Anger is a Mind-Body State

- Triggered by a perceived threat, and
- A reaction to and distraction from inner pain such as anxiety, shame, frustration, and powerlessness.

Anger is an Attempt at Self-Compassion

When our pain is managed constructively, we express “healthy anger.”

But when our self-compassion goes awry, we express destructive anger.
Healthy Anger Consists of:

• Recognizing anger as a signal to direct our attention inward
• Observing and experiencing anger without being overwhelmed by it
• Identifying unrealistic expectations that can make us vulnerable to anger
• Responding with compassion and self-compassion
• Developing strategies to let go of anger

Cultivating Healthy Anger encompasses skills from three broad areas of theoretical understanding and practice:

• Affective awareness regarding body, thoughts, and emotions
• Mindfulness and Mindfulness Meditation
• Self-compassion (Compassion Focused Therapy and Theory based on an integration of evolutionary, social, and developmental theories; Buddhist psychology and neuroscience)

Framework of Anger

Triggering Event → Anger (1-10)
A Framework of Anger

Negative Feelings
Hurt
Disappointment
Embarrassment
Frustration
Shame
Anxiety
Guilt
Abused
Devalued
Rejection, etc.

Triggering Event

Anger (1-10)

Needs Expectations
Triggering Appraisals

Embarrassment
Anger
Event Frustration
SdSaSd

Desires
Depression
Shame
Anxiety
Guilt
Abused
Devalued
Rejection, etc.

Body reactions
Self-talk
Images

2016©Model of Anger
Bernard Golden

The Anger Log

Needs
Desires
Triggering Event

Negative Feelings
Triggering Appraisals

Embarrassment
Shame
Anxiety
Guilt

Bodily reactions (coinciding with negative emotions including anger):

Self-talk (coinciding with negative emotions including anger):

Images (coinciding with negative emotions including anger):

Previous events and mood prior to triggering event:
To feel confident, respect my decision other lane She’s criticising me, attacked She’s criticizing, devalued, It’s happening again

Bodily reactions: tension in chest, Self-talk: She can be so annoying and overbearing, Impact: None

Previous events and mood prior to triggering event: Past history of feeling disrespected and current mood

Mindfulness and Mindful Meditation

• Be alert to how clients practice meditation.
• Encourage discussion of judging observations.
• Emphasize informal practice as well as formal practice.
• Discuss the difference between detachment and suppression.

The Usefulness of Mindfulness Regarding Anger

• To recognize thoughts, expectations and appraisals.
• To observe emotions without overidentification.
• To observe bodily sensations.
• To recognize alternative choices that can impact the trajectory of anger arousal.
Key Concepts of Compassion Focused Theory (CFT)

The brain is wired for emotions to seek safety, connection, and strive toward fulfillment. The challenge is to be mindful to the system that is being activated. Compassion and self-compassion help to create something that is essential for creating such balance. Compassionate meditations impact these systems.

Components of Self-Compassion

Self-compassion entails (Kristen Neff):

- Kindness with oneself
- Non-judgment
- Recognizing and honoring our humanity
- Not over-identification with thoughts or feelings

Psychologist Christopher Germer states that:

"Self-compassion is a form of acceptance of ourselves while we’re in pain."
Physiological Reaction to Compassionate Meditations

- Decreased cortisol levels
- Decreased adrenaline
- Increased oxytocin
- Activation of Vagus nerve for calmness

blocks to self-compassion

- Opening heart for compassion includes opening the heart for past wounds
- Self-compassion is viewed as weakness
- Suppressing the need for compassion helped
- Revisiting the longing for compassion can potentially lead to vulnerability
- Fear of losing one’s competitive drive

cultivating your compassionate self

Exercise #1 – Recall being compassionate with others

Exercise #2 – Direct compassion toward self
Directing Compassion at Your Hurting Self

Direct compassionate meditations to self:

1. I know you're hurting
2. I'm here to sit with you
3. This is what we're feeling right now
4. Like all feelings, it will pass
5. I know it's uncomfortable
6. We can do this
7. I'm not going anywhere

Directing Compassion at Thoughts

It makes sense—given your history

We have all kinds of thoughts

Of course, that is where your mind goes

It makes perfect sense to your emotional brain

But if it were true...

That's a familiar path, it figures, of course

Practicing BEAR for "Healthy Anger"

B • Breathe deeply: Inhale and exhale deeply

E • Evolve calmness in your body

A • Activate compassion for yourself and others

R • Reflect on thoughts and feelings that trigger anger
Grieving and Mourning

- Grieving involves acknowledging the immediate pain.
- Mourning involves letting go.
- Addressing past hurts.
- Mindfully and intentionally re-investing in the present.

Practicing Compassion Within the Session

- Being mindfully present.
- Being compassionate.
- Being mindful to help client identify alternative inner dialogue that reflects self-compassion.
- Finding opportunities within the session to encourage client mindfulness.
- Helping client identify and overcome challenges to self-compassion.

"Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted pieces of ourselves. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen. Room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy."

- Pema Chodron
The following websites offer information and many types of mindfulness and self-compassion exercises. You may want to try several of the exercises to determine which ones fit you best.

**Mindfulness Meditation**
*www.headspace.com*
This application, available through iTunes, provides guided meditations and addresses a variety of issues such as anxiety, creativity, and relationships.

**iTunes**
*www.apple.com/itunes*
iTunes offers a wide variety of mindfulness meditation MP3s, including some by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mark Williams, and Daniel Goleman.

**Meditation downloads**
*www.jackkornfield.com*
Body Scans
*Daniel Goleman – Body Scan on iTunes*

**Exercise #2**
*www.bernardgoldenphd.com*
Downloads
**Self-Compassion**
*http://selfcompassion.org*
Kristin Neff’s website offers insight, exercises, and resources on self-compassion.

**Center for Mindfulness Compassion:**
http://centerformsc.org
This site offers resources and helps promote self-compassion.

**The Greater Good Science Center:**
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu
This site focuses on the science of a meaningful life. It offers articles, workshops, and resources on themes of gratitude, altruism, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, happiness, and mindfulness.

**Mindful Self-Compassion:**
http://mindfulselfcompassion.org
Directed by Christopher Germer, this site offers exercises, publications, and resources on mindfulness and self-compassion.

**Rick Hanson, PhD: Resources for Happiness, Love, and Wisdom**
www.rickhanson.net/event/natural-contentment
Rick Hanson offers meditations on self-compassion and contentment.