

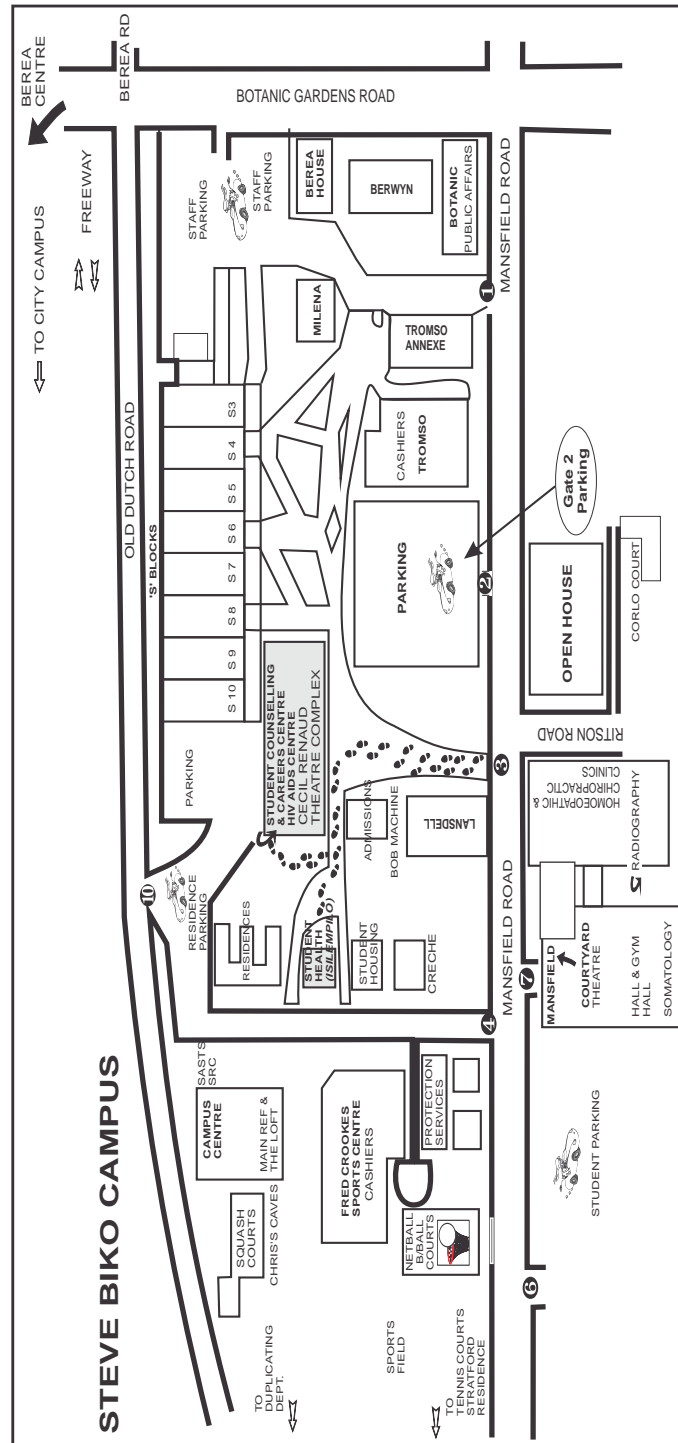
Remember:

- Learn to recognize the signs of your anger, understand the reasons for your anger.
- Find constructive ways to deal with your anger.
- Should you find that you are still unable to manage your anger, contact the:

Student Counselling and Health
Department
Lower Library Complex
Steve Biko Campus
Tel: 031 373 2266

This is an initiative of the
Student Counselling and Health Department
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STUDENT
COUNSELLING
& HEALTH

Anger Management

Anger Management

Anger is a powerful human emotion that we naturally experience in response to frustration, hurt, disappointment, annoyance, harassment and threat to our security. For instance, you have probably had experiences similar to this, in response to a person or event that has upset you and left you with feelings of intense anger.

If we fail to deal with our anger constructively and effectively, it can become stressful resulting in high levels of tension and anxiety with consequent or resultant health problems. It is important to understand your anger, how it affects you, how to respond to it and how you can handle it.

What happens when you get angry?

- *Your body reacts just like it does to stress. Your heart beats faster to pump oxygen, adrenalin and sugar into your blood stream.*
- *Your breathing becomes more rapid, your blood pressure rises and your muscles tense.*
- *Your body is energized into action. In looking to release tension, you may shout, yell or pick a fight. These are non-constructive ways of dealing with your intense emotions.*

Strategies for handling your anger

Recognize angry feelings

Ask yourself: Where is this anger coming from?

What are the external and internal triggers involved?

Calm down

The old saying of "take a deep breath and count to ten" really does work. Tell yourself that you

can deal with the situation most effectively.

Thought restructuring

Changing the way you think. When you are angry, you tend to think in highly exaggerated negative terms. Try replacing these thoughts with more positive ones.

Better communication

Do not jump to conclusions. When in a heated discussion, do not say the first thing that comes to your mind. Slow down, think and listen carefully to the other person before answering.

Use humour

Imagining silly scenes or people can reduce anger. However, do not try to laugh off anger and do not use harsh, sarcastic humour.

Change your environment

Your external surroundings or situations could be frustrating you. Identify the instances that continually anger you and take small steps to change the situation or your reaction to it.

Think about your reactions after the conflict or situation has occurred

Ask yourself: What is it that worked? What did I do right? What could I do differently? What could I do next time to make things go smoothly?

Accept your natural, healthy feelings of anger

Accept how you handled anger in the past and learn how to handle it in future.

A personal exercise

Think about a situation where you became angry and lost control. Identify the triggers. What could you have done differently? What do you plan on doing in that type of situation in future?

Use a sounding board

If there's a neutral person you can talk to, discuss the situation with them to determine if you are interpreting the situation clearly.

Learn to fight fairly

If someone has said or done something to make you sad or angry, tell them how you feel and that you would like to discuss it with them.

State specifically what a person has said or done

- *why it has made you angry and what you expect to rectify the situation.*
- *ask the person if he understands your anger.*
- *have the other person state their understanding of the situation.*
ask the person to work with you towards the resolution of the problem.

Avoid displacing your feelings

Do not direct your anger on people who are not the source of your anger. For instance, if your lecturer reprimands you for not submitting an assignment on time, don't take your anger out on others.

Seek help

If you have difficulty handling your anger in a constructive and effective way, talk to a professional.