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Anger management group therapy? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

It has come to my attention over the last several months that I have an pretty significant anger management problem that must be addressed with professional help. Do you know of any anger management groups in New York City? Or, could you recommend a resource that could help me locate a group for anger management? I am already in individual counseling, but I believe that I would benefit from the group dynamic.

Thank you.

Answer

Dear Reader,

First off, props to you for taking the initiative to address your anger problems head-on. As you mentioned, many people find that group therapy, in addition to individual counseling, to be useful in dealing with anger issues. Along with asking your individual mental health professional for a referral, there are a variety of resources available that can guide you in your search to find a group that fits your needs. Keep reading to learn more about these resources, and for some tips on how to manage anger in the meantime.

It may be useful to know what an anger management group is, along with who may potentially benefit. In anger management groups, individuals typically learn and discuss strategies for managing anger and reducing violent responses with other participants who are struggling with similar issues. Participants share and learn from others, which, as an added benefit, may help participants feel less isolated and alone in their experience. You may find value in anger management treatment if you feel your anger is intense and difficult to manage, if it negatively impacts your relationships with friends and family, or if you fear your anger is putting you at risk for health concerns. However, group settings may not benefit everyone. Individuals who feel uncomfortable talking in front of large groups might prefer sticking to individual treatment.

There are typically two types of groups that may be helpful: a group therapy option or participating in a support group. Note that the structure, format, and methods used in anger management groups can vary. For example, if you decide to participate in anger management *group therapy*

, you can expect to join a group led by mental health professionals. In these groups, the facilitator may use cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or other methods to teach skills and strategies aimed to modify thoughts and responses associated with anger. One way to get connected is by searching specifically for anger management therapy groups in your area. If you're a student, you may see what groups exist on campus. If that group doesn't exist, you may voice the interest to your counseling services office. Because these groups are run by mental health professionals, it's likely that you'll be charged a fee if you choose to participate.

Anger management *support groups*, on the other hand, aren't always led by mental health professionals or trained facilitators, and may be run by fellow community members and peers instead. These groups are opportunities for people with shared experiences to share what they're going through and provide emotional support to each other. Support groups are oftentimes free, and, if you believe this type of group fits your needs, [Emotions Anonymous](#) [2], [Mental Health America](#) [3], and the [National Association for Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) [4] are some examples of resources that may provide information about groups meeting in your area. You can also do a search for anger management support in your specific city and also see if any offer groups in other languages.

While searching for a group, it also may be worthwhile to try some of the following strategies for managing anger on your own:

- If you notice you're getting angry, try to take a moment to pause before saying anything.
- Once you're calm, try to address your concerns in a way that's respectful to the other people involved.
- Consider using physical activity to reduce stress or the intensity of your anger.
- If you can, implement short breaks during stressful periods of your day to help manage your response to whatever is causing you distress.
- Try to problem solve instead of fixating on what's making you angry.
- Use "I" statements to stay respectful of others and avoid placing blame.
- Try not to hold a grudge.
- Use humor to decrease tension.
- Use relaxation skills such as deep breathing, yoga, or listening to music when you notice your anger is rising.

Adapted from the [Mayo Clinic](#) [5].

It's also good to keep in mind that it's not unusual to try one or more groups (or mental health professionals) before finding the one that's most helpful to you. Perhaps asking around, making a few calls, and exploring all of your options will help you find the solution you seek. Best of luck finding a counseling style that works for you!

Alice!

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