



[Emotional Health \(/emotional-health/\)](#) > 
 [Children & Young People's Emotional Health \(/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/\)](#) > 
 [\(/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/\) Anger](#)

## Children & Young People's Emotional Health

# Anger

Anger is a normal and healthy feeling which we all experience. Over time we have learnt ways to manage this. Children and young people can sometimes be scared by the feeling of anger. They may not always have the words or understanding to manage this emotion. Anger can be a way for them to show their frustration or unhappiness, or they may not even know what is making them feel this way.

It can be a response to feeling scared or stressed, or things not happening as they hoped. Parents and carers have an important part to play in helping them cope with these strong feelings.

Children can learn to recognise and name strong feelings like anger. Children often need support to learn out how to handle the feeling and how to show it safely, as well as how to calm themselves down.



Sometimes children and young people get angry about something that has just happened or something they have bottled up for a long time. As they grow up they have many challenges to learn to manage. Changes in school, friendships, exams and family relationships can all lead to feelings of anger.

## Dive Deeper

## Things You Can Do

It can help for your child to learn about anger. You can support them do this.

The anger volcano is a fun activity that you can do together. It will help you to chat about how anger feels and how you can manage this in a positive way. You can download this below.

Talk about what's making your child feel angry – don't ignore it. Your child may not want to talk straight away and that is okay, but you can help to get them started by talking about what makes you angry. Choose examples that a child or young person can easily understand like 'leaving the towels on the floor in the bathroom'.

It is hard keeping calm and caring for your child through a meltdown. Make sure you have time to let off steam and have someone to talk to too – being with your child when they are feeling angry is exhausting! Get support for yourself;

- Talk to friends and family.
- Relax when you can; it could be deep breathing, getting some fresh air or having a bubble bath.

Taking care of yourself will help you keep being able to respond to and support your child when they are struggling with their feelings.

# Triggers

You know your child best. You may notice that there are some things that make an angry outburst more likely. Being aware of this can help you and your child avoid a meltdown.

Anger can be triggered by basic needs like hunger or tiredness. Or it may be that stress, new situations or family upsets or worries increase the number of outbursts. Things like teasing or feeling 'bossed about' by a sibling can also create these feelings. Sometimes stepping in to distract and support your child to manage their frustration can head off an outburst.

Knowing how best to respond to your child can be difficult when they are angry. The reasons and how your child shows anger will depend on a number of things like age, personality and understanding.

There is a pattern to anger. It can happen very quickly but if you can spot the stages you may be able to sometimes avoid the meltdown. Use some time after an outburst to think how it might be avoided next time. As your child gets older it is important that they get in the habit of reflecting on this too.

Stages of an angry outburst:

## The Trigger

- Try to intervene or distract your child when you first notice they are becoming irritable or angry.
- Give positive instructions and give time for your child to act on these.
- Notice the triggers for future reference.

## Escalation – it's getting bigger!

- Try to change activity to diffuse the situation.
- Encourage your child to use calming strategies such as the "Take 5 breathing", counting to ten or a physical activity like star jumps.

## Crisis Stage – meltdown!

- Make sure everyone is safe and remain calm.
- Use a quiet, slow and clear voice so your child has time to understand what you are saying.

## Recovery Stage – for you as well as your child.

- Allow time for your child to calm down safely.

- Give them a simple calming activity such as colouring or drawing.
- Be positive, encouraging and avoid discussing what happened at this point.

## Post-Crisis Stage

- Having a meltdown is exhausting – your child will need reassurance and encouragement from you as the chemicals in their body returns to normal.
- Having a meltdown is a really scary experience for a child – they may need you to reassure and comfort them.
- If they are old enough you can discuss any unwanted behaviour after they are calm.

## Follow up

- Reflect, talk and listen with your child.
- Try to make a plan together to avoid future angry outbursts.
- It is important that your child feels listened to, especially when they are talking about something that is important to them and resulted in a strong emotion like anger.

Always praise your child when they try to manage a difficult feeling in a positive way. If they don't manage it talk to them when they have calmed down. Come up with a plan about what they could try another time.

## The Anger Iceberg

It can be helpful to think of your child's anger like an iceberg. If your child is showing lots of signs they are angry, underneath the surface they could be feeling lots of other emotions.

Anger is sometimes just the quickest and easiest emotion to show.

- Think about the other things that could be happening for your child at the moment.
- Talk with them about what they might be feeling underneath.

