

# ANGER IN THE AISLES



Kevin Tripp, the UK's first 'shopping rage' fatality

In June 2008, 57-year-old Kevin Tripp visited the Merton branch of Sainsburys in London. Another shopper accused him of queue-jumping, and the disagreement turned violent. Mr Tripp sustained a blow to the head, fell into a coma and later died. 'Shopping rage' seems to be on the increase. But what causes it? Dr Michael Sinclair, an anger management psychologist, thinks widespread aggressive behaviour is a sign of an overall lack of confidence in the world.

"I think at the moment there's huge lack of confidence in society, with endless redundancies, insecurities and economic pressures," he says. "When we lack confidence, we tend to expect the worst all the time. When someone pushes in front of us it may be because they didn't see us, but if we're expecting the worst, it's easy to interpret it as a personal attack."

Such hostile thinking, together with the adrenaline rush triggered by emotional responses, can lead to an angry outburst. Sinclair urges shoppers to try and be more assertive, rather than aggressive. That means staying calm, and using language that expresses your own feelings rather than trying to place blame on others.

"Instead of saying, 'You pushed in front of me', you might say, 'I feel angry when you step in front of me like that'," he says. "By talking like that, people are more inclined to listen and empathise with us." ■

**Paul Parsons is consultant editor of Focus**