

The Window of Tolerance

HYPER-AROUSAL
This means feeling too much. It can be a fight or flight response. You may feel anxious & panicked, angry, out of control, impulsive, overwhelmed

DYSREGULATION
Discomfort from being outside your window of tolerance. You may feel agitated, irritable, frustrated, stressed, nervous, uncomfortable

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE
EXPAND YOUR WINDOW: calming and grounding techniques, enjoyable activities, self-care, positive self talk, social supports
Feeling safe, calm and in-control
WINDOW WILL NARROW WITH: poor sleep, stress, trauma, isolation, unmanaged mental illness, not looking after yourself

DYSREGULATION
Discomfort from being outside the window of tolerance. You may feel depressed, low, slow, zoned out.

HYPO-AROUSAL
A freeze response and feel too little. You may feel empty, isolated, withdrawn, detached or dissociated.



Scan Me
For more information on the window of tolerance

Fight, Flight & Freeze Response

Our brains can make mistakes and think that everyday things, like school, tests and seeing friends, need an emotional response!



Fight

Feeling hot
Agitated
Easily annoyed / angry
Lashing out verbally & physically



Flight

Hot
Agitated
Wanting to leave
Needing a release
Feeling like running away



Freeze

Wanting to hide
Stuck / frozen
Dizzy / dreamy
Losing your words

Co-regulation

When supporting your child to regulate their emotions, it is helpful to be aware of:

- Your own emotions
- Your reaction to these emotions
- How your emotions may affect your child's emotions and behaviour.



Younger children will need your support to regulate their emotions. Children observe and imitate their carers thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

(Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; Parke, 1994; McLaughlin et al., 2015)



The 3 R's of Emotional regulation

Regulate:

First we need to bring our child down from their fight, flight and freeze response.



Relate:

We need to relate and connect with the child through an attuned and sensitive relationship. It is important that our children know we understand how they feel.



Reason:

This is when we can encourage our children to reflect and learn about their emotions and behaviour. If consequences need to be put in place then this is the time to do it.



Name it to Tame it!

Studies show that naming emotions reduced the effect that emotion has on the body, which helps to regulate it. Sometimes children may struggle to name the emotion themselves. We can help them by naming it for them!

"It sounds like you might be feeling angry"

"I imagine you're feeling annoyed?"

"I wonder if you're worried?"

"I can see that it might be making you feel frustrated."

Check in

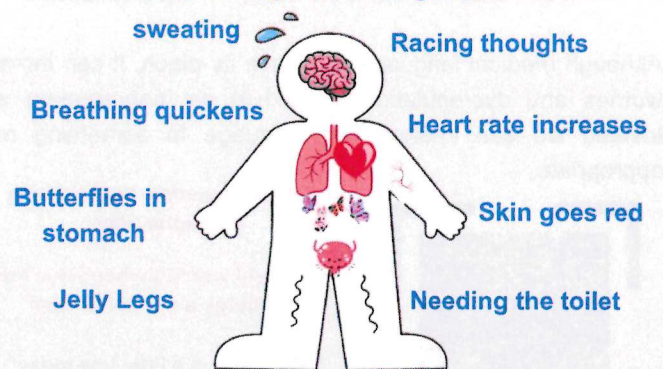
Create opportunities to check in with your child and how they are feeling. Don't forget to discuss how you are feeling too. Using visuals like below can help to develop their emotional literacy.

Blue Zone	Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Red Zone
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of some control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/ Hitting Disgusted Out of Control

This practice not only helps children to understand and manage their emotions but also strengthens their relationships with others and their ability to navigate life's challenges.

Body Mapping

Emotions have an effect on our body. Noticing these sensations can be the first step to emotional regulation, to help prevent these feelings from taking over.



What physical sensations does your child feel?

Use WINE

Using WINE is a conversation method that you can use to help develop your child's emotional literacy and relate to them when they are feeling big emotions.

- W** - "I wonder if you are feeling worried about your first day back in school"
- I** - "I imagine that you have been feeling sick and having negative thoughts; this is natural"
- N** - "I noticed you became upset this morning!"
- E** - "I can see this is really tricky for you and you are trying really hard"



Using Medical Language



Sometimes we use medical language to describe normal, everyday emotions:

"I'm Bi-Polar" **"I'm a bit OCD"** **"I'm Depressed"**

Although medical language can have its place. It can increase worries and dysregulation if used in an inappropriate way. Instead we can change our language to something more appropriate.



