Anger/Resentment

Facilitator Guide | 60–75 minutes | Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources

Purpose: Explore resentment as a response to perceived or actual unfairness, how it may connect to anger, and how to respond without escalating conflict or undermining recovery.

Learning goals: Distinguish feelings from actions; identify interpretations, boundaries, and unmet needs; practice a coping response; create an individualized support plan.

Facilitator safeguards

Participation and disclosure are voluntary. Do not ask participants to name an abuser or confront a person who has harmed them. Anger can be appropriate in response to injustice. Accountability concerns choices within a participant's control, not responsibility for abuse, discrimination, or another person's actions. Avoid treating relapse as inevitable or shame as motivational.

Suggested agenda

• 0–10 min: Check-in and group agreements; optional opening prompt.

• 10–25 min: Explore resentment, anger, and the difference between emotion and action.

• 25–40 min: Private reflection on a real or fictional situation; identify interpretations and needs.

• 40–60 min: From Resentment to Response activity; rehearse a boundary or coping step.

• 60–75 min: Review nine strategies; make a support plan and close.

Teaching notes: Resentment and anger

Resentment can involve lingering anger or bitterness about an experienced or perceived wrong. Anger may follow resentment, but the relationship is not inevitable or one-directional. The original lesson discussed hypocrisy, perceived disrespect, unmet expectations, family conflict, and lack of recognition during recovery; these remain useful examples for discussion.

Ask: What happened? What meaning did I give it? What evidence supports that meaning? What is still uncertain? What feelings and physical cues appeared? What choice is mine?

Distinguish justified anger from harmful behavior. Passive-aggressive communication, threats, retaliation, or impulsive substance use may worsen outcomes. Naming an emotion, seeking safety, and setting boundaries are different from suppressing anger.

Reflection prompts (from original lesson)

1. Describe a situation in which resentment toward a person or situation negatively affected your life. You may use a fictional scenario.

2. Who or what was the source of the resentment? Were boundaries unclear or crossed? Did past experiences shape your response? Do not assume trauma or poor boundaries caused the mistreatment.

Interactive activity: From Resentment to Response

Offer a fictional example: A friend repeatedly promises to call but does not. A participant thinks, "Nobody respects me," notices clenched fists, and wants to send an angry message. Have participants separate the

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observable event, interpretation, feelings, needs, and options. Compare an impulsive reaction with a pause, boundary statement, or request for support.

Nine intervention options

Setting boundaries: Clarify what is and is not acceptable; choose a safe response within your control.

Practicing forgiveness: Optional and personal. Forgiveness is not required for healing, reconciliation, or safety.

Suspending judgment: Check interpretations and consider other explanations without dismissing genuine harm.

Journaling: Record events, feelings, thoughts, needs, and next steps without sending an impulsive message.

Talking with loved ones or professionals: Choose trustworthy support; ask whether you need listening, perspective, or problem-solving.

Meditation: Try grounding or brief mindfulness; if inward attention feels distressing, choose an external focus.

Creative hobbies: Use music, drawing, building, or other activities to channel energy constructively.

Attending 12-step meetings: Use mutual-help community if it fits; alternatives include SMART Recovery and other peer support.

Reaching out to sponsors: Contact a sponsor, mentor, counselor, or other trusted support person before acting on an urge.

Discussion and closing

Which response is most likely to protect your dignity and recovery? What can you control, and what belongs to someone else? When is stepping away safer than talking it through? Which support will you contact if anger feels overwhelming?

Safety: If a participant feels at risk of harming themselves or someone else, follow your setting’s safety protocol and seek immediate qualified help. Do not frame forgiveness or reconciliation as a safety requirement.

References and editorial notes

Source lesson cited Merriam-Webster (resentment), Psychology Today (anger and resentment), SAMHSA (co-occurring mental health and substance use), Eugene Therapy (boundaries), and Choosing Therapy (meditation). Exact original quotations and dated claims have been paraphrased or removed pending source verification. For current educational resources: SAMHSA, https://www.samhsa.gov/ ; APA, https://www.apa.org/topics/anger

Educational group material; not a diagnostic assessment or individualized treatment protocol. Adapted from the supplied original lesson; original group title and nine strategies retained.

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