

Supporting your child to manage anger positively

Create opportunities to talk

In a calm moment, gently check-in about how they're doing. Give space for them to talk and show you're listening to what it's like for them. Remember that someone who's feeling angry a lot of the time probably isn't feeling very happy. Explore together what's making them feel this way.

These kinds of conversations can support you child or young person to put their feelings and experiences into words. This can help to make their emotions feel less overwhelming. Trust your instincts about choosing the right moment for a chat. If they say no, you can always try again another time. Starting a conversation when you are playing, or driving in the car really helps too—as there is another focus.

If they don't want to talk, try other ways of communicating

Write a note, draw them a picture, send them a message, if they are older -send them a text.

Help them identify triggers

Help them to understand the things that make them angry. Keeping a diary or journal may make it easier for them to think this through. Teenagers can also use an app such as HeadSpace to track their feelings

Create a plan of action together

When things are calm, think together about what happens when they're angry. How would they like you to respond? What strategies will they use to help them express their anger? The more involved your child or young person is in this discussion, the more likely they are to engage later on.

Support them find strategies that work for them
Support them to identify what types of things help them manage and express their anger. Remember that different things work for different people. Some young people will find that active strategies work. Others might prefer relaxing activities. Or, different strategies might work in different situations.

Active strategies include:

going for a walk, playing sport, ripping or screwing up paper, throwing a ball, hitting a pillow, listening to loud or angry music

Relaxing activities include:

listening to calm music, listening to a meditation on an app such as Headspace or Calm, colouring or drawing, taking deep breaths, doing a breathing technique such as breathing out for a few counts longer than they breath in, which can help their body relax, writing down how they're feeling

Keep holding the boundaries

Your boundaries as a parent or carer need to adapt as your child or young person gets older. But it's still important to keep a stable foundation in place. Hold appropriate boundaries and be consistent in how you respond to their behaviour. Remember that when they get really angry, they might also feel frightened or out of control. Even though they might resist them, appropriate boundaries are important.

Model the behaviour you want to see

Your child or young person will learn a lot from the way they see you behaving. When you show them how you're coping with your big feelings, it will them learn how to cope with theirs. Here are some examples of things you could say:

- 'I'm feeling cross and frustrated about this, I'm going to take a break for a few minutes'
 - 'This is really frustrating, let's take some deep breaths'
- 'I'm sorry I got angry earlier. I was feeling tired and stressed. I'm really sorry I shouted'

Reassure and don't lose hope.

Communicating with an angry or distressed child



We will always seek to work alongside parents to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils and families. If you have any concerns or questions at any time, please contact us

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What is anger?

We all feel angry sometimes. This is a normal part of growing up and being human. Sometimes, feeling angry can be a helpful sign that something's not okay with us. It can also give us the strength and energy we need to challenge or change something.

Anger can boil over for all kinds of reasons, especially when we're tired or stressed. It's also a common reaction to situations that feel unfair, unsafe or out of our control.

It's normal for children and young people to find it difficult to manage angry feelings sometimes. This is because the part of our brain that helps us to manage our emotions is not fully developed.

Lots of children and young people will act in these ways sometimes. But anger can start to become a problem if it:

- makes them feel overwhelmed, unhappy or bad about themselves
 - affects their relationships
 - gets expressed through physical aggression towards other people
- gets expressed through harmful behaviour towards themselves, including self harm
- When anger's like this, there are often other feelings going on too. This can include things like fear, sadness, grief and hurt. Sometimes, feeling irritable over a prolonged period of time can be a sign that a young person is struggling with low mood. It can also be a way of communicating that something in their life isn't quite right.



Help your child spot the signs

Being able to spot the signs early will help your child make more positive decisions about how to handle it.

Talk about what it feels like when they start to feel angry. They may notice:

- Their heart beats a little faster
- Their muscles tense
- They clench their teeth
- They make a fist
- Their stomach churns

Anger tips for your child

Work together to try and find out what triggers the anger. Talk about helpful strategies for managing anger. Encourage your child to:

Count to 10, walk away from the situation, breathe slowly and deeply, clench and unclench your fists, talk to a trusted person, go to a private place to calm down.

Responding to anger and distress

1. Stay calm

Avoid responding with anger yourself. This is likely to escalate the situation. Focus on staying as relaxed as you can. Use a calm voice and open body language, for example by not folding your arms.

2. Separate their feelings from their behaviour

Remember that all feelings are okay, even though some behaviour is not. Make it clear that you are not dismissing how they feel. Let them know you can see they are angry or frustrated and that it's okay to feel that way. Then calmly ask them to stop any behaviour that is hurting them or someone else. For example, you might say: 'it's okay that you're angry, but it's not okay to shout at me'.

3. Give them some space to calm down

Especially with teenagers, having an hour to listen to music or chat with friends can really help. Avoid talking about what has happened or asking lots of questions when they are still angry. Give yourself space to calm down if you need it. It is understandable if you are feeling cross too.

4. Check in afterwards

Once they have had some space, gently check in about what was going on. During the conversation, show you are trying to understand it from their perspective. Let them know again that while it's okay to be angry, it's not okay to hit/shout/break things. After you have talked about it, try to move on from the incident.