

Anger Management For Kids

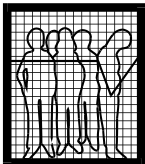
With

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Things to know about anger

<http://eqi.org/anger.htm>

Anger is a powerful emotion. It can be used either in productive or counter-productive ways. It can lengthen or shorten our lives. It is like electricity. It can run large equipment or it can electrocute you.

Here are more things to know about anger:

1. It is a powerful survival tool
2. It is a response to pain (physical or psychological)
3. It is a source of energy
4. It is a secondary emotion
5. When we are angry, the brain downshifts to a lower evolutionary level
6. Prolonged anger is unhealthy
7. Repressed anger is also unhealthy

Nature has developed the emotional state we call "anger" to help us stay alive. Anger sends signals to all parts of our body to help us fight or flee. It energizes us to prepare us for action. Many years ago we were threatened by wild animals who wanted to eat us. Now we more often feel threatened by other human beings, either psychologically or physically.

When we feel energized by anger, we might ask ourselves how we put this energy to the most productive use. As with the use of other forms of energy such as electricity or oil, we might want to use it efficiently, not wastefully.

Primary vs. Secondary Feelings

Perhaps the most helpful thing to remember about anger is that it is a secondary emotion. A primary feeling is what is felt immediately before we feel angry. We always feel something else first before we get angry.

We might first feel afraid, attacked, offended, disrespected, forced, trapped, or pressured. If any of these feelings are intense enough, we think of the emotion as anger.

Generally speaking, secondary feelings do not identify the unmet emotional need (UEN). When all I can say is "I feel angry," neither I nor any one else knows what would help me feel better. A helpful technique, then, is to always identify the primary emotion.

Here is an example. Assume someone wants us to do something we prefer not to do. At first we feel a little pressured, but not enough to get angry. When they keep pushing us, we begin to get irritated. If they continue, we get "angry". Such anger damages relationships. One suggestion on how to avoid getting angry in this case would be to express your initial feeling by saying "I feel

pressured" before the feeling has escalated to the point of destructive anger. If the person respects your feelings and does not [invalidate](#) or ignore them, they may stop their pressure. Even if they do not, I believe it is helpful to know what the specific feeling is. Knowing exactly how we feel with others and why helps us in several ways. First it raises our self-awareness in general. Second, it helps us communicate more precisely. Third, it helps us learn more quickly who respects our feelings and who we want to spend time with.

Anger as a Response to Fear

One of the primitive functions of an animal's response to fear is to frighten away the attacker. But in modern human life, we often frighten away those who we need and care about most. Besides this, prolonged anger has clear health consequences. According to Dr. Herbert Benson, these include heart attacks, hardening of the arteries, strokes, hypertension, high blood pressure, heart rate changes and metabolism, muscle and respiratory problems. (The Relaxation Response, 1975)

Responding To and Learning From Anger

Anger is an intense emotion. It is evidence that we feel strongly about something. As with every emotion, it has a lesson for us. It can teach us what we value, what we need, what we lack, what we believe and what our insecurities are. It can help us become more aware of what we feel strongly about and which emotional needs are important to us. One way to learn from anger is shown in the example below:

Instead of saying,

She never should have done that. I can't believe how irresponsible, insensitive and inconsiderate she is. What a cold- hearted, evil witch she is.

a more productive response is:

I am really upset by this. Why does it bother me so much? What specifically am I feeling? What are my primary feelings? What need do I have that is not being met? What principles of mine have been violated?

From the answers to these questions, we can decide what course of action to take in view of what our goals are. Simply being aware that we have multiple options and that we can decide to pick the best one helps soothe the anger. It may help, for instance, to ask if we really want to frighten away the person we are angry at. As soon as we "upshift" and begin to think about our options and their consequences, and make appropriate plans, we start to feel more in control and less threatened. We get out of the automatic stimulus-response mode and realize that we have choices.

There is a quote which goes like this:

Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom. - Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

It may be helpful for us to try to widen this space during our lives. In fact this may be one sign of wisdom and maturity. It may also give us an increased sense of control over our feelings and reactions.

Simply remembering that we have a choice helps us feel more in control. I have found it helpful, for example, to identify when I am feeling provoked. Once I realize this I feel more in control of my response. Not surprisingly, studies show that people feel better and are healthier when they have a sense of control over their lives. This is where the balance between upper brain and lower brain comes in. Part of developing our emotional intelligence is learning to channel our anger in productive ways to help us achieve our goals rather than to sabotage them. Keeping our goals clearly in mind at all times helps us accomplish this.

