

# Uncontrolled anger can have dangerous consequences

■ BY HARITH KAMAL  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** Uncontrolled anger can lead to severe consequences, including road rage, violent assaults and even murder, as recent incidents have underscored the dangers of unchecked aggression.

Last week in Kajang, a 39-year-old man allegedly assaulted a secondary school student following a road rage dispute, leaving the victim with a fractured nasal bone.

In a separate incident earlier this week, a man reportedly harassed and slapped a youth at a convenience store for eating during Ramadan.

These cases raise critical questions about why some individuals struggle to control their anger, leading to violent outbursts.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Faculty of Human Ecology senior lecturer Dr Mohamad Naquiddin Dahamat Azam said difficulties in emotional regulation and external stressors often fuel aggressive behaviour.

"Some individuals struggle to control their emotions due to psychological or neurological factors,

➤ Expert links rising aggression to social factors as well as stress, trauma and lack of coping mechanisms

leading to impulsive reactions without considering the consequences," he told *theSun*.

Further, he said cognitive biases, such as hostile attribution bias – where neutral interactions are misinterpreted as threats – can unnecessarily escalate conflicts.

"A lack of effective coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills further increases the likelihood of aggression becoming the primary outlet for frustration.

"Persistent stress also keeps the brain in a heightened state, reducing impulse control and making aggressive reactions more likely."

He said anxiety amplifies emotional sensitivity, making individuals more reactive and prone to frustration, or defensive anger.

"Societal influences also play a role. Violent media and cultural

norms that normalise aggression reinforce these unhealthy responses," he added.

Naquiddin said anger issues could often stem from childhood experiences.

"Unresolved trauma from childhood can manifest in adulthood, increasing the risk of violent tendencies.

"Individuals who experience neglect or abuse may develop a tendency to misinterpret neutral situations as hostile, responding with unnecessary aggression.

"While not everyone with a traumatic past becomes violent, studies show early adversity significantly raises the risk, especially when combined with factors such as substance abuse or social exclusion," he said.

In today's hyperconnected world,

technology further complicates the issue.

"Although social media can provide an outlet for stress, it also has the potential to amplify hostility.

"The anonymity of online platforms often fosters aggressive behaviour with little accountability.

"Prolonged exposure to online aggression – such as cyberbullying, cybercrime and harassment – can desensitise individuals, making aggressive responses more frequent."

Naquiddin stressed that anger is a natural emotion but must be managed to prevent escalation into violence, emphasising that effective emotional regulation starts with a strong foundation of support from parents, schools and communities.

"For children and teenagers, schools can play a crucial role by organising parenting workshops that equip families with strategies to reinforce emotional regulation at home.

"Beyond schools, broader community involvement is essential. Therapists, youth mentors and local leaders can provide the public with additional guidance and resources to navigate emotional challenges.

"At a larger scale, partnerships between governments, NGOs and corporations can help fund emotional wellness programmes, ensuring everyone has access to the necessary support for developing healthy coping skills."

He also acknowledged that systemic support plays a crucial role but stressed that individuals can also take proactive steps to manage anger effectively.

"Simple techniques such as the four-seven-eight breathing method – inhale for four seconds, hold for seven and exhale for eight – can activate the body's relaxation response and reduce stress."

He said pausing before responding, stepping away from tense situations to regain composure and engaging in physical activities such as jogging or stretching can help release pent-up stress.

Naquiddin stressed that although anger is inevitable, its impact depends on how it is managed.

"Recognising warning signs, adopting coping strategies and fostering a culture of emotional awareness can prevent impulsive actions that lead to lifelong consequences," he said.



**FESTIVE DELIGHTS ...** A trader arranging treats comprising a variety of traditional cookies and delicacies at a special Hari Raya bazaar in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN