

# 5 Reasons

## Catharsis Doesn't Help Treat Aggressive Behavior

1



### Catharsis Makes Aggression Worse

Studies dating all the way back to the 1970s have indicated that "venting" or "purging" one's feelings and actions actually increases the frequency of aggression.

2



### Here's a List of the Studies

Geen, Stonner, and Shope (1975)  
Morris and Reilly (1987)  
Thayer (1989)  
Berkowitz (1989)  
Bushman, Baumeister, and Stack (1999)  
Bushman, Baumeister, and Phillips (2001)

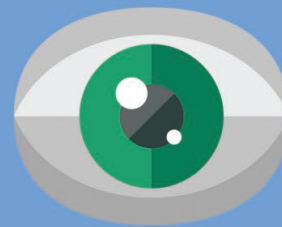
3



### Catharsis Actually Contributes to Rumination

Rumination or "self-focused attention" on negative moods increases anger and aggression (Lyubomirsky & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1995).

4



### Distraction Is a Pretty Great Alternative

Any process that distracts attention away from an angry mood should reduce anger and aggression.

5



### There Are Plenty of Alternatives to Catharsis

Take the time to visit with your colleagues about all the alternatives to catharsis when addressing aggression.

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