Here are some suggestions for responding to your anger:

1. Ask what you are afraid of.
2. Ask what feelings preceded the anger.
3. Ask what other feelings you are feeling.
4. Ask what you are trying to control.
5. Ask what you can control.
6. Consider your options.
7. Choose the one which will bring you the most long term happiness.

Finally, here is a technique I sometimes use to help me cope with "anger" (if I haven't already "downshifted" to a purely reactive animal instinct state). When I catch myself starting to say "I feel angry" or "I am starting to get really pissed off," I say instead, "I feel really energized." Then I ask myself how I want to channel my energy to its best use. It is a simple little technique, but sometimes it has made a big difference in how I feel and how I respond.

Psychology of Anger

Harry Mills, Ph.D.

Anger is a natural and mostly automatic response to pain of one form or another (physical or emotional). Anger can occur when people don't feel well, feel rejected, feel threatened, or experience some loss. The type of pain does not matter; the important thing is that the pain experienced is unpleasant. Because anger never occurs in isolation but rather is necessarily preceded by pain feelings, it is often characterized as a 'secondhand' emotion.

Pain alone is not enough to cause anger. Anger occurs when pain is combined with some anger-triggering thought. Thoughts that can trigger anger include personal assessments, assumptions, evaluations, or interpretations of situations that makes people think that someone else is attempting (consciously or not) to hurt them. In this sense, anger is a social emotion; You always have a target that your anger is directed against (even if that target is yourself). Feelings of pain, combined with anger-triggering thoughts motivate you to take action, face threats and defend yourself by striking out against the target you think is causing you pain.

A Substitute Emotion

Anger can also be a substitute emotion. By this we mean that sometimes people make themselves angry so that they don't have to feel pain. People change their feelings of pain into anger because it feels better to be angry than it does to be in pain. This changing of pain into anger may be done consciously or unconsciously.

Being angry rather than simply in pain has a number of advantages, primarily among them distraction. People in pain generally think about their pain. However, angry people think about harming those who have caused pain. Part of the transmutation of pain into anger involves an attention shift – from self-focus to other-focus. Anger thus temporarily protects people from having to recognize and deal with their painful real feelings; you get to worry about getting back at the people you're angry with instead. Making yourself angry can help you to hide the reality that you find a situation frightening or that you feel vulnerable.

In addition to providing a good smoke screen for feelings of vulnerability, becoming angry also creates a feeling of righteousness, power and moral superiority that is not present when someone is merely in pain. When you are angry, you are angry with cause. "The people who have hurt me are wrong – they should be punished" is the common refrain. It is very rare that someone will get angry with someone they do not think has harmed them in some significant fashion.

Physiology of Anger

Harry Mills, Ph.D.

Like other emotions, anger is experienced in our bodies as well as in our minds. In fact, there is a complex series of physiological (body) events that occurs as we become angry.

Emotions more or less begin inside two almond-shaped structures in our brains which are called the amygdala. The amygdala is the part of the brain responsible for identifying threats to our well-being, and for sending out an alarm when threats are identified that results in us taking steps to protect ourselves. The amygdala is so efficient at warning us about threats, that it gets us reacting before the cortex (the part of the brain responsible for thought and judgment) is able to check on the reasonableness of our reaction. In other words, our brains are wired in such a way as to influence us to act before we can properly consider the consequences of our actions. This is not an excuse for behaving badly - people can and do control their aggressive impulses and you can too with some practice. Instead, it means that learning to manage anger properly is a skill that has to be learned, instead of something we are born knowing how to do instinctually.

As you become angry your body's muscles tense up. Inside your brain, neurotransmitter chemicals known as catecholamines are released causing you to experience a burst of energy lasting up to several minutes. This burst of energy is behind the common angry desire to take immediate protective action. At the same time your heart rate accelerates, your blood pressure rises, and your rate of breathing increases. Your face may flush as increased blood flow enters your limbs and extremities in preparation for physical action. Your attention narrows and becomes locked onto the target of your anger. Soon you can pay attention to nothing else. In quick succession, additional brain neurotransmitters and hormones (among them adrenaline and noradrenaline) are released which trigger a lasting state of arousal. You're now ready to fight.

Although it is possible for your emotions to rage out of control, the prefrontal cortex of your brain, which is located just behind your forehead, can keep your emotions in proportion. If the amygdala handles emotion, the prefrontal cortex handles judgment. The left prefrontal cortex can switch off your emotions. It serves in an executive role to keep things under control. Getting control over your anger means learning ways to help your prefrontal cortex get the upper hand over your amygdala so that you have control over how you react to anger feelings. Among the many ways to make this happen are relaxation techniques (which reduce your arousal and decrease your amygdala activity) and the use of cognitive control techniques which help you practice using your judgment to override your emotional reactions.

If anger has a physiological preparation phase during which our resources are mobilized for a fight, it also has a wind-down phase as well. We start to relax back towards our resting state when the target of our anger is no longer accessible or an immediate threat. It is difficult to relax from an angry state, however. The adrenaline-caused arousal that occurs during anger lasts a very long time (many hours, sometimes days), and lowers our anger threshold, making it easier for us to get angry again later on. Though we do calm down, it takes a very long time for us to return to our resting state. During this slow cool-down period we are more likely to get very angry in response to minor irritations that normally would not bother us.

The same lingering arousal that keeps us primed for more anger also can interfere with our ability to clearly remember details of our angry outburst. Arousal is vital for efficient remembering. As any student knows, it is difficult to learn new material while sleepy. Moderate arousal levels help the brain to learn and enhance memory, concentration, and performance. There is an optimum level of arousal that benefits memory, however, and when arousal exceeds that optimum level, it makes it more difficult for new memories to be formed. High levels of arousal (such as are present when we are angry) significantly decrease your ability to concentrate. This is why it is difficult to remember details of really explosive arguments.

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Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder diagnostic criteria and differential diagnosis

<http://quizlet.com/29851718/depressive-disorders-disruptive-mood-dysregulation-disorder-flash-cards/>

What is the diagnostic criteria A for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

A. Severe recurrent temper outbursts manifested verbally (e.g., verbal rages) and/or behaviourally (e.g., physical aggression toward people or property) that are grossly out of proportion in intensity or duration to the situation or provocation.

What is the diagnostic criteria B for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

B. The temper outbursts are inconsistent with developmental level.

What is the diagnostic criteria C for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

C. The temper outbursts occur, on average, three or more times per week.

What is the diagnostic criteria D for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

D. The mood between temper outbursts is persistently irritable or angry most of the day, nearly every day, and is observable by others (e.g., parents, teachers, peers).

What is the diagnostic criteria E for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

E. Criteria A-D have been present for 12 or more months. Throughout that time, the individual has not had a period lasting 3 or more consecutive months without all of the symptoms in Criteria A-D.

What is the diagnostic criteria F for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

F. Criteria A and D are present in at least two of three settings (i.e., at home, at school, with peers) and are severe in at least one of these.

What is the diagnostic criteria G for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

G. The diagnosis should not be made for the first time before age 6 years or after age 18 years.

What is the diagnostic criteria H for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

H. By history or observation, the age at onset of Criteria A-E is before 10 years.

What is the diagnostic criteria I for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

I. There has never been a distinct period lasting more than 1 day during which the full symptom criteria, except duration, for a manic or hypomanic episode has been met. Note: Developmentally appropriate mood elevation, such as occurs in the context of a highly positive event or its anticipation, should not be considered as a symptom of mania or hypomania.

What is the diagnostic criteria J for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

J. The behaviours do not occur exclusively during an episode of major depressive disorder and are not better explained by another mental disorder.

What is the diagnostic criteria K for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder?

K. The symptoms are not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance or to another medical or neurological condition.

Differential diagnosis for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder and Bipolar Disorders

Bipolar disorders are episodic conditions, but disruptive mood dysregulation disorders are not. In fact, the diagnosis of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder cannot be assigned to a child who has ever experienced a full-duration hypomanic or manic episode (irritable or euphoric) or who has ever had a manic or hypomanic episode lasting more than 1 day. Another central differentiating feature is the presence of elevated or expansive mood and grandiosity, these symptoms are common features of mania but are not characteristic of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder.

Differential diagnosis for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder

While symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder typically do occur in children with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, mood symptoms of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder are relatively rare in children with oppositional defiant disorder.

Differential diagnosis for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder and ADHD/Major Depressive Disorder/Anxiety Disorders/Autism Spectrum Disorder

Unlike children diagnosed with bipolar disorder or oppositional defiant disorder, a child whose symptoms meet criteria for disruptive mood dysregulation disorder also can receive a comorbid diagnosis of ADHD, major depressive disorder, and/or anxiety disorder. However, children whose irritability is present only in the context of a major depressive episode or persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia) should receive one of those diagnosis rather than disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. Children with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder may have symptoms that also meet criteria for an anxiety disorder and can receive both diagnoses, but children whose irritability is manifest only in the context of exacerbation of an anxiety disorder should receive the relevant anxiety disorder and can receive both diagnoses, but children whose irritability is manifest only in the context of exacerbation of an anxiety disorder should receive the relevant anxiety disorder diagnosis rather than disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. Children with autism spectrum disorder frequently present with temper outbursts when, for example, their routines are disturbed. In that instance the temper outbursts would be considered secondary to the autism spectrum disorder, and the child should not receive the diagnosis of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder.

Differential diagnosis for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder and Intermittent Explosive Disorder

Unlike disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, intermittent explosive disorder does not require persistent disruption in mood between outbursts. In addition, intermittent explosive disorder requires only 3 months of active symptoms.

Anger Feeling Words Continuum

Levels of Intensity

Weak



Mild

Strong



Intense

Livid

Enraged

Acrimonious

Cranky

Annoyed

Disgusted

Irate

Displeased

Mad

Furious

Fierce

Hot

Raving

Infuriated

Miffed

Mean

Fuming

Nettled

Cross

Sullen

Riled

Sore

Offended

Dismayed

Seething

Bitter

Put out

Grouchy

Sulky

Revengeful

Irritated

exasperated

Irked

Incensed

Burned up

Blustery

Upset

Incensed

Source: Pat Huggins, 2005 Helping Kids Handle Anger

My Typical Anger Triggers and Trouble Makers

I get angry when:	Yes	Maybe	NO
1. Some lets me down.	___	___	___
2. People are unfair.	___	___	___
3. Something blocks my plans.	___	___	___
4. Someone embarrasses me.	___	___	___
5. I'm delayed; held up.	___	___	___
6. I have to take orders from someone.	___	___	___
7. I have to work with incompetent people.	___	___	___
8. I do something stupid.	___	___	___
9. I don't get credit from something I've done.	___	___	___
10. Someone puts me down.	___	___	___
11. Other _____	___	___	___
12. Other _____	___	___	___

Adapted from Seigel, J. M. (1986). The multidimensional anger inventory. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 51, p. 200 American Psychological Association.

Be able to Recognize Your Physical

Does Your Behavior



Become More
INTENSE?

Do Your Eyes



Get BIGGER?

Are You UGLY?



Are You
Short of Breath?



Do You STEAM?



Do You Hold It
All Inside and



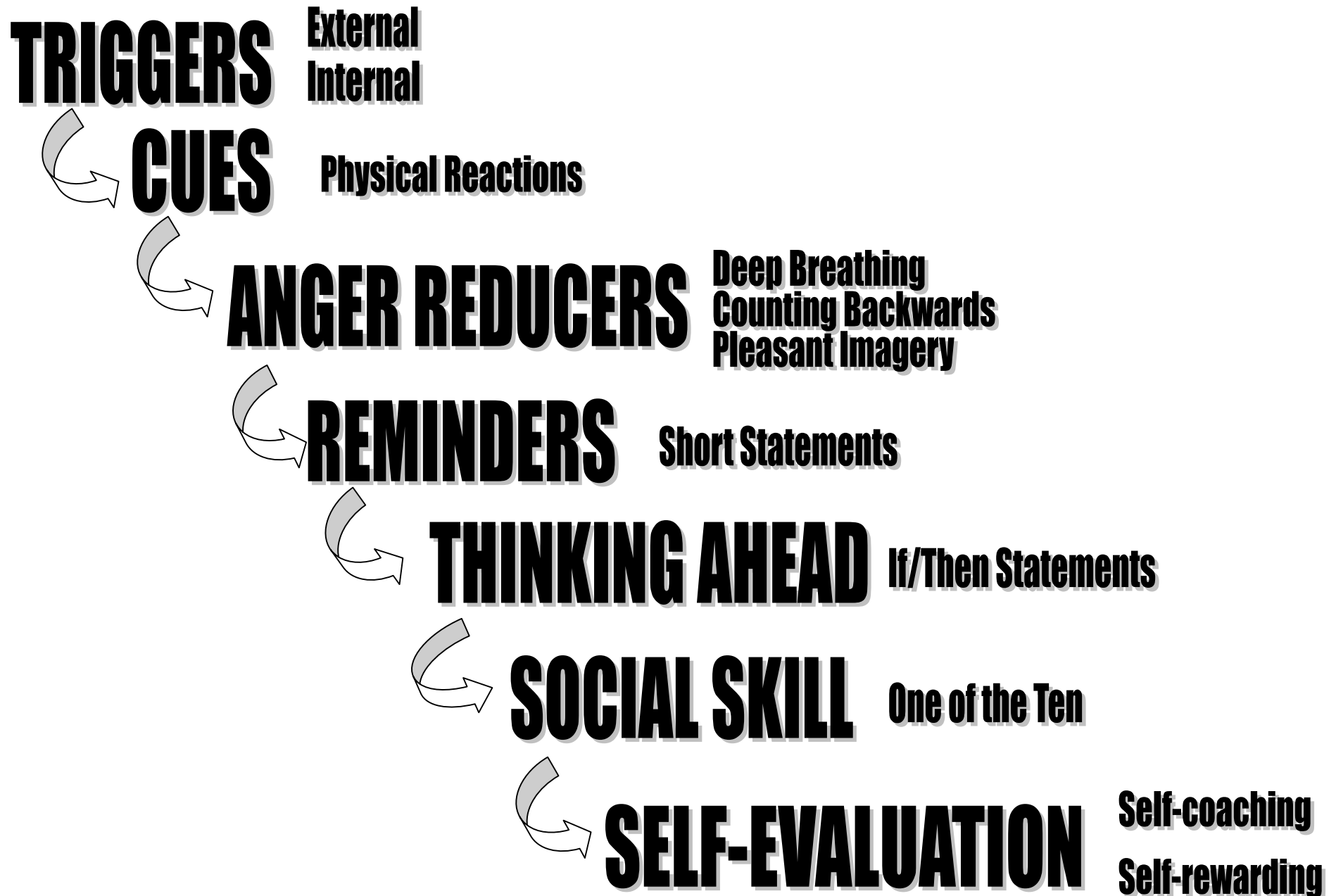
Explode Like a
VOLCANO?

Do you have a
LOUD LION voice?



CUES

ANGER CONTROL CHAIN



The Most Important Things To Remember About Getting Mad!

Lynne Namka, Ed. D.

- **I am in charge of my own feelings.**
 - I own my feelings.
 - I feel them, name them and then tell them.
 - It is okay to feel angry.
 - I learn how to express my anger in ways that are helpful.
 - Anger is part of being a human being and that's a wonderful thing to be.
- **I am in charge of my own behavior.**
 - I get my control.
 - I control what I do with my anger.
 - I gain control over how I let my anger out.
 - I watch my thoughts.
 - Hot thoughts keep me angry. Cool thoughts calm me down.
 - I practice cooling off. I learn to chill myself out. I take a chill pill.
 - I feel good about being responsible for chilling myself out.
- **I remember people are precious.**
 - I stop hurting others or myself with my anger.
 - I watch my thoughts. I watch my words. I watch my actions.
 - I own the hurtful words and actions that I do to others.
 - I learn about things I do when I am stressed and threatened.
 - I stop hurting people with my words and actions.
 - I feel good about treating people with kindness.
- **I choose to feel good about myself through speaking out.**
 - I express angry feelings in ways that are fair to others and myself.
 - I use my firm and fair words: "I feel ____ when you ____."
 - I tell my feelings and then try to work things out.
 - I feel good about saying what I feel and what I stand for.
- **I don't have to hold on to my anger.**
 - I find ways to let my anger go.
 - I talk about my hurt feelings and angry feelings.
 - I problem solve things that make me upset.
 - I keep looking until I find someone safe to talk about my anger.
 - I talk about my words and actions that hurt others.
- **I take my power!**
 - I stand up for myself. I stand up for others who are being hurt.
 - I learn to break into my mean thoughts that I use to beat myself up.
 - I feel good about learning about myself.
 - **I am powerful when I use my fair and firm words.**

The definition of whether someone's anger is a problem often turns on whether or not other people agree with them that their anger, and the actions they take in the name of their anger, is justified. Angry people most always feel that their anger is justified. However, other people don't always agree. The social judgment of anger creates real consequences for the angry person. An angry person may feel justified in committing an angry, aggressive action, but if a judge or jury of peers do not see it that way, that angry person may still go to jail. If a boss doesn't agree that anger expressed towards a customer is justified, a job may still be lost. If a spouse doesn't agree that anger was justified, a marriage may have problems.

