

Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter



Anger is a normal and healthy reaction when things don't go as expected, life feels unfair or people upset or hurt us. It can be a helpful thing - letting us know that something is wrong or not okay with us.

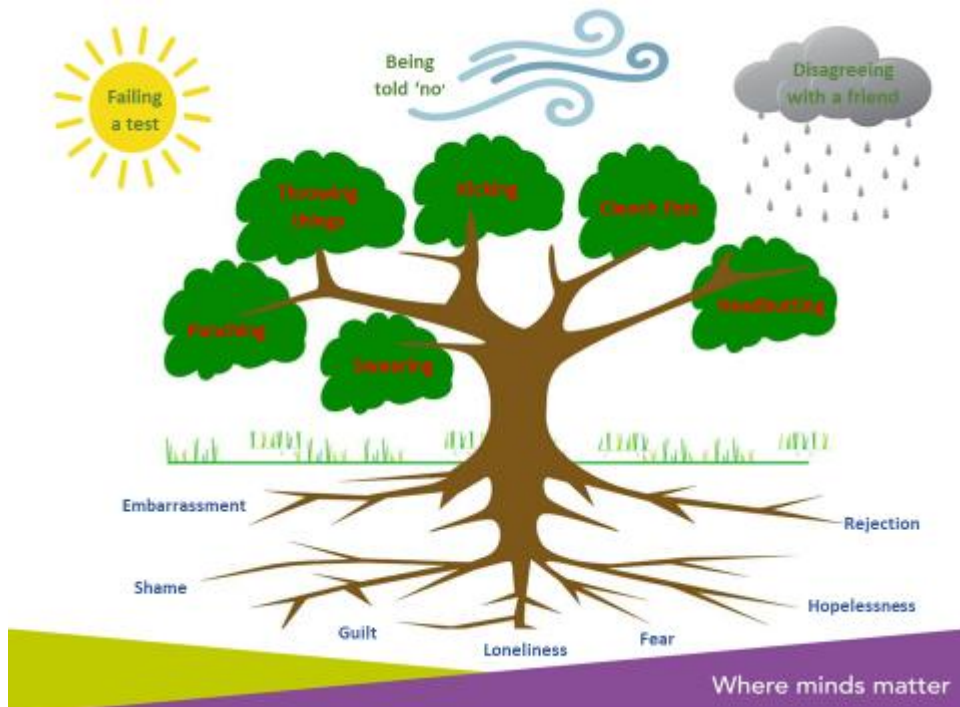
It's normal for children to find it difficult to manage their angry feelings sometimes and it's helpful to remember that the part of our brain that helps us do this doesn't fully develop until we're in our mid-20s.

Anger can become a problem for your child if it feels overwhelming or unmanageable, makes them unhappy, affects their relationships or is expressed through unhelpful or destructive behaviours – towards either themselves or other people.

Angry feelings and aggressive behaviour can be really hard to deal with as a parent, and can have a huge effect on family life.

Anger is the symptom of a deeper unmet emotional need.

One way to understand this is to think of these emotions being represented by a tree. The roots are the emotions driving anger responses; we can't see these and therefore they're harder to detect. Whereas the leaves and the branches, what we can see, are what these emotions present as. The sun rain and wind are the elements (or triggers) that are external to the tree and keep the emotions going.



Triggers

One of our roles as significant adults in a child's life is to help them identify their triggers. Some children will be very clear about what winds them up whereas others will describe



feeling seeing 'a red mist' and may not be able to pinpoint exactly what sets off these emotions.

The easiest way to help a child to identify triggers is to raise their awareness of what they're experiencing in the moment. Remembering what they did when they were angry can usually be the easiest first step in exploring this emotion.

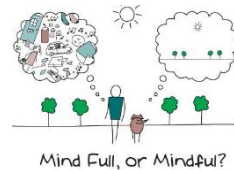
Asking a child to describe what they did as if they were watching themselves on TV is a really good way of getting accurate information from them, but also helps separate themselves from the behaviour, making it easier to talk about.

