

YOUNG MINDS

A young boy with short blonde hair, wearing a bright red ribbed turtleneck sweater and light blue jeans, stands on a train platform. He has a thoughtful or perhaps slightly angry expression on his face, looking off to the side. He is wearing a backpack. In the background, another person in a red jacket and a striped shirt is partially visible, and the interior of a train is seen through the platform.

The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing

FEELING ANGRY?



EVERYONE FEELS ANGRY SOMETIMES

It's normal and healthy to get angry when there is a good reason, and sometimes we just feel angry but we don't really know why. It is important to do something with our angry feelings and not bottle them up. But losing our temper may make things worse.

If you are a young person and your anger is making things difficult for you, then this booklet might help.

WHY DO WE GET ANGRY?

There are lots of things that can make us angry.

Here are a few examples...

- Being hurt or abused
- Being shown up in front of other people
- Experiencing family changes like parents' divorce
- Being let down...or letting ourselves down
- Things being unfair
- Having to do something we don't want to do
- Not being listened to
- Feeling lonely or rejected
- Too much pressure from school or home
- Someone dying or leaving us
- Being unwell ourselves
- Things not working out as we'd hoped

"In my family no-one shows they are angry...well, apart from my Dad. Everyone just keeps it inside. Sometimes I go up to my bedroom and just want to smash things up."





ANGER CAN SHOW ITSELF IN LOTS OF WAYS

We might...

- Hit other people
- Shout at or pick on people
- Mix with people who get us into trouble
- Break things
- Lose control
- Wind people up

...or we might turn our anger and hurt feelings in on ourselves and this can lead to...

- Eating problems
- Feeling low
- Putting ourselves in danger
- Refusing to go to school
- Not talking to anyone
- Harming ourselves
- Drinking too much
- Misusing drugs

Some of these things might make us feel better in the short term. But they can make trouble for us later that is harder to sort out. People might not understand why we are behaving like this.



RECOGNISE THE ANGRY FEELINGS

When we get angry, our bodies experience a “fight or flight” response caused by adrenaline, a hormone which helps our bodies to react instantly to stress. Our teeth clench, shoulders tense, heart pumps faster, stomach turns, fists clench, muscles tense. These are natural reactions and can be useful signals to warn us when we are getting worked up.

Sometimes it can be hard to admit to anyone, or ourselves, that we feel angry. There may be a lot of pressure on us not to show how we feel. We might be aware of feeling other things:

If we are aggressive, we may make other people feel angry – and if people are aggressive to us, it makes us feel angry and no-one gets what they want.

“My heart was pounding and my hands were sweaty. I couldn’t keep still – I had too much energy. I couldn’t focus on anything. I couldn’t even sleep properly.”

“Inside I felt bad about myself. When I lost my temper it felt like I was losing control. I was scared, but nobody knew – they were scared of me.”



“I get angry when Dad has a go at me about going out in the evenings. I’ve done all my homework and everyone else is allowed out, but he and my step-mum expect me to stay in and help look after my sister.”

“I talked it over with Dad and my step-mum. They didn’t understand at first but I explained that I wasn’t a kid any more and had my own life. We agreed that I could go out if I was back by 10 o’clock, and that I’d still baby-sit for them sometimes.”

WHAT CAN I DO WHEN I GET ANGRY?

As we learn to stand up for ourselves in a calm way, we improve our communication with each other. This helps us feel more confident that we can sort things out AND get what we need.

If there is a problem with someone, it might help for you to agree a certain time to sit down and discuss it later, rather than in the heat of the moment.

Make sure you both have a chance to put your point of view across (and don’t interrupt each other!).

Once you know exactly what you both disagree on, take it in turns to think of solutions. It can help to write these down.

If, after you have made an agreement, things occasionally slip back to how they were before, don’t worry – this doesn’t mean it isn’t going to work.

Of course both sides may need to change. If you still feel stuck, there are always other people who are willing to listen and help (see help section at the end of this booklet).

DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU

If you are already angry about something you can't do much about (eg. parents divorcing), you might be more likely to lose your temper in other situations too. For example, someone at school seems to be winding you up; on another day this wouldn't have bothered you at all. If you find yourself starting to feel angry, it can help to have some thoughts prepared to keep you out of trouble...

If you can stop the situation getting to you, you will feel more in control of yourself. You will become more confident about thinking about what YOU want to do, rather than what someone else has pushed you into. If you are being bullied there are organisations that can give you more advice (see help section).