Whether justified or unjustified, the seductive feeling of righteousness associated with anger offers a powerful temporary boost to self-esteem. It is more satisfying to feel angry than to acknowledge the painful feelings associated with vulnerability. You can use anger to convert feelings of vulnerability and helplessness into feelings of control and power. Some people develop an unconscious habit of transforming almost all of their vulnerable feelings into anger so they can avoid having to deal with them. The problem becomes that even when anger distracts you from the fact that you feel vulnerable, you still at some level feel vulnerable. Anger cannot make pain disappear – it only distracts you from it. Anger generally does not resolve or address the problems that made you feel fearful or vulnerable in the first place, and it can create new problems, including social and health issues.

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Helping Young Children Deal with Anger

Marian Marion

Children's anger presents challenges to teachers committed to constructive, ethical, and effective child guidance. This Digest explores what we know about the components of children's anger, factors contributing to understanding and managing anger, and the ways teachers can guide children's expressions of anger.

Three Components of Anger

Anger is believed to have three components (Lewis & Michalson, 1983):

The Emotional State of Anger. The first component is the emotion itself, defined as an affective or arousal state, or a feeling experienced when a goal is blocked or needs are frustrated. Fabes and Eisenberg (1992) describe several types of stress-producing anger provocations that young children face daily in classroom interactions:

- *Conflict over possessions*, which involves someone taking children's property or invading their space.
- *Physical assault*, which involves one child doing something to another child, such as pushing or hitting.
- *Verbal conflict*, for example, a tease or a taunt.
- *Rejection*, which involves a child being ignored or not allowed to play with peers.
- *Issues of compliance*, which often involve asking or insisting that children do something that they do not want to do—for instance, wash their hands.

Expression of Anger. The second component of anger is its expression. Some children *vent* or express anger through facial expressions, crying, sulking, or talking, but do little to try to solve a problem or confront the provocateur. Others *actively resist* by physically or verbally defending their positions, self-esteem, or possessions in nonaggressive ways. Still other children express anger with *aggressive revenge* by physically or verbally retaliating against the provocateur. Some children *express dislike* by telling the offender that he or she cannot play or is not liked. Other children express anger through *avoidance* or attempts to escape from or evade the provocateur. And some children use *adult seeking*, looking for comfort or solutions from a teacher, or telling the teacher about an incident.

Teachers can use child guidance strategies to help children express angry feelings in socially constructive ways. Children develop ideas about how to express emotions (Michalson & Lewis, 1985; Russel, 1989) primarily through social interaction in their families and later by watching television or movies, playing video games, and reading books (Honig & Wittmer, 1992). Some children have learned

a negative, aggressive approach to expressing anger (Cummings, 1987; Hennessy et al., 1994) and, when confronted with everyday anger conflicts, resort to using aggression in the classroom (Huesmann, 1988). A major challenge for early childhood teachers is to encourage children to acknowledge angry feelings and to help them learn to express anger in positive and effective ways.

An Understanding of Anger. The third component of the anger experience is understanding—interpreting and evaluating—the emotion. Because the ability to regulate the expression of anger is linked to an understanding of the emotion (Zeman & Shipman, 1996), and because children's ability to reflect on their anger is somewhat limited, children need guidance from teachers and parents in understanding and managing their feelings of anger.

Understanding and Managing Anger

The development of basic cognitive processes undergirds children's gradual development of the understanding of anger (Lewis & Saarni, 1985).

Memory. Memory improves substantially during early childhood (Perlmutter, 1986), enabling young children to better remember aspects of anger-arousing interactions. Children who have developed unhelpful ideas of how to express anger (Miller & Sperry, 1987) may retrieve the early unhelpful strategy even after teachers help them gain a more helpful perspective. This finding implies that teachers may have to remind some children, sometimes more than once or twice, about the less aggressive ways of expressing anger.

Language. Talking about emotions helps young children understand their feelings (Brown & Dunn, 1996). The understanding of emotion in preschool children is predicted by overall language ability (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994). Teachers can expect individual differences in the ability to identify and label angry feelings because children's families model a variety of approaches in talking about emotions.

