

Anger

**Understand it.
Control it.**

If you are a service member or vet with PTSD — or if you are experiencing any mental-health difficulties that are causing you problems with your daily life — you need to get professional help.

Successful treatments to relieve or completely resolve symptoms are available, and the sooner treatment begins, the more effective it is.

Service members with PTSD have serious problems with extreme and unpredictable emotions. Anger can be the most destructive one. Left unchecked, anger can lead to aggressive

or high-risk behavior that damages relationships, endangers your health or threatens the safety of others. Domestic violence and road rage are just two examples of anger running wild.

There are many methods to help you manage anger or other emotions that are causing you stress.

Understand that **fear** or **frustration** often is the cause of anger



Where to get treatment.

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Here are some general tips to get you started:

Learn to Identify Your Emotion.

This allows you to actively change the negative emotion and to set appropriate boundaries.

Effectively Communicate Your Emotion to Others.

When you identify your emotion, tell others who are affected. If you are angry and identify it, say to your family, friends or co-workers, “Right now I’m feeling angry and I need to be alone. I’ll get back to you.”

In this example, you identified the emotion, you set a boundary and you gave assurance to people you care about that you are not running away from the situation. This is a healthy way to communicate.

Understand that fear or frustration often is the cause of anger.

When you feel angry, STOP. Ask yourself — and do it aloud — why you are angry. Even if you don’t know why, by continuing to ask the question you are engaging the reason center of your brain — the portion that promotes rational thinking and helps to regulate emotions.

Identify the characteristics of your anger.

The better you know your anger, the better you can deal with your anger. Ask yourself:

“How often do I get angry?” Are you rarely angry or angry most of the time?

“How intense is my anger?” Do you do a slow burn or are you a full-blown volcano?

“How do I express my anger?” Do you lash out or can you walk away from a heated situation?

“How long do I stay angry?” Does your anger fade quickly or do you hold on to it like a precious gem?

Find ways to cope with your anger.

This is not as difficult as it might seem because the best coping skills are healthy activities that you enjoy. First, understand why coping skills are necessary.

- They decrease the intensity of a bad feeling.
- They provide an alternative to destructive behavior.
- They reduce the chance of damaging your relationships; trust increases.

- They increase control over your life because you act out of thought, not out of emotion.

Secondly, put your coping skills into categories so you easily see what type of skill can be used in a given situation. Write down coping skills in these four areas:

- **Physical** — any activity that gets you moving. Taking a walk, playing basketball or going to a batting cage are good coping skills.
- **Spiritual** — any activity that promotes hope. Prayer or meditations are good coping skills.
- **Emotional** — any activity that calms you down. Listening to music; taking deep, slow breaths; or holding your pet are good coping skills.

- **Intellectual** — any type of brain activity. Good coping skills here include, for example, talking with people about your problem, researching an interesting topic online or doing a Sudoku puzzle.

To help jump start your own list of coping skills, [click HERE](#) for a list of more than 150 suggestions.

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Find ways
to cope
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A 24-hour outreach center for active duty and retirees is operated by the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

The toll-free number is

866-966-1020.

You will speak in person with a counselor. The service is anonymous and confidential.

Where to Get Mental-Health Help

Options for active-duty service members:

- Go to sick call and ask for a mental-health referral.
- Talk to a chaplain.
- Contact the Fleet and Family Support Center. See www.nffsp.org for details.
- Go online to : www.MilitaryOneSource.com, which provides a free counseling service. The toll-free number is 800-342-9647.
- See a private provider, but expect to pay for any service.

Options for retired service members:

- If you are registered with the VA, you can refer yourself to a mental-health provider.
- If you have TRICARE Standard, call the TRICARE service line for a referral. The website is: www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/
The toll-free numbers are:
 - Health Net Federal Services, 877-747-9579
 - Humana Military HealthCare, 800-700-8646
 - TriWest Healthcare Alliance, 888-874-9378

- If you have TRICARE Prime, you can refer yourself to a VA health facility or ask your primary care provider for a referral.

- Go to a Vet Service Center. The VA operates 232 community-based counseling centers throughout the country. All are staffed by combat vets.

Details and a complete list of centers are at www.vetcenter.va.gov. The toll-free number is: **800-905-4675**.

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