



## MIXED-EPIISODE IRRITABILITY VS ROUTINE ANGER

### A Quick Guide on How to Spot The Difference



This handout helps families and friends understand how irritability during a possible mood episode with mixed features can look and feel different from routine anger. These patterns need professional assessment and should not be used to diagnose someone.

Mixed-episode irritability is not typical anger. It is often intense, persistent, and unpredictable. It tends to occur with agitation, restless energy, and mood swings. These features are different from the more proportional and time-limited anger most people recognize.

### REAL-LIFE

## MIXED-EPIISODE IRRITABILITY

A person may lash out with sudden and disproportionate anger over a small frustration, then shift to tears or despair within minutes. They may feel both keyed up and emotionally raw at the same time.



Many describe a state so irritable that any interaction, noise, or demand feels like sandpaper on the nerves. Yelling or impulsive decisions can follow, even when the person feels exhausted or hopeless.



People sometimes report needing to physically remove themselves because the irritation is overwhelming and persistent, even while recognizing that the reaction feels extreme or out of character.



Irritability may present as severe agitation such as restlessness, pacing, reckless driving, or abruptly quitting a job. The behavior is not driven by righteous anger. It is driven by an internal pressure that feels energized and miserable at once.



Unlike routine anger, the irritability can escalate to aggression or self-destructive behaviors. It is often resistant to usual calming strategies and may alternate rapidly with tearfulness, guilt, or racing thoughts.



## ROUTINE ANGER

- Usually arises from a clear trigger. It tends to be proportional to the situation and often settles with time, assertive communication, or physical activity.
- After the episode, most people can cool down and reflect without the lingering inner agitation or emotional whiplash that mixed episodes can bring.
- Routine anger is less likely to come with pressured speech, risk taking, or mood swings. It usually does not include deep guilt, despair, or a sense of emotional chaos.

## KEY DIFFERENCES AT A GLANCE

MIXED-EPISODE IRRITABILITY	ROUTINE ANGER
Sudden, extreme, and unpredictable	Triggered and proportional
Persistent, wired, and raw feeling	Resolves with calming or logic
Often paired with agitation, impulsivity, and shifts to despair	Usually fades after action or cooling down
Can lead to self-destructive or aggressive acts	Less likely to involve severe, out-of-character, or repeated consequences
Often followed by guilt, mood crashes, and continued volatility	Emotional balance returns within a short time

People who describe mixed-episode irritability sometimes recall destroying relationships in a single day, feeling ready to explode without a clear reason, or acting on impulses even while knowing the behavior is hurtful. This pattern is not typical for everyday anger.

### A GENTLE NOTE

If you are in the Philippines and need help now:

- National Center for Mental Health Crisis Hotline: Call 1553 or 1800-1888-1553, available 24/7
- Hopeline Philippines: (02) 8804-4673 | 0917-558-4673 | 0918-873-4673
- In Touch Crisis Line: (02) 8893-7603 | 0919-056-0709 | 0917-800-1123 | 0922-893-8944, available 24/7
- Immediate danger: Call 911