



## ***Transforming Anger* Group Reading Guide**

**Dr. Kathryn (Kate) E. Patten**

### **Pre-reading Information About Anger**

Feelings of anger are the result of how we interpret and react to certain situations. Everyone has their own triggers for what makes him/her angry, but some common ones include situations that make a person feel:

- threatened or attacked
- frustrated or powerless
- invalidated or treated unfairly
- disrespected (people or possessions)
- the loss of someone or something precious

How a person interprets and reacts to a situation can depend on many factors:

- inherited factors (such as excitability of amygdalae)
- mentoring (i.e. parents, role models, etc.)
- past experiences
- current experiences
- future predictions

Whether your anger arises from something that happened in the past or something that's happening right now, thinking about how and why we interpret and react to situations can help us learn how to manage with our emotions better. We can also learn healthy strategies to manage our anger.

### **Your childhood and upbringing**

How we learn to cope feelings of anger is often influenced by our upbringing. Many people are given messages about anger as children that may make it harder to manage it as an adult. For example:

- It's okay to act out your anger aggressively or violently
- Don't show your feelings; doing so is a sign of weakness
- Bullying is okay; just deal with it

### **Past experiences**

- Verbal, psychological, physical, sexual abuse
- Events where a person was treated unfairly or unkindly

### **Current circumstances**

- A current event may trigger past hurts and involve unresolved issues