

**George Anderson, MSW, BCD, CEAP**  
**CEO, Anderson & Anderson**  
**Fellow, American Orthopsychiatric Association**  
**Diplomate, American Association of Anger Management Providers**

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to create positive incomes in relationship to others and ourselves. It is the practice of being aware, understanding, appropriately expressing and handling emotional states in ourselves and others. Emotional intelligence is an important skill to acquire because of its usefulness in leadership, sales, marriage and interpersonal relationships at work, school and families. It is a skill which can be developed and/or enhanced at any point in our lives.

The Anderson and Anderson model of anger management intervention is one of the first curriculums to incorporate emotional intelligence as a key component of the skills taught in its anger management classes as well as executive coaching. The other components of this model include stress management, communication and anger management. All of these four key concepts are woven throughout the curricula as well as the group exercises, videos and CDs used to teach participants not only how to manage anger but also how to manage stress, improve communication and enhance emotional intelligence.

Before being admitted into any of our programs, a computer scored Anger Management Map is administered. This assessment component determines the client's level of functioning in the following areas, anger management, stress management, emotional intelligence and communications. Skills in these four areas are the topics taught in the Anderson & Anderson model of intervention programs.

While an individual may initially enroll in an anger management class as a referral from the court, Human Resource Manager, Employee Assistance Program or spouse, once in the class, he or she will quickly recognize the value of using these skills in all other aspects of his or her daily functioning. Emotional intelligence is by far the most popular of the four modules mentioned above. It is closely related to empathy, sensitivity to others, compassion and self awareness. It is what distinguishes persons who make you feel comfortable, optimistic, laugh and feel good about yourself from those who you avoid because their negativism is contagious and tends to cause you to feel gloom and discomfort.

Currently, in the United States, Canada, England and Bermuda, the largest number of referrals to anger management programs using the Anderson & Anderson model are from businesses, and governmental agencies, including Hospitals. These organizations tend to be most concerned about the bottom line, productivity, profit and good morale. Understanding the powerful role of emotions in the workplace sets the best leaders apart from the rest not just in tangibles such as better results and the retention of talent, but also in the all-important intangibles, such as higher morale, motivation, and commitment.

#### Some case examples

Fifteen percent of participants in our anger management classes are self referred. Several months ago a young father joined one of our Saturday accelerated classes because he was concerned over his growing impatience and negative response to his infant son. During his first session, he quickly realized that this "impatience" was also occurring at his business where he was responsible for managing fifty employees. He also acknowledged being frequently abrasive in his style of communicating with his wife. Over a ten session period, he was able to see a change in his relationship with others as well as his self-esteem as he began making changes in his sensitivity to others and using assertive communication rather than passive aggressive or aggressive communication.

In another example, an executive of a major Motion Picture Company was ordered to attend an executive coaching/anger management class as a result of verbal abuse exhibited in a meeting directed to one of his senior staff. Initially, this executive denied the need for help and protested his referral to an anger management program. During his initial assessment interview, the focus was on his style of communication, (aggressive) level of stress, (high) emotional intelligence (low) and finally his skills in managing anger which was poor. It was determined in the assessment session that he may benefit from developing skills in emotional intelligence, stress management, communication and finally anger management. During his ten week individual coaching sessions, he was promoted at his company and received a hefty raise. After one year, he is now an advocate in his company for emotional intelligence for all managers and supervisors.

Forty percent of our referrals come from business and industry. Self-referrals are the third largest source of referrals to our classes. Many of our new referrals come from participants who have successfully completed either executive coaching or anger management classes.

In our third example, a man decided to take his toddler son for a ride on his Harley Davidson Motorcycle. A neighbor reported the incident to the police and he was subsequently arrested and charged with child endangerment and ordered to attend a one year anger management class with a focus of emotional intelligence. Not only did he express appreciation for the Judge who sentenced him, he also recommended that his local public Adult Education High School offer anger management and emotional intelligence to the community as a public service. 30% of anger management referrals come from the criminal justice system which includes the courts, probation and parole.

Just as laughter offers a ready barometer of emotional intelligence at work, so rampant anger, fear, apathy, or even sullen silence signals the opposite. In a survey of more than a thousand U.S. workers, 42 per cent reported incidences of yelling and other kinds of verbal abuse in their workplaces, and almost 30 percent admitted to having yelled at a co-worker themselves. Such disturbing encounters wreak havoc emotionally, as demonstrated in studies in which physiological response were

monitored during arguments. Such attacks which send the painful emotional messages of disgust or contempt emotionally hijack the person targeted, particularly when the attack is a spouse or boss, whose opinions carry much weight.

Emotional intelligence is a relatively new concept which holds considerable promise in teaching us the skills to relate to each other which leads to positive outcomes in many areas of human interaction. Currently it is the newest rage in Human Resource and Organizational Development consultation and training.