

Special Report: Anger Solutions™ vs. Anger Management

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Just recently, I was approached by a Certified Anger Solutions™ Trainer with a valid question – one that I have fielded many times over the past few years. What is the difference between Anger Solutions™ and traditional Anger Management Programs? How do we know it works? Why would I devote my time, money, and resources to learning the Anger Solutions™ system when I am already running Anger Management programs in my agency or practice? This special report will answer all of these questions, and will give you a greater understanding of what makes Anger Solutions™ so successful.

QUESTION:

I have been asked often, “Exactly what the difference is between the Anger Solutions™ program and the traditional Anger Management programs. Obviously, I know what Anger Solutions™ is all about, but if you were asked to explain the difference, what would you say? I think people are becoming more interested, but it appears that Anger Management is still the buzz word, especially in Corrections and agencies that embrace the medical model. I need some solid facts I can use to clearly identify why Anger Solution™ is more effective in many areas and what it offers that the Anger Management programs do not. Could you help me, or provide me with some specific information?”

ANSWER: There are several reasons why Anger Solutions™ is different from traditional Anger Management programs. In this report, I will cite 7 in particular that I believe are the key contributors to the program’s uniqueness, as well as its success rate overall.

1. The first and most important distinction is the **terminology** - as it reflects the underlying philosophy of the program. Anger Management implies that we are teaching people how to CONTROL something - and when you break that down, Anger Management programs are teaching them to control behaviour... In my mind, the inherent problem with this philosophy

is that Anger Management does not go to the source or the root of those behaviours (that is, beliefs). Anger Solutions is about RESOLVING the emotion of anger, and the issues that bring it up. Because we confront the underlying beliefs that dictate people's behaviours, we actually give them the tools they need to CHANGE their old responses to new ones that are more effective. In effect, we do not need to teach them how to control their behaviour because we have taught them something much more valuable, and that is how to respond to their emotions safely and appropriately. The behavioural change comes as a result of that (of course, with some coaching from facilitators).



2. The second distinction between the Anger Solutions program and traditional AM programs is its **approach**. Rather than sticking to one model (usually cognitive behavioural), our program takes the best of several therapeutic models and combines/tailors them into a suit that is the best fit for our clients. We incorporate the CB approach along with Reality Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy, traditional behavioural therapy when it fits, art and music therapy tools, and the psychosocial rehabilitation model for lifeskills training. Together they create something that is more powerful than using only one of these tools. You know the old saying, "if the only tool you have in your toolbox is a hammer, you tend to treat everything like a nail." So, Anger Solutions represents a complete toolkit, rather than just a hammer.
3. **Definition:** Something else that I think is important to note, and it doesn't get touched on so much in the program, but more in the book - is that anger is often a good thing. It is an emotion that lets us know that something is not right in our lives, and it provokes us to make a change. The problem is that we have never been taught how to deal with this emotion, so we try different responses until we find one that takes us into a more pleasurable state than the one we were in before.
4. The fourth distinction between traditional Anger Management and Anger Solutions™ is our **success** rate. I can cite follow ups with clients whose kids were infants when they first took the program, and are still doing well and their kids are teenagers. Of course, I have my long-term follow up with my client who had a brain injury, as well as my 2 year follow up with my coaching client (corrections) - all of which will be posted to the website if they're not already. Just ask your probation and parole people in particular, "How many of your repeat offender clients took anger management while they were incarcerated?" - then ask them "how long after being released from jail did it take for them to re-offend?" Chances are, several of the P&P clients have taken traditional anger management programs at least twice. If it works so well, then why are they re-offending - and with similar types of offences? Conversely, ask some of our agencies

who have been using Anger Solutions™ as part of their core programming for close to 10 years, and they will tell you that they keep using it because it WORKS!

5. One of the keys to making this program work is the **leveraging** we do with clients to ensure that they are internally motivated to change their responses to anger. This helps with the attrition rate (drop outs as the program progresses), and again creates a stronger sense of buy-in, which in turn results in greater success.
6. I think another difference is **focus**. In the Anger Solutions™ groups, there is no time built in for people to talk about "the things that MAKE them angry" - because in the end, it really doesn't matter. Indeed, one of the first things we teach them is that people and things don't MAKE us angry. (If that's the case, then we are puppets, completely at the mercy of external stimuli). Rather, we have anger inside us, and certain things evoke that response. It is a different way of thinking about anger.
7. Lastly, the **forgiveness** component as many of our Certified Counsellors and Trainers can testify to, is a powerful piece that helps people to let go of whatever hurts they brought with them to the group, and they can move on from there. Once people learn to truly forgive, then the anger of past hurts dissipates and no longer comes back to affect today's choices. This one component alone has a major contributing factor to the overall long-term success of our Anger Solutions™ participants.

There you have it – 7 distinctions between traditional Anger Management programs and the Anger Solutions™ model. For more information about Anger Solutions™, please visit our website, www.angersolution.com or contact Julie Christiansen at info@angersolution.com or 905-329-6169.

