

# SESSIONS 9 & 10:

## *Anger and the Family*

In these two sessions, you will learn how anger and other emotions were expressed in your family. This involves analyzing how past family interactions affect current thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

### **I. Anger and the Family**

For many of us, the interactions we had with our parents have strongly influenced our behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes as adults. With regard to anger and its expression, these feelings and behaviors were usually modeled for us by our parents or parental figures. The following series of questions concerns the interactions you had with your parents and the families that you grew up in. Discussing family issues can sometimes bring up uncomfortable feelings. Be sure to discuss these feelings with the group leader or your counselor.

- Describe your family. Did you live with both parents? Did you have any brothers and sisters? Where did you grow up?

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- How was anger expressed in your family while you were growing up? How did your father express anger? How did your mother express anger? Were you ever threatened with physical violence? Was your father abusive to your mother or you?

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ANGER MANAGEMENT *for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Clients*

- How were other emotions, such as happiness and sadness, expressed in your family? Was emotional expression limited to feelings of anger and frustration, or were many different kinds of emotions expressed?

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- How were you disciplined and by whom? Was physical punishment involved (e.g., being hit with hands, belts, switches, or other objects)? How did you respond to this discipline?

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- What role did you take in your family? For example, were you the hero, the rescuer, the victim, the clown, the scapegoat, etc.?

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- What messages did you receive about your father and men in general? What messages did you receive about your mother and women in general?

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- What feelings, thoughts, and behaviors carry over into your relationships today? What purpose do these behaviors serve today? What would happen if you gave up these behaviors?

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## II. Monitoring Anger for the Week

- 1) What was the highest number you reached on the anger meter during the past week?

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- 2) What was the event that triggered your anger?

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- 3) What cues were associated with the anger-provoking event?

Physical cues \_\_\_\_\_

Behavioral cues \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional cues \_\_\_\_\_

Cognitive cues \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) What strategies did you use to avoid reaching 10 on the anger meter?

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- For each day of the upcoming week, monitor and record the highest number you reach on the anger meter.

\_\_\_\_ M    \_\_\_\_ T    \_\_\_\_ W    \_\_\_\_ Th    \_\_\_\_ F    \_\_\_\_ Sat    \_\_\_\_ Sun