

YMCA Week 7

Anger Management and Pandemic

Why am I so angry?

My cell phone makes me angry: Social Media and News

The Cycle of Anger

Reframe Your Thinking

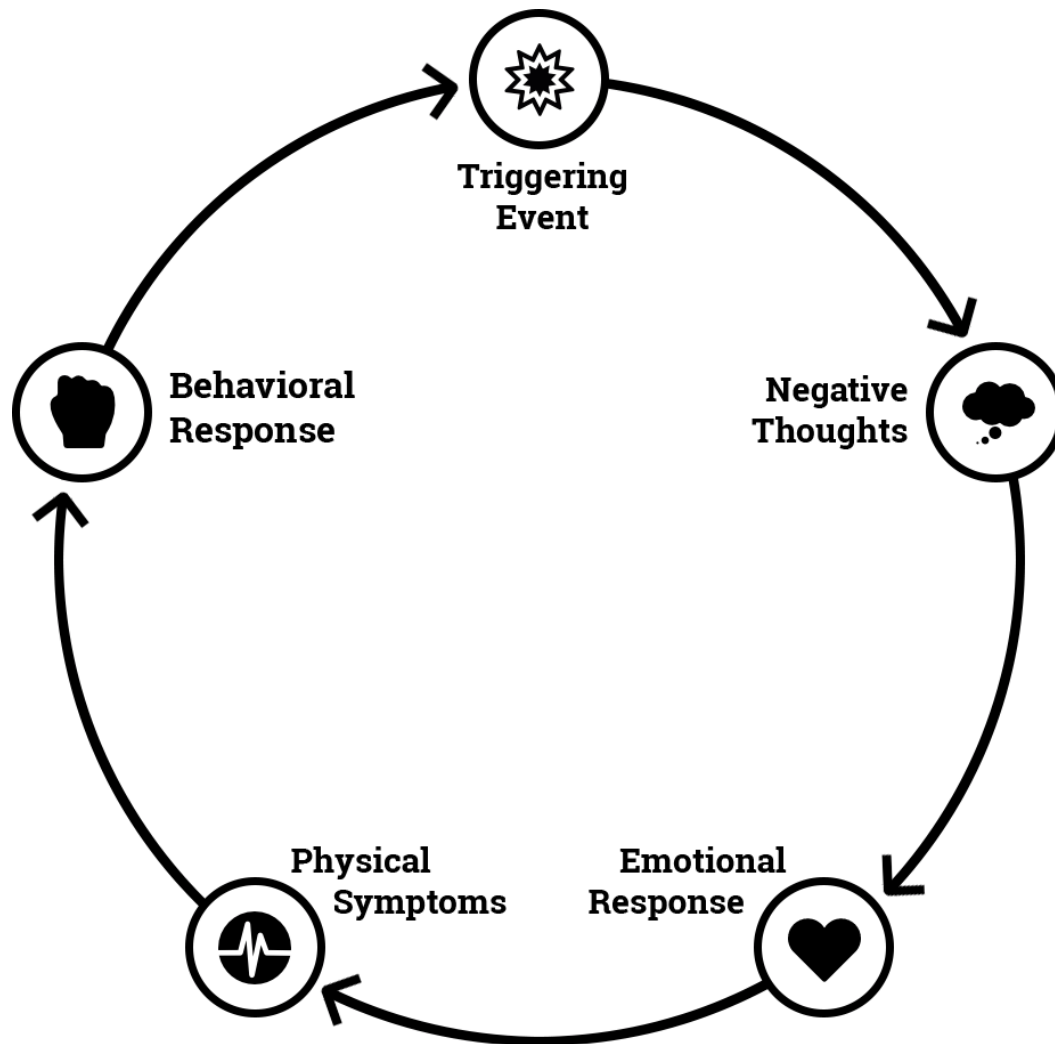
Humanity and kindness

Kindness Health Facts

The Science of Kindness – Oxytocin/Dopamine releases with repeated acts of kindness

Mindfulness Exercise

# The Cycle of Anger



## Triggering Event

An event or situation “triggers” a person’s anger. Examples:

- Getting cut off while driving.
- Having a bad day at work.
- Feeling disrespected.

## Negative Thoughts

Irrational and negative thoughts occur as a result of the triggering event. Examples:

- “I’m the worst parent ever.”
- “The jerk who cut me off doesn’t care about anyone but themselves.”

## Emotional Response

Negative thoughts lead to negative emotions, even if the thoughts are irrational. Examples:

- Feelings of shame and guilt due to being the “worst parent ever”.
- Rage directed toward a bad driver.

## Physical Symptoms

The body automatically responds to anger with several symptoms. Examples:

- Racing Heart
- Sweating
- Clenched Fists
- Shaking

## Behavioral Response

The person reacts based upon thoughts, feelings, and physical symptoms. Examples:

- Fighting
- Arguing
- Yelling
- Criticizing

## Reframe Your Thinking

**Have you ever noticed that one person sees the glass half full and another sees the same glass half empty?**

People tend to look at life events very differently. The way that we look at things has a strong impact on our mood. Sometimes we spend so much time thinking bad thoughts that we begin to believe things that are not true, or we stress ourselves out by focusing on the negative parts of our day.

