

# HOW TO EXPRESS ANGER (WITHOUT HURTING YOURSELF OR OTHERS)

## 1. It's OK to get angry.

- ✓ Anger is how people react to an insult, pain, rejection or frustration.
- ✓ Anger can help you stand up for yourself in an unfair situation.
- ✓ But anger can cause problems if you don't know how to express it appropriately.

## 2. Take time to cool off.

- ✓ If you act on anger when you're so mad you can't think, you may do something you'll later regret.
- ✓ Take a deep breath or take a walk to help you calm down.

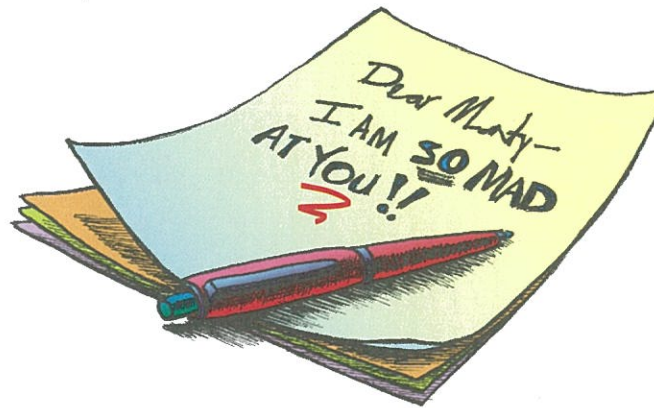
## 3. Think about why you're angry.

- ✓ What happened? What's the best thing you can do now?
  - ✓ Can you talk to the person you're angry with? Talk it over with someone else? Do something to change the situation?

*Afraid you'll lose your temper?  
Take time to cool off.*

## 4. Talk to the person directly (when it's safe).

- ✓ Use "I" statements. Saying, "I am angry because you left a mess in my room," works better than saying, "You're a slob."
- ✓ Be ready to listen to the other person's feelings. He or she may be angry too.
- ✓ If you can talk about the problem, you may be able to find a solution that works for both of you.



*You can express anger by talking about it or writing it down.*

## 5. When you can't express your anger directly...

- ✓ Sometimes talking to the person directly will cause a hurtful or dangerous situation.
- ✓ Or, you may feel angry at something (like racism or not having enough money) rather than at a person.
- ✓ When you can't express it directly, talk about your feelings with a friend. Or, write your feelings down.

## 6. Take action to feel better.

- ✓ If you still feel angry after expressing your feelings, try a distraction. Exercise, watch a funny movie or go dancing.
- ✓ Or, put your anger to work. A student who has been harassed at school, for example, might work on a crisis line to help others who are being mistreated.



*Exercise can help you work out angry feelings.*

## 7. Don't express anger with violence.

- ✓ Control violent reactions (such as wanting to hit someone).
- ✓ Violence won't help. In fact, it will make things worse.
- ✓ You may hurt someone else or yourself.

## 8. Keep yourself safe.

- ✓ If you are angry with someone because he or she is hurting you, take steps to keep yourself safe.
- ✓ Don't confront a person who may hit or otherwise hurt you.
- ✓ Get help immediately if you are in danger.

## 9. Don't use alcohol or other drugs to deal with anger.

- ✓ Using alcohol or other drugs may make you feel even angrier.
- ✓ When you're drunk or high, your anger may turn into violence.
- ✓ Watch for other signs of anger being turned inward – like feeling depressed, hurting yourself, eating too much or starving yourself.



*If you feel angry all the time, get help!*

## 10. If anger gets to be too much...

- ✓ Do you sometimes feel so mad you think you might explode? Do you feel like hurting yourself or someone else? If so, get help now.
- ✓ Talk about your feelings with a trusted friend, family member, counselor or health care provider.

(Look at the back of this pamphlet for suggestions on where to get help.)

## Sometimes anger can turn into violence.

- If you are afraid of hurting yourself or someone else (or if someone is hurting you), get help right away.
- To find hotlines and resources, look online or in the yellow pages of your local phone book under "crisis intervention" or "suicide prevention."

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Special thanks to our reviewers from the Sacramento Unified School District, the Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District and the Racine Council on AODA.

2015 Revised and updated.

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Please do not duplicate. Printed on recycled paper.

Title #5160 (Rev. 1/15) ISBN 978-1-56885-160-0

For ordering information contact:

**JOURNEYWORKS PUBLISHING**

P.O. Box 8466 • Santa Cruz • CA 95061  
800 • 775 • 1998 [www.journeyworks.com](http://www.journeyworks.com)