

Wellbeing Newsletter



Anger

Everyone feels angry sometimes and this is a normal and healthy reaction when things go wrong, life feels unfair, we get overwhelmed, or people upset and hurt us.

Anger can act as a positive force for change, letting us know that something is wrong or not okay with us. Anger can start to become a problem for your child if it is overwhelming or unmanageable, making them unhappy, or being expressed through unhelpful or destructive behaviours - either towards themselves or other people.

Angry feelings and aggressive behaviour can be really hard to deal with as a parent and can have a big effect on family life. But there are things you can do to make the situation better, and places where you can find support.



How can I help my child to manage their anger?

- Try to open a conversation about what's going on. If your child doesn't know why they are feeling angry, think together about what might be causing these feelings. You might begin by saying that you have noticed they don't seem happy, and you're wondering if anything is worrying them or stressing them out.
- If your child is prepared to talk, focus at first on listening to them and empathising with how they're feeling. Anger can be a difficult topic for young children to talk about, so reassure them that it's normal to feel angry sometimes and that you're glad they're sharing these feelings with you.
- Stick to consistent boundaries and rules around their behaviour. When children are angry, they can also feel frightened about how out of control things seem. While they might not like it, they do need stability and consistency from you.
- Help them to recognise the patterns around when and how they get angry. Think together about what triggers their anger and whether there are things that would help them to realise this is happening before situations become overwhelming.
- Support them to find ways of channelling their anger and calming down. This could be as simple as taking deep breaths or listening to music. It might also help to do something physical like playing sport, running or going for a walk, or to do another activity they enjoy - whether it's painting, colouring, reading or skateboarding. Some children like to find creative ways of expressing their feelings, for example by drawing, writing it down or keeping a journal.
- Give yourself and your child some time for things to get better. Things don't always change straightaway and sometimes children just need their parents/carers to notice and acknowledge that things are hard for them.



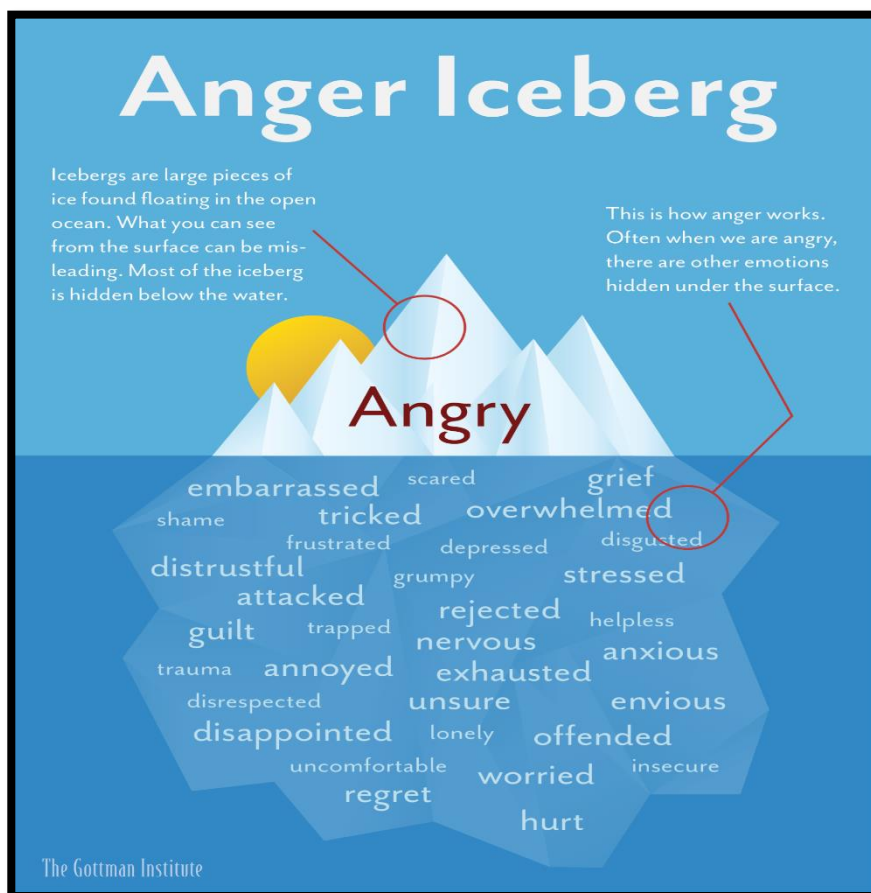
Understanding the connection between emotion and behaviour

A child that has difficulty regulating emotions may frequently engage in behaviours that appear impulsive and might be challenging to manage. The strategy of 'Stop, Think, Do' is a good mantra for parents/carers to use.



Stop and **think** about what the behaviour might be communicating, were these patterns of behaviour evident previously or could they be a reaction to a change in their routine?

Do respond calmly and clearly. Children need to be aware that their behaviour has consequences; however, they require patient teaching, reminders and clear boundaries and expectations that are repeatedly explained in different ways and enforced consistently. **Do** respond to the underlying emotions rather than the behaviour. The behaviour may look like anger, but the underlying emotion could be fear, rejection, sadness and many more.



This website from the NHS offers expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your child's mental health and wellbeing as well as the rest of the family.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mindmatters/>