

TIPS FOR PARENTS: helping your child learn to manage their anger

In these days of being denied our normal routines, time with friends, being able to move freely from place to place, it's easy for ourselves and our children to become frustrated, lonely and frightened. Unfortunately, our children don't always know how best to express themselves and so they react to situations with anger. It's important that we help our children develop ways to respond in a healthy manner to express how they feel.



Here are a few tips to guide you:

- 1. We need to deal with our own anger in positive ways.** This may mean we need to leave the scene or a situation until we have calmed down enough to process what happened and then talk through how we are feeling.
- 2. We need to model appropriate ways to handle our anger.** For example, you might say "I'm going to take a walk right now and calm myself down before we talk about what just happened." When we return to our child, we need to remain calm and express how we felt during the situation and how we would like to move forward. "**How Are You Feeling Today?**" (page 1 Children (Red Cap) Activities.pdf), "**Focus on Your Senses**" (page 2 Children (Red Cap) Activities.pdf) or the "**How Do You Feel Today?**" (page 1 Teens (TASK Activities.pdf) and "**Connecting With Your Senses**" (page 2 Teen (TASK) Activities.pdf) provide a few ideas that can help your child to calm down. (Activity pages can be found on [www.CANBDAYouth.com/remote resources](http://www.CANBDAYouth.com/remote%20resources))
- 3. We need to know how to tell when our child is struggling and needs help with their anger.** For example, are they having trouble sleeping? Has there been a change in the eating habits? Are they harming animals or having physical outbursts? These behaviours could be an indicator that your child is struggling with anger and expressing its underlying emotions.
- 4. We need to help our children discover what happened that led to their anger.** Encourage them to tell you what has happened, what were they thinking during the situation, and what they were feeling that led them to become angry. Being able to identify our emotions is a helpful step. Encourage your child to try the "**Naming My Emotions**" (page 3 Children (Red Cap) Activities.pdf), "**What Are You Feeling Today?**" (page 4 Children (Red Cap) Activities.pdf) or the "**Sorting Your Emotions**" (page 3 Teen (TASK) Activities.pdf) activity sheets. Ask them to tell you about times they have experienced some of the different emotions listed on these sheets.

- 5. We need to help our child develop anger management skills.** Use a tool like the “How Do You Express What You Are Feeling?” (page 5 Children (Red Cap) Activities.pdf) or the “How Do You Express Your Feelings” (page 4 Teen (TASK) Activities.pdf) circle charts. These charts will help you and your child identify the situation, their thoughts, feelings, responses and encourage them to think of a cool down that might work for them, and then to identify how they could handle the situation differently. (Check in with your local Salvation Army to see if they will be hosting a Red Cap – Anger Management for Elementary Aged Children or TASK - Teen Anger Management Skills program in the future.)
- 6. We need to keep the lines of communication open with our child.** We may need to give them space to calm down before we attempt to have conversations with them. It is also important that we acknowledge how they felt instead of focusing on just the behaviour in expressing their emotions.
- 7. We need to recognize that sometimes our children need outside help.** You can reach out and call 211 or visit 211.ca. It is a resource for people who need to talk, helps connect you with resources, and they will link you or your child to the right social organization.

It's important to understand as adults that when another person reacts to a situation in anger; there may be other feelings that resulted in anger such as frustration, disappointment, worry, fear or other underlying emotions. We want our children to feel safe to communicate their feelings. As we encourage our children to recognize and share their feelings, we too need to do the same for ourselves.

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