



## REMEMBER

- Although anger may be the emotion we see, there could be a variety of emotions behind anger, including: anxiety, fear, shame, sadness, frustration, hurt, jealousy, embarrassment, worry, disappointment, guilt. Exploring the underlying emotion with them can be an important step toward resolution.
- Many youth showing anger are highly anxious. Anxious kids can respond to feeling out of control or being pushed with either fight or flight behaviour. Find out about anxiety and talk with them about this possibility. There's great relief for an anxious teen as they begin to understand what is going on.
- Managing anger is a skill that can be learned. Practicing skills improves them until new behaviours begin to form.
- God understands. Anger is a normal, healthy emotion that he created...even Jesus felt angry! However it is when our anger is uncontrolled and causing harm to our relationships and others that we need to invite him to help us manage our anger well.



## RECOGNIZE

- Anger shows itself in many ways. Some of the things you may see in angry teens are:
  - ▶ Threatening or bullying others
  - ▶ Insomnia; weakened immune system/frequent sickness
  - ▶ Depression and self harm (anger turned inward)
  - ▶ Periods of rage or silence and withdrawal
  - ▶ Obsessively playing violent video games, watching violent movies, or visiting websites that promote or glorify violence
- Some of the things you may hear from them are:
  - ▶ An emphasis on 'shoulds' and 'musts'; feelings of being constrained
  - ▶ An unwillingness to compromise; viewing different viewpoint/ideas as a personal challenge
  - ▶ Difficulty showing empathy for others/stepping outside of themselves
  - ▶ A hard time expressing emotions other than anger
  - ▶ Responses to situations that are out of proportion with the event, over-generalizations (using 'always' or 'never') and assumptions.
  - ▶ Words that represent themselves as the victims in the situation. eg. "He made me angry"; "That car tried to kill me!"; "It's because they all hate me."



## RESPOND

- **Teach them to step away.** Encourage the teen to see the freedom in walking away from a situation that is getting too heated. Offer to step away with them so they don't see it as a punishment for their emotion, but a choice to take charge of it.
- **Encourage reflection.** A big part of being able to resolve feelings is recognizing what is going on. Guide them think about what they're really angry about in a particular situation get them to say, "I am angry because..." rather than "I'm angry."
- **Explore alternate possibilities.** Often anger comes from the interpretation of events or beliefs about how things should be. When the anger has cooled, invite them to brainstorm

other possible interpretations of the situation that set them off. Talk about how things can look and feel different depending on the meaning one puts on things.

- **Encourage new language.** Owning emotions and their impact of them means changing our language: eg. "I chose to get angry when..." rather than "He made me angry when ...." We get to choose who holds the power and language is part of that equation.
- **Choose a new role.** Help them find new ways of interpreting the world around them where they are not in the role of a victim. Responding rather than reacting is a choice and can bring great satisfaction and a sense of personal power.

# [ ANGER ]



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## RESOURCES

[helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org) - search "relationships" for anger management resources

[www.therapistaid.com](http://www.therapistaid.com) - search "angry teens" for worksheets, interactive tools, and strategies.