

HOW TO DEAL WITH ANGRY PEOPLE

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ADR Lunchtime Series (10/17/24)



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THREE GOALS FOR TODAY

1. Understand what anger IS and what it's NOT
2. Learn why people get angry and how to diagram an emotional incident
3. Learn some basic strategies for how to deal with angry people

PART 1: WHAT IS ANGER?



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ANGER IS AN EMOTION

- A feelings state, ranging from frustration to intense rage
 - The emotional desire to lash out
- Different from Aggression
 - Overlaps
- More like sadness, fear, or jealousy

EMOTIONS INCLUDE...

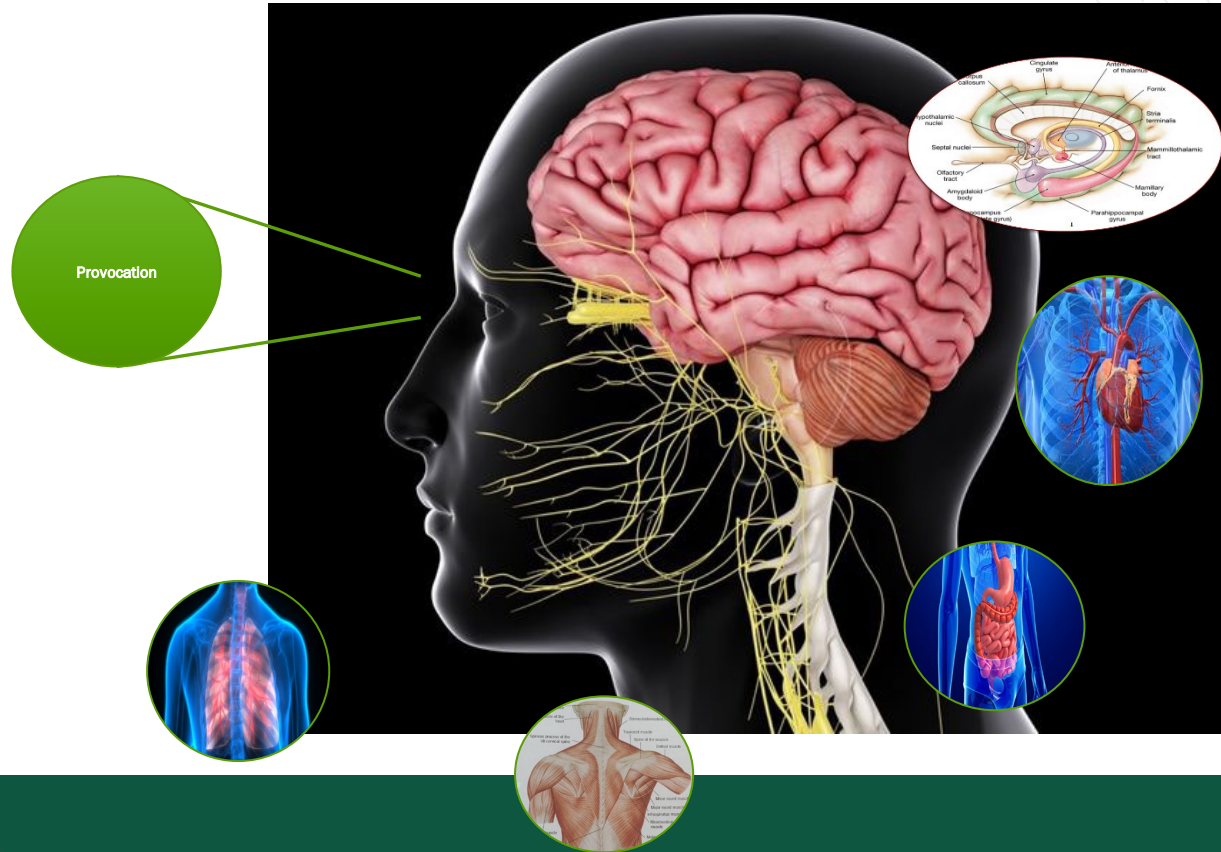
- Think about the last time you got angry
 - Physiological activation
 - Thought patterns
 - Desires to act

