

Anger – Signs & Coping Strategies

Brain injury not only causes changes in thoughts, memory, and behavior, it also affects emotions. Anger is especially common after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and can have an impact on relationships with family and friends and also lead to other issues like depression. This article discusses the most common signs, triggers, and coping strategies for anger.

Signs

- Unable to move past small inconveniences
- Explosive outburst one minute and calmness shortly after
- Trouble articulating what made you or your loved one angry
- Difficulty holding conversations without it ending in conflict
- Physical responses like sweating, increased heart rate, and/or raised voice

Common Triggers

- Lack of structure or unexpected events
- Overstimulation, e.g. large crowds, loud noises, fast activities
- Feeling out of control
- Being offended by other people's comments or behavior
- Fatigue or confusion
- Unrealistic self-expectations
- Impulsivity
- Set-backs to achieving goals or keeping a routine

Coping Strategies

- Avoid triggering situations or prepare for them so an outburst is less likely to happen.
- Practice "time-outs." When situations become heated, go for a walk or take a break for 10-15 minutes before addressing the issue again.
- Practice mindfulness and meditation to learn to control your thoughts and emotions better.
- Journal at the end of each day to keep a log of your emotions to track patterns.

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