers: 1946-1964
Gen X: 1965-1979
Gen Y: 1980-2000

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Age

<u>Present workforce</u>	<u>Born</u>
The Veterans	1922-1945
Baby Boomers	1946-1964
Generation X	1965-1979
Generation Y – Millennials	1980-2000



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Generational Considerations

<u>Present workforce</u>	<u>Born</u>
The Veterans	1922-1945
Baby Boomers	1946-1964
Generation X	1965-1979
Generation Y – Millennials	1980-2000

Communication

- > WWII Generation
 - > Logical, linear, conservative
- > Baby Boom Generation
 - > Personable; Information = Reward
- > Generation X
 - > Direct, straightforward, results-oriented
- > Millennial Generation
 - > Positive, motivational, personal goal-oriented

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Generational Considerations

Generational Dislikes:

WWII Generation:
Profanity, slang, poor grammar, disrespect

Baby Boom Generation:
Brusqueness, one-upsmanship

Generation X:
Using time poorly, corporate-speak

Millennial Generation:
Cynicism, sarcasm, condescension*

*Phyllis Cohn, Project Manager, AARP, "The Aging Workforce: Moving Forward in a New Age," (Turn-offs), OSHA Small Business Forum, July, 2009.

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Generational Differences in:



1. Philosophy
2. Reasoning
3. Tolerance
4. Judgment
5. Aptitude
6. Spirituality
7. Morality
8. Work Ethics



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Mind Sets



- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Altruistic | Egotistical | Messianic |
| Questioning | Spiteful | Arguer |
| Detached | Complaining | Belligerent |
| Introverted | Extroverted | Uncooperative |
| Retreating | | |
| Phobic | | |



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Awareness & Perception



... Of a problem and its remedy is determined by a person's:

- > Education;
- > Training;
- > Experience;
- > Lack of information or interest;
- > Technical Barriers to Understanding;
- > Nonconformity;
- > Political or personal agendas.



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Physical & Mental Needs



- Dependencies interfering with understanding and
- Factors impacting mental health:

- Weight;
- Family Health;
- Rising Prices;
- Full schedules;
- Misplacing/losing things;
- Outside yard/home maintenance;
- Property, investments & taxes;
- Crime;
- Personal/physical appearance.



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Components of Anger



Like the "3 mirror images of Self"

1. How the complainant views the situation
2. How you view the situation
3. What the situation really is



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Life Change Units



Established from studies conducted by Dr. T. H. Holmes and Dr. R. H. Rahe

Addresses changes to a person's life within the last 24 months.

Values assigned may provide an indication whether a person may incur an illness in the next year if not properly handled.

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Life Change Units



Areas considered to impact a person and health risks assigned include the areas of:

- Work Events;
- Personal Issues;
- Financial State;
- Social Condition;
- Family Concerns.



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Social Changes & High Tech



"Doublespeak Quiz"

"Technological changes and their new terminology may confound, confuse and anger those required to work with these systems"



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Types of Complaints



Types of complaints from the angry public may be directed at:

- ❖ Products;
- ❖ Services;
- ❖ Individuals within your organization;
- ❖ Company performance overall or specifically.



These could be based on a lack of understanding of your operation or false presumptions. (The public's perception and expectations).

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The Eternal Victim Mystique



Profile

"Always pitiful and always in the middle of a crisis for all kinds of complicated reasons, which you'll feel compelled to explore and try to fix, if you aren't careful."



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The Eternal Victim Mystique



Profile

- They hold others "hostage"
- Not responsible
- Everyone's out to get them
- Not my fault . . . It's everyone else's fault



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Handling Anger



4 Principles for Dealing with People

1. Build trust and rapport - eliminate the threat;
2. Determine and meet the person's needs;
3. Communicate on all levels -
Read the cues - verbal, visual, tones;
4. Solve the problem.



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Handling Anger 

1. Assess the Anger - Determine the level

Low: normal tone/pitch; little/no swearing; context (is it anger?).

Moderate: higher pitch; swearing; crying; gesturing; face flushed. 

