

CHARLES L. GUSTAFSON, M.A., MFCC

599 S. Barranca Av. Rm 224
Covina, Ca. 91723
Phone 626-966-2662

FAMILY COUNSELING
INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

PAIN and ANGER

Pain can take many forms from mild to intense but it is uncomfortable in all of its forms. Human beings tend to become angry when they are uncomfortable. In fact, expressing anger is one way of verbalizing discomfort. It is important to remember that anger is not a primary emotion. Just as a scab is nature's way of protecting a physical wound, anger is nature's way of protecting an emotional wound. Once the wound has healed, the scab or the anger drops away. It is no longer needed.

In the case of emotional wounding, sometimes the trauma is too much for an individual to tolerate. This is especially true when the person involved is too young to acknowledge and constructively address the issues causing the trauma. In such cases the person may wait until they are an adult and have become psychologically stronger before examining and treating childhood trauma. In the meantime, they are apt to practice avoidance techniques such as denial or addictive behaviors.

Unfortunately, when feeling pain and anger, we often forget to use logical problem solving skills. Humans seem capable of intense feelings and intense concentration, but usually not both at the same time. Generally speaking, people in pain become angry. Most angry people don't utilize higher levels of reasoning. Therefore, people are most apt to make mistakes when they are in pain.

The path of intimacy is littered with emotional potholes and stones. Whenever we find ourselves expressing pain or distress in the context of a relationship it may be a sign that we've stumbled into a pothole of feelings or tripped on an emotional stone. The next time you feel anger, take time to notice the pain beneath it. See what you can do to heal the pain, and the anger will evaporate on its own.