

# Anger & Aggression



*In Service Members With PTSD*



**Anger**  
*is a feeling.*

-an emotional state or response to perceived violation.

- is activating, but does not require action .

-may range from mild irritation to fury & rage.



**Aggression**  
*is a behavior.*

-intended to dominate, control, or inflict damage.

-may be non-verbal, verbal or physical.

- includes gestures, threats, yelling, name calling, throwing or breaking objects and physical attacks.



Both can help you survive when you are in danger, like in a combat zone.



At home the consequences are different. Angry feelings may be uncomfortable, but aggressive behavior is dangerous.



Aggression can result in incarceration, family violence, disruption of treatment-facilitating factors, and death.



Service members & Veterans with PTSD symptoms engage in more aggression than Veterans without PTSD, or civilians with PTSD symptoms.



Almost half of Veterans with PTSD symptoms reported engaging in physical aggression within one year after returning from deployment.



Risks factors for aggression include experiencing trauma, male sex, younger age, combat exposure, alcohol use, and emotion dysregulation.

## Aggression can be:



**Premeditated**

deliberate  
instrumental  
planned

**Impulsive**

emotionally charged  
reactive  
uncontrolled



Veterans with PTSD primarily engage in impulsive aggression and report regret for their actions.

They are asking for help!

### Impulsive aggression can be treated

A brief three-session treatment, called *Manage Emotions to Reduce Aggression*, may help Veterans with PTSD reduce their impulsive aggression.



For more information about the treatment of anger in patients with PTSD register for our June 26 webinar:  
CDP Presents: Understanding and Managing Anger and Aggression in those with PTSD lead by Shannon Miles, PhD. , James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

#### Reference

Miles, S. R., Sharp, C., Tharp, A. T., Stanford, M. S., Stanley, M., Thompson, K. E., & Kent, T. A. (2017). Emotiondysregulation as an underlying mechanism of impulsive aggression: Reviewing empirical data to inform treatments forveterans who perpetrate violence. *Aggression And Violent Behavior*, 4, 147-153. [doi:10.1016/j.avb.2017.01.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.01.017)