High: sustained high pitch (voice cracking); personalized vulgarity; "fingerpainting"; repeating basic concept; stammering.

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Handling Anger 

2. Assess your reaction: (Pro-active or Reactive)

- Realize your abilities/limitations;
- Cope;
- Assert appropriate assertiveness;
- Don't talk yourself into a corner;
- Relax on cue;
- Fog (agree with any truth, probability of or general truth).



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Handling Anger 

3. Calm the anger through:

- Active Listening;
- Allowing the person to "vent";
- Sectoring anger toward true (real) cause;
- Reflecting;
- Asking/answering questions



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Handling Anger 

4. Solve the problem
Keep people feeling good about themselves.

Objectives:

- Get them off defensive;
- Reflect their concern, do not immediately answer complaint;
- Discover reasons behind their problem;
- Involve person in finding a solution.

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Handling Anger 

Types of Questions:

- What in particular troubles you?
- What specifically do you feel we need to correct?
- What stands in the way?
- How do you feel our past performance was better?
- What do you think is the first step in resolving this problem?

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Handling Anger 

Other Goals:

- Provide acceptable alternatives;
- Empathize: see the situation from their perspective;
- Dovetail: resolution summary of event showing how alternative solutions merge with demands or requests;
- Your agency is a facilitator to remedy problems!

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Dealing with Angry Public

Strategies:

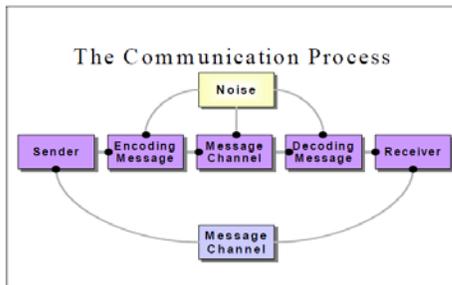
1. The communications process;
2. Listening/speaking skills;
3. Telephone techniques;
4. Knowing your people;
5. Administrative policies & procedures.



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1. The Communication Process



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Communications Process

<u>Sender</u>	<u>Message/ Medium</u>	<u>Receiver</u>
Experience	Verbal/non-	Experience
Attitudes	written	Attitudes
Skills	Email	Skills
Perceptions	Web	Perceptions
	Pictures	

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Communications Process



Input

Personality/Style
View of others/self

Communication skills

Feedback

Climate
Complainant's
Behavior

How well you handle
feedback

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Communications Process



Coping abilities or
defensiveness

Your predetermined outcome:

- Lose/Lose
- Lose/Win (Altruistic.
Reasonable?)
- Win/Win (Optimum result)
- Win/Lose (Temporary
Victory) Result may be
perpetual Halloween-
You'll see this 'ghost'
again.

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Anger Vocabulary



<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Strong</u>	<u>Intense</u>
Moody	Unhappy	Very Unhappy	Bitter
Concerned	Discontented	Frustrated	Angry
Disappointed	Disturbed	Fed Up	Disgusted
Worried	Sullen	Indignant	Outraged
Dissatisfied	Troubled	Irate	Furious

Some words, by their very construct, may sound harsh (hard and soft sounds)

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Phrasing Questions



Open Questions

Phrased so they can
NOT be answered
simply with yes or no

Begin With

What Who When
Where How Which

Closed Question (Avoid)

Phrased so they can be
answered by a yes or no
reply

Begin With

Is Can Do
Will Has Shall

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2. Listening/Speaking Skills



- Effective Listening;
- Active Listening;
- Persuasion;
- Types of Responses and their Result.



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Effective Listening



Listening is 1/3 of communication

- Listen for ideas-not facts;
- Judge content (first); not delivery (secondary);
- Be an optimistic listener, from the beginning;
- Listen to the full message-don't jump to conclusions;
- Be flexible-take notes;
- Concentrate on the speaker.



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Effective Listening 

Thought: 4 x faster than speech.