"I'm feeling some really strong emotions today"

"I feel worried when I don't do things a particular way"

"My mood is a little low today"

Scan Me NHS website for Sensory Regulation support

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique to help your child to relax by focusing on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group in their body.

Progressive muscle relaxation



Breathing as a tool



As part of the physiological stress response, the heart races to get oxygen to the body which triggers shallow, upper chest breathing. Controlled breathing is good step to calm the nervous system.



Practice, practice, practice.

Belly breathing

This technique involves pushing the belly out while inhaling (nose; for adults, 7 seconds) Then, pulling the belly in while exhaling (mouth; for adults, 11 seconds) Two minutes of belly breathing can calm the body. (Porges, 2011)



Coping Strategies

Music

Worry Time

Cold shower

Cold drink

Let it out

Talk to a key adult

Hard/crunchy food

Tearing paper

Gentle exercise

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

- 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE
- 4 THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH
- 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR
- 2 THINGS YOU CAN TASTE
- 1 THING YOU CAN FEEL

Top Tips

- Don't take it personally.
- Try to remain calm.
- Be assertive, but try to model handling angry feelings without being aggressive.
- Defuse the situation by offering limited choices; try giving them some control.
- Move to a private place, but consider risks of being alone with an angry person.
- Enforce sanctions and consequences consistently.
- Try to be clear about how you expect them to behave.
- A second-chance opportunity should always be available.
- It's important to provide as many opportunities as possible for anger to be heard and acknowledged.
- Plan ahead – identify together what strategies help your child to calm down before a meltdown or outburst.



School In-reach Feedback 2025-2026



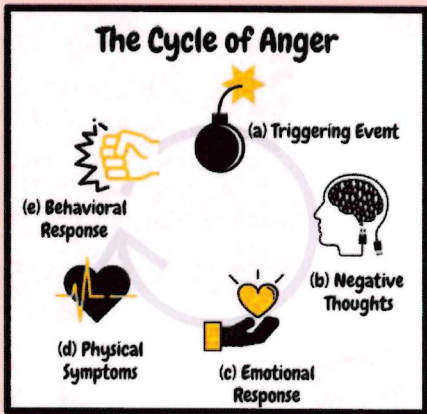
Managing Big Emotions Top Tips for Parents/ Carers



What is Anger?

Anger is an intense emotional state which involves a strong uncomfortable and uncooperative response. Although it's healthy to experience anger, it's important that we are able to respond appropriately in the way in which we behave.

The Cycle of Anger

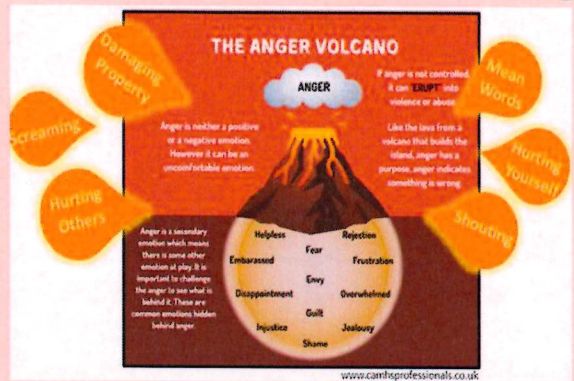


Using the anger cycle with your child could help them to better understand their feelings of anger and where the anger has stemmed from. It can support them in understanding the way in which anger often grows from irrational thoughts, and leads to a difficult to break cycle of growing frustration.



If you continue to have significant concerns about your child, please don't hesitate to seek further advice from your GP or contact SPOA team on 01639 862744

Communicating a Need



Think of anger like a volcano. Deep under its surface there is reservoir of molten rock which is the source of its eruptions. Similarly, when we're angry, there are other emotions hidden beneath the surface and if not controlled can erupt into violence and abuse.

What might make them go BANG?

