

Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

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Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Dr. Recco's Corner

With as much boldness that can be mustered up, I proclaim that “The year 2026 can be the best year of my life and your life.” As surely as I’m sitting here, I believe that this year can be the best year ever for those of us who believe, have faith, and step out of our comfort zone.

It is in times like these, newness of life and opportunity avails to people like you and I who have been pondering and waiting for the right time and right place to launch. In case you need more prodding and specifics, here it is. Right now, there is a power shift happening in the world and in America. The shift is happening in the lives of individuals and families.

Personally, I love when there is a shifting going on. It means that things are changing, people are lining up, various principles are being activated, the line is moving, opportunities are in the making and hopes are no longer being delayed.

What was held up and a solid no answer three months ago, is now loosed and a yes answer. My goodness, what a feeling of excitement, confidence, and relief there is in knowing that change has come and we all can rejoice and walk in our purpose. Because of my gifting, talents, callings, and training, I’m going to go ahead and give you the green light to move forward and to not look back.

You and I have all the help, skills, know how, grace and strength needed to capture that which has alluded us emotionally, socially, financially, and spiritually for far too long. It is ours for the taking and we deserve and need it.

Are you ready and willing to have the best year of your life ever? I’m ready and willing! Can you believe and embrace all the good and success that is available? I can and I will! Let’s set ourselves to do and to have in 2026.

Recco

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Supporting Others Without Burning Out

Featuring: Hannah Rau, B.S., Master's Level Counseling Intern

Counselors are drawn to work because they care deeply about others. That same empathy, however, can place us at risk for emotional depletion when boundaries become blurred, and Mental health counselors are drawn to this type of work because we care deeply about others. That same empathy, however, can place us at risk of emotional depletion when boundaries become blurred, and self-care is over-looked.

Boundaries are not barriers to compassion, rather, they are what make compassion sustainable. For counselors, this includes maintaining session limits, adhering to the scope of practice, and utilizing supervision or consultation when cases become emotionally overwhelming. Limits also involve emotional boundaries, which allow us to care deeply without absorbing responsibility for a client's healing process.

When helping our clients (or friends informally), setting limits might mean saying no to late-night crisis texts, clarifying what support you can realistically offer, or encouraging shared support rather than being the only helper. Clear, compassionate boundaries communicate respect for both you and the person you're supporting.

It is easy for counselors (nurses, teachers, and other helpers) to experience compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue means and describes the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others, especially those who experience stress or trauma. The signs of the fatigue can show up and present in a variety of ways (see chart #1)

Chart #1 Compassion Fatigue Symptoms

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Emotional exhaustion | Chronic irritability | Reduced empathy |
| Feeling numb or detached | Poor concentration | Sleep disturbances |
| Increased cynicism | Dreading conversations | Physical tension |
| Frequent self-doubt | Feeling ineffective | Being in daze |
| Avoidance of others' needs | More sensitive to stress | Workplace dissatisfaction |
| Overidentifying with others' pain | Inadequate boundaries | Feeling low and sad |
| Feel over responsible for others | Increased anxiety | Withdrawing from others |

Difference Between Helping And Overextending

Helping others is done intentionally, ethically, and is established by limits set up from the ethical codes we follow as professionals. The limits help us to be present in the moment, use our skills, and be compassionate without sacrificing our own well-being. Overextending ourselves, on the other hand, often feels urgent and emotionally driven. It may involve taking responsibility for outcomes that are not yours, working beyond sustainable capacity, or ignoring internal cues of fatigue.



Hannah Rau, B.S.
Master's Level Counseling Intern

**"We have to take
care of ourselves."
Dr. Recco**

For counselors, overextension can show up as overbooking, neglecting our own self-care, or carrying clients' stories home with us. Helping supports growth and autonomy, but overextending quietly erodes your energy, mental well-being, and effectiveness.

The Importance of Self-Care

Self-care may often be framed as optional for some people, but for people in helping professions, it is an ethical necessity. Attending to our physical, emotional, relational, and professional needs protects us against burnout and enhances clinical effectiveness.

This may include regular rest, movement, creative outlets, peer connection, and reflective practices. Beyond preventing burnout, self-care can strengthen our emotional resilience and clinical presence. When we consistently attend to our own needs, we are better able to remain grounded, attentive, and attuned to others.

