# Chapter 35 Anger

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# Abstract

Anger is an affective response to survival threats or otherwise stressful experiences. It is a primary emotion having adaptive functions linked to survival mechanisms that are biological, psychological, and social in nature. Threat perception is intrinsic to its activation, and symbolic structures govern such perception. Cognitive processing of anger-provoking experiences can alternatively prolong or disengage anger. Anger is primed and demarcated by neurophysiological arousal, and, as a high arousal state, anger can constitute an internal stressor, causing wear and tear on the body when it is recurrently activated. Behaviorally, anger is associated with approach motivational systems and can activate aggressive behavior. While anger expression is governed by social rules, it can be part of an antagonistic style of coping with the stressors of daily life, particularly in responding to interpersonal conflict. The role of anger as an activator of violent behavior is interpersonally and societally problematic. Anger dysregulation produces impairment in functioning across life domains and is associated with various psychiatric disorders through transdiagnostic processes, such as selective attention, threat perception, and rumination. The efficacy of psychotherapeutic interventions for anger, principally cognitive-behavioral therapy, is well-established for a wide variety of clinical populations.