

Responding vs Reacting

“A Lack of emotional regulation causes others to feel unsafe to speak the truth”

1. Reflect on the negative consequences of reacting harshly or in anger

2. Sources of reacting with Anger

1. Misinterpretation of other people's behaviour or what they have said.
2. Being too sensitive
3. Low frustration tolerance.
4. Unreasonable expectations.
5. People-rating.
6. Bio-chemical factors or neurophysiologic factors.
7. Lack of sleep.
8. Low self-esteem.
9. Drugs and alcohol use.
10. Not eating healthy meals or skipping meals.
11. Personal attacks against us.
12. Our ideas are being attacked.
13. Our needs are being threatened.
14. Not being respected.
15. Lack of good communication and conflict management skills.

3. How to be less emotional reactive

1. Have an attitude of let me learn something rather to prove something.
Ask questions to try to understand the other person.
2. Speak in the present tense with the phrase “I can feel”.
Example: I can feel myself getting worked-up.
3. If you were triggered it means you have some healing to do. “What is this saying about me”.

(Intuitive.grego Instagram)

4. Analyzing my anger outbursts

Behavior Chain Analysis of Problem Behaviour

1. Describe the specific PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

- A.** Be very specific and detailed. No vague terms.

B. Identify exactly what you did, said, thought or felt (if feelings are the targeted problem behaviour).

C. Describe the intensity of the behaviour and other characteristics of the behaviour that is important.

D. Describe the problem behaviour in enough detail that an actor in a play or movie could recreate the behavior exactly.

2. Describe the specific *PRECIPITATING EVENT* that started the whole chain of behavior.

A. Start with the environmental event (situation) that started the chain. Always start with some event in your environment, even if it doesn't seem to you that the environmental event "caused" the problem behavior. Possible questions to get at this are:

- What exact event precipitated the start of the chain reaction?
- When did the sequence of events that led to the problem behavior begin? When did the problem start?
- What was going on the moment the problem started?
- What were you doing, thinking, feeling, imagining at that time?
- Why did the problem behaviour happen on that day instead of the day before?

3. Describe in general *VULNERABILITY FACTORS* happening before the precipitating event.

What factors or events made you more vulnerable to a problematic chain? Areas to examine are:

- A.** Physical illness; unbalanced eating or sleeping; injury
- B.** Use of drugs or alcohol; misuse of prescription drugs
- C.** Stressful events in the environment (either positive or negative)
- D.** Intense emotions, such as sadness, anger, fear, loneliness
- E.** Previous behaviours of your own that you found stressful

4. Describe in excruciating detail *THE CHAIN OF EVENTS* that led up to the problem behaviour.

A. What next? Imagine that your problem behaviour is chained to the precipitating event in the environment. How long is the chain? Where does it go? What are the links? Write out all links in the chain of events, no matter how small. Be very specific, as if you are

writing a script for a play.

- What exact thought (or belief), feeling, or action followed the precipitating event? What thought, feeling, or action followed that? What next?
- Look at each link in the chain after you write it. Was there another thought feeling, or action that could have occurred? Could someone else have thought, felt, or acted differently at that point? If so, explain how that specific thought, feeling, or action came to be.
- For each link in the chain, as if there is a smaller link I could describe.

B. The links can be thoughts, emotions, sensations and behaviors.

5. What are the CONSEQUENCES of this behavior? Be specific.

- How did other people react immediately and later?
- How did you feel immediately following the behaviour? Later?
- What effect did the behaviour have on you and your environment?

6. Describe in detail different SOLUTIONS to the problem.

A. Go back to the chain of your behaviors following the prompting event. Circle each point or link indicating that if you had done something different, you would have avoided the problem behavior.

B. What could you have done differently at each link in the chain of events to avoid the problem behavior? What coping behaviors or skillful behaviors could you have used?

7. Describe in detail the PREVENTION STRATEGY

A. How could you have kept the chain from starting by reducing your vulnerability to the chain.

8. Describe what you are going to do to REPAIR important or significant consequences of the problem behavior.

Analysis/Consequences

What exactly is the major **PROBLEM BEHAVIOR** that I am analyzing?

Vulnerability Prompting event Links Problem Behavior Consequences
 Possible type of links: Actions, Body Sensations, Cognitions, Events, Feelings

What **PROMPTING EVENT** in the environment started me on the chain to my problem behavior?:

Start Day/hour: ____

What things in myself and my environment made me **VULNERABLE**?

Start Day/hour____

LINKS: List actual and specific behaviors and events

LINKS: List new and more skillful behaviors

What exactly were the **CONSEQUENCES** in the environment:

Immediate: _____ Delayed: _____

What exactly were the **CONSEQUENCES** in myself:

Immediate: _____ Delayed: _____

Ways to reduce my **VULNERABILITY** in the future:

Ways to prevent **PROMPTING EVENT** from happening again:

What **HARM** did my **PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CAUSE**:

Plans to **REPAIR, CORRECT, AND OVERCORRECT** the harm:

MY DEEPEST THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT THIS (THAT I WANT TO SHARE)

5. Keep your heart and your mind clean

- Know the importance of cleaning out your thoughts, mind and your heart.
- Accept that not everyone will like you and that is okay.
- Work on forgiveness.
- Focus on your goals.
- Don't waste time and energy on unnecessary battles distracting you from your race.
- Think how you are going to wisely respond to the situation.