Think back to how you thought, felt or talked today. Were most of your feelings or thoughts negative? Did you get mad at yourself when things did not go right? Reframing your thoughts might be helpful- reframing will help you reduce stress and feel better.

**The examples below are some common ways that people tend to think negatively- and options for being more positive about the same situation.**

### 1) All-or-None Thinking

You, like everyone, have strengths and weaknesses as well as worth. Even if you didn't reach your goal today, celebrate something you did well.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* I messed up at work- I'm terrible at my job.

*Positive talk (helpful):* I made a few mistakes today at work but I also completed a project very well.

### 2) Assuming too much

Do you find yourself saying things like "I always mess that up" or "I could never do that?" Ask yourself why you feel that way and try to focus on the things you can do well.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* I could never run a 5k.

*Positive talk (helpful):* I'm not sure how far I can run, but I will try to run a little further today.

### 3) Mental Filter

Many people tend to focus on the few "bad" things that happen to them in a day instead of the many "good" things that happen that same day. Think of something that went well today.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* Going to work will ruin my entire day.

*Positive talk (helpful):* Working with my coworker seems to make my day go quickly.

### 4) Ignoring the Positives

When you do something well, celebrate it! Often, in our busy schedule, we forget the many things that we do well. You might catch yourself doing this when you say, "Yeah, but..."

*Negative talk (hurtful):* Yeah, but the house still is not very clean.

*Positive talk (helpful):* Thanks for noticing my efforts! I did vacuum and dust today.



## 5) Jumping to Conclusions

Many of us do this all of the time, and we don't always know we have done it. Try not to assume that a certain event will happen a certain way- keep an open mind and wait and see what happens.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* I won't make any friends at my new job / school.

*Positive talk (helpful):* Maybe it isn't so; I won't know until I go to work / school.

## 6) Mountains out of Mole Hills

Do you find yourself thinking "it couldn't get any worse" or "this is the worst day?" You may be thinking too much about some events that went wrong and you may be ignoring things that go right.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* This is the worst day. It certainly couldn't get much worse.

*Positive talk (helpful):* That part of my day was not fun but I did enjoy chatting with Sally at lunch.

## 7) Emotional Thinking

Have you ever been told that you are thinking with your heart instead of your head? Remember that emotions are signals, not statements of fact. Meet and accept the feelings, but know that feelings change.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* This is very horrible. How am I to handle this mess?

*Positive talk (helpful):* Things really could be much worse and I can bear this, even if I don't like the problem.

## 8) "Should Statements"

We often think our way is the best way. Remember to consider other people's thoughts and opinions also and try to use "could" instead of "should."

*Negative talk (hurtful):* You should organize the room this way.

*Positive talk (helpful):* Have you thought about organizing the room this way?

## 9) Labeling

Remind yourself that no one is always anything (dumb, rude, inept, etc.) and we all have strengths and weaknesses. Ask yourself why someone's faults should bother you.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* She always talks about herself and is not considerate of others.

*Positive talk (helpful):* Why am I letting her actions bother me? I have no control over her.

## 10) Personalizing

It's easy to say but hard to do- don't take it personally. Some things may be out of your control and you may stress about things that you cannot change. Look for reasons that events may have happened that are not your fault.

*Negative talk (hurtful):* What's wrong with me, I should have scored higher?

*Positive talk (helpful):* The test was hard, I didn't prepare adequately.

## Resources:

[American Heart Association- Reframe your Thoughts](#)

[Psychology Today- "Positive Reframing" as Optimistic Thinking](#)

[University of the Sunshine Coast- Reframing Your Thinking](#)



© **Depression Awareness.** It is very important to talk with a doctor about depressive symptoms you or your loved one are having. This website is not intended to replace a visit to a doctor.

# Distress Tolerance Skills

## **Distraction (A.C.C.E.P.T.S.)**

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Negative feelings will usually pass, or at least lessen in intensity over time. It can be valuable to distract yourself until the emotions subside. The acronym "A.C.C.E.P.T.S." serves as a reminder of this idea.