- Analyze message
- Read verbal/non-verbal signs
 - Posture, head positioning
 - Eye movement and contact
 - Hands
 - Proximity (territorial aspect)
 - ✓ Standing/sitting/lounging
 - ✓ Gestures
 - ✓ Word choice and pace of speech
 - ✓ Tonality and intensity
 - Facial expressions



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Effective Listening 

Work at Listening:

- Provide feedback;
- Keep open mind: don't fall victim to "trigger" words or emotions; heed central theme of message;
- Stretch your mind by experiencing new information, not just that with which you're familiar.



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Active Listening 

Defined: Paying careful attention to content & feelings of message.

Content: What words mean and context of use.

Feeling: Emotions displayed by content.

Feelings real as disclosed?
Are true feelings masked?



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Active Listening 

Before you reply:

- Attempt to determine core theme;
- Determine content and feeling;
- Consider what you heard;
- Ask for clarification & feedback;
- Reflect before replying;
- Understand speaker's position, then construct your conclusion and reply.



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Active Listening 

Personal Approach and Attitudes

- Realize there is a nobility inherent in people, each has value and a contribution;
- Express care and concern;
- Realize all are unique and different;
- Express empathy. What we view as trivial might be their most significant concern.

Put yourself in THEIR shoes 

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Active Listening 

Components

- Encouraging
- Restating
- Reflecting
- Summarizing



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Active Listening Components



1. Encouraging

Goal: Project interest; maintain conversation.

Process: Be non-committal; don't agree or disagree; use positive tone of voice.

Listener's comments:

- "I see..."
- "Uh-huh"
- "That's interesting..."



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Active Listening Components



2. Restating

Goal: Shows your understanding; discloses grasp of facts.

Process: Restate speaker's basic ideas; place emphasis on facts.

Listener's comments:

- "If I understand, your idea is..."
- "In other words, you think..."



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Active Listening Components



3. Reflecting

Goal: Demonstrates you're listening and understanding; lets speaker know you understand how they feel.

Process: Reflect person's feelings with short replies without being flipant or curt.

Listener's comments:

- "You feel that ..."
- "You were pretty annoyed by this ..."

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Active Listening Components



4. Summarizing

Goal: Draw together ideas and facts; create basis for continued discussion; review/update progress.

Process: Major ideas are restated, reflected and summarized.

Listener's comments:

"These seem to be the main ideas you've expressed ..."

"If I understand you, you feel this way about ..."

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Reflection and Fogging



Reflection

A restatement, (not a question) of:

- What you understand;
- The speaker said;
- Expressed in your own words;
- Including your understanding of contents and feelings revealed.



Solutions are not reached at this level. This stage seeks to ensure agreement on the topic between parties.

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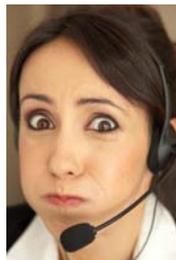
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Reflection



Your Approach:

- Be non-judgmental;
- Be non-argumentative;
- Do not evaluate;
- Do not question;
- Repeat your understanding;
- Encourage person to continue.



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Reflection



Your Goal

- Check your understanding of speaker's statements;
- Promote continued dialog;
- Improve empathetic listening;
- Build rapport;
- Display your caring, and;
- Demonstrate your understanding.



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Reflection and Fogging



Reflection Levels (5):

- Repeating word-for-word;
- Repeating but changing I to You;
- Repeating part of the conversation but not summarizing;
- Summarizing in your own words;
- Summarizing content and feeling of message;



Example: "I can truly understand why this has you ___(feeling)___ particularly due to ___(content)___."

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Fogging



Fogging: Method of reply used when you're under attack or criticism. It's simply agreeing with

- Any truth
- The probability of truth, or
- The general truth or agreeing in principle

<p><u>Comment:</u> "You never give me a good job evaluation. You don't even know my capabilities."</p>	<p><u>Fogged Reply:</u> "You're probably right, I should get to know your capabilities better."</p>
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Persuasion 

Requires:

<u>Listening Skills</u>	<u>Self-Expression Skills</u>
Empathy	Stroking
Disarming	Tactful Presentation
Inquiry	Problem-Solving



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Persuasion 

Listening Skills

Empathy: Attentive listening to feelings. Reflect back in sympathetic, non-judgmental way.

