

Managing Conflict & Making It a Teachable Moment ... Keeping your cool

(and how to help your kids keep theirs)



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Reflection...

- ▶ We know that conflict is inevitable...
How do you deal with it?
- ▶ How did your parents/caregivers deal with anger?
- ▶ How do you handle anger?
- ▶ How do your children deal with anger?
- ▶ Any similarities?



Know yourself...

Anger triggers

- ▶ Triggers are personal (historical)
- ▶ May be different for different children/adults
- ▶ May vary by day (or hour)



Your triggers... and what you do

- ▶ How do you know you're angry?
- ▶ How do you know when your kids are angry?
- ▶ What do you do to keep your cool?
- ▶ How are your responses affected by what was modeled for you growing up?



Why Do We Lose Control of Our
Emotions... How We Get Angry...

What Happens in Our



How do we define anger?

acrimony

animosity

annoyance

antagonism

displeasure

enmity

exasperation

fury

hatred

impatience

indignation

ire

irritation

outrage

passion

rage

resentment

temper

violence

chagrin

choler

connoption

dander

disapprobation

distemper

gall

huff

infuriation

irascibility

irritability

miff

peevishness

petulance

pique

rankling

soreness

stew

storm

tantrum

tiff

umbrage

vexation

blow up

cat fit

hissy fit

ill humor

ill temper

mad

slow burn



How do we define anger in our family?

Reflection...

- ▶ What words do we use in our family?
- ▶ How do we teach anger to our children?
- ▶ What about developmentally normal frustration?

Let's look at an example...



Feelings Thermometer... for the child

► My behaviors:

Yelling

Stomping feet

Throwing things

Clenched hands



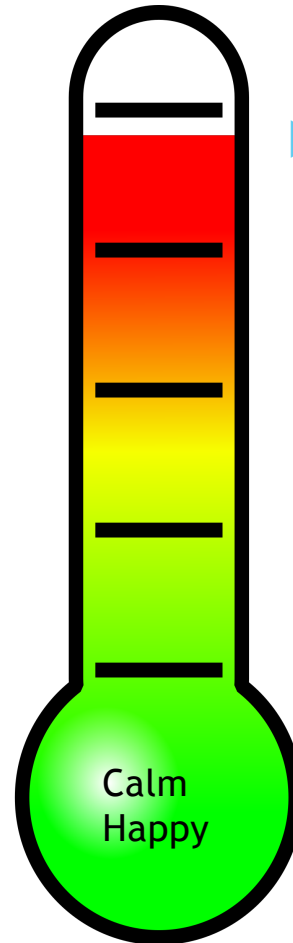
► How I feel:

Feel like crying

Tummy feels sick

Face feels hot

Breathing fast



► What I can do:

- Pizza breathing
- Get a hug from someone I trust
- Squeeze a stuffed animal
 - Count to 10
 - Do jumping jacks
- Splash cold water on my face
 - Run around outside

Feelings Thermometer... For the adult

Recognize your anger (behaviors/feelings)

- ▶ Tense muscles
- ▶ Clenched jaw
- ▶ Fast breathing
- ▶ Clumsiness
- ▶ Upset stomach
- ▶ Raised voice



Emotional

Use techniques to calm down

- ▶ Stop what you are doing
- ▶ Count to 10
- ▶ Get away from the situation (if safe)
- ▶ Vent in a safe place
- ▶ Do something physical
- ▶ Call a crisis line if needed

If you don't let it out...

Growing up, you may have been taught that it's wrong to be angry. Holding it in may:

- ▶ Make you feel worse
- ▶ Delay (not prevent) an outburst
- ▶ You may turn it on someone else causing further conflicts



Adapted from Resolving Family Conflict, Channing Bette



What can happen when anger is not controlled & expressed in a healthy way:

- ▶ Inability to assess one's own feelings
- ▶ Often ignites conflicts and disagreements
- ▶ Continually defensive in social situations
- ▶ Frequent ill feelings toward peers
- ▶ Alcohol or drugs are the chosen anger relief method on a regular basis
- ▶ Other self destructive behavior
- ▶ Rapid loss of temper
- ▶ Feared rather than respected by others
- ▶ Reliance on cursing and blaming in verbal language
- ▶ Trouble with the law
- ▶ Holding on to grudges
- ▶ Severe rage is sparked by “the little things”
- ▶ Inability to sleep well
- ▶ Tendency to spout backhanded compliments
- ▶ Makes hurtful “jokes”
- ▶ Known for yelling and high pitched tone



Adapted from
<http://www.centerforworklife.com/hulk-syndrome/>



Controlling anger, Expressing anger and resolving the conflict:

STARR

- ▶ Stop

Emotional



- ▶ Think about what could happen if you lose control
- ▶ Ask yourself what you want to happen here
- ▶ Reduce the anger
- ▶ Reward yourself

FEWW

- ▶ Tell the person how you Feel
- ▶ Identify the specific Event that produced the feeling
- ▶ Explain Why that specific event produced that feeling
- ▶ Explore What the options are and make a plan to solve the problem



Adapted from Guiding Good Choices, Channing Bette



Use VALIDATION to coach your child in their own struggle

- ▶ Validation communicates to others that their thoughts, feelings, opinions, experiences, etc make sense and that we ***get them***.
- ▶ Validation does ***not*** mean you agree with the other person's stance, but shows that you understand where they're coming from.
- ▶ Validation can deescalate situations and improve relationships.
- ▶ We can validate feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in ourselves and others.
- ▶ HOW?
 - ▶ Actively listen
 - ▶ Be mindful of your verbal and nonverbal reactions
 - ▶ Observe the other person and describe what emotions you observe
 - ▶ Show tolerance - how might their feelings make sense? Try to put yourself in their shoes.
 - ▶ Respond in a way that shows you are taking them seriously - offer a tissue, give a hug, or ask "what do you need right now?"



Adapted from Rathus & Miller, 2015



Teaching “time out”

- ▶ Use mindfulness glitter jars
- ▶ Teach by example - you can give yourself a time out
- ▶ Take a deep breath
- ▶ Identify emotions
- ▶ Watching thoughts
 - ▶ Clouds
 - ▶ Leaves floating downstream
 - ▶ A train in the distance



Solve conflicts (last step in FEWW)

- ▶ Identify the specific conflict to be solved - ONE issue to talk about (example: toys are not picked up in room vs. general messiness)
- ▶ Brainstorm solutions; all ideas are welcome
- ▶ Work out pros and cons
- ▶ Choose one solution that both sides can live with (room must be cleaned before company comes, other times parent will tolerate door being kept closed)
- ▶ Agree to try it: make a contract, including length of time and consequences; set a date to review progress



Adapted from Resolving Family Conflict, Channing Bette



Benefits of conflict

- ▶ Helps children/teens learn to negotiate and compromise
- ▶ Helps family members learn to listen, understand, and respect one another
- ▶ Can bring awareness to a problem
- ▶ Creates opportunity to grow
- ▶ Challenges old assumptions
- ▶ Helps build life long relationship skills



What's next?



- ▶ Practice, practice, practice!
- ▶ Help your kids make a feelings thermometer (or make one for yourself!)
- ▶ Make a mindfulness glitter jar
- ▶ Make a cope ahead plan
- ▶ Model coping responses
- ▶ Ask for help when you need it



Additional Resources:

- Spenj.org
- Parenting Facebook group

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**THANK
YOU**