Self-referential and self-regulatory behaviors. Self-referential behaviors include viewing the self as separate from others and as an active, independent, causal agent. Self-regulation refers to controlling impulses, tolerating frustration, and postponing immediate gratification. Initial self-regulation in young children provides a base for early childhood teachers who can develop strategies to nurture children's emerging ability to regulate the expression of anger.

Guiding Children's Expressions of Anger

Teachers can help children deal with anger by guiding their understanding and management of this emotion. The

practices described here can help children understand and manage angry feelings in a direct and nonaggressive way.

Create a safe emotional climate. A healthy early childhood setting permits children to acknowledge all feelings, pleasant and unpleasant, and does not shame anger. Healthy classroom systems have clear, firm, and flexible boundaries.

Model responsible anger management. Children have an impaired ability to understand emotion when adults show a lot of anger (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994). Adults who are most effective in helping children manage anger model responsible management by acknowledging, accepting, and taking responsibility for their own angry feelings and by expressing anger in direct and nonaggressive ways.

Help children develop self-regulatory skills. Teachers of infants and toddlers do a lot of self-regulation "work," realizing that the children in their care have a very limited ability to regulate their own emotions. As children get older, adults can gradually transfer control of the self to children, so that they can develop self-regulatory skills.

Encourage children to label feelings of anger. Teachers and parents can help young children produce a label for their anger by teaching them that they are having a *feeling* and that *they can use a word* to describe their angry feeling. A permanent record (a book or chart) can be made of lists of labels for anger (e.g., mad, irritated, annoyed), and the class can refer to it when discussing angry feelings.

Encourage children to talk about anger-arousing interactions. Preschool children better understand anger and other emotions when adults explain emotions (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994). When children are embroiled in an anger-arousing interaction, teachers can help by listening without judging, evaluating, or ordering them to feel differently.

Use books and stories about anger to help children understand and manage anger. Well-presented stories about anger and other emotions validate children's feelings and give information about anger (Jalongo, 1986; Marion, 1995). It is important to preview all books about anger because some stories teach irresponsible anger management.

Communicate with parents. Some of the same strategies employed to talk with parents about other areas of the curriculum can be used to enlist their assistance in helping children learn to express emotions. For example, articles about learning to use words to label anger can be included in a newsletter to parents.

Children guided toward responsible anger management are more likely to understand and manage angry feelings directly and nonaggressively and to avoid the stress often accompanying poor anger management (Eisenberg et al., 1991). Teachers can take some of the bumps out of understanding and managing anger by adopting positive guidance strategies.

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For More Information

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Helping the Child Who is Expressing Anger

When you hear about children killing other children, you may think, "I don't know a single child who could do such a thing."

Too often the daily news confirms that children and teens can be violent, even deadly. As parents, families, teachers and members of the community, what can we do to help children cope with angry feelings--from frustration to rage?

Some young people turn to violence, because they do not see other ways to endure what they are feeling at that moment. They may not anticipate the repercussions of their violence.

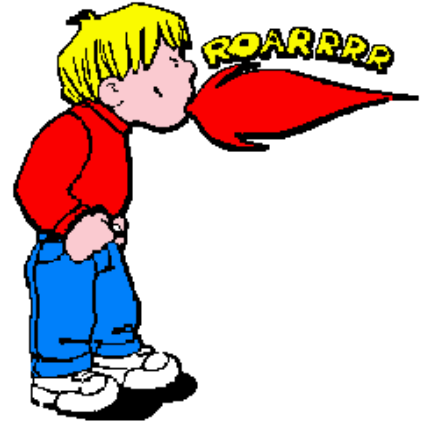
These tips may help when you recognize a child who is withdrawing or exploding over everyday frustrations:

- Listen to what the child is saying about his or her feelings and be willing to talk about any subject. Young people today are dealing with adult problems such as love, sex, relationships, failure and rejection. Unfortunately, their minds and bodies simply are not ready for these stresses.
- Provide comfort and assurance. Tell the child that you care about his or her problems. Show confidence in his or her ability to tackle life's ups and downs.
- Tell the child that everyone experiences anger. Tell him or her about the last time you felt really angry and how you dealt with that anger in a positive way.
- Encourage the child to shift gears to spend some time doing things he or she really likes to do playing sports, walking someone's dog, or reading a book. A different activity can refocus thoughts and help alleviate some of the angry feelings.
- Teach basic problem-solving skills. When upsetting situations arise, the child who has practiced these skills will be more likely to think through the consequences of different actions and will, ultimately, make a better choice than violence.
- Look at how you handle your own anger. Are you setting a good example? Would you want to be imitated by a child who admires you?
- Acknowledge good behavior. When a child deals with his or her anger in a positive way, praise the positive choice. Take every opportunity to reinforce strengths. Build the child's awareness of his or her own talents and abilities.