EVOLUTIONARY VALUE OF EMOTIONS

- Emotions are a primitive yet valuable “knowing system”
 - Fear alerts us to danger
 - Sadness -> loss
 - Guilt -> error
 - Anger -> unfairness or mistreatment



ANGRY BIOLOGY



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- Amygdala->Hypothalamus->Fight or Flight
- Facial Motor Nuclei -> Angry Expressions

THE ANGRY FACE



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ANGRY BIOLOGY

- Evolutionary value here too
- Emotional communication has survival benefits
 - Both expressing and interpreting emotion

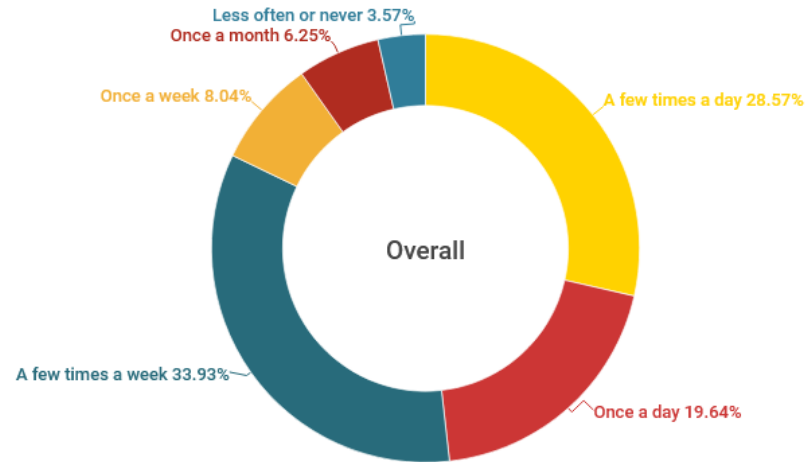
QUICK POLL

- How often would you estimate you become angry (not aggressive)?
 - a. A few times a day
 - b. Once a day
 - c. A few times a week
 - d. Once a week
 - e. Once a month
 - f. Less often or never



