

survive & thrive

moving forward from interpersonal trauma

Week 06

Understanding anger and how to
cope with angry feelings

Welcome back

- Reviewing last week:
 - Any questions?
 - Any thoughts?
- What did you try?
- How did you get on?



What we will cover today

- What is anger?
- Problems of too much anger
- Problems of too little anger
- Coping with your problems with anger

Getting into the 'green zone'



Anger

Anger is a natural healthy emotion which is part of life. It can help to protect us if we are feeling attacked or threatened.



Anger can become a problem

- Too much anger leading to destructive and violent feelings and behaviour.
- Too little anger, feeling bottled up and sometimes taken advantage of.



Vs



Problem with anger

- One group discuss the possible problems of having too little anger.
- One group discuss the possible problems of having too much anger.

Too little anger

- Get overlooked and perhaps taken advantage of
- Feel depressed
- Use drugs or alcohol to block out feelings
- Lowers self esteem
- Feel ignored
- Not good for your health
- Bit like trying to avoid feelings generally, can leave us feeling numb and shut off.
- You are like a pressure cooker, when the steam builds up you can feel out of control of your angry feelings

Too much anger

- Damages relationships
- Get into trouble
- Get physically hurt
- Lowers self esteem
- Breaking things
- Using drugs and alcohol to try to manage things

Why too little anger?

- Children are often punished for getting angry.
- We might have got the message ‘good kids don’t get angry’.
- You may have witnessed adults as terrifying and out of control.
- You might be mixing up anger and aggression.
- You have learned to avoid all feelings including anger.

