



IMMANUEL COLLEGE

# PARENT RESOURCES

## Dealing with anger in 11-18 year olds

### Is it normal for a teenager to be angry all the time?

**No two teenagers are the same. One may appear angrier than others, including their siblings, so as a parent you'll need to adapt your approach to individual needs. For all teenagers it's worth thinking about how they're sleeping and how much information they're being expected to process at a given moment.**

#### Sleep

In addition to emotional triggers that affect everyone, teenagers need more sleep than children and adults. It allows their brains to develop. Not getting enough sleep can cause teenagers to become angry.

#### Information processing

Teenagers cannot store and process information as they could when they were a child. For example, if you're asking your teenage child to complete several tasks at once (clean their bedroom, do their homework and get a shower) they're unlikely to complete anything as their brain can't process the requests. This struggle with processing information can result in arguments and angry outbursts.

## HOW TO CONTROL ADOLESCENT ANGER?

Your aim is to help a teen control their behaviour when they feel angry. You can encourage positive and proactive self-reflection. When they're in a calm state of mind you can speak to them about what they think helps when they feel themselves becoming angry.

They should know:

- **They can learn to control their behaviour.**
- **Boundaries that are in place.**
- **What the consequences will be if they go over a boundary.**

When your child is behaving angrily, as long as your child is not harming themselves or others, give them space. You can check in with them an hour or so later. If they're behaving angrily towards a sibling, it's important to talk to the sibling about their feelings and experience to make sure they also feel supported.

Finding ways to connect to your child is valuable, that might include gaming with them, eating food they like together or being aware of their friendship circle. Teens are often influenced by their peers so knowing who their friends are, what they do together, the music they like and games they play is a valuable way to stay connected.

If your child behaves violently, when things have calmed down explain that abuse, physical harm or any damage to the property is not acceptable. Do not threaten your teenager with the Police or Children's Services unless you are willing to contact them for help. Otherwise, they will see this as an empty threat. Try to keep the conversation collaborative as you find healthy strategies to help them cope with expressing feelings of anger.



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### HOW TO HANDLE AN ARGUMENT

Try to stay calm even if you feel you are being goaded. If an argument feels like it's gone too far and you're both antagonising one another, explain you're going to walk away so you can take a break. Try speaking again when things feel calmer. Once an argument is over and resolved, do not revisit it at a later date, this is likely to cause further anger and resentment.

#### RECOGNISE

Help a child recognise the early signs of anger.

They may experience:

- a faster heartbeat
- tense muscles
- racing thoughts
- a 'fuzzy' brain
- their stomach churning

By paying attention to these physical and emotional indicators, children can begin to identify when anger is building. It's important to help them understand that while these feelings are natural, the behaviours that follow can be managed.

Recognising these patterns gives them the power to pause, take control, and choose healthier, more constructive ways to express what they're feeling.

#### REFLECT

Once emotions have settled, take time to explore the situation with your child.

Calm moments offer valuable opportunities to uncover the deeper feelings behind their anger.

Anger may stem from fear, confusion, sadness, or frustration. These underlying emotions can be linked to:

- Unmet needs
- Past experiences or trauma
- Ongoing stress or anxiety
- Unresolved conflicts
- Misunderstandings or distorted thinking

Reflection also involves accepting responsibility for any behaviour that occurred during moments of anger. What this looks like will vary depending on your child's age and level of understanding. Encouraging healthy self-reflection helps build self-awareness and empowers children to take ownership of their actions and reactions.

#### RESPOND

The third step is to respond to anger healthily and constructively.

Encourage the development of assertive communication skills, where they can express their needs and emotions confidently while still respecting others' boundaries.

Some helpful anger management strategies include:

- Deep breathing
- Mindfulness practices that help ground someone in the present (what can you see, hear and smell)
- Physical activities to release tension and calm the mind
- Regular self-care
- Building routines that include exercise, rest, hobbies, and relaxation

These habits reduce stress and make it easier to manage strong emotions before they escalate.



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### WHY DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET ANGRY?

Everyone gets angry. It's a build-up of feeling when something's gone wrong. While it's a normal emotion to feel it can be unpleasant to be around.

Anger issues are a top mental health concern for children contacting Childline, with many struggling to regulate their emotions during challenging situations and some sharing that they are aggressively criticise themselves. As parents our responsibility is to help children understand what they're feeling when they feel angry. Children should know that although they can't control their feelings, they can find ways to manage their behaviour, so they don't cause themselves or others harm. Finding an appropriate way to release anger is a valuable lesson for life.

You can always [encourage your child to contact Childline](#), were here 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

#### Five key things to remember about anger:

1. For children all behaviour is communication.
2. Anger frequently masks other more vulnerable emotions like fear, hurt or frustration.
3. You teach children by example. How a child sees anger being dealt with is often what a child will mirror.
4. A parent can help their child express anger in a way that won't cause them or others harm.
5. It's important that a child develops an understanding of what makes them feel angry.

When the initial anger has subsided it's likely that it's followed by low feelings of regret and sadness. When it's possible to talk, it's worth encouraging children to reflect so they can identify what their emotional triggers are in particular situations.

Anger is often caused by miscommunication and unrealistic expectations. If your child's angry because of a mistake you've made, it's entirely appropriate to apologise, it models accountability. Explain to your child that verbal abuse and violence is not ok and how it can make the person on the receiving end feel, this will teach them empathy.