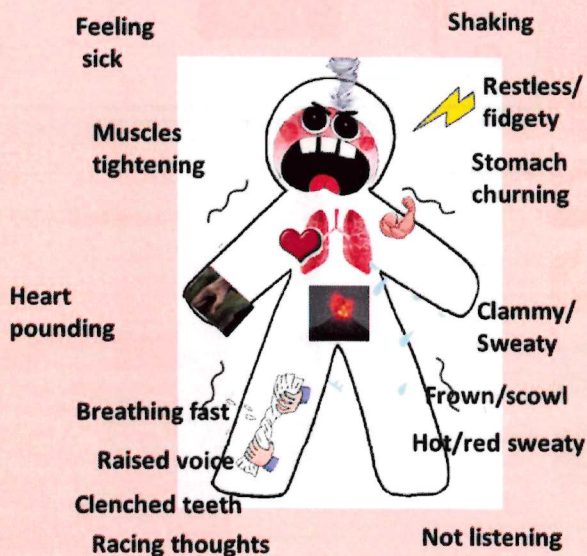
Did they have a disagreement with friends?
Are they feeling that something is unfair?



Consider ...
Are they finding something difficult?
Are they worried about something?

Signs of Anger

It is often common for young children to recognise the early signs of anger. Using a body map like above, and helping children to name and identify the physical signs of anger, can help them to manage their big emotions.



Calming Strategies



Breathing Exercises



Guided Meditation



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Grounding Technique





It's OK to feel angry

We are not here to stop children feeling angry.

We should never discourage anger or associate anger with shame or being 'in trouble'. What we do when we are angry is what we can be held accountable for.

So, remind your child its ok to be angry but you must release it safely by following these rules:


ANGER RULES

IT IS OK TO GET MAD, BUT...

Don't Hurt Others!

Don't Hurt Yourself!

Don't Destroy Property!



Visualisation



Letting it Out!



Squeezing playdough or a fidget

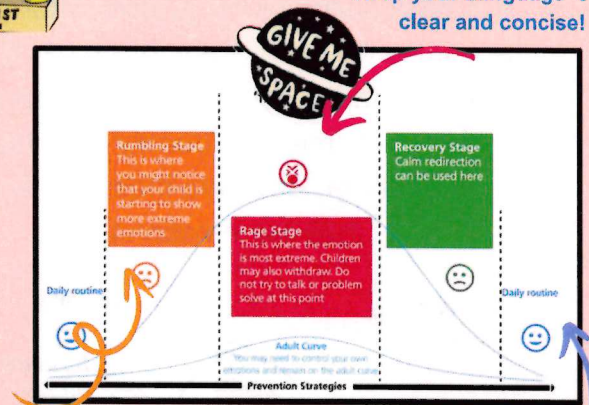


ripping scrap paper



The Anger Curve

Keep your Language calm, clear and concise!



<https://camhs.rdash.nhs.uk>

- P Playfulness**
• Playfulness in interactions can diffuse conflict and promote connection.
• It's maintaining a sense of humor and not seeing everything as a joke (though humor can be done carefully).
- A Acceptance**
• Accepting needs and emotions that drive behavior (not necessarily the behavior) without judgement.
- C Curiosity**
• Being curious to learn a behavior has come from (a gut ache or not being).
- E Empathy**
• Really connecting with how they are feeling and showing compassion.

Reflection

It takes at least 20 minutes for a child to fully calm down. Once the time is appropriate give them the opportunity to reflect on what happened using the following type of questioning.

- What could you have done instead?
- How do you think that made me/other person feel?
- What could you do next time this happens/you feel this way?
- Is there anything you wish to say about it?
- What do you want me to know/do?

PACE is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes aimed at supporting recovery from developmental trauma. However, it can be a useful attitude to adopt with anyone who is emotionally dysregulated.

Emotionally Open Home



Emotion check ins - Feelings chart on the fridge or asking “how was your day?”

Normalise all feelings.

Good sleeping & eating routines.

Model how to emotionally regulate.

Talk through thoughts and feelings.