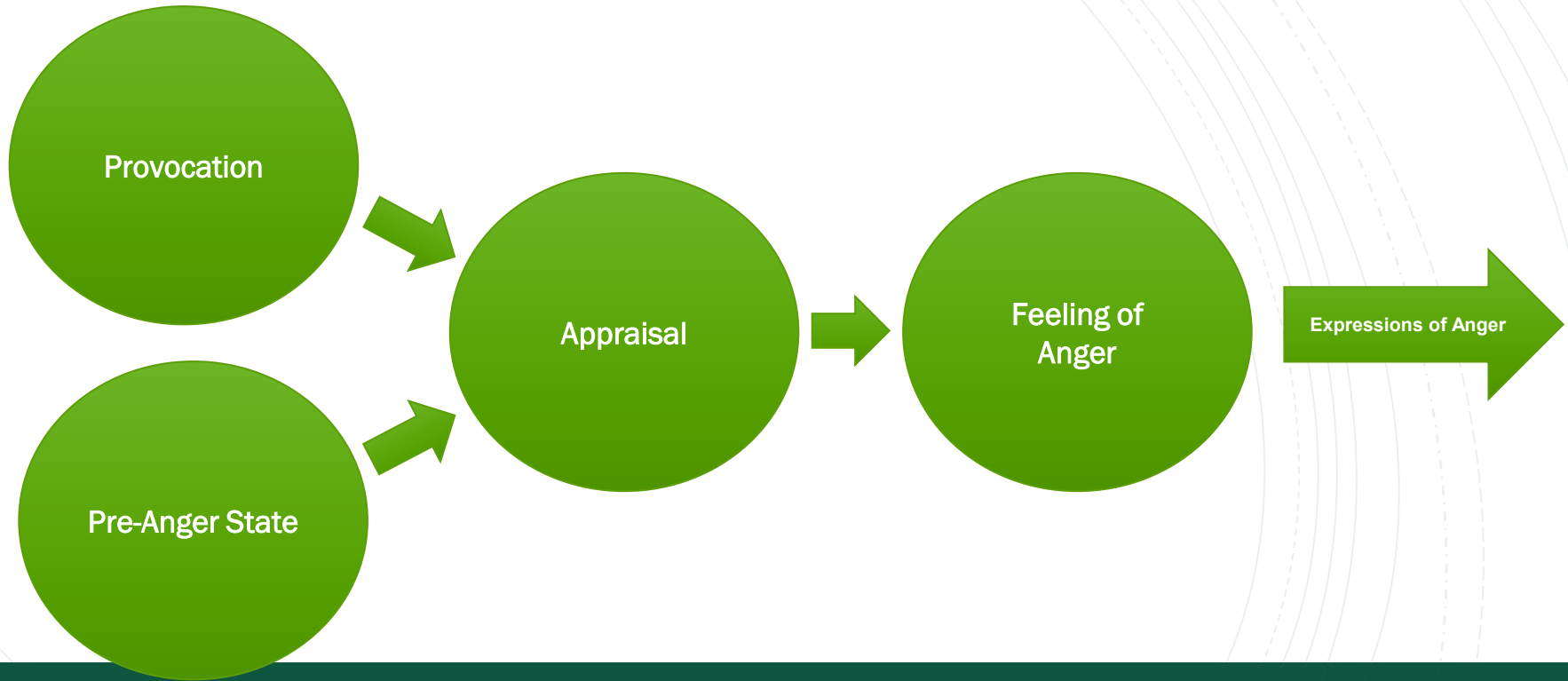
SOME RESULTS: THE ANGER PROJECT

How Often Do You Get Angry?

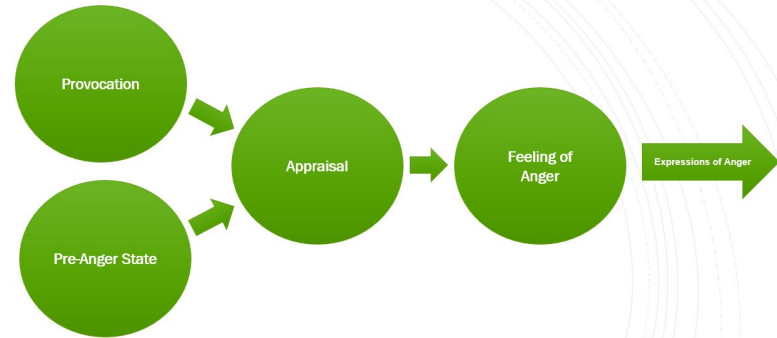


PART 2: WHY WE GET MAD

WHY WE GET MAD



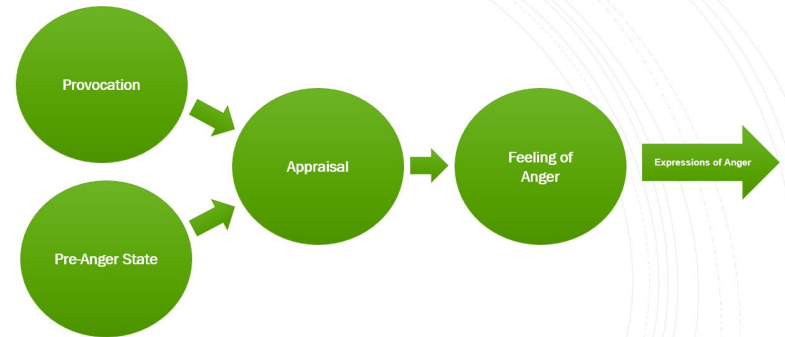
WHY WE GET MAD



- Provocation
 - Thing that “made” you mad
- Pre-Anger State
 - Doing and thinking at the time of the provocation
- Appraisal
 - Evaluations of the provocation

