

## **Working collaboratively to support the mental health of men experiencing difficulties regulating their emotions**

Trevor is a 43 year old male who's been divorced for five years, partly because of his anger problems. An intelligent but not highly educated man, he works as a heating and cooling technician. He has two adolescent sons, with whom he barely converses and seldom visits. He's now in a new relationship with Jennifer, a 38 year old mother of three younger children who live with them. Although Trevor has never been physically violent with the children, he often frightens them with his angry outbursts.

Trevor grew up in a rough area where survival was the name of the game. His parents separated and reconnected several times during his childhood. The family atmosphere was markedly hostile, full of negativity, accusations and drunken bouts from his father. Trevor said he hated his father because he was never there for him, not even when he became a star athlete on his high school football team.

At work Trevor is constantly in arguments with his boss and often walks out giving him the finger. He is also really mean to apprentices, recently having a new apprentice in tears due to a practical joke that ended badly.

Jennifer has threatened to end their relationship unless Trevor can treat her children better and has demanded that he seek help. Jennifer provided Trevor with some helpline phone numbers.

After a week of contemplating, Trevor rang one of the helplines. When the counsellor on the phone asked what the problem was Trevor explained that his anger was out of control.

He went on to say that he always had a bad attitude in school, beat people up if they looked at him in the wrong way, however he said that he doesn't get into fights these days. He explained that his partner says she has to walk on egg shells and that I look for problems with her kids. Trevor said, "I have a short fuse and have a hard time letting go of my anger. Once I get annoyed at someone, they are always my enemy. I guess you could say I hold grudges".

Trevor shared that he wants to change because he doesn't want to lose Jennifer, but he is doubtful that anyone can help.

He mentioned that a few years ago, he attended an anger-management program for about 10 weeks, but says "I didn't get nothing useful from it".

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