How to support Relaxation Techniques

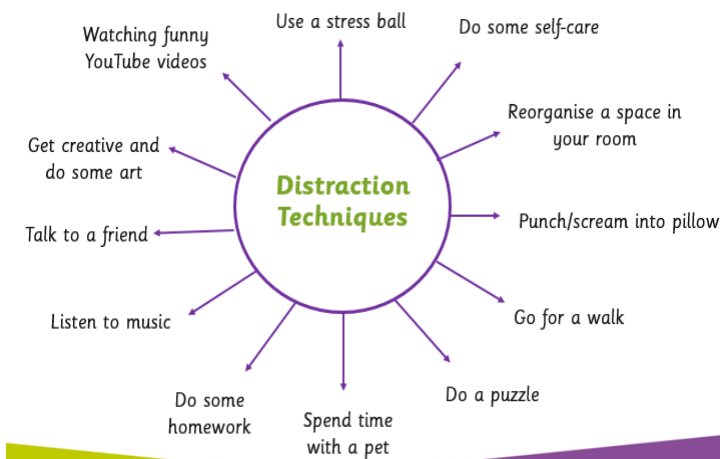
Other ways to promote regulation is to help children switch off some of the physical sensations they experience when angry

This can be done through;

- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness



Distraction



Distraction can be really helpful way of beginning to regulate their anger. Some are effective as they get the body moving and start discharging some of that adrenaline produced through fight, flight freeze. Some are effective as they require thinking and concentration and this helps take the mind of the unhelpful, negative beliefs. Some promote opposite alternate emotions that help to shut down these anger responses.

Grounding

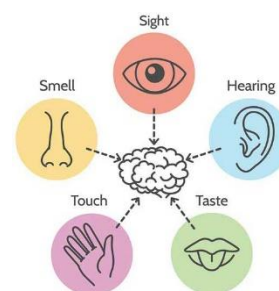
Grounding is a helpful technique that draws on the senses; just how the senses can very easily trigger anger they can also have the opposite effect and have a powerful influence in reducing the emotion.

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

De-escalation

It's important to consider our responses and how they may unintentionally be escalating the situation. Some tips to consider include;

Strike when the iron is cold; contrary to the common saying, it is best to explore these emotions with a child when they are calm and regulated. Trying to understand what they're experiencing in the midst of an outbursts will be ineffective as the young person is in



fight/flight mode. This part of the brain does not understand logic or reasoning. When they are calm they are more likely to be able to reason.

Communication Model; the communication model is a technique that encourages the adult to say less. By saying less in these moments you're giving the child less to respond to. Instead gentle repetition and feedback on what you're hearing the child say not only allows them to feel heard and validated, it also creates a space for them to reflect on what they're saying.

Body language and facial expression: remember an angry child can't hear language but they can read body language and respond to facial expression. Remember to be mindful of this in the midst of an escalation

Tone of voice; if you do need to verbally communicate something in the moment (perhaps it's linked to risk or safety) then ensure our tone of voice is calm and clear.

Remain regulated; the child may try and draw you into the escalation by doing or saying things they feel you may react to. It's important to be aware of this and refrain from falling into this trap. Staying regulated can be achieved by practising relaxation techniques yourself or even repeating a calming/soothing mantra to yourself.

Support

If you're concerned your child's anger is harmful to them or people around them, you could talk to a: GP, Class teacher, Jolly Jungle

Further help and support for anger in children

For more support with anger in children, you could phone the [YoungMinds parents' helpline](#) free on 0808 802 5544 (9.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday).

Other sources of help and support include:

- [YoungMinds: parent's guide to supporting your child with anger](#)
- [YoungMinds: anger – a guide for young people](#)
- [MindEd for families: anger and aggression in children](#)

Forward Thinking Birmingham Crisis Team-0300 300 0099

A 24-Hour service 7 days a week for anyone who feels they are unable to keep themselves safe and at severe risk of harming themselves.

Child line- 0800 1111 (24 hour phone line) . www.childline.org.uk

The Samaritans- 116 123 (24 hour phone line) www.samaritans.org

Sane line- 0300 304 7000 (Mental Health Helpline 6pm-11pm daily)

Kooth- www.kooth.com (Online chat and counselling for 11-25yr olds)

Parentline Plus: 0808 800 2222 More information about this service is available at: www.familylives.org.uk

