

Law (1997) - found that only one individual who complete an 8 session course showed any improvement.

Just because an individual feels that they are able to control their anger does not necessarily mean that this will be reflected in a reduction of aggression.

Holbrook (1997) - used anger management successfully with prisoners. The sample was selected as their aggression was reactive. Following the course, they were less likely to engage in revenge. This raises an issue about the causes of aggression. For anger management programmes to be effective, the cause of the aggression must be anger, however this is unlikely to be the case for all offenders – consider those criminals who are cold and calculating in their violent behaviour.

Loza & Loza-Fanous (1999) - studied Canadian male offenders comparing a group of violent offender with non-violent offenders and a group of rapists and non-rapists. They examined the offences, recidivism and anger scores. They found no significant link between the offenders. However, they argue that anger treatment programmes are ineffective with violent offenders since this does not cause their crime. Furthermore, they suggest that such programmes could be harmful as they encourage the offender to attribute his violent actions to anger for which he can't be blamed, rather than taking full responsibility for his actions.

Ireland (1999) studied young male offenders who had committed similar offences and did not differ in their level of angry behaviours. All 87, completed anger questionnaires prior to the study; 10 weeks later they were questioned again. 37 of the offenders acted as a control group and did not receive treatment. She found that 92% of the prisoners showed an improvement between the 10 weeks, however the control group showed no reduction in angry behaviours. One reason for this is that the individuals were provided with greater insight into the causes of their behaviour and were offered alternative ways of responding to provocation.

Even if we assume that anger management may be useful, Ireland and Holbrook demonstrated short-term changes only. These effects may not continue after the course or release from prison, so unlikely to reduce recidivism. Furthermore, some studies test only prisoners suitable for the course, so the strategy may not be generalised to other aggressive offenders, for example in they can't self-evaluate.