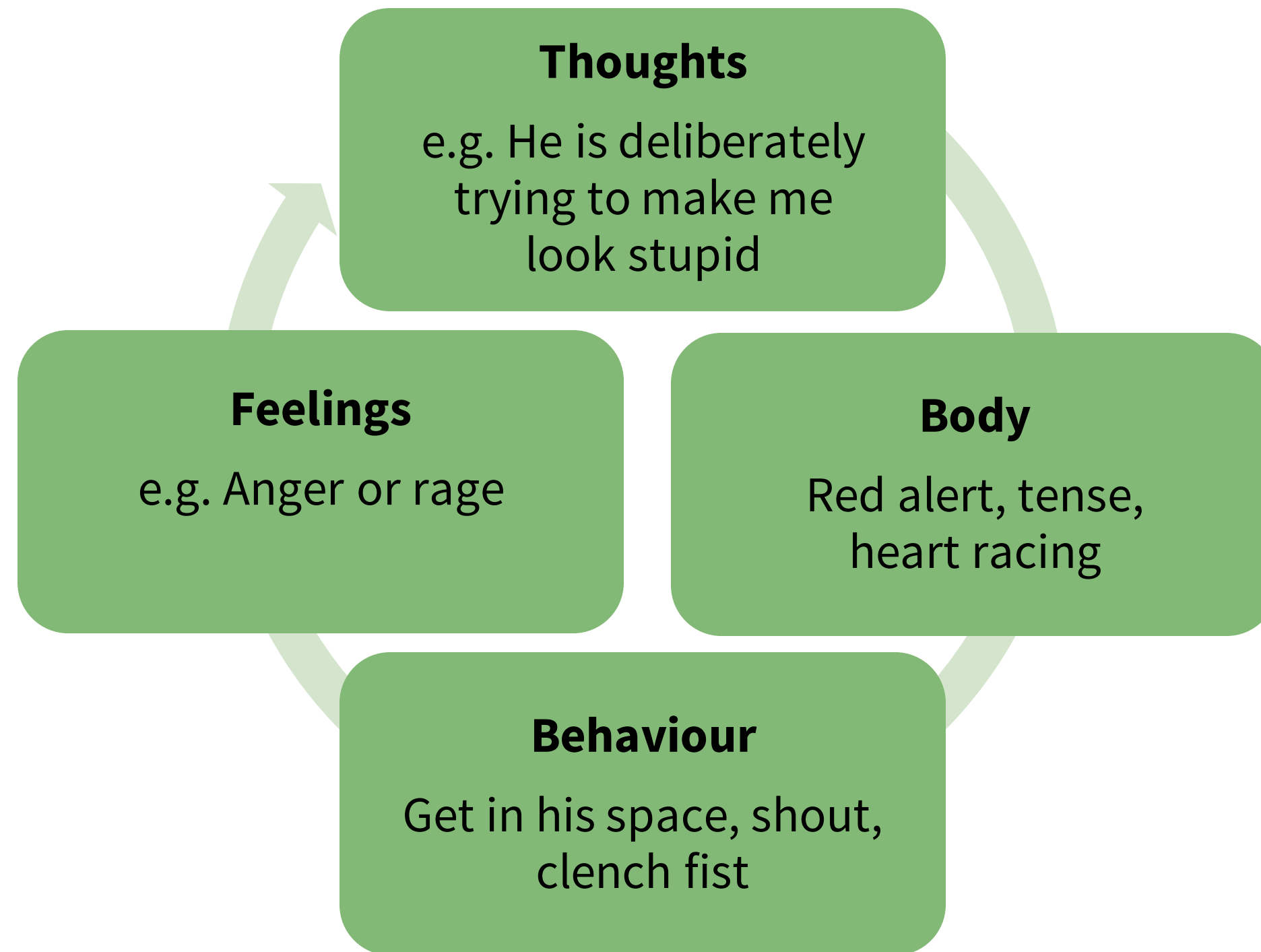
Too much anger

- Remember your brain may be wired to be overly sensitive to threat.
- You may believe you need to protect yourself from others.
- You may have been brought up in a culture which valued aggression.
- You may be under too much stress.
- Drugs/alcohol may make things worse.

How to manage anger

- Recognising you have a problem with anger is half of the battle.
- Throughout the course we have looked at managing difficult feelings. In your groups can you come up with **3 ideas for coping with too much anger** and **3 ideas for coping with too little anger**.

The anger cycle



Coping with anger

- Feelings—try reducing tension, safe coping, breathing, noticing your anger, reduce your stress. Get back in the green zone.
- Behaviours—unclench your fists, drop your shoulders, notice your voice tone and volume.
- Generally:
 - Avoid drugs and alcohol
 - Remember violence is not ok, if it is getting violent you need to get support from someone.

Coping with anger

Too little

- Realising anger is ok. It may be trying to tell you that you need to protect yourself
- Anger is not the same as aggression and violence
- Learn to stand up for yourself
- Become more aware of your anger and decide how to safely express it
- Not always pushing your anger away
- Reducing drugs/alcohol

