



## 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.
- Anxious youth can respond to feeling out of control or being pushed with a “fight” response that looks a lot like an anger management problem. If you suspect this, talk with the teen about the 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 become habit.
- 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 our Creator to help us manage our anger well.



## RECOGNIZE

- Anger is a normal human response but it becomes a problem when a teen has trouble controlling it, causing them to say or do things they regret.
- Problem anger shows itself in many ways. Some things to watch for are:
  - Explosive responses to situations that seem out of proportion to the event
  - A limited emotional repertoire with poor emotional regulation
  - Negative assumptions about others’ behaviours/thoughts toward them
  - Periods of rage or silence & withdrawal in response to disappointment
  - Over-generalizations (using ‘always’ or ‘never’)
  - Obsessively playing violent video games, watching violent movies, or visiting websites that promote or glorify violence
- If anger is becoming a problem, some of the things the teen may feel are:
  - Chronic irritability and frustration
  - Feelings of being constrained; a deep sense of the “unfairness” of life
  - Irritability, frustration, stress, feeling overwhelmed
  - Insomnia, weakened immune system/frequent sickness
  - Depression and the urge to self harm (anger turned inward)



# ANGER



## RESPOND

- **Teach them to step away.** Invite the teen to explore 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 they can make to take charge of it.
- **Encourage reflection.** A big part of being able to resolve feelings is recognizing what is going on. When their emotion has calmed, guide them to 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 our interpretation of events, or our beliefs about how things should be. When the anger has cooled, invite them to share their interpretation of the situation that triggered them. Then brainstorm other possible interpretations of what happened. Talk about how things can look and feel differently depending on the meaning we put on them.

• **Encourage new language.** Owning emotions and the impact of them means changing our language. Invite them to consider changing their words to: “*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.

• **Suggest 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.

• **Teach coping skills.** Deep breathing, exercise, muscle relaxation and distraction can all slow down the reactive response and make space for emotional regulation. Help them create helpful new habits for coping to overshadow the old ones.



## RESOURCES

For links to further resources, tools, and info for this topic, scan the QR code or visit [resourcesjsl.org](http://resourcesjsl.org)