Disarming: Find the core truth, even if it seems to be distorted or illogical.

Inquiry: Question to change vague points into the real issues.

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Persuasion 

Self-Expression Skills

Stroking: Be positive. Compliment and reward people.

Tactful Presentation: Express your thinking and feeling in objective, constructive manner.

Problem-Solving: Resolve real problems after above techniques are used now that core truth and reasons are identified.

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Persuasion



General Persuasion Techniques:

- Use home-turf advantage;
- Look your best;
- Identify with your listener;
- Reflect the listener's experience;
- Make a strong case;
- Employ stories and examples



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3. Telephone Techniques



Preparing:

- Keep pencil/pen and pad by phone for notes;
- Answer phone within 2 rings;
- Identify yourself and agency;
- Note caller's name and agency;
- If you need to transfer call, give them the name and phone number should you drop the call.



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Telephone Techniques



On Hold:

- Assure them you'll be back with them immediately;
- Thank them for waiting;
- After 30 seconds on hold, ask if they would prefer
 - to continue waiting, or
 - to be called back;
- If to be called back, get their number and best time to call.



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Telephone Techniques



Your presence:

- Be personable - smiling while talking makes your voice pleasant;
- Speak in normal, conversational tone at rate of 140 to 150 words per minute;
- Match caller's rate, tone, and vocabulary (matching and pacing);
- Reflect content and caller's feelings;
- Clarify caller's message by asking questions.



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Telephone Techniques



Admin Actions

- Log notes on standard form listing: caller's name, agency, address and contact phone and if call was a
 - Comment
 - Request
 - Complaint;
- Department where information should be directed;
- Where findings should go for action.

Name _____		Time _____	
WHILE YOU WERE OUT			
To _____		From _____	
By _____		Date _____	
Phone (____) _____		Ext. _____	
E-Mail _____		Priority _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Informational	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up Call	<input type="checkbox"/> Please Call	<input type="checkbox"/> Important
<input type="checkbox"/> Please See Me	<input type="checkbox"/> Will Call Again		
Message _____			
Signed _____			

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Everybody Wins If You . . .



- Know your agency policies;
- You're alert to win/lose syndrome. May be detected if you
 - Feel under attack
 - Feel sorry for yourself, or
 - Feel like retaliating;
- Listen empathetically;
- Avoid absolute comments/statements which close the door to alternatives;
- Involve angry person in problem resolution;



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Everybody Wins If You . . .



- Make decisions by agreement rather than having a winner and a loser;
- Determine if person will accept any agreement on issues;
- Establish a stand on an issue and have other person do the same;
- Be alert for strategies of intimidation by others - don't evoke them yourself.

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4. Knowing Your People



Stress - Some warning signs:

- Isolation;
- Deterioration of personal appearance;
- Loss of interest;
- Carelessness;
- Poor work quality;
- Increased absenteeism;
- Lowered productivity.



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4. Knowing Your People



Stress - Burnout Symptoms:

- Emotional exhaustion;
- Cutting back involvement with others;
- Depersonalization;
- Feeling reduced personal accomplishment.



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4. Knowing Your People



Problem Employees:

Trait

Meaning

Late

Avoidance

Excuses

Transferal

Retreating

Introverted

Defiant Acts

Act of Desperation



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4. Knowing Your People



Reducing Stress:

- Start a healthful life style;
- Compartmentalize work/home life;
- Get physical exercise;
- Discuss problems with spouse or friends or peers at work;
- Change to non-work activity;
- Change strategy to work tasks.



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5. Administrative Policies



Personnel Selection Should Provide For

- Specific Job Descriptions
- Cross-training
- Creating Organizational Communications
- Setting Policies & Procedures for Dealing with Complaints
- Creating Positive vs. Negative Reinforcement
- Creating Quality Circles

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Questions




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