You can download the anger iceberg below.



# Fight or Flight

Fight, flight or freeze is a normal reaction. It is our body's way of preparing itself to respond to danger. Back in cave man times it would have been the instinct that kept us safer when wild animals were around.

Fight, flight or freeze is an automatic response. It can happen when the danger is real or only in our minds. Our body's automatic reaction is either to;

- Stay and fight.
- Run away.
- Freeze and be unable to move.

It can be helpful to watch out for when your child has a "fight ,flight or freeze" response. Be aware of any patterns or triggers. Flight or flight can be a sign of the anger emotion. This response is our bodies letting us know that there is a danger. We can stay and fight the danger or run away.

Being able to spot the signs of anger early can help your child understand what they are feeling. Talk about what your child feels when they start to get angry. For example, they may notice that:

- Their heart beats faster.
- Their muscles tense.
- Their teeth clench.
- They clench their fists.
- Their stomach churns.
- They feel hot.
- They want to hit or kick.
- They shout or swear.

## Let It out

Helping your child find safe ways to let out anger can be good for all the family. Giving your child a space where they can go if they are feeling angry can also make them feel more secure.

### **Safe ways for your child to let their anger out:**

- Listening to or playing music
- Writing down or drawing how they are feeling
- Hitting or punching a cushion or pillow
- Counting to 10 slowly
- Exercise such as kicking a football or jumping on a trampoline
- Tearing up an old newspaper or magazine
- Scribbling with a marker pen.

## Ideas For Calming Down

The videos below explain what your child can do to calm intense fear or anger so they can make better decisions, and how they can create a space between a situation occurring and their reaction to it.

# Shelf Help Books

Books about mental health for 13 to 18 year olds, with advice and information about issues like anxiety, stress and OCD, bullying and exams.

All Shelf Help books can be reserved for free from any Norfolk library, or [online \(https://norfolk.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/ENQ/HEALTHY/BIBENQ?QRY=SVL\(SHELFHELP\)&SORTS=DTE.DATE1.DESC%5DHBT.SOVR&QRYTEXT=Shelf%20Help&ISGLB=0\)](https://norfolk.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/ENQ/HEALTHY/BIBENQ?QRY=SVL(SHELFHELP)&SORTS=DTE.DATE1.DESC%5DHBT.SOVR&QRYTEXT=Shelf%20Help&ISGLB=0). The books are available to borrow for up to six weeks.

## Suggestions:

- **Feeling Angry!** by Katie Douglass.
- **Mindful Me: Exploring Emotions: A Mindfulness Guide to Dealing With Emotions** by Paul Christelis and Elisa Paganell.

# Health Uncovered Podcast

Health Uncovered is a series of podcasts that aims to get young people in-tune with their health and wellbeing. The series is hosted by BBC Radio One presenter Cel Spellman and features young people and health professionals from our Norfolk Healthy Child Programme.

Life isn't always easy - and young people across the country have been helping us explore the issues that they're facing today. From online bullying to sexual health, body image to mental health. They've been asking the questions you want to hear answered, joined by the health professionals that help young people, like school nurses and mental health specialists, to provide solutions, support and understanding.

S1/E1 Sexual health, STIs

00:00 - 24:35



- i **S1/E1 Sexual health, STIs**
- i S1/E2 Bullying, how it feels
- i S1/E3 Mental health, me and my emotions
- i S1/E4 Sexual health, are you ready?
- i S1/E5 Mental health, are you OK?
- i S1/E6 Grooming, could it happen to me?
- i S1/E7 Mental health, taking control