Try to stay out of situations which make you angry.

"They're not worth bothering about"

"I won't let it get to me"

"It's his problem, not mine"

"They might get bored, and will go away if I don't get wound up"



“I hadn’t been at school for a while and I just got freaked out about going. On the first day back I was really wound up and when Josh turned round and started laughing at me, I just lost it...”

IT MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU THINK

Sometimes it can help if we can look at things from another point of view to help us have a more balanced idea of what is really going on.

Sometimes, if we are feeling something really strongly, it can be hard to see things from any other point of view:

- What would you say to someone else you cared about in your situation?
- What else could the person who has annoyed you have been thinking or doing, other than what you are imagining?



HOW CAN I FEEL CALMER?

It is important to take time out to relax and do things that we enjoy. Everyone relaxes in different ways – what works for you?...

- Talking to someone – this can help put things in perspective
- Listening to music
- Taking slow deep breaths when you feel anger coming on
- Going for a walk
- Drawing, painting or writing in your diary what you are feeling
- Listening to a relaxation tape
- Running, cycling, playing football or other energetic sport
- Having a long hot bath
- Getting into a good book or computer game





GETTING HELP

Sometimes it's hard to know why we are feeling angry.

Something might have happened a long time ago and now we find ourselves over-reacting to all sorts of things. Or sometimes we might find we can't talk to the person who makes us feel angry because they can't see their part in it, or we are scared of them. If this is the case, it can take a lot of courage to ask for help but it's important to try and talk to someone we trust like...

- A friend or relation
- Favourite teacher
- Social worker
- Youth worker
- Connexions adviser
- Mentor
- School counsellor
- School nurse
- Doctor

If this isn't working, your family doctor could refer you to a counsellor or someone who could work with you to give you more skills to manage better. Your local child and adolescent mental health service can help children and families with all sorts of difficulties. They will give you a chance to talk about how you feel. These services are confidential so your friends and school don't need to know about it if you don't want them to.



HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS

YOUTH ACCESS

Tel: 020 8772 9900
Fax: 020 8772 9746
Email: admin@youthaccess.org.uk
Website: www.youthaccess.org.uk

Provides information advice and counselling services throughout the UK for young people aged 12-25 years. Gives details of appropriate local agencies for young people. Gives contact by letter, telephone, fax or email.

YOUTH2YOUTH

Helpline: 020 8896 3675
Email & Online chat via website Mon & Thurs 6.30pm-9.30pm
Website: <http://youth2youth.org.uk>

For people under 19 years. Confidential and anonymous email and telephone helpline support, run by young volunteers. Offers sympathetic listening and information about practical help.

CHILDLINE

Helpline: 0800 1111
Textphone: 0800 400 222
Mon-Fri 9.30am-9.30pm & 11am-8pm Weekends
Living away from home: 0800 88 44 44
Monday-Friday 3.30pm-9.30pm & 11am-8pm Weekends,
Website: www.childline.org.uk

ChildLine is the UK's free helpline for children and young people. It provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

NSPCC

NSPCC Helpline for children and young people: 0800 1111,

Textphone: 0800 056 0566

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Helpline for any child or adult concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

CONNEXIONS

Helpline: 080 800 13 2 19

Textphone: 08000 968 336

Text connection direct: ... 07766 4 13 2 19

Email and adviser online via website

Website: www.connexions-direct.com

A government support service which aims to provide advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities for young people aged 13-19 years. The helpline will refer onto the local service.

VOICE

Freephone: 0808 800 5792 Mon-Fri 9.30a-5.30pm

Email: help@voiceyp.org

Website: www.voiceyp.org

Offers you advice, support and advocacy if you are in care, a care leaver, or in custody or have any issue with social services. Can also visit you in a children's home or secure unit.

FRANK

Freephone: 0800 77 66 00 24 hour service.

If you call from a landline the call is free and won't show up on your phone bill. Also provides a translation service for non-English speakers.

Textphone: 0800 917 8765 24 hours

Email: frank@talktofrank.com

Website: www.talktofrank.com

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or solvent misuse.



YM PARENTS
HELPLINE

0808 802 5544

youngminds.org.uk

Mon–Fri 9.30am–4pm

Registered Charity No: 1016968
Company No: 2780643
OCSR No: SC39700

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