Self-care also supports ethical decision-making by reducing emotional overload. Self-care also means noticing when we are depleted and then responding to ourselves with kindness rather than self-criticism. Caring for oneself is not selfish, but necessary. Supporting others without burning out means knowing your role, honoring your limits, and trusting that shared care leads to stronger, healthier outcomes for everyone involved.

Supporting others is meaningful and powerful work, but it should never come at the expense of our own health. By caring with intention, maintaining boundaries, and prioritizing self-care, helpers can continue offering compassion in ways that are both sustainable and deeply impactful.



**"Care begins
with ourselves"
Dr. Recco**



Recco S. Richardson Consulting, Inc.

Who Are We

Recco S. Richardson Consulting Inc. (RSRC) is a multi-faceted human service agency that provides innovative and effective mental health services, psycho-educational classes, community programs, seminars/workshops, and research. The organization was founded in 2005 by Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC.



**"We care and
we also help."
Dr. Recco**

Our Services/Programs

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Licensure Clinical Supervision
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Ivy League Pipeline Program
The Sunshine Committee
Santee Book Publishing



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"Here to help, Here to serve."

Therapist's Spotlight

Featuring: Leslie Hu, Master's Level Counseling Intern

Leslie Hu is the Therapist Spotlight for January. She is currently a counseling intern here at Recco S. Richardson Consulting. Her internship started in January of 2025 and will be coming to an end in May. Leslie has enjoyed her internship and looks forward to continuing to help others. Her internship has shown her the amount of effort and work that is put in by therapist.

Leslie is always willing to learn and ask questions, to ensure she is doing the best she can for her clients. She sees clients ages 4 and up and always looks forward to guiding them through their challenges. Each person has a unique reason for seeking help and she makes sure she pulls research that will help tailor interventions for each person.

1. In the last 12 months, what have you learned most about life and yourself?

Leslie reported that over the past year, she learned that growth is rarely linear. Progress often comes in quiet moments—showing up consistently, practicing self-compassion, and allowing myself to be imperfect while still moving forward. She also learned that curiosity, rather than self-criticism, creates the most meaningful change both personally and professionally.

2. What should a person do who is trying to break a negative cycle in their life?

Leslie stated that the first step is awareness and recognizing patterns without judgment. From there, small, and intentional changes matter more than drastic ones. She went on to say that replacing shame with curiosity, building supportive routines, and seeking accountability through therapy and trusted relationships can interrupt negative cycles.

3. Why do some individuals fail at so many things, and how can they fix it?

She believes repeated “failure” is often less about ability and more about unmet emotional needs, unrealistic expectations, or lack of support. Many people were never taught how to regulate stress, tolerate discomfort, or recover from setbacks. Fixing this starts with reframing failure as merely valuable information and learning how to set goals realistically.

4. Describe the best way to be happy in life.

Leslie stated that happiness isn't a constant emotional state. It's the ability to experience life fully, including discomfort, while staying aligned with one's values. Meaningful relationships, self-acceptance, self-compassion, purpose, and the ability to be present tend to matter far more than external achievements.



Leslie Hu

Master's Level Counseling Intern

“Leslie is becoming an excellent therapist who cares and is effective.”

Dr. Recco

5. What does a person have to do to secure their dream job, and how would you help them?

She stated that securing a dream job requires clarity, persistence, and emotional resilience build realistic action plans, and manage fear or self-doubt that can sabotage opportunities. Confidence grows when preparation meets self-trust.. Leslie helps clients identify their values and strengths, address imposter syndrome,

6. When having to make a major decision, what do you suggest your clients do?

As an answer, Leslie offered that it is important to encourage clients to pause and gather both emotional and practical information before deciding. This often includes clarifying their core values, identifying what is within their control, and acknowledging fears without letting them drive the decision. We also look at how each option aligns with the person they are becoming, not just the immediate outcome.

7. What do you tell your clients who are tired all the time?

Leslie stated that chronic fatigue is often emotional as well as physical. She helps clients explore stress levels, boundaries, sleep habits, and burnout patterns while also encouraging medical evaluation such as making an appointment with their PCP when appropriate.

8. How important is it for your clients to have a personal vision, and how do you assist them in achieving it?

After some thought, she stated that a personal vision provides direction and motivation, especially during difficult seasons. Something Leslie does is help clients clarify what matters to them, break their vision into achievable steps, and address internal barriers like fear, self-doubt, or perfectionism that can derail progress.

