

Dealing with anger in the workplace



when *life* works better,
business works better
Pai ake te oranga, pai ake te pakihi

Whether or not we are aware every day we are confronted by our own frustrations and anger. Recognising anger as an emotion seems obvious to some but others may see anger as a behaviour.

Let's think of a thermometer, left unchecked, our emotions tend to gather heat. We might feel a little irritated by someone's behaviour and after a while we become frustrated and then we feel the need to say or do something as we are no longer able to contain the developing anger. If we can recognise where we are on the emotional scale, we can approach the person concerned and attempt to communicate our frustrations.

The timing of this communication is important. Waiting for our own emotional response to dissipate before approaching someone is important. Remember, if we wait strong emotions naturally dissipate to a degree where we are able to discuss this with the person concerned. If this does not seem possible then we need to include someone to assist, this may be a line manager or another colleague.

Let's take this a little further. If we become so angry that there is an outburst toward someone or there is a repeating pattern of someone expressing themselves this way, we must address this as early as possible. Loud voices, harsh tones, unwelcome physical postures can all be considered aggressive behaviours. When angry emotions turn into aggressive behaviours, we must address this to ensure these actions do not escalate. We may not want to intervene due to feelings of intimidation which in turn may contribute to behavioural problems escalating.

If you are thinking that a colleague's behaviour is unacceptable then this is an indicator to approach this person directly or indirectly. Remember we want to address the behaviours of the person not the whole person.

When we develop the courage to say to someone "I feel wary of your angry tone..." we are actually overcoming our own fear in that moment and more often than not the other person is surprised as they have become unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others.

When we become aware of our own anger or someone lets us know we sound or act aggressively we should consult a qualified practitioner. There may be contributing factors we are aware of or other factors we are not aware of. Talking with someone outside the workplace gives a fresh perspective from a more objective position.

Key points to remember; anger develops on an emotional scale starting with irritation ; if we wait for emotions to die down we will be able to communicate more clearly; choosing a time to talk with someone acting inappropriately is important; consult when you need to.

If you need to consult on an issue or you think you will benefit from further coaching in these skills contact one of Vitae's professionals on <http://www.vitae.co.nz/contact/counselling-form/>

If you need some support or are feeling overwhelmed by anxiety you can contact a Vitae Clinician by phoning 0508 664 981 or email The Vitae Team