



News Release

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Family & Consumer Sciences
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Families the strongest link

Dealing with Anger in a Marriage

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One of the most difficult skills that partners must develop in a marriage is how to deal effectively with anger.

Any time two people live together, there are bound to be episodes of anger. The frequency and potency of these episodes will vary among families. Successful anger management can mean the difference between marital joy and misery. The success or failure of a marriage may depend on the way a couple copes with their angry feelings.

People have many misconceptions of anger and these perceptions can lead people to cover up or deny their anger. Some of the misconceptions people have are:

- If you don't look angry, you're not angry.
- If you ignore anger and hurt, they'll go away.
- If you vent feelings of anger, they'll go away.
- Being nice all the time and not expressing anger will not damage you.
- Your relationships will suffer if you express any anger or hurt.

When people cover up their anger, it goes unresolved, causing even more problems in a marriage relationship. Some of these "cover-ups" include denial, giving in, withdrawal, collecting grievances, pouting, sarcasm, stubbornness, procrastination, bigotry, or being overly sweet and nice.

Anger is healthy and normal and will always be present in human relationships. Couples should give each other the right to be angry. Angry feelings should be expressed in words, but said calmly and with love. These feelings should be expressed in much the same tone as you would say, "I'm tired" or "I'm hungry."

A firm, no-yelling policy should be developed if the anger is going to be managed effectively. If anger is handled using a calm approach, couples usually find that the anger was based on a misunderstanding or misinterpreted words or deeds. Don't let anger get so out of hand that it can't be resolved.

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FactSheet

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