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Anger Disorders & Substance Abuse: What You Should Know

Anger is an emotion associated with feelings of rage and aggressive behavior. There's wide-spread research on how drug use can incite aggressive behavior. The opposing view – how [anger issues](#) might make us prone to addiction – hasn't been studied as much but is a hot topic among [addiction specialists](#) and researchers.

Curious about anger disorders, and the dynamics between anger and addiction, we explored these topics through a couple of questions:

- [Is there a mental disorder for anger?](#)
- [What causes anger disorders?](#)
- [What's the connection between anger and addiction?](#)
- [Can anger issues lead to addiction?](#)

Here's the gist of anger disorders and addiction.

Is There a Mental Disorder for Anger?

Yes, three clinical diagnoses are characterized by anger or aggression: intermittent explosive disorder, oppositional defiance disorder, and conduct disorder.

Intermittent explosive disorder (IED) is symptomized by impulsive and aggressive outbursts, usually out of proportion to what provoked someone to blow-up in anger. These

outbursts can take the form of shouting, rage, temper tantrums, verbal abuse, physical violence, assault, and damaging property or possessions.

IED is a highly comorbid condition. More than 80% of people battling this are also diagnosed with either depression, anxiety, or substance use disorder. Intermittent explosive disorder typically starts in adolescence, and surveys show that this kind of anger disorder affects nearly [16 million](#) Americans – interestingly, more than bipolar disorder and schizophrenia combined.

Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is symptomized by an irritable mood, often losing your temper, acting defiant and argumentative, deliberate rule-breaking, and a spiteful demeanor. ODD occurs mostly in young children.

Conduct disorder (CD) is regarded as more severe than ODD. It is symptomized by persistent antisocial behaviors that lead to school performance and social development issues. CD is diagnosed in children and adolescents – adults with these types of symptoms are generally regarded as having an [antisocial personality disorder](#).

What Causes Anger Disorders?

Like most mental health conditions, anger disorders are likely caused by a combination of factors. These include:

- genetics
- being exposed to an environment of anger or aggression
- low serotonin levels have been linked to IED
- lack of or difficulty separating from positive parental attachment has been linked to ODD
- comorbid conditions, especially [depression](#), [ADHD](#), antisocial personality disorder, and borderline personality disorder.

Although affecting people of all ages, anger disorders seem to be most prevalent among young men with a history of childhood trauma.

It's key to remember that persistent feelings of anger isn't a disorder by itself but can be a symptom of other mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. Similarly, poor mental health is also known to make a person susceptible to addiction.

Now that we know a little more about anger disorders let's take a closer look at how this overlaps with substance use.

Connecting Anger and Addiction

[Pullquote: "Addiction and anger disorders (specifically intermittent explosive disorder) are clinical conditions both marked by impaired self-control."]

Addiction and anger disorders (specifically intermittent explosive disorder) are clinical conditions both marked by impaired self-control. Both these disorders affect the higher-order cognitive skills we use to regulate our everyday life responses and behaviors. Brain specialists [studied](#) correlations between anger and substance disorders, and the findings showed similarities in the neural signatures of these two conditions.

Here are key findings from a few more studies demonstrating the connection between drug use, alcohol addiction, and anger.

Can Anger Issues Lead to Addiction?

Yes, studies state that [people with IED are more vulnerable to addiction](#) than those without anger issues. Especially young people with a history of persistent and problematic impulsive aggression, are prone to substance use disorders later in life.

Anger and Alcoholism

- [Alcohol makes people more aggressive.](#)
- [Those with antisocial personality disorder are more susceptible to alcohol-related aggressive behavior](#) and usually have alcohol [dependence](#).

Anger and Substance Abuse

- The neuropathology of depression and anger in people with a cocaine addiction proves chronic [cocaine use compromises cognitive processes](#) regulating inhibitory control. Put plainly, using cocaine affects your brain's capacity to control your responses to situations – an essential function in curbing excessively angry, aggressive, and impulsive behavior.
- [People who use drugs experience feelings of anger more frequently](#) than non-users. Drug-users are also more likely to express their anger with aggressive behavior towards people and things and tend to have less control over angry feelings.

At [Silicon Beach Treatment Center](#), we offer treatment for anger and substance use disorders. Our holistic approach to mental health support can help you break free from both addiction and anger.

Los Angeles IOP That's Not Like the Rest

Our [Los Angeles](#) recovery programs are geared towards helping you rebuild your life while kicking your addiction, and dealing with any accompanying anger. We offer additional support to outpatient clients through our [LA sober living homes](#). [Talk to us](#) to find out more.