

IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH ANGER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Relax

Breathe deeply through your nose, feeling your stomach go out rather than just your chest. Repeat five times to yourself "Cool down - keep calm" and concentrate on the words and be aware of your body calming. You need to practise this until you don't need the words but just the feeling of calming yourself.

Think positively

Tell yourself that your thoughts may be wrong - that person is really annoying you but you may be over-reacting and getting things out of all proportion.

Try to solve the problem in a different way. Why are you so angry? Do you need to be? Is there another way to handle this? You will be the one left to deal with what happens after your anger - your bad feelings about yourself and other people's anger and disappointment.

Communicate

When you are angry, you can get the wrong end of the stick. Slow down and think carefully about what you want to say. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying. Write it down in a letter if you can't talk about it without getting really angry.

Manage stress

Make sure you give yourself time to think about why you get so angry and whether it was worth it. Manage your stress and anger levels by:

- Listening to music or watching TV that isn't violent or emotional, just soaps or fun shows
- Writing down what you feel. Teenagers always feel stupid writing down their feelings but it's a really good way to see your thoughts written down and you may surprise yourself with how truthful you can be on paper. If you are worried about anyone finding it, destroy the paper afterwards - it's the writing down that helps you deal with it so you don't really need to keep it.
- Take lots of exercise – a sport or something physical that helps get your aggression out and not onto other people. It may just be kicking a football around or running.
- Talk about your feelings with someone you trust. This could be a parent or a friend - it could even be your cat or dog or old teddy bear - the important thing is to practise talking about your feelings. Think of those bad feelings as dangerous - if you bring them out into the daylight, they look insignificant and can be dealt with but they get bigger and more unmanageable if they are hidden and fed with more anger until they are huge.

- Maybe you should change who you hang around with? If your friends are angry frequently and/or make you angry, consider making some new ones who may help your self-confidence and well-being.

Get off the roundabout

There are many reasons why you feel angry and hostile and the worst of it is that the more angry and aggressively you behave, the more you will hate yourself and so it goes on and on, round and round, worse and worse until you even frighten yourself and end up feeling that everyone hates you. How do you stop that?

Test how real your ideas are. If your parents have split up, young people often feel it's their fault, especially if they have been behaving badly before it happens because they have been reacting to the atmosphere in the house. If one parent has left, it's really hard to understand how they could have done that if they really loved you. Maybe you feel you aren't good enough to be loved otherwise, wouldn't they have stayed? Or maybe you feel it's just so unfair and you weren't even asked or told about it, it just happened - doesn't anyone understand how YOU feel?

You are probably taking it out on the other parent, the one left at home. But that is scary too - perhaps they might leave you or stop loving you as well or put you into care even? These fears are really frightening but the REALITY is that parents almost never leave because they want to leave their children. Marriages and relationships break up and the two people in them want to live apart. They still love their children and the parent who leaves is often terrified that the child will lose contact with them.

Usually, it's the children who suffer most because parents can forget to tell their children that they love them and might not see the terrible pain that it gives their children to lose one parent from the home. They'd understand if that parent died, but usually, parents expect you to deal with divorce or separation - but it's not that easy, is it? Maybe both parents are saying bad things or thinking bad things about each other and expecting you to get involved or worse, take sides.

Be a bit kinder to yourself: You ARE loveable. You ARE OK. You ARE allowed to be feel so much pain inside that you don't know what on earth to do with it. You ARE allowed to be furious with your parents for splitting up – that anger is part of the process of coming to terms with it. You ARE allowed to be angry but you owe it to yourself to deal with it so it doesn't hurt you and other people.

Get off the roundabout: TALK about it. GET your anger out in other ways. BE HONEST with yourself and write down what you feel. FIND ways to deal with it so that it eventually goes away

Allow yourself TIME OUT

If your anger is getting out of control and the relaxation technique first mentioned isn't working, take **TIME OUT**. Tell your parent that you are going to use the **TIME OUT** technique and get them to agree that they will allow it to happen as it's really important that you both agree to it and respect it. When you say **TIME OUT**, calmly

leave the house or situation and walk yourself out of the rage or upset you feel. Give yourself time to think and not just react - allow yourself time to cool down. Adults do this all the time, either by leaving physically or in their heads but parents often feel they need to keep you there, usually because they're worried you'll hurt yourself or someone/something or because they might feel you are getting away with it.

TIME OUT means, OK, I'm leaving so that I can get control, think things through, be myself again, get some space between us etc. it's an amazingly good technique. You can usually come back and talk things over more calmly or it may be a way to give everyone space for a few hours. If you have an angry parent, they might learn to use the technique as well. No post-mortems though - otherwise the situation will get angry again rather than be resolved.

So this is the agreement for **TIME OUT**

Say **TIME OUT** and leave the situation to allow both sides to cool down

When you come back either agree to talk calmly or forget it

No post-mortems ie no accusing 'you always do this', 'I won't have you talking to me like that' etc.

If you can't talk, both sides agree to write down what they feel it.

Don't over-use it or it won't be effective

Finally - LIKE YOURSELF!

- Practise thinking good stuff about yourself
- Even though you don't like yourself sometimes, are you really that bad? Lots of people have gone through what you are going through and they are fine now, they got through it. If you don't really like yourself when you behave with anger and aggression, then change the behaviour. It's the BEHAVIOUR that's bad, not you.
- Think something good about yourself and members of your family every day - it sounds daft but it really works!