

RESPONDING TO THE ANGRY PERSON

Tips:

Managing self – not taking the anger personally or responding defensively (that includes what might feel for them, like excuses at this point. Particularly important if this is not the REAL ISSUE driving the anger. Many emotions can drive anger – guilt, fear etc...these are what we need to help them identify in order to move forward).

Although this feels counter-intuitive, encouraging the verbal expression of anger (support them to vent their feelings) can actually help DIFFUSE the anger. This is because the person is feeling 'listened to' rather than you 'fuelling' their anger.

It is through venting that the anger can be released and the underlying emotions (that are driving the anger) accessed and then responded to

These steps can be helpful:

EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGE the anger. **Do not minimise or change its intensity**

Invite the person to tell you why they are angry/what they are angry about

DO NOT TRY TO RESPOND to the reasons; **acknowledge them in a non-judgemental & non-defensive way.**

EMPATHISE with the person's predicament (where appropriate)

SCREEN for other reasons that may be adding to them feeling angry (don't assume the one they have given you is the crux of the situation; it may have been the 'final straw' that ignited it now.

LOOK FOR A TRANSITION (as the person is talking) – a time when the anger subsides & other emotions/feelings become evident.

ACKNOWLEDGE & EXPLORE these.

If the anger is still strong & evident, **ACKNOWLEDGE THIS** & invite the person to consider if there is something else that might be making them feel angry, something unrelated or that you haven't talked about yet.....and **EXPLORE**
