



DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY



What is Anger?

Anger is a feeling that affects us all. But for some, anger can get out of control and cause problems with relationships, school and even the law.

Anger is an important emotion. It's the one that tells us we need to take action to put something right. Anger is a problem-solving emotion. It gives us strength and energy, and motivates us to act.

How does a person's body react when they feel angry?

Everyone has a physical response to anger. Our body releases the hormone adrenalin, making our heart beat faster and making us breathe quicker and sweat more.

This allows us to focus on the threat and react quickly, but it can also mean we don't think straight, and maybe react in ways we might regret later on.

How can you help a child or young person manage their anger?

It is important to identify what makes a child or young person angry. What are their anger triggers that make them lose their temper? The following questions may help depending on the age of the child or young person:

What makes you angry?

The most common factors are:

- ‡ *Grief - losing a loved one*
- ‡ *Family problems*
- ‡ *Problems with friends*
- ‡ *Rudeness*
- ‡ *Tiredness*
- ‡ *Hunger*
- ‡ *Pain*
- ‡ *Withdrawal from drugs or some medications*
- ‡ *Some physical conditions, such as pre-menstrual syndrome*
- ‡ *Physical illness*
- ‡ *Mental illness*
- ‡ *Alcohol, some drugs, alcohol abuse, drug abuse*
- ‡ *Injustice*

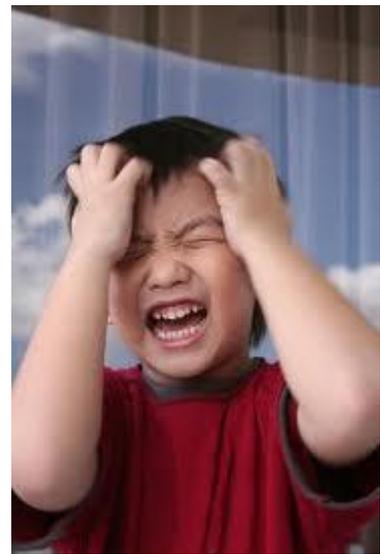


- ⤴ *Being teased or bullied*
- ⤴ *Humiliation*
- ⤴ *Embarrassment*
- ⤴ *Deadlines*
- ⤴ *Disappointment*
- ⤴ *Failure*

How do you feel when you are angry?

Some people have warning signs indicating that they are getting angry. These signs might include:

- ⤴ *Grinding your teeth*
- ⤴ *Clenching your jaw*
- ⤴ *Butterflies in the tummy*
- ⤴ *Heart beats faster*
- ⤴ *Sweating*
- ⤴ *Breathlessness (rapid shallow breathing)*
- ⤴ *Hot flushes in the face and/or neck*
- ⤴ *Trembling hands, and sometimes lips or jaw*
- ⤴ *Dizziness*
- ⤴ *Tingling at the back of the neck*
- ⤴ *You may start rubbing your face with your hand*
- ⤴ *You may fidget or clasp one hand with the other*
- ⤴ *You may start pacing around*
- ⤴ *You may start speaking louder*
- ⤴ *You may see a colour eg red*



What do you do when you are angry?

- ⤴ *Shout at people*
- ⤴ *Break things*
- ⤴ *Hit people*

How do other people feel when you are angry?

- ✧ *Upset*
- ✧ *Annoyed*
- ✧ *Frightened*
- ✧ *Angry*

What strategies can a child or young person use?

Anger Buddy

Find someone who can be your 'anger buddy'. This can be a friend or an adult. They understand your needs, agree a response, and provide the right support. Teenagers can phone, text or email their buddy when their buddy is not around.

Removal

Remove yourself from the situation that is making you angry. Walk away and as walking count slowly 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Make for a quiet place where you can be alone or go to someone who is your 'anger buddy'.

Visualisation

When you are angry think of something pleasant and relaxing eg being on the beach, swimming in the pool, sitting/playing in the garden, being in a warm bed, etc. Train yourself to think of your favourite place, eg on the beach:

see the place (blue clear sky, blue sea, sandy beach, yellow sun,)

hear the place, (seagulls, waves,)

smell the place, (the sea,)

feel the place (sun on your face and body, sand on your back)



Deep Breathing

Breathe quietly. Concentrate on breathing in and out.

Take Care of Yourself

If your body is under a lot of stress and strain, you may be more prone to anger in your daily life. For example, sleep-deprived people are often cranky; the same holds for hungry people. If you're able to create a nice school-life balance so that you have enough time outside of school to get quality sleep, eat a healthy diet, and have some time for hobbies, interests and relationships you should find yourself less tense and angry.

Hobbies and Interests

Take up a hobby or interest that relaxes you eg music, skateboard, drawing, and do it regularly.



Don't hold on to resentment

Holding a grudge against somebody can only fuel your anger and make it harder to control it. It is important to be realistic and accept that people are the way they are, rather than how you want them to be.

Have an anger diary

Some young people find that writing down what happened, how they felt, what was occurring before-during-after their episode of anger, helps them anticipate anger triggers as well as coping during and after episodes. Being able to read about what happened, what worked, what didn't work, etc., has helped people manage their anger.

Change the subject

If a particular conversation includes an anger trigger, start talking about something else.

Exercise regularly

Many of the hormones we release when we are angry are produced to help us get out of danger. This was great hundreds and thousands of years ago when we had to run away from bears and predators. Exercise uses up those chemicals and hormones. If you exercise



regularly not only will your body better regulate your adrenaline and cortisol levels, but as you become fitter you will have better levels of endorphins - natural feel-good hormones. You will also sleep better; a crucial factor for good mental health.

Focus on the solution, not just the problem

It is fine and useful to identify what made you angry. However, it is much more important to focus on ways to resolve the problem.

Tell a story in pictures

Draw a picture/pictures telling the story - what happened. Look at the picture/pictures and talk about how the story might have changed with a different response.

Up and down escalator

Get the young person to imagine an escalator. The escalator moves up and down. When the escalator moves up the anger gets worse, when it goes down the anger calms down. Discuss situations and what the person does to make the escalator go up and what they can do to move the escalator down.

Dan and Eric are supposed to be working together to solve a maths problem. Dan takes the problem sheet and starts to write his solution on it.

Eric: 'Here, let me have that. I think I know how to do this'. (Slides the paper away from Dan and starts to write on it).

Dan: 'Hey, I was right in the middle of something. Give that back to me'. (Reaches over, pulls the paper back and continues writing).

Eric: 'You're not doing it right, dummy. You're going to have to erase the whole thing'.

Dan: 'I'll erase your face in a minute if you don't stop bugging me'.

Eric: 'We're supposed to be doing this together, and you're not listening to me!'

Dan: 'Maybe I'd listen if you weren't so pushy. Anyway, I've finished it. There!'

Eric: 'It's wrong. You can't prove your answer'.

Dan: 'Sure I can'.

Eric: 'Show me, Mr Smartie. You couldn't prove it if you worked all day. Ha ha ha (loudly)'.

Dan: 'Shut up, Eric. You always think you know everything, but you don't' (pushes Eric away).

Get creative

Put your feelings in poems, lyrics to a song, in drawings and paintings.