## Also in this section...

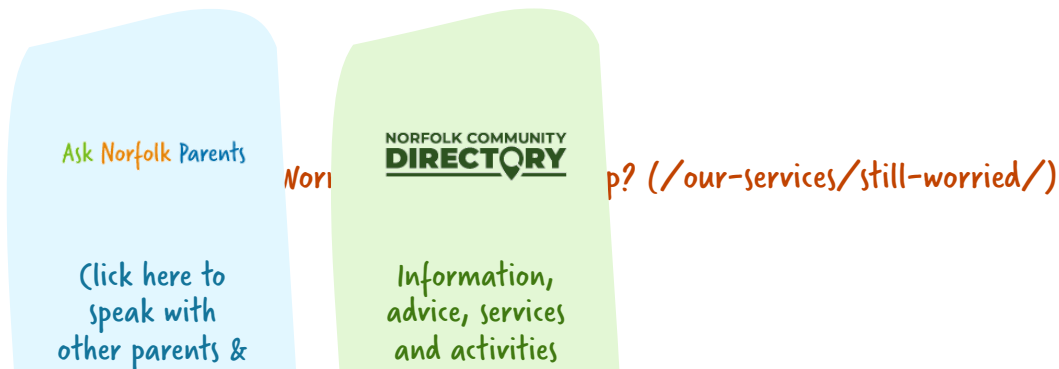
|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Anger                                      | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/anger/)                           |
| Anti Bullying                              | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/anti-bullying/)                   |
| Bereavement                                | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/bereavement/)                     |
| Building Resilience                        | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/building-resilience/)             |
| Eating Disorders                           | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/eating-disorders/)                |
| LGBTQ                                      | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/lgbtq/)                           |
| Low Mood                                   | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/low-mood/)                        |
| Managing Feelings                          | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/managing-feelings/)               |
| Mindfulness                                | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/mindfulness/)                     |
| Self Confidence and Self-Esteem            | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/self-confidence-and-self-esteem/) |
| Self-Harm                                  | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/self-harm/)                       |
| Top Tips for Young People                  | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/top-tips-for-young-people/)       |
| Trauma                                     | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/trauma/)                          |
| Worries & Anxiety                          | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/worries-anxiety/)                 |
| Children & Young People's Emotional Health | → | (/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/)                                 |
| Emotional Health                           | → | (/emotional-health/)  |

**and safe** way to receive online counselling, advice and emotional well-being support.

**Childline** (<https://www.childline.org.uk/>) - Children and young people under 19 can call 0800 1111 for free support.

**Emotional Health Activities** (</emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-Young Minds Parents Helpline>) (<https://www.healthyminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/>) - Call 0808 802 5544 for free Mon-Fri from 9.30am to 4pm.

To speak to other Norfolk parents and carers, you can join our online community forum below.  
**Supporting Children's Mental Health - online Session** (</emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/supporting-children-s-mental-health/>)



## Need More Information

Young Minds - Anger Advice

→ (<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/anger/>)

NHS Choices Dealing With Angry Child

→ (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-with-anger-issues/>)

Young Minds - Looking After Yourself

→ (<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/find-help/looking-after-my-mental-health/>)

Every Mind Matters - Self-Care Videos for Young People

→ (<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/youth-mental-health/>)

# Other Useful Pages



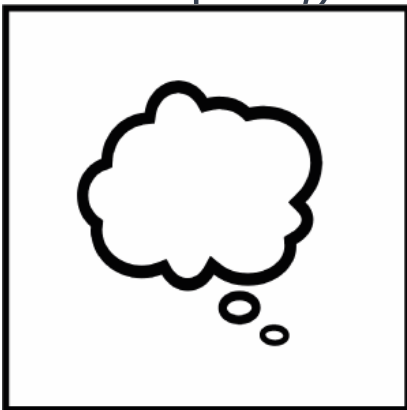
Understanding Child Development

(/child-development-additional-needs/supporting-development/understanding-child-development/)



Teenage Brain

(/child-development-additional-needs/supporting-development/teenage-brain/)



Understanding Your Child's Behaviour

(/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/understanding-your-child-s-behaviour/)



Worries & Anxiety

(/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/worries-anxiety/)

# Log In / Create An Account

Log In

Create Account

Email address

Password

[Forgot password? \(/reset-password/\)](/reset-password/).

Log In

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy \(https://policies.google.com/privacy\)](https://policies.google.com/privacy) and [Terms of Service \(https://policies.google.com/terms\)](https://policies.google.com/terms) apply.

## Was This Page Helpful?



Yes



Somewhat



No

Submit

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy \(https://policies.google.com/privacy\)](https://policies.google.com/privacy) and [Terms of Service \(https://policies.google.com/terms\)](https://policies.google.com/terms) apply.

## Latest from social media



<https://www.facebook>



<https://www.instagram>



<https://twitter.com/nor>

[com/NorfolkCYP/](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/anger/)

[.com/norfolkcyp/](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/anger/)

[folkcyp](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional-health/children-young-people-s-emotional-health/anger/)



Just One Norfolk has been created by Norfolk & Waveney Children & Young People's Services which is provided by Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust. This service is commissioned by Norfolk County Council.

[\(L\)](#)

©2023 Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust, All Rights Reserved.