9. Discuss how you help your clients be more patient.

With confidence, she stated that patience often develops when clients learn emotional regulation and realistic expectations. An important step is to normalize frustration, teach grounding strategies, and help clients understand that sustainable change takes time. Patience grows when people feel safe, supported, and compassionate toward themselves.



**"We have to know
what we want and
how to secure it."
Dr. Recco**

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Dr. Recco

Introduction

Your child has anger and so do millions of other children in America. Anger has many definitions and is a normal emotion that everyone has (see chart #1). However, it is one of the few emotions that are negative and that can disrupt lives beyond repair. We as humans utilize anger in response to negative happenings that are encountered.

Chart #1 Definitions of Anger

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| When you get mad or upset about something | A disoriented way to express feelings |
| Emotions that lead to aggressiveness | Furious emotions that get to you |
| When someone pushes your buttons | When someone ticks you off |
| When you want to fight | When something upsets you |
| Feelings that make you upset | Expressing emotions in a wrong way |

"Angry children
can change."
Dr. Recco

Although anger is a normal emotion it is often a result of being offended. In today's society, children can have problems controlling their anger. We see it in their everyday interactions with their teachers, peers, parents, and other people. When expressed appropriately it can result in positive outcomes. When not expressed properly or bottled up, anger can be dangerous.

Anger Explored

Anger is believed to be 40 percent of school related negative incidents. The incidents possibly could have been prevented if those involved had been taught to control their anger. As well, anger (and aggression) accounts for more than 40 percent of referrals to outpatient children's mental health services. Of this number, nearly 16 percent of the children received specialized services to address their issues. The remaining percent of the children referred to mental health services remained untreated and in the community.

In the recent past, anger was viewed from many angles and philosophies. When dissected, its internal workings and concepts are basic. There are three components of anger.

1). The Emotional State of Anger: This stage is the emotion itself, which is also known as the arousal state. It arises when there is conflict over possessions or the invading of personal space. It also arises when there is physical assault, a verbal conflict, the feeling of being rejected, and issues of non-compliance.

2). Expression of Anger: This stage features the act of expressing anger. Often children express their anger through facial expressions, slouching, crying, going to sleep, and talking, but little effort is made to solve the problem. In other cases, children will express their anger through revenge, avoidance, and averting conflict with the provocateur.

3). Understanding Anger: In this stage, the interpreting and evaluating of emotions takes place. Children can reflect on their anger on a limited basis. This stage features the need for children to be “guided through the process” of understanding and managing their anger to get their anger out.

Getting the Anger Out

There are several ways for children to get their anger out in a positive way. Below are a few ways to release anger.

- 1). Recognize their anger triggers.
- 2). Identify the true causes of their anger.
- 3). Utilize pro-social behavior skills to prevent escalation.
- 4). Take part in mental health counseling.
- 5). Seek out friends and family members to talk to.

Anger Overload

It is believed that there is “anger” and then there is “anger overload.” An overload of anger is at work when a child’s anger regularly erupts from 0 to 10 in a matter of seconds and lingers for upwards of an hour (see chart #2). When a child’s anger is viewed as an overload, a different approach to managing and assisting should take place.

Chart #2 Features of Anger Overload

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Erupts rather quickly | Is in response to feeling rejected |
| Features yelling and screaming | Initiated by insignificant events |
| Not associated with ADHD | Difficult to anticipate episodes |
| Features intense reactions | Not associated with Bipolar |
| Feelings are consumed | Not associated with ODD |
| Child is risk taker | Child is typically mild |

What Works

Most anger overload and general anger solutions fail because a holistic approach is required. Holistic approaches include the following:

- 1). Engages the entire school system.
- 2). Has partners from the community.
- 3). Emphasis is on strengthening the family unit.
- 4). Has a clear-cut definition of what anger entails.
- 5). Addresses environmental issues.
- 6). Seeks solutions for choices and consequences.
- 7). Offers anger management, conflict resolution, peer mediation training, and support groups.

“The are ways to
manager anger.”
Dr. Recco

Anger Management Class

Anger management classes have a long history of effectively teaching children how to manage their anger. The goal of anger management is to teach children techniques, that when utilized, decrease levels of anger and promote appropriate responses. Childhood anger management skills provide a building block for the future and decrease disruptive behaviors in the home and school settings.

