

HEALTHY YOUNG MINDS

Anger Management



Parents use the term 'anger management' when they are talking about wanting their child to stop losing their temper or to stop them getting angry.



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger tends to be a secondary emotion triggered by another feeling such as frustration, fear, embarrassment and other feelings that are a normal part of life. So what we need to do is help children manage their emotions and not be overwhelmed or controlled by them.



Children feel angry when they feel threatened but this may not be in a physical sense. If a child feels they have been treated unfairly, even if their perception is not accurate, their sense of justice feels threatened and they may become angry.



Our bodies, from caveman times, are made so that if we feel threatened we can react instantly to fight or run away (called fight or flight). Once a child is in this state then the thinking part of their brain is shut off; so it is best to have conversations about this when they are calm and relaxed, not when they are angry.

What can parents do?

➤ Help your child to understand that to feel angry is normal. It is how we react to that anger that is important. Discuss with your child ways they can manage those feelings before they become overwhelming ie; talk to someone about how they feel or spend some time alone listening to their favourite music, write a letter about how they feel then tear it up or distract themselves with an activity they enjoy.



➤ Model the use of 'feeling words' and how you manage them i.e. 'I was annoyed it rained on my washing today but at least I didn't have to water my garden', 'I was angry my boss made me work late but it cheered me up hearing how well you had done at school today'.

➤ Help your child recognise the things they are good at. Praise their strengths and skills because unless they know others believe in them they will not believe that they can make positive changes to their behaviour.



➤ Help your child to think about what the triggers are for their anger, how to recognise when they are getting angry and how to use opportunities to manage this. For instance, do they need a snack or drink break, do they need a change of activity or to move away from someone who is annoying them.

➤ Help the child learn that by changing the way they think it can change the way they feel i.e. 'I could feel angry that your brother broke the computer game but I know that he really liked playing with it too so it must have been an accident.'

➤ Explore with your child what activities help them to feel calm and relaxed so they can use these if they feel stressed.



➤ Make a 'reward chart' with your child to reinforce/reward positive behaviour. Each time your child reacts in positive manner, such as walking away when angry or using distractions or activities to help them 'calm down', they get a tick (or sticker) on the chart. At the end of the week they get a small reward of their choice (such as choosing a film for the family to watch, having their favourite meal made).

KEEP CALM AND TIME TO RELAX !!

➤ You could even make them a 'calm box' to use if they feel they are getting angry. Items you may use could include:- a sweet to suck, Velcro to rip apart, a puzzle to complete, a straw to blow through, a photo of a pet or person they are close to, bubbles, a stress reliever to squeeze, scented soap etc. For older children a pen and pad of paper or notebook to help them write how they feel or nail polish to paint their nails. There are lots of ideas online if you Google 'items for a calm box'.

