

Dealing With Anger and Conflict in Your Relationships Workshop

RESPONDING TO ANOTHER PERSON'S ANGER

- 1) If you suspect that the person's anger will be expressed violently - get away!
 - No one has the right to strike or harm you.
 - You did not cause the violent behavior.
 - The behavior will not automatically stop.
 - You have the right to seek assistance.

- 2) Understand and attempt to use your own anger productively.
 - You need to feel comfortable with your own feelings to be able to respond effectively to other people's feelings.

- 3) Assert self when verbally attacked.
 - If you don't think you are in danger of physical harm, stand firm against any verbal put-downs. Be assertive without being aggressive.
 - Suggestions of what to say if being verbally attacked: "I'm willing to listen to you as long as you stop the attack," "I want to hear what you're angry about and I can't while you put me down," or "You don't have the right to attack me that way. If you want me to listen, stop the put-downs."

4) Respond as one adult human being to another.

- Attempt to respond in the here and now. Often we respond in the present based on how we have been conditioned to respond in the past. If your conditioning includes the expectation of harm, accusation or punishment, you probably defend against or ward off an attack, even if you are not being attacked.
- The first objective in responding to someone's anger is movement beyond old expectations and interpretations. *Listen* to what they are saying.
- Recognize that you are an adult and not a powerless child. Mentally negate the expectation with a "new" statement such as, "This person can't punish me. He is a peer."
- Reply directly to person's message. Speak specifically to what you heard them say to attempt to clarify what they are angry about.

Information taken from *The Anger Workbook* by Lorraine Bilodeau, MS, CompCare Publishers, Minnesota, 1992 - pp. 89-92