When dealing with an angry client, you may have asked yourself “What does this person want from me?”, or even perhaps asked the client this question. It is an important question that has a number of answers. Knowing the answers will help you calm down an angry person, and reduce hostile behavior directed at you.

**Angry Clients Want: Acknowledgment**
Perhaps one of the most important things an angry client wants is to be acknowledged. They want you not only to understand their situation, but their emotional reactions to it as well. The simple act of acknowledging that a person is upset can help to calm them down, provided the acknowledgment is phrased and toned well.

An error workers make when dealing with angry clients is to overlook clients' underlying feelings and shift immediately to problem-solving mode. Clients tend to perceive this as uncaring, unfeeling, and unhelpful, thus intensifying their anger. It is critically important that you acknowledge not only the issue, but how they feel about it. Even if you resolve their issue, clients might still be emotionally charged. Feelings of frustration, fear, disappointment, betrayal, etc., tend to linger.

**Angry Clients Want: Help**
Angry or hostile clients want you to be helpful. If they see you as making a genuine effort on their behalf, they are much less likely to be hostile towards you personally. They also want you to be competent and capable of helping them resolve their issues. This is why they ask you if you know something about their experience or how long you've been doing this job. They are attempting to find out if you know what you're talking about and aren't wasting their time.

**Angry Clients Want: Choices**
Clients want to feel they have choices and alternatives. They do not want to feel helpless, or trapped, or at the mercy of others or institutions. If they feel they have no options or no control over their own destiny, they will tend to lash out at you. Offer choices whenever possible, and you are less likely to be attacked by the upset individual.

Recognizing and providing for the client’s wants and needs can result in a reduction of the hostility directed at you.

**Key Points about Anger**
1. While we would like people to like us, and not be angry with us, if we choose this as a goal, we are bound to be disappointed. We try to make clients happy, but the truth is that certain jobs involve giving bad news that people may become unhappy about.

2. At times clients are going to be angry, and it is best to recognize they have a right to be upset or angry. Clients do not have the right to be abusive or manipulative.

3. Anger is a feeling that belongs to the other person. It is hard to affect directly. Hostile and abusive behavior is another story. We want to focus our defusing efforts on reducing the amount of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior. That is a realistic goal.

4. Abusive behavior is about control. The hostile or abusive person is trying to manipulate and control you and your decision-making. We want to make sure we don’t allow this.

5. We need to provide some leeway for people to express their anger, provided the expressions are not demeaning, insulting or manipulative. If we react to every four letter word, twitch, or raised voice, we will go nuts, and we won't be very good at defusing the abusive situations.