



CHILDREN'S
HOME
SOCIETY OF
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Family Education Program materials and podcasts, and information on CHS programs can also be found on our website at www.chs-ca.org.



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MANAGING ANGER

YOUR CHILD'S AND YOUR OWN



Everyone feels angry at some time; it is a common emotion. You may not be able to change the person or situation that makes you angry, but you can control how you respond to anger. The goal of anger management is to control and express anger in a positive and effective way that is safe and appropriate.



Adults and children can have many different reactions to feelings of anger. It is important to know when you feel angry, where the anger comes from, and how to control the anger. Anger can be expressed in a healthy manner that is socially acceptable or in a destructive way that may hurt you or another person. By practicing and developing habits of effective anger management, parents and caregivers can promote a peaceful environment, while helping children understand and manage their anger too.

★ RECOGNIZING ANGER ★

By paying attention to your body and signs of growing anger, you can “cool down” and deal with your anger before losing control. Some signs are:

- Rush of adrenalin
- Rapid heartbeat
- Tense muscles
- Sweaty palms
- Feeling warm
- Feeling trapped
- Snapping at others

Children need adults to help them understand and recognize their own feelings of anger. Some signs that a child is getting angry or frustrated are:

- Pulling on/out own hair
- Tightening fists or muscles
- Hitting self or wall
- Yelling or crying
- Throwing items



Your child learns by watching you. Be a positive influence by managing your anger appropriately.

★ ANGER “TRIGGERS” ★

Situations and people around you can trigger feelings of anger. Identifying “anger triggers” for you and your child allows you to be better prepared to respond in a positive manner. You and your child can use anger management skills if you know when to apply them. Common triggers are:

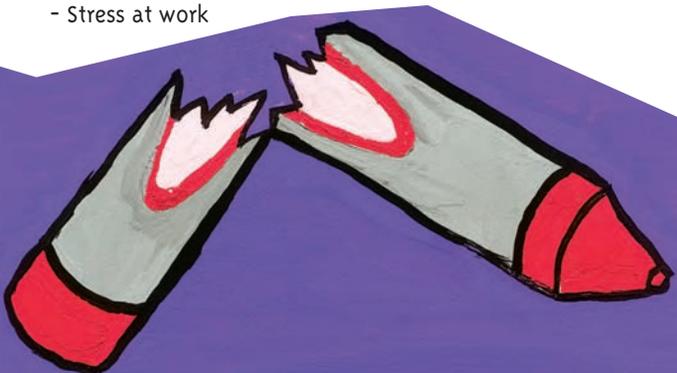
For adults:

- Children’s actions (they talk back or break something)
- Unexpected events (your child is sick and you are late for work)
- Traffic jam
- Stress from relationship problems
- Mistakes made by you or others
- Being overly tired or hungry
- Stress at work

For children: (Because each child is different, it is important to learn which situations or activities trigger your child’s anger.)

- Conflict with another child (other child takes their toy)
- Rejection by peers (other children do not let them play)
- Physical assault by another child (other child pushes or hits them)
- Not getting their way
- Being scolded or punished
- Being overly tired or hungry
- Sickness

Anger can be used positively. If children feel angry that a classmate at school is being bullied, you can help them think of a positive action in response to their anger, such as telling a teacher about the situation.



★ COOLING DOWN ★

Different activities can help adults and children release anger and “cool down” in healthy ways without hurting anyone by:

Adults:

- Exercising
- Taking deep breaths
- Using time-outs (remove yourself from the person or environment that causes anger)
- Talking to a spouse, family member, or friend
- Writing about feelings or thoughts
- Going for a walk
- Sleeping/resting

Children:

- Talking to an adult or other trusted person about their feelings
- Playing outside (running, jumping, throwing, or kicking a ball)
- Playing by themselves (even if other children are present)
- Using time-outs
- Drawing
- Keeping a journal, or just writing about feelings
- Sleeping/resting
- Reading a book or magazine
- Taking deep breaths

★ EXPRESSING ANGER ★

Anger can be expressed with words. Not communicating anger does not necessarily make it go away; it may build up and lead to an outburst later. In some instances, your anger may go away after you “cool down”; in others, you may need to communicate your anger to find resolution.

Adults:

- Tell the person who triggered your anger, even your child if they are able to understand, about the action that made you angry, how you felt, and what your needs are. You may need to “cool down” before you do this. Remember to focus on the action that made you angry, not on the person. (For example: “I feel angry when...” or “When mommy comes home from work, I want to play with you, but I need you to give me a chance to put my things away and change my clothes.”)
- Write about the situation to clear your thoughts and help you “cool down.” If it involves another person, you can discuss what you wrote or write a letter to the person.

Children:

- Children may hit or throw tantrums out of anger. Teach them how to talk about their anger by giving them words so they can express themselves in a non-aggressive manner.
- If children use angry, aggressive behavior to achieve a goal, discuss other options that would have enabled them to reach the same goal. Practice choosing other options by pretending to be in the same situation and asking them what a responsible action would be.
- Positively reinforce appropriate behavior with praise and recognition.
- Use the media (television shows, news, etc.) to discuss appropriate/inappropriate and safe/unsafe reactions to anger (this is better with older children, as some news may not be appropriate for young children).
- Present circumstances to children before they happen so they can be prepared to respond in a positive manner.
- Teach children about anger when they are young and able to understand. You can avoid having to break negative habits by teaching positive ones.

★ LONG-TERM EFFECTS

As you encourage children to take steps toward learning effective anger management, they can also benefit by:

- Becoming more responsible
- Growing independent through knowing they have choices
- Developing greater self-esteem
- Expanding problem-solving skills
- Understanding and using anger in ways that can be helpful to themselves and others



Get plenty of sleep and eat well. When you or your child are tired or hungry, you may be less patient and react out of anger or frustration.

TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

WHEN SOPHIE GETS ANGRY - REALLY, REALLY, ANGRY...
Molly Bang

WHEN I FEEL ANGRY

Cornelia Maude Spelman, illustrated by Nancy Cote

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

BECOMING THE PARENT YOU WANT TO BE

Laura Davis & Janis Keyser

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE A-Z

Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., Lynn Lott, M.A., M.F.C.C., & H. Stephen Glenn, Ph.D.

LOVE AND ANGER

Nancy Samalin with Catherine Whitney