

ANGER/DEFIANCE IN YOUNG ADULTS

While going through any sequence of change, it's simple for many young adults to find themselves at odds with the world and holding on to fits of anger and defiance. Like everyone else, we all have our moments where a moment of anger can consume us. It is a normal feeling that we have at times. Just as we all have our moments of happiness, sadness and grief, anger is no different from any other emotion.

There are many misconceptions about anger. Many people associate anger as a “bad” or “negative” emotion, leading individuals to not express it in healthy and helpful manner. While during a time of constant change, as what many young adults may be experiencing, levels of anger may be at all time highs. Not knowing what the future holds, pressures from friends and families, and difficulties in school can all be factors that lead to anger issues for a young adult.

TIPS TO HELP CONTROL ANGER

Here are a few helps tips in maintaining and keep one's anger in control:

- Recognizing the difference between an annoyance or inconvenience as a legitimate reason to be mad.
- Taking a deep breath, stepping away from the angering situation and asking one's self, “Why am I really mad?”.
- Knowing the triggers. If there are certain things that are consistently bothersome, take steps to avoid them.
- Planning ahead. One of the most common stressors is poor time management.
- Exercising regularly. Exercise is an excellent means to de-stress the body and mind.

- Talking it out. Anger often causes the reasoning center of the brain to shut off for a time. Take a few minutes to gather your thoughts and speak about them out loud.

WHY FEEL ANGER OR DEFIANCE?

The next time anger or defiance rears its head, stop and ask yourself or the individual, “Why are you really angry or acting out?”

- Is it fear based?
- Have you been treated unfairly?
- Are you embarrassed?
- Were your feelings hurt?
- Do you feel a lack of respect?
- Do you feel controlled?
- Do you feel like yourself?

Addressing the issue of anger and defiance and looking outside of it is beneficial in measuring its validity. Many reasons why we feel these emotions sometimes are just inconveniences that strike a nerve, but it's all in recognizing it and confirming with one's self if it called for.

Sometimes the scars of anger and the triggers for defiance can run deep. Simple activities and remedies are not enough to handle the situation. A wilderness therapy program can be a remarkable way to combat one's anger and defiance with productive behavior and self-identifying activities.

At Pacific Quest, young adults learn to manage their emotions and to live with them. We understand that nature provides powerful symbolism in dealing with many of life's difficulties. Young adults interact with nature and gain a sense of calmness, an aspect that other programs cannot offer their students.

Our Sustainable Growth model incorporates numerous activities, experiences and sessions that help young adults identify the source of these issues. Through our

Wellness Program, Individual and Group Therapy, and Rites of Passage, young adults become empowered and learn to live a healthier lifestyle with their controlled emotion.

If you feel your child, or another individual, could benefit from the Pacific Quest Wilderness Therapy Program or if you have a question about our therapeutic model, contact us at 808-937-5806 today.

DEFIANCE

The natural and necessary process that helps an adolescent move from the dependence of childhood toward the independence of adulthood is the separation of a teen's identity from that of their parents. However during this phase, even mildly resistant behavior can feel like defiance to all involved, which can lead to parental frustration and adolescent resentment and guilt. As long as there is a sense of mutual adaptation on the part of defiant adolescent and their parents during this process, some degree of conflict and even low-grade defiance can be considered "normal."

Defiant behavior is also known as "Oppositional" behavior and even though it is a normal part of development, openly uncooperative and hostile behavior can become a serious concern when it is so frequent and consistent that it stands out when compared with other children of the same age and developmental level- especially when it affects the teens social, family and academic life.

There are some issues that can be the catalyst for extreme defiant behavior, such as severe family problems, negative peer/culture influences, substance abuse/addiction and even untreated underlying psychological / emotional disorder is present (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder or ADHD).

For adolescents with a possible oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), there is an ongoing pattern of uncooperative and hostile behavior toward authority figures that does seriously interfere with day to day functioning.

Some symptoms of Defiance issues/ ODD may be:

- Constant temper tantrums

- Frequent arguing with adults
- Always questioning “rules”
- Obvious and active defiance when refusing to comply with rules
- Attempts to annoy or upset people that are on purpose
- Not taking responsibility for mistakes or misbehavior
- Being on edge or easily annoyed by others
- Being angry and resentful often
- Talking in a mean and hateful way
- An attitude of spite and revenge seeking

SERIOUS DEFIANCE: PACIFIC QUEST CAN HELP

As teens enter the process of becoming individuals they may at times feel they are changing from the inside out in ways that are out of their control on a cognitive, emotional, and physical level. This can bring about previously dormant issues to the surface, such as serotonin imbalances and depression, ADHD, past traumas, family conflict, or previously repressed resentments toward other family members for example.

When normal efforts at individuation are replaced by chronic defiance, a teenager may be suffering from oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). It can sometimes occur simultaneously with or is misdiagnosed as ADHD, depression, or other emotional disorders.

The best approach to treating defiance issues is a multi-modal approach like the one at Pacific Quest that hits the issue from a variety of complementary angles. This kind of treatment is most manageable in a residential treatment setting. At Pacific Quest, students participate in outdoor programming on seven acres of organic farmland and a three-acre retreat. They sleep in a secure dormitory monitored by staff, all evening.

Our treatment model allows students to cultivate strong connections to the environment with group and individual projects that serve the whole community.

Students have multiple, daily therapeutic interactions with clinicians and staff, they receive individual and group therapy multiple times per week (different than most wilderness therapy programs where the standard is once per week).

At Pacific Quest the defiant adolescent is immersed in a community living experience, mirroring a family system, giving students an opportunity to practice relevant and essential life skills in a healthy pattern.

Through Horticultural Therapy they work in an environment rich in metaphor, allowing them to understand and master sustainable (personal) growth through gardening.

Therapists also communicate extensively with Educational Consultants and home professionals to keep them apprised of the student's progress. Medication management is also available as Pacific Quest employs a Psychiatrist and full-time N.D.

In addition to our successful clinical model, we offer a unique holistic approach to healing. Our Medical Director, Dr. Britta Zimmer, creates an individualized, personal Wellness Plan for each incoming student. We help defiance issues by teaching healthy, sustainable habits covering: diet, exercise, sleep, stress reduction, hygiene and personal responsibility. A rich and varied, organic diet is introduced along with the re-establishment of healthy sleep cycles and balanced exercise. Students learn about the connection between their health and their emotions- helping them to readjust back into life outside of Pacific Quest.