

UNDERSTANDING ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

Anger is a natural emotion to feel in the circumstances. However, anger about what has happened is often directed at a variety of individuals, including doctors, nurses, family members, God and patients themselves. A second aspect of anger is to do with frustration. If you are a person who is used to 'being in control', the occurrence of a head injury in a family can be the most frustrating event of your life. Recovery does not follow a smooth pattern and definite answers are difficult to find. It is difficult to plan anything and now life is riddled with uncertainty. What makes the situation worse is that often people outside the immediate family do not understand the deeper problem and sometimes can be insensitive with their comments.

COPING WITH ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

1. Recognise that you are primarily angry about what happened. Apologise ahead of time.
2. Identify the triggers for anger, for example a particular nurse, a friend of the patient's, a critical relative. Avoid if possible.
3. Express your anger. Ventilate it with someone you trust. Don't let it eat you away. Seek counselling if necessary.
4. Discharge some of the anger in a vigorous, productive, physical activity (sport, house cleaning, walking or starting a self-help group).