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Activities</b>   | Engage in activities that require thought and concentration. This could be a hobby, a project, work, or school.  |
| <b>Contributing</b> | Focus on someone or something other than yourself. You can volunteer, do a good deed, or do anything else that will contribute to a cause or person.   |
| <b>Comparisons</b>  | Look at your situation in comparison to something worse. Remember a time you were in more pain, or when someone else was going through something more difficult.   |
| <b>Emotions</b>     | Do something that will create a competing emotion. Feeling sad? Watch a funny movie. Feeling nervous? Listen to soothing music.  |
| <b>Pushing Away</b> | Do away with negative thoughts by pushing them out of your mind. Imagine writing your problem on a piece of paper, crumpling it up, and throwing it away. Refuse to think about the situation until a better time. |
| <b>Thoughts</b>     | When your emotions take over, try to focus on your thoughts. Count to 10, recite a poem in your head, or read a book.  |
| <b>Sensations</b>   | Find safe physical sensations to distract you from intense negative emotions. Wear a rubber band and snap it on your wrist, hold an ice cube in your hand, or eat something sour like a lime.                      |



# KINDNESS HEALTH FACTS

## DID YOU KNOW?

### KINDNESS IS TEACHABLE

"It's kind of like weight training, we found that people can actually build up their compassion 'muscle' and respond to others' suffering with care and a desire to help."

Dr. Ritchie Davidson, University of Wisconsin

### KINDNESS IS CONTAGIOUS

The positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain of everyone who witnessed the act, improving their mood and making them significantly more likely to "pay it forward." This means one good deed in a crowded area can create a domino effect and improve the day of dozens of people!

## KINDNESS INCREASES:

### THE LOVE HORMONE

Witnessing acts of kindness produces oxytocin, occasionally referred to as the 'love hormone' which aids in lowering blood pressure and improving our overall heart-health. Oxytocin also increases our self-esteem and optimism, which is extra helpful when we're in anxious or shy in a social situation.

### ENERGY

"About half of participants in one study reported that they feel stronger and more energetic after helping others; many also reported feeling calmer and less depressed, with increased feelings of self-worth"

Christine Carter, UC Berkeley, Greater Good Science Center

### HAPPINESS

A 2010 Harvard Business School survey of happiness in 136 countries found that people who are altruistic—in this case, people who were generous financially, such as with charitable donations—were happiest overall.

### LIFESPAN

"People who volunteer tend to experience fewer aches and pains. Giving help to others protects overall health twice as much as aspirin protects against heart disease. People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive 44% lower likelihood of dying early, and that's after sifting out every other contributing factor, including physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status and many more. This is a stronger effect than exercising four times a week or going to church." Christine Carter, Author, "Raising Happiness; In Pursuit of Joyful Kids and Happier Parents"

### PLEASURE

According to research from Emory University, when you are kind to another person, your brain's pleasure and reward centers light up, as if you were the recipient of the good deed—not the giver. This phenomenon is called the "helper's high."

### SEROTONIN

Like most medical antidepressants, kindness stimulates the production of serotonin. This feel-good chemical heals your wounds, calms you down, and makes you happy!

## KINDNESS DECREASES:

### PAIN

Engaging in acts of kindness produces endorphins, the brain's natural painkiller!

### STRESS

Perpetually kind people have 23% less cortisol (the stress hormone) and age slower than the average population!

### ANXIETY

A group of highly anxious individuals performed at least six acts of kindness a week. After one month, there was a significant increase in positive moods, relationship satisfaction and a decrease in social avoidance in socially anxious individuals.

University of British Columbia Study

### DEPRESSION

Stephen Post of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine found that when we give of ourselves, everything from life satisfaction to self-realization and physical health is significantly improved. Mortality is delayed, depression is reduced and well-being and good fortune are increased.

### BLOOD PRESSURE

Committing acts of kindness lowers blood pressure. According to Dr. David R. Hamilton, acts of kindness create emotional warmth, which releases a hormone known as oxytocin. Oxytocin causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide, which dilates the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure and, therefore, oxytocin is known as a "cardioprotective" hormone. It protects the heart by lowering blood pressure.

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.RANDOMACTSOFKINDNESS.ORG](http://WWW.RANDOMACTSOFKINDNESS.ORG)

# Distress Tolerance Skills

## Radical Acceptance

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Sometimes you'll run into a problem that's simply out of your control. It can be easy to think "This isn't fair" or "I shouldn't have this problem", even though those ways of thinking only make the pain worse.

*Radical acceptance* refers to a healthier way of thinking during these situations. Instead of focusing on how you would like something to be different, you will recognize and accept the problem or situation as it is. Remember, accepting is not the same as liking or condoning something.

Learning to accept the problems that are out of your control will lead to less anxiety, anger, and sadness when dealing with them.

### Situation

You find out that you were not selected for a job where you felt that you were the best candidate.

#### Typical Thinking

"This isn't fair—I did everything right! I was the best one there. They can't do this to me."

#### Radical Acceptance

"It's frustrating that I didn't get the job, but I accept that they felt someone else would be a better fit."

## Self-Soothe with Senses

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Find a pleasurable way to engage each of your five senses. Doing so will help to soothe your negative emotions.

**Vision** Go for a walk somewhere nice and pay attention to the sights.

**Hearing** Listen to something enjoyable such as music or nature.

**Touch** Take a warm bath or get a massage.

**Taste** Have a small treat—it doesn't have to be a full meal.

**Smell** Find some flowers or spray a perfume or cologne you like.