DIGGING DEEPER... APPRAISAL

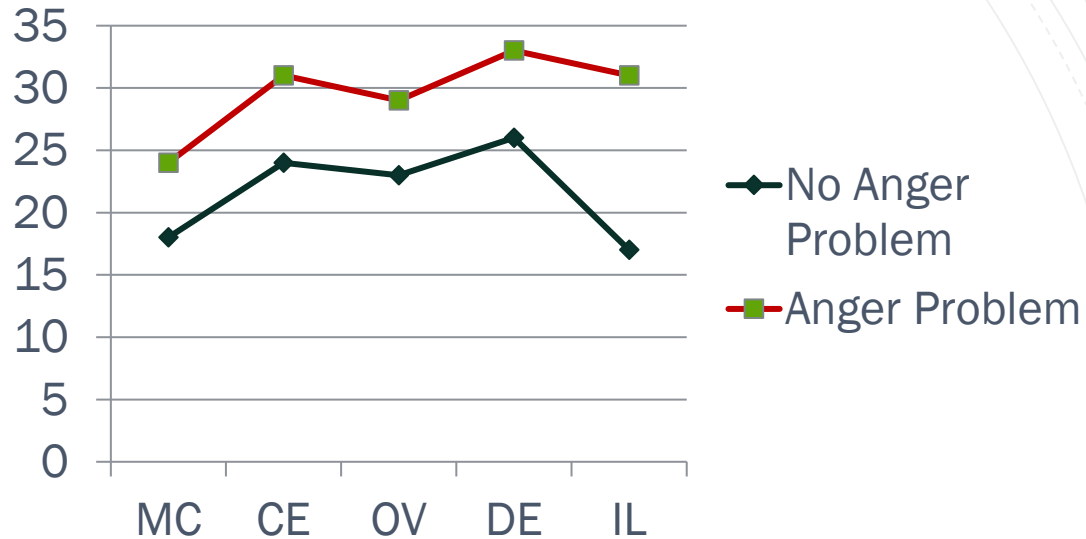
- Appraisal
 - Primary
 - Evaluating the thing we are angry about
 - Secondary
 - Evaluating our ability to cope



FIVE TYPES OF ANGRY THOUGHTS

- Misattributing Causation
- Demandingness
- Overgeneralizing
- Inflammatory Labeling
- Catastrophizing

FIVE TYPES OF ANGRY THOUGHTS



INFINITE EXPRESSIONS

- A variety of ways to express anger
 - Aggression
 - Suppression
 - Assertation
 - Social Support Seeking
 - Diffusion
 - Avoidance
 - Rumination
 - Control

PART 3: DEALING WITH ANGRY PEOPLE?

Five Strategies



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BASIC PRINCIPLES FIRST: DOS AND DON'TS

■ Dos

- Listen
- Minimal Encouragers
- Pause/Wait Patiently
- Empathize
- Work Together/Problem Solve

■ Don'ts

- Match their Tone
- Tell them to “relax”
- Disregard their Feelings
- Get “snippy”

*If the goal is de-escalation, avoid things that are going to escalate.



NUMBER 1

- Ask yourself if the anger is justified
- Maybe we really did something wrong that we need to make right
- Might have to find ways to reach those who won't communicate



NUMBER 2

- Remember that anger can look a lot of ways
- There's no one way to express anger
 - Some yell and swear
 - Others cry or pout
 - Some are assertive but not aggressive



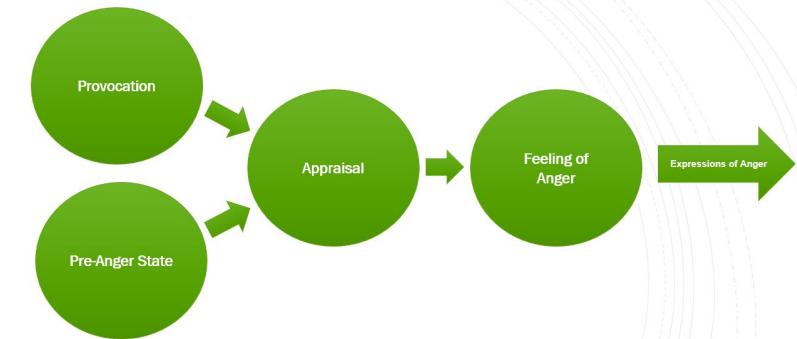
NUMBER 3



- Figure out your goals
- Determine what you want from the interaction and (based on that) the best direction forward
 - Not easy
 - What we want to do isn't always the same as what we should do
 - Especially important online (social media, email, etc.)

NUMBER 4

- Diagram the angry incident from their perspective
- Building empathy by understanding where they are coming from



NUMBER 5

- Stay calm
- Easier said than done, but will also help deescalate the other person
 - Noncomplementary responses
- Know when to disengage



THANK YOU!

- Want to know more?

- @AngerProfessor on Social Media
- Website: www.alltheragescience.com
- TED Talk: Why We Get Mad
- Books:
 - *Why We Get Mad: How to Use Your Anger for Positive Change*
 - *How To Deal with Angry People*