6. Recognize red flags

- Know red flags in people
- If people have red flags, it will determine how you will respond and deal with conflict.

7. Anger management skills

Getting what you want

- Focus on the problem
- Keep your eye on the future and your goals.
- Remember that you and the other person see things differently and you are not the only one who is right.

When you feel like hurting yourself

- Imagine you see a STOP sign. Stop thinking about your hurt or anger for a moment and focus your mind on something physical, something not directed at a living thing.
- Hit a punching bag.
- Use a pillow to hit a wall, pillow-fight style.
- Rip up an old newspaper or phone book.
- Throw ice into the bathtub or against a brick wall hard enough to shatter it.
- Crank up the music and dance.
- Clean your room (or your whole house).
- Go for a walk.
- Do something that creates a sharp physical sensation, e.g. squeeze ice hard
- Take a cold shower.

Tips on controlling your anger

- Self-examination: Ask yourself what you will gain from being angry all the time?
- Family Involvement: Anger outbursts are not an individual problem it is a problem that requires the help of the whole family.
- Physical action: a quick and simple thing to do when you are overwhelmed with your feelings is to jump up and down several times saying in a loud voice, 'Yes! No! Get off my back! Yes! No! Get off my back!'
- Catch yourself before you lose it.
- If you have lots of stresses in your life admit to yourself that you are now vulnerable.
- Make sure you make more time for relaxation, especially when you are stressed.
- Maintain healthy lifestyle.
- Time management. Spend time wisely by planning your day.
- Use a To - do list.
Set Priorities. Use the ABC system, i.e. A (priority --- must do), B (priority --- should do), C (Priority - nice to do).
- Monitor your feelings, moods and energy levels.
- Observe your feelings. Do not run away from your feelings. When feeling angry admit it firstly to yourself. Realize that you are now vulnerable.
- Write your feelings down in words.
- Draw a picture of anger.
- **Do not act immediately when you are angry, but take some time to cool down and think about it:**
 Count backwards from 100 to 1.
 Breathe in for four seconds and then out for four seconds.
 Tell yourself to "Cool it" and to relax.
 Go to a relaxing place in your mind.
 Cool off by going somewhere to be alone.
 Do something active.

Do some eye movement exercises.

- **Tackle your anger early**
 The earlier anger is tackled, the better the chance of handling it assertively. Take control at the stage when you first notice mild irritation, most outbursts of rage are caused by a build-up of minor stresses.
- **Identify the primary source of your anger**
 Which of my needs are not being met?
 Ask yourself: What are the real issues here?
 Take a look at the big picture.
- **Anger by appointment only**
 If you have an issue you need to discuss with someone, approach the person politely and make an appointment, e.g. I have an issue that I need to resolve. Do you have time to talk about it now? Negotiate a time.
- **Express your feelings**
 Expressing feelings is very important. This lets other people know things you don't like. 'I' statements allow you to say what you think without making the other person angry. 'You' statements criticize. For example: 'You' statement – "You never think of anyone but yourself". 'I' statement – "When you promise to pick me up and don't come, I feel very hurt and I miss seeing you".
- **Do not take things personally**
 When you take things personally, your anger is triggered and you become defensive and aggressive. Remind yourself: "I am special, lovable, valuable, creative, an original thinker, my thoughts and opinions are important and I listen carefully".
- **Let go of expectations**
 Expectations are unrealized resentments waiting to happen. When setting high expectations of others and ourselves, anger is usually not very far from the surface as a result. Explore your expectations of others and yourself by asking:
 - Is this expectation reasonable?
 - If yes, why?
- **Thermometers**
 Make thermometers to put up at work and home. Indicate your current mood on the individual thermometer. Organise a family/staff meeting and explain what you expect from others when you experience certain emotions for example, when you are close to an anger outburst.
- **Time-out:** For yourself, your family, friends and colleagues: Make or even just imagine a 'Time-out' sign. If your emotions are high, remember you are going to become out of control and irrational and you will have regrets if you do not STOP. Every time you reach the 0 control point, show or imagine the 'Time-out' sign. Everyone including yourself, must understand this sign. Do not speak or act. Speaking now can bring about hurtful words. Acting can cause someone or yourself to be hurt. Imagine you are an electric appliance and you can switch it off.

Self-study

- Keep an Anger Management Journal.
- Choose five anger management skills and record them in your skills chart.
- Write a letter. Think of someone who you are still angry with. Write this person a letter. Tell them your grievances and how you feel. Don't hold back. Really express yourself. When you have finished the letter, read it once. Then fold it and on the outside write: 'What I really want is your love and approval'. Then burn the letter and release it.
- Mirror work: Take another person, or the same person you are angry with. Sit down in front of a mirror. Be sure to have some tissues nearby. Look into your own eyes and see the other person. Tell them what you are so angry about. When you are finished, tell them, 'What I really want is your love and approval'. We are all seeking love and approval. That's what we want from everyone, and that's what everyone wants from us. Love and approval bring harmony into our lives. In order to be free, we need to release the old ties that bind us. So once again look into the mirror and affirm to yourself; 'I am willing to release the need to be an angry person'. Notice if you are really willing to let go or do you still want to hang onto the past?

Information was obtained from The workbook of Louis L Hay