What Is Taught in Anger Management Classes

Coping Skills: The skills provide children with alternatives and internal resources that allows them to make the best decision possible, manage their thoughts, and exercise personal restraint.

Physical Activities: The activities can release frustrations and pains in a positive manner and in a safe supervised/unsupervised environment.

Self-monitoring: Child gains confidence from recognizing and responding positively to the environment, other people, and stimulation. Successful self-monitoring builds confidence and esteem.

Avoiding Confrontation: The fewer the number of potential incidents, the better for the child. Avoidance takes the pressure off having to respond properly and unnecessary processing.

Parents, What to Do/What Not to Do

When a child is having an anger episode or reverts to anger, there are certain things that adults should do and should not do. The list (see chart #4) is not that long and serves as intentional actions and suggestions.

Chart #4 What to Do/What Not to Do

What to Do

- Wait until later to talk to child
- Make good eye contact with the child
- Keep your voice as calm as possible
- Repeat back to the child their concerns
- Validate their feelings and experiences
- Assure them that it's safe
- Help them identify their feelings/fears
- Discount their feelings
- Keep the focus on the child
- Make your feelings the focus
- Help them discuss disappointment
- Share the truth
- Remind them that things will be okay

What Not to Do

- Make a child talk when angry
- Stare or look them up and down
- Yell or change the pitch of voice
- Minimize their concerns and responses
- Ignore their feelings and experiences
- Discuss consequences early
- Let them lead the conversation
- Take over the conversation/discussion
- Remind them that problems happen
- Share a story with a happy ending
- Remind them that you told them so
- Change things so as to protect others
- Give threats and worst case scenarios

**"To address anger issues, children have to do something."
Dr. Recco**

Childhood Ideas That Must Be Addressed by Parents

Like most subjects, there are traditional and non-traditional ideas held by children that gives rise to anger. The “studious and insightful” parent prepares themselves to offset counterproductive ideas that lead to childhood anger that is based on irrational beliefs. Irrational beliefs are rarely discussed when seeking to address anger issues. There are six irrational beliefs that lead to childhood anger.

1). Things should be quick and easy: Few children enjoy waiting. Waiting can be viewed as annoying, a waste of time and a form of disrespect. As a result, when events and requests take additional “time” and additional “work” it can be tempting to make demands and become angry. To overcome this area, it is necessary to teach children that things are the way they are for a reason and making demands and having tantrums probably will not be beneficial.

2). People should love and approve of me: It is typical and a natural desire to be loved and approved by others. When being loved and approved is viewed by a child as not being sufficient, anger can arise. To avoid this trap, it is important to teach children how to handle rejection. Rejection is best managed by acquiring a strong sense of self-acceptance. Children and adults who accept themselves (regardless of how others view them) are much more likely to avoid unhealthy levels of anger.

3). Other people make me angry: The blaming of others for our anger is not a good idea. No one can make us angry. Why? Because we have power over our emotions. The irrational belief that other people can make us angry gives them too much control over our emotions. The fact is that we choose to become angry. We make the choice to become angry. No one forces anger upon us. To avoid blaming others for an anger episode, it is best to accept personal responsibility, ask for support, seek professional help, etc.

4). I must have certainty in my life: The world as we know it is fast paced and ever-changing. As a result, certainty is a fleeing idea. For the most part it is impossible for things to always turn out the way a child wants. Demanding that things should “work out right” is a good recipe for anger. “The world as we know it is fast paced and ever-changing.” To avoid falling into the trap of needing certainty, children must learn to explore all their options, become more flexible emotionally, think out of the box, and develop resiliency.

5). I must do well in everything: The irrational demand that is placed on children to “do well in everything” can result in anger. Regardless of how many skills a child has, failure to reach goals in a stated area should not create “space for anger.” Regular successes and victories do not make children worthy or exceptional and failure does not make them “less than” the next child.

6). I must seek revenge for past harms: For children, revenge can be a positive or negative motivator. It can help children stay focused and determined. Likewise, revenge can lead children down the road of replaying embarrassment and humiliation that can result in anger. To avoid the need for revenge, it is good for children to let others know how they feel. It is also good for children to be assertive. “We should not accept anger influencing our children.”

“Anger problems can be based poor beliefs.”

Dr. Recco

**"We are just one
call away."
Dr. Recco**

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