



# Surgeon's Corner



## Anger Management for Veterans

Anger is a normal emotion, but it can be destructive if it is not managed effectively. Veterans are especially vulnerable to anger problems; due to the trauma they may have experienced during military service.

There are many different anger management techniques that can be helpful for veterans. Some of the most effective include:

- **Deep breathing:** This is a simple but effective way to calm down when you are feeling angry. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- **Counting to ten:** This is another simple technique that can help you to pause and think before you act when you are angry. Count to ten slowly and focus on your breathing as you do so.
- **Walking away:** If you are feeling overwhelmed by anger, it can be helpful to walk away from the situation. This will give you some time to cool down and think about how you want to respond.
- **Talking to someone you trust:** Talking to a friend, family member, therapist, or other trusted person can be helpful to express your anger in a healthy way.
- **Practicing relaxation techniques:** There are many different relaxation techniques that can be helpful for anger management. Some examples include meditation, yoga, and tai chi.

In addition to these techniques, there are also several helpful resources available for veterans who are struggling with anger problems. Some of these resources include:

- **The National Anger Management Association:** This organization offers a variety of resources for anger management, including online courses, articles, and books.
- **The Mayo Clinic:** This website provides information on anger management, including tips on how to identify your triggers and how to develop coping mechanisms.
- **VA:** This website offers training that helps you to get better along with others, control your reactions to different types of anger, the causes of anger, and how to manage anger effectively.

If you are a veteran who is struggling with anger problems, there is help available. Please reach out to a mental health professional or another trusted resource for support.

Here are some additional tips for anger management:

- **Identify your triggers:** What are the things that make you angry? Once you know your triggers, you can start to avoid them or develop coping mechanisms for dealing with them.
- **Challenge your thoughts:** When you are feeling angry, your thoughts may be distorted. Challenge these thoughts and try to see the situation from a more rational perspective.
- **Express your anger in a healthy way:** If you need to express your anger, do so in a way that is not harmful to yourself or others. This could involve talking to someone you trust, writing in a journal, or engaging in physical activity.
- **Seek professional help:** If you are struggling to manage your anger on your own, please seek professional help. A therapist can help you to develop coping mechanisms and learn how to manage your anger in a healthy way.

Links: **VA:** <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/>

The National Anger Management Association: <https://namass.org/index.html>

The Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/anger-management/art-20045434>

Resources: If you are in distress, call or text 988

<http://veteranscrisisline.net>

Mindfulness app

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach>

Dr. Olav Opedal NCC LMHC

Psychologist & Data Scientist

[olav@opedalconsulting.com](mailto:olav@opedalconsulting.com)

WDVA Veteran or Service-member Owned Business Certification Number: OPC628rt