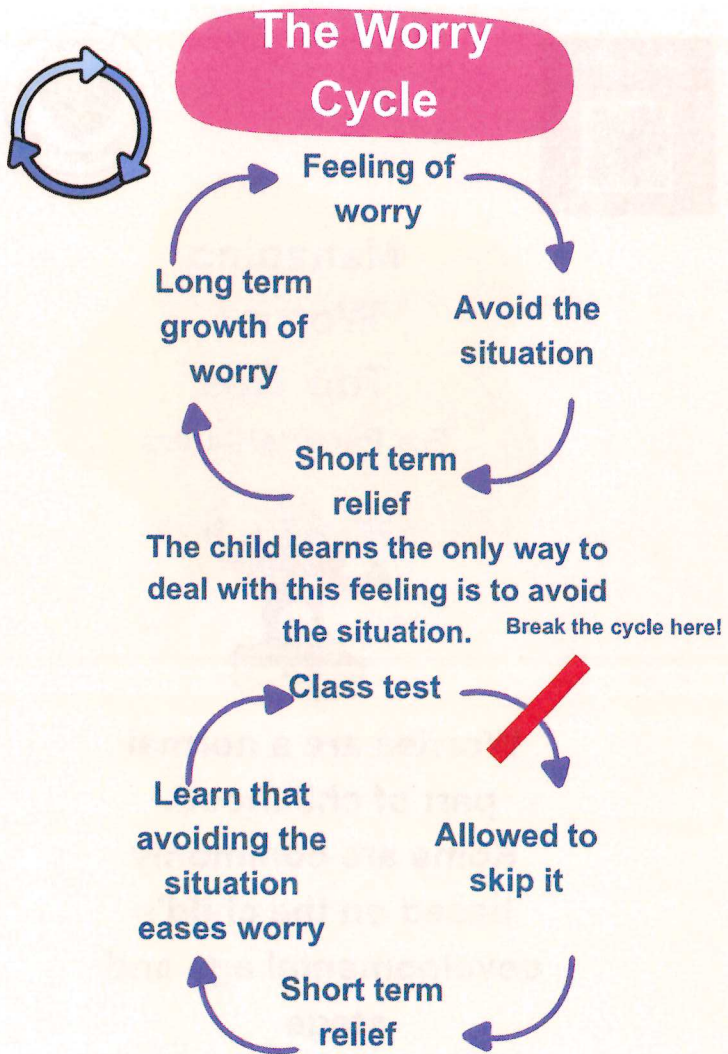
If a worry is prolonged and impacting on a child's daily functioning, that is when further support should be sought.



Managing Worries Top Tips For Parents/Carers



Worries are a normal part of childhood. Some are commonly based on the child's developmental age and stage.



Negative Thinking Patterns

Thinking traps give power to our uncomfortable emotions, like worry. If we can recognise them, we can start to challenge them.

Below are a few examples:



Mistaking thoughts as facts.

Predicting - Thinking that you already know will happen.



Blaming other people or circumstances.

Mind reading - Believing you know what someone else thinks.



All or nothing - Seeing only one side or one point of view.

Challenging Negative Thoughts



Firstly, identify the negative thought. Then challenge it:

Is it helpful?



Is there another way to see this?

What evidence is there?

How might someone else see this?

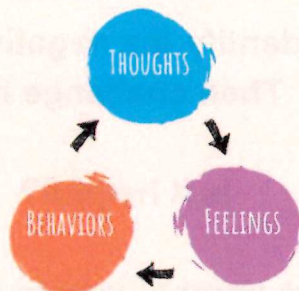
What advice would you give a friend in this position?

Is this fact or opinion?

The power of thoughts

We are shaped by our thoughts;
we become what we think.

THINK
POSITIVE



THINK
POSITIVE

Here are some questions that could
be used to challenge negative
thoughts...

What evidence is there? Is this helpful?

How would someone else see this?

What advice would you give to your friend?

Is this fact or opinion?



Become aware of negative
thinking patterns.

 Negative Thinking Patterns	 Catastrophizing Thinking the absolute worst	 Blaming Blaming other people or circumstances
 Procrastinating Thinking that you already know what is going to happen	 All or Nothing Seeing things in black and white	 Over Generalizing Thinking that something is true in every context
 Mentalizing Thinking that thoughts are facts	 Mind Reading Believing that you know what someone else is thinking	 Spinning Fixating on one negative thought to avoid your mind leading to more negative thoughts

Solution-focused Approach

Focus on the *how* as opposed to the *why*.

The task of solving problems is approached by seeking to move towards **what is wanted** instead of trying to **move away from an unwanted problem**.

As adults, we can support our CYP to be solution-focused through our means of communication and questions we pose, this scaffolds the way they approach challenges.

Positive Self-talk - Be kind to yourself!

Adults modelling **kind self-talk** on themselves and using **positive language** on CYP has a positive impact on their levels of positivity.

