

Men & Mental Health: When your fuse is short

Are you quick to anger? Are you easily frustrated or disappointed? Is it difficult for you to tolerate people who don't know what they're doing or don't know what they're talking about? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Life is frustrating for everyone at certain times, and some are better than others at managing their responses to life's difficulties, including other people and situations.

Letting anger fester not only makes us unhappy in the moment, it can also have potentially damaging long-term consequences on both our physical and mental health. Learning how best to manage and channel negative feelings can lead to a happier, healthier, and more productive existence.



Anger – what else to watch for (besides feeling angry)

Anger is often readily identifiable and expressed. We've all been there and while we may have an idea in our heads about what anger looks and feels like (crossed arms or clenched fists, stern expression, raised voice, increased heart rate and adrenaline), here are some not-so-obvious signs and symptoms that you may be coping with an issue related to anger:

- Denying yourself activities you ordinarily enjoy (e.g., watching TV, going to the gym).
- Picking fights or starting an argument for no apparent reason.
- Sudden fixation on a minor problem or non-urgent issue (e.g., becoming unreasonably fixated on completing a household repair that does not require immediate attention).
- Excessive thoughts about past wrongs, nursing old grudges, and general negative ruminating.

Is feeling bad feeling sad?

When we think about depression, chances are what comes to mind are things like feelings of overwhelming sadness and despair, a sense of hopelessness, loss of interest in one's hobbies or passions, lack of energy, fatigue, exhaustion... But what about anger? For some, men especially, a common manifestation of

depression is anger. In fact, some clinical researchers believe that irritability, along with apathy, are more symptomatic of depression than feelings of sadness, especially for males.

It's also important to remember that a person can be struggling with depression and still get out of bed, suit up and show up to work, and take care of their responsibilities in life. Depression is not always something that's visible or observable. That said, here are some ways that depression can manifest itself, particularly in men:

- Increase in risk-taking behaviors, such as gambling, alcohol/substance use, reckless driving, and unsafe sex practices.
- Increase in escapist behaviors (e.g., excessive working out, overworking, oversleeping).
- Low or no sex drive (where previously there had been an active, healthy interest in sex).
- Aggressive, controlling behavior (this can range from having a hostile disposition to violence and abuse, depending on the individual and severity).

Moving Forward: Sage words from the Stoics

The ancient Stoics tell us that it isn't so much what happens to us that matters, but rather how we respond to it. While we can't always control what happens, we can and do have some control over how we react. Two of the most notable Stoic thinkers were Epictetus (c. 50 – 135 CE), who was born into slavery, and Marcus Aurelius (161 – 180 CE), a Roman emperor. Despite vastly different backgrounds, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius espoused many of the same views and guidance on managing life's turmoil, and their wisdom is as applicable now as it was then.

Consider the following:

"Circumstances don't make the man; they only reveal him to himself."

– Epictetus

"You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

– Marcus Aurelius

"Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants."

– Epictetus

“You always own the option of having no opinion. There is never any need to get worked up or to trouble your soul about things you can’t control.”

– Marcus Aurelius

“Don’t seek to have events happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do happen, and all will be well with you.”

– Epictetus

Additional Resources

Any Ron Swanson fans reading this? If so, check out www.mantherapy.org – a very Ron Swanson-esque approach to mental health and getting the help you need. And if that piques your interest in counseling, remember the free and confidential services available to you through Ulliance. As they say at Man Therapy, “Sometimes a man needs a pork shoulder to cry on.”

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we’re here to help **800.448.8326**