

# Gulf Oil Spill: Get the Facts

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

LAKEVIEW CENTER  
1221 W. LAKEVIEW AVE.  
PENSACOLA, FL 32501  
(850) 469-3500

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE  
850.438.1617

### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

AVALON CENTER OF LAKEVIEW  
6024 SPIKES WAY  
MILTON, FL 32570  
850.437.8900

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE  
850.438.1617

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

BRIDGEWAY CENTER  
24-HOUR CRISIS LINE  
850.833.9200

### WALTON COUNTY

COPE CENTER  
24-HOUR CRISIS LINE  
850.892.4357

If you need additional behavioral health assistance, please contact your local community provider listed above.



## Managing Anger

As the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill and its effects continue, many people may begin to feel irritable, and even angry at times.

Anger is a normal, healthy emotion that moves us to action when we have been wronged or victimized. The gulf animals and community are being victimized by the oil spill. Significant anger regarding these events is normal. The feeling isn't the problem—it's what you do with it that makes a difference.

### Myths and Facts about Anger

**Myth:** Anger isn't something you can control.

**Fact:** You can't always control the situation you're in or how it makes you feel, but you can control how you express your anger.

**Myth:** Anger management is about learning to suppress your anger.

**Fact:** Never getting angry is not a good goal. Anger is normal. Anger management is about learning to express anger in constructive ways.

### **Dynamics of Anger**

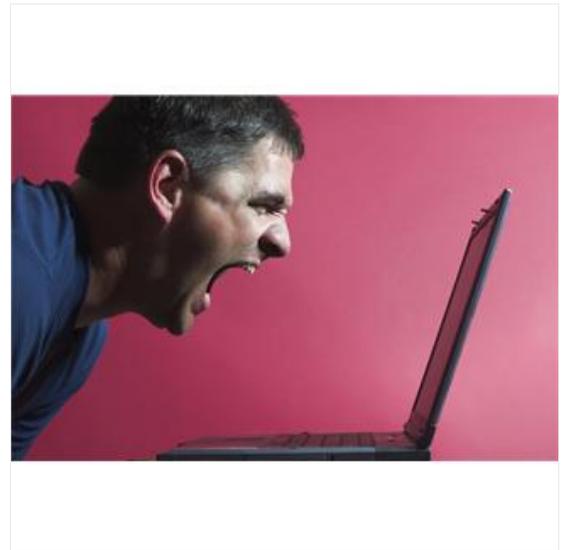
Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or others. Be mindful of displacing/directing anger at those close to us such as our children, spouses, family, etc.

- We become more angry when we are stressed and body resources are down.
- Underneath many current angers are old disappointments, traumas, and triggers.

### **Clues that your anger could be out of control**

- You have a hard time compromising. Is it hard for you to understand other people's points of view, and even harder to concede a point? Do you believe that your way is always right and get angry when others disagree?
- You have trouble expressing emotions other than anger. Do you feel that emotions like fear,

guilt, or shame don't apply to you? Everyone has those emotions, and if you think you don't, you may be using anger as a cover for them.



### **Why learning to control your anger is important**

- Out-of-control anger is harmful to your physical health. Chronic anger makes you more susceptible to heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol levels, a weakened immune system, insomnia, and high blood pressure.
- Out-of-control anger impacts your mental health. Chronic anger consumes huge amounts of mental energy, making it harder to concentrate. It can also lead to stress, depression, and other mental health problems.

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## Be aware of your anger warning signs and triggers

Identify the negative thought patterns that trigger your temper. Common negative thinking patterns that trigger and fuel anger include:

- **Overgeneralizing** - EVERYONE disrespects me.
- **Obsessing** on “shoulds” and “musts” - Having a rigid view of the way things should or must be and getting angry when reality doesn’t line up with this vision.
- **Jumping to conclusions** - Assuming you “know” what someone else is thinking.
- **Avoid people, places, and situations that bring out your worst.**
- **Blaming** - You blame others for the things that happen to you rather than taking responsibility for your own life.

Stressful events don’t excuse anger, but understanding how these events affect you can help you take control of your environment and avoid unnecessary aggravation.

## Learn ways to cool down

Once you know how to recognize what triggers your temper, you can

act quickly to deal with your anger before it spins out of control.

- Take some deep breaths. Deep, slow breathing helps counteract rising tension.
- Exercise. Even a brisk walk can release pent-up energy.
- Use your senses. Take advantage of the relaxing power of your sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. You might try listening to music or picturing yourself in a favorite place.
- Stretch or massage areas of tension.
- Slowly count to ten. Focus on the counting to let your rational mind catch up with your feelings.

## Find healthier ways to express your anger

When communicated respectfully and channeled effectively, anger can be a tremendous source of energy and inspiration for change. Direct anger into community involvement and help. Individuals can focus their energies on helping friends, family, community and those whose livelihoods have been affected by the oil spill.

