Understand Your Anger Cycle

Standard CBT worksheet | Guide and example

Who this is for

For adults who want to understand what happens before, during and after anger.

What this helps with

Notice early signals; explore the meaning you gave the situation; choose one point to respond differently.

Why this can help

Mapping one event can help you see links between what happened, your interpretation and your response. It can also show practical pressures that need attention.

How to use this worksheet

1. Choose one recent, manageable example. Complete this when you feel settled enough to reflect.

2. Write what happened separately from what you thought it meant. Note your feelings, body signals and urges.

3. Record what you did and its effects. Choose one helpful change, then review it after a similar situation.

Guided example - fictional

Situation: A colleague asked for an update while I was completing a form.

Thought and feeling: "They think I am too slow." Angry and embarrassed.

Body and urge: Tight jaw; urge to answer sharply.

Action and effect: I snapped. We both became defensive and the form stayed unfinished.

Possible change: Save my place and say, "I can update you in five minutes."

Optional next step: Rehearse your chosen response at a calmer time.

Original educational tool informed by NHS anger advice and NICE ADHD guidance.
Sources: nhs.uk (Get help with anger); nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87. Checked 6 Nov 2026.

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Standard CBT worksheet | Your turn

Use one event or practice attempt. A few words are enough; leave out identifying details.

What happened? Stick to observable details.

What went through your mind? What did it mean to you?

What feelings and body signals did you notice?

What did you feel like doing? What did you actually do?

What happened afterwards, for you and anyone else?

Where could you try a different response or practical change?

Reflect and choose your next step

Which early signal would be useful to notice next time?

What could make the different response easier?

What will you try, and when will you review it?

Choose a format that suits you. ADHD does not mean someone is always angry. These adaptations support access to skills; responsibility for actions still matters. If this feels too much or anger is causing harm, speak with your GP or therapist. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999.

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