

Understanding and Managing Anger

This toolkit is for young people with a physical health condition or difficulty.

Here is some information on what it means to feel anger, and strategies on how to manage this.



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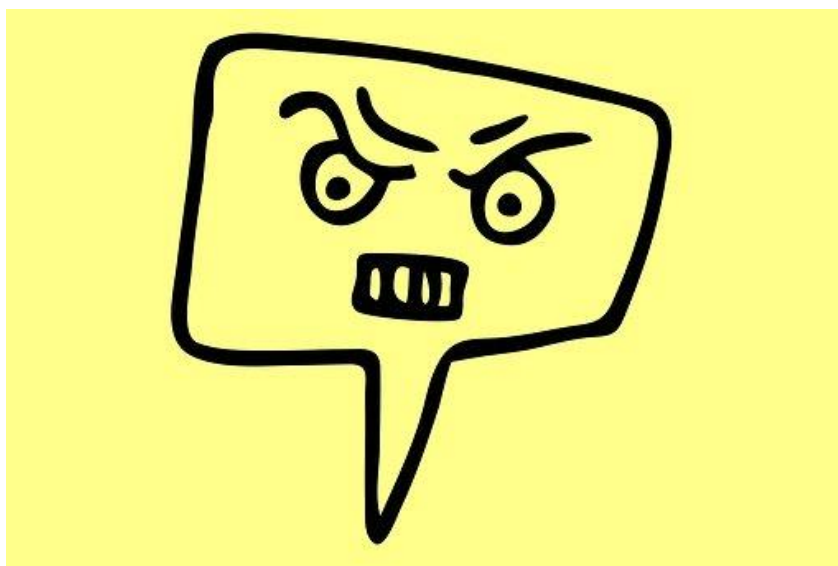
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What is Anger?

If you have ever seen the movie 'Inside Out', you will recognise this guy as 'Anger'.

Anger is an **emotion** just like happiness, nervousness, sadness, fear, shame, guilt, joy, and excitement.



Anger is a **normal** human response to situations where we feel threatened, unsafe, annoyed or irritated by something. When we feel angry, we might notice our mood start to change. Anger can be a very intense feeling, and it may feel like we can't focus on anything else when this happens.

Anger may not feel as 'nice' as emotions like happiness or joy, but it's important to be able to recognise when we are angry so that we can know how to respond and look after ourselves and others.

Anger can feel **soft** or **very strong**, and you may feel it in situations like these:

- When someone cuts the dinner queue in school
- When someone is being rude
- When something breaks or won't work properly
- When you lose something important to you
- When you think something is unfair

What does Anger feel like?

Anger can effect everything we feel in our world, and can make us react and act in ways that we wouldn't usually. Things may feel 'out of control'. Being able to recognise when you are feeling angry and taking control of the situation can help you **slow down** and **choose** how to respond to the anger.

Thoughts

"That has really annoyed me. I can't believe this has happened"

Actions

Running away from a situation
Snapping at others
Arguing
Feeling like you want to throw something

Mood

Feeling irritated, sensitive and angry

Body

Heart pounding
Sweating
Feeling hot



Anger and my health difficulty

When you have a physical health condition or difficulty, life can sometimes feel more stressful and unfair. You may have a mixture of emotions and think things like *"why me?"*.

Be kind to yourself, and allow yourself some **'wobble room'** to feel these difficult emotions because of the tricky situation you are in.

It is normal to feel angry over things like:

- Having to go to lots of appointments
- Having to take medication
- Feeling 'different'
- The effort that goes into managing your condition
- Your symptoms
- When you feel like people don't understand
- When people ask rude questions

Write down the things that make YOU angry, no matter how **BIG** or **SMALL**, in this box. This could be about your health condition or something entirely different.

Accepting Anger

Even though it might feel like Anger is not a very nice feeling, it is a good skill to be able to “sit with” Anger, rather than try and push it away. Understanding what makes us Angry and how we deal with Anger can help us feel more in control, and better able to manage our Anger in the future.

To help understand your anger, you could **stop in the moment** and ask yourself questions like..

Why am I feeling this way?

What caused this?

What am I feeling in my body?

How am I going to act?

Write them down or share them with an adult who can help you manage your emotions.

If it is sometimes tricky for you to recognise what makes you angry, and what can ‘trigger’ difficult emotions, you could keep a log or a diary.

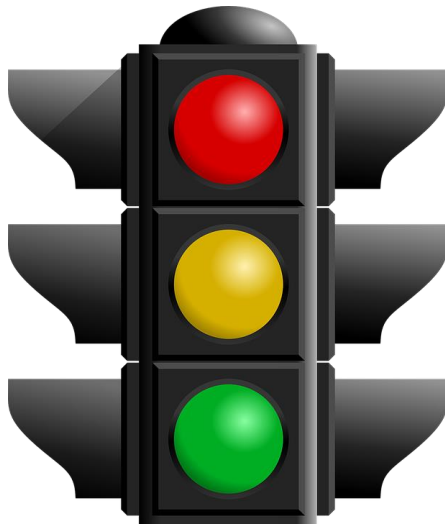
Make a note of:

- *What day and time did it happen?*
- *What happened just before?*
- *What were you feeling in your body?*
- *How did you act?*
- *What helped you to calm down?*



My hot thoughts

When you feel angry, one way of noticing and understanding your thoughts can be to think of them as **'hot thoughts'**. Use this traffic light system to help!



HOT/RED thoughts like "I hate this!" or "GRRR!"



UNSURE/AMBER thoughts like "I don't feel calm" or "This is winding me up"



CALM/GREEN thoughts like "I feel calm, safe and relaxed" or "I can manage this"

Use this space to **DRAW** what it feels like in your head when you are angry. If it feels confusing and just like a big ball of scribbles – draw that! Drawing your feelings can help you to explain them to other people (like parents or teachers) when it's too hard to use words.

Managing Anger

Although Anger is a normal and ok thing to feel, it can be nice to have some **tips and tricks** in your back pocket on how to calm down, and bring yourself back to safe space when you are Angry.

Different things work for different people – so find out what works best for you! Here are some ideas.

Counting down **slowly** from 10, 20 or 30 in your head

Taking **slow, deep** breaths in and out 5 times

Refocussing your **senses** on 5 things you can see, smell, hear, or touch

Taking yourself to a **quiet space** and thinking of your favourite memory or story

Drawing or writing about your angry thoughts and feelings

You can find more strategies on the ABUHB Paediatric Psychology website **here!**

Resources →
Managing Difficult Thoughts and Feelings
→ Grounding, Mindfulness and Relaxation