Parents who use more **positive emotional language** have CYP with higher levels of positivity and self-esteem.



Positive self-talk



Finding the Positives

Practical ways to increase positivity, in everyday life.

Help your children to scaffold ways of identifying areas of change and focus on changing the narrative - see what *is* working as opposed to what is not working.

Being **open to humour**, especially during difficult times, increases the ability to demonstrate positivity. Helping our children to identify opportunities to smile and laugh can increase their positivity.

Studies suggest that the following aspects suggest a positive mindset - **life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism.**

(Caprara and Steca, 2005)

Positive Affirmations

A simple way to encourage a *positive mindset*.

Children are like sponges, soaking up the messages they receive from those around them.

Positive affirmations are short, simple phrases that grown ups can tell their children and children can repeat to themselves regularly.

Affirmations will help to counteract negative and promote positive self-talk.



Encourage your child to use positive self-talk with these activities



Self-esteem & Resilience Top Tips

For Parents/Carers



Children with good self-esteem are more likely to:

Have a growth mind-set

Take on new challenges

Cope and learn from mistakes

Stand up for themselves

Try and solve problems on their own

Ask for help when they need it

Make friends easily

Cope with change

Feel pride



Rings of Resilience



Problem solving

I am hearing they were mean to you. What could you say to them tomorrow?

You found that test/exam tough, how might you feel if you don't get the results you want? What could we do next time?

If that happens again tomorrow, what could you do?

Its ok to fail

- Let your child know you don't expect them to be perfect and it doesn't matter if they make mistakes
- Avoid bringing up past mistakes
- Praise your child for admitting to a mistake
- Encourage them to take responsibility for their mistakes and not to blame others
- Ensure they apologise if their mistake has hurt others
- Talk to them about the times you made mistake and how you learned from them
- Encourage their problem-solving skills when they've made a mistake, rather than doing it for them

Resilience

It is likely that your child will face many challenges throughout their childhood and, of course, as an adult too.

Equipping children with the tools needed to face big emotions and how to manage them, rather than thinking they will never have these feelings again.

See the Positives

I can see that you're sad about not getting an award today. Let's be happy for Tom who won it and hope you get it next time!

It's disappointing that we can't go out because of the rain, isn't it? Let's do some colouring together instead – maybe it will stop later!

Responsibilities

Show children that you trust them and that you believe they are capable.

Give them the responsibility of walking the dog, getting dinner ready or putting the bins out



Affirmations

I am so proud of you for trying something new, you are so brave

Excellent work in school today, you are really focused

Thank you for laying the table, you are so helpful

Thank you for laying the table, you are so helpful

Well done for sharing, you are so kind



How your parents spoke to you became your inner voice.

How you speak to your children, becomes their inner voice. →



Praise

Praise the process not the outcome

Praise your child for working hard on a project or studying for a test. Comment on their concentration or perseverance on a certain task.

Praise specifically

"I love how detailed your drawing is," rather than, "I like your drawing."

Praise sincerely

Children can tell when praise is insincere. If they think you feel sorry for them or are trying to manipulate them in any way, it will make the praise totally ineffective.

Praise sparingly

Too much praise can have a negative effect. They may think your attention and love is conditional on their achievement. They can also become afraid of losing that approval therefore, will not challenge themselves in case they fail.

Calming Toolbox



Routine
mindfulness

breathing techniques

gradual muscle relaxation

grounding techniques



Feedback

Thank you for attending the programme, we would really like to hear what you thought about it

School In-reach Feedback 2024 - 2025



Thank you!

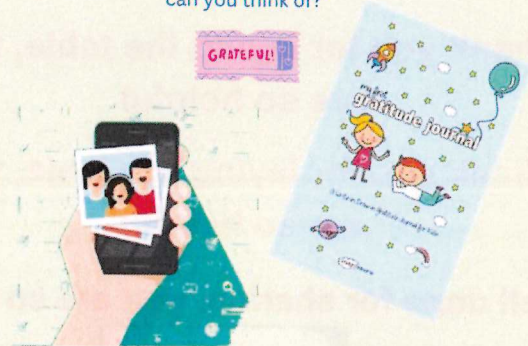
THANK YOU

Gratitude



Practice Gratitude

Tell someone, write it down in a journal, make a paper chain, take photos on your phone...what else can you think of?



APPRECIATE YOU