If none of these approaches seems to work, and the child stays angry or withdrawn for a long time, seek help. Talk to your family doctor or pediatrician. Together, you may decide that your child and family need help from someone with more mental health training.

RULES FOR GETTING YOUR MADS OUT

- Check your tummy, jaws and your fists.
See if the mads are coming.
- Breathe! Blow your mad out.
- Get your control. Feel good about getting your control.
- Stop and think; make a good choice.
- People are not to be hurt with your hands, feet or voice.
You can't hurt people just because you are mad.
- Remember to use your firm words, not your fists.
- Use a strong voice and talk your mads out. Say "I feel mad when you _____."
- Sometimes you need to take a time out to get your control back.
- Take yourself off to a safe place and talk to yourself.
- Pat yourself on the back for getting your mad out nicely.



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The Mad Family Gets Their Mads Out*

A Mindful Practice to Fully Feel Your Anger

By [MARGARITA TARTAKOVSKY, M.S.](#)

Associate Editor

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2014/04/05/a-mindful-practice-to-fully-feel-your-anger/>

Early in her practice, psychotherapist Andrea Brandt, Ph.D, M.F.T, found that the clients she was seeing were able to talk about their anger. They used popular techniques such as “I” statements. They were able to articulate when they felt angry.

And, yet, their anger wasn’t dissipating. Communicating their anger wasn’t the problem. The problem was their inability to fully *feel* that anger.

For many of us, feeling our feelings is uncomfortable, especially when the emotion is anger. The tension may seem too much. We don’t want to deal with the discomfort or we may worry what we discover on the other side.

However, fully experiencing our emotions means they don’t get buried and we receive the important information they’re trying to give, Brandt writes in her book *Mindful Anger: A Pathway to Emotional Freedom*.

It also means that we can make positive changes. “Recognizing our true feelings makes it possible for us to change behaviors and situations that do not support us — leading to a more honest, satisfying life,” according to Brandt.

In [Mindful Anger](#) she shares mindfulness strategies to help readers access, process, release and resolve their anger.

Below is a mindfulness-based exercise from the book, which helps you tap into your anger and any other accompanying emotions:

- Find a quiet spot and focus on your breathing.
- Stand with your feet a short distance apart. Make sure they line up with your hips. Notice the support of the floor, and really feel how it sustains you. “Dig your feet and toes into it.” Bend your knees slightly.
- Pull your shoulders back. Take several slow breaths. “With your hands, knead the skin on your arms, neck, and shoulders.” Pay attention to the sensations in your body.
- Visualize an incident that triggered your anger. Picture the details, until you can feel the anger arising.
- Say, “I am angry.” Say it in various ways, “louder, softer, faster, slower.”
- Notice what happens in your body when you’re practicing the various ways. For instance, do you feel hot, clammy, cold, confused, fatigued, floating, faint, nauseated, sweaty, shaky, stiff, tense or weak?
- Check for any feelings other than anger. Name them aloud, one at a time, such as “I am hurt,” “I feel embarrassed,” “I am heartbroken,” “I feel anxious,” “I am scared,” or “I am ambivalent.”
- After you’ve mentioned all the feelings you’re feeling, relax your stance. Take several deep breaths.
- Journal about this experience. For instance, you can start with: “It’s safe to be present in my body. It’s safe to feel my feelings.” Explore how just writing these sentences feels.

According to Brandt, when you’re able to tap into your anger — or any emotions — you’re able to examine the message, *before* you figure out how to respond.

Feeling your feelings may not be easy. It may not come naturally to you — especially depending on your earlier experiences. However, you can learn to feel your emotions in safe and healthy ways and to process them in safe and healthy ways.

My Anger Management Plan

1. The anger trigger and setting *(Briefly describe.)*

2. The degree of my anger *(Circle one.)*

1	2	3	4	5
not angry	mildly angry	moderately angry	really angry	burning mad

3. Useful/effective anger management tools *(Briefly describe.)*

4. Result *(Describe what worked and what didn't.)*

5. Some ideas for the next plan *(Briefly describe.)*

Behavioral Institute for Children and Adolescents
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www.behavioralinstitute.org

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