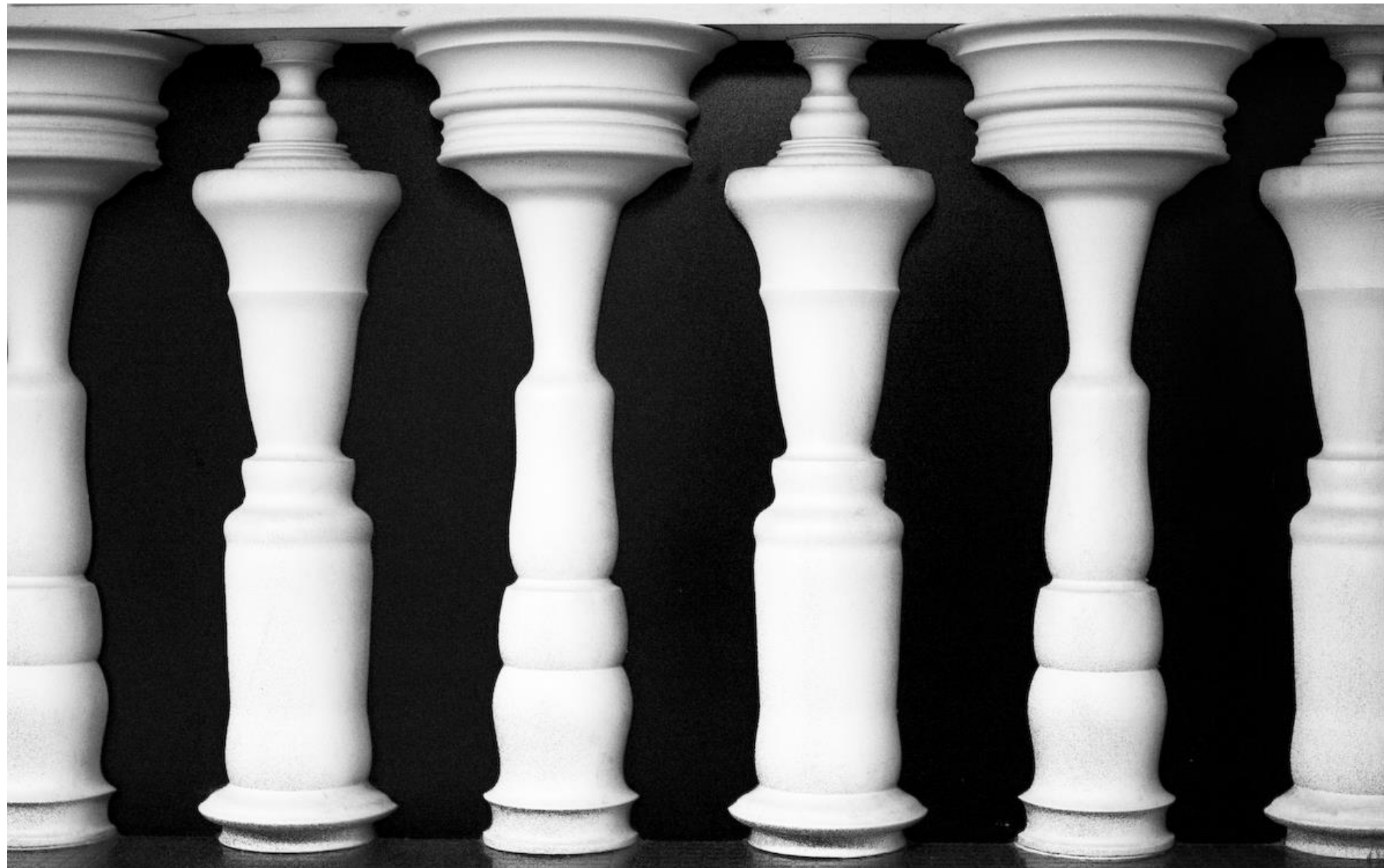
Thinking and anger

- Often when we get angry, it is not what is happening but what we think is happening...
- As we saw with anxiety, the way we think can have a huge effect on how we feel.
- The way we feel starts to effect way we think

“No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched.”

George Jean Nathan

There may be more than one way of thinking about it



What do you see?

Thinking and anger

If I don't get angry
I will get taken
advantage of.

People lose their
temper, there is
nothing can be
done about it.

Unless you shout
no one will listen.

They think I am a soft
target. I have got to
protect myself.

I heard someone
laughing I bet they
are laughing at me.

Thinking and anger

Anger is another feeling
I can learn to cope with
and manage.

They are not attacking
me, although they might
be disagreeing.

I can get my point across
better without shouting
and being aggressive.

Safe coping

We are less likely to have problems with anger if we are:

- Less in a 'wired for threat' frame of mind
 - Notice when that is happening and try to give yourself a minute to think it through.
 - Notice when you are 'out of the green'.
- Able to tolerate feelings
 - Rather than automatically shutting down feelings can you notice them and wonder why you are feeling like this?

A minute for planning

- Take a minute and write down or think about what you have learned today and what you are going to take away (REMEMBER THE 3 Ps)
- **OR**
- Have a look at the home practice exercise in your pack and plan what you are going to do this week.

Safe coping practice



A final thought

“Do not teach your children never to be angry; teach them how to be angry.”

Lyman Abbott