

Anger Control

While we all get angry at times, some kids act out in unhealthy and destructive ways. They often have other emotions driving this anger such as fear, worry, sadness, doubt, yet are unaware of how these feelings fuel the anger. They may be triggered by social situations, health, family, school, or other issues. Kids with anger issues have difficulty controlling it, can scare those around them, and it can interfere with everyday life.

It may feel overwhelming if this sounds like you or your child - What now? There is **Good News**- your child and family can **OVERCOME** these challenges and achieve great things! Following are supports and resources, further information, and skills to manage anger in a healthy way.

Support and Resources:

Child Mind Institute:

<https://childmind.org/search/?fwpterm=anger%20control>

Hey Sigmund, Where the Science of Psychology Meets the Art of Being Human:

<http://www.heysigmund.com/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Utah:

Phone: (801) 323-9900 Website: <http://www.namiut.org>

US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Patient Medication Guide

Website: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm?fuseaction=Search.Search_Drug_Name

Other:

Diagnosis Information:

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/index.shtml>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP):

http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx

Skills to Control Anger:

- ❖ **Take care of yourself:** Eat healthy, exercise or play every day, spend QUALITY time with family and friends, do things you enjoy, laugh, get 8 hours or more of sleep nightly.
- ❖ **Identify what triggers anger:** Recognizing causes can help us to plan healthy coping ahead of time and cool down when warning signs are noticed. How do you feel anger in your body? This can be an effective warning.
- ❖ **Talk about feelings:** Tell people when things bother you calmly, using "I feel" statements. Notice what feelings come before anger. Anger is a secondary emotion and typically fear, sadness, worry, etc. happen first.
- ❖ **Deep Breathing:** Take deep breaths in through your nose so your stomach rises, pausing for a few seconds, before slowly breathing out through your mouth. Deep breathing can counteract the physical effects of anger.
- ❖ **Imagine a relaxing place:** Think of your favorite calming place, noticing what you see, smell, taste, touch, and hear to healthily distract and relax.

- ❖ **Stretching:** Stretch the muscles in your body gently. Anger often causes our muscles to tighten and stretching counteracts this stress.
- ❖ **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Gently tense the muscle groups in your body, one at a time. Then, relax that muscle group and completely relax for at least 15 seconds before moving onto the next muscle. Many people will add deep breathing and calming imagery while relaxing the muscle group. Move through your face, neck, shoulders and back, arms, hands, chest and stomach, legs, and feet one at a time. Be careful not to cause pain when tensing muscles.
- ❖ **Count to 10:** Before saying or doing anything. This allows time for more rational thoughts when emotional.
- ❖ **Find a safe physical outlet:** Do push-ups, jumping jacks, run, hit or scream into a pillow, go on a walk.
- ❖ **Put your feelings on paper:** Draw or write what causes anger. Circle what things can be made better, tear up the paper and put it in the garbage, or make a funny picture out of it to change emotion.
- ❖ **Set goals:** Think about the kind of person you want to be and work towards becoming that person.
- ❖ **Do not try to control things that cannot be controlled:** We can work to do our very best while recognizing and accepting what we can't control. Nothing is more stressful than trying to change what we have no control over.
- ❖ **Realize choices:** Think of different choices, the consequence of those choices, and choose the best one.
- ❖ **Recognize your strengths:** Make a list of your strengths, talents, and positive qualities. Focus on what you do well and use these ideas when upset.
- ❖ **Change unhealthy thinking:** Notice unhealthy thoughts and replace them. Healthy thoughts include you are not a bad person if getting angry, you have control, anger will not fix anything, the best time to stop anger is when it starts, problems are caused by how you act out your anger, anger gets worse if not stopped, acting like everything is ok does not work. Decide if the problem is worth getting upset over.
- ❖ **Be mindful:**
 - What to do:
 - **Observe:** Notice what is going on around you including your thoughts and feelings. Use your 5 senses of what you see, smell, taste, touch, and hear.
 - **Describe:** Use words to describe what you are observing.
 - **Participate:** Be healthily in the moment, not thinking about yesterday or tomorrow. Example: If you are upset, accept it and choose to handle it positively.
 - How to do it:
 - **Do not judge:** Notice without adding a value judgement of "good, bad, right, wrong, mean, etc." Do not judge your judging. Example: "I am a bad person because I get angry" can be replaced with "I can handle anger without hurting others, stuff, or myself".
 - **Stay focused:** Do one thing at a time, let go of distractions, concentrate.
 - **Do what works:** If a skill or idea helps without causing other problems, keep doing it.

THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

If you or your child begins to have suicidal thoughts, please contact your treatment team immediately or call 911 in an immediate emergency. Effective treatment and safety planning can help you or your child overcome these challenges and find the hope to live!