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

Anger Defined

Webster:
“...A strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism.”

Synonyms which deal with intensity of anger.

Ire - Rage - Fury - Indignation - Wrath
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

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.
People feel threatened by:
1. Manipulation;
2. Erosion of their self-esteem;
3. Life changes;
4. Challenges to their security.

What makes you angry and why?
How do you handle your anger?

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

### Generational Dislikes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Dislikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WWII Generation</td>
<td>Profanity, slang, poor grammar, disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boom Generation</td>
<td>Brusqueness, one-upsmsanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Using time poorly, corporate-speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennial Generation</td>
<td>Cynicism, sarcasm, condescension*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mind Sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Altruistic</th>
<th>Egotistical</th>
<th>Messianic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Spiteful</td>
<td>Arguer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>Belligerent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted</td>
<td>Extroverted</td>
<td>Uncooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreating</td>
<td>Phobic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Components of Anger

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

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

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

“Doublespeak Quiz”

“Technological changes and their new terminology may confound, confuse and anger those required to work with these systems”
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).

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.

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.
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).

3. **Calm the anger through**:
   - Active Listening;
   - Allowing the person to “vent”;
   - Sectoring anger toward true (real) cause;
   - Reflecting;
   - Asking/answering questions

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.
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?

Dealing with Angry Public

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

Communications Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sender</th>
<th>Message/Medium</th>
<th>Receiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Verbal/non-written</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Web</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anger Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Intense</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>Unhappy</td>
<td>Very Unhappy</td>
<td>Bitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>Discontented</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Disturbed</td>
<td>Fed Up</td>
<td>Disgusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Sullen</td>
<td>Indignant</td>
<td>Outraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Troubled</td>
<td>Irate</td>
<td>Furious</td>
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Some words, by their very construct, may sound harsh (hard and soft sounds)
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

2. Listening/Speaking Skills

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

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.
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)
    - Hands
    - Positioning
    - Eye movement and contact

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?

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.
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…”

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…”
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 flippant or curt.

Listener’s comments:

“You feel that ...”
“You were pretty annoyed by this ...”

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 ...”

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.
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)__."
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.

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.

4. Knowing Your People

**Problem Employees:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuses</td>
<td>Transferal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retreating</td>
<td>Introverted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defiant Acts</td>
<td>Act of Desperation</td>
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</table>
Summary

- Ask yourself if the anger is justified
- Stay calm
- Avoid character insults
- Know when to disengage
- Stay safe

Questions

Bibliography


Christina Maslach, *Burnout—the Cost of Caring*, Prentice-Hall


"Getting Your Own Way-The Easy Way," Morton Hunt