

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Understanding and Countering Road and Air Rage

Anger on the roads and in airports around the world is becoming an increasing problem that many of us are encountering all too often. When we are the aggressors, it is tempting to justify our rage by placing the blame on external circumstances, such as other drivers' mistakes or airline inefficiencies.

In truth, road rage and air rage are demonstrations of out-of-control anger, for which there is never any excuse. Such aggression is not only unsafe for travellers; chronic angry outbursts can ultimately lead to health problems. Learning to recognize and manage the frustrations and stress behind this anger will give us vital coping skills that will reap benefits in every area of life.

Tips and Tools You Can Use

Take an honest look at your behavior when traveling. If you frequently express built-up anger and frustration through aggressive risk-taking actions or verbal abuse, it's time to start understanding why and to find solutions to the underlying issues. Here are some great tips to get you safely on your way:

Self-Assessment

- Do you feel you are the only sane driver on the road among a host of idiots?
- Do you frequently swear, shout or make derogatory signs when driving in rush-hour?
- Do you tailgate, lay on your horn or weave between lanes in traffic?
- Do you feel your blood pressure mounting with every delay when traveling?
- Are you verbally abusive with other drivers or with airline employees?
- Does traveling leave you feeling a wreck?

Self-Help

- Avoid the need to race against the clock—give yourself extra time for traveling, both on the road and by air.
- Anticipate delays—try to roll with the punches. Bring snacks, games or books when flying.
- If your schedule allows it, avoid traveling at peak times.
- If you feel your blood pressure rising, breathe deeply for several minutes.
- Sing to yourself if you are in the car—it's tough to feel angry when you are singing, no matter how badly.
- Force yourself to be courteous to others, no matter how stupid their actions may be.
- Avoid alcohol when flying.
- Learn relaxation techniques to reduce your overall stress level.

Road Rage in Others

- Avoid rising to the bait of another driver's anger.
- Stay calm and breathe deeply.
- Avoid meeting the eyes of an enraged driver—don't respond.

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- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- If you can safely use a cell phone, call the police to report the driver's license plate number.
- If another driver follows you, do not stop. Drive straight to the nearest police station.

Though traveling can certainly be a stressful experience, there is never a reason to let your anger get out of control. By committing to courteous behavior at all times, planning ahead, and keeping yourself calm, you can resist the impulse to act on this kind of socially and personally destructive behavior. Your health, and even your life, depends on it. If you need help in dealing with your anger, talk to a counselor about what’s going on, and ways to harness the power of your emotions towards things you DO want in life.