

Teenage Anger

Anger can't be defined in one simple sentence. It is a complex blend of physical responses and feelings. If asked to describe anger it might be easier to talk about what we believe it is not. It is not nice. It does not solve many problems. It is not about being happy and it does not feel good. As a result, we may consider anger to be something that is not desirable or socially acceptable and we try to avoid expressing the feeling.

Suppressed anger may be expressed in several negative and non-productive ways. The rebellious teenager is typically easy to spot. He/she may be failing most classes and does not appear to put in the effort necessary to receive passing grades. There might be various indications of defiance or law breaking behavior. On the other hand the most respectful teenager may be found internalizing their feelings, refusing to allow anyone to see how their feeling. Both teenagers struggle with anger; however, there are different behaviors displayed.

What do we do With Anger?

Consider that if the adolescent had a better way to express themselves or better cope with this situation, they would probably make a better choice. But in this moment, they are doing the best they can with what skills they have available to them. When we begin to understand that anger exists and it is a normal feeling, we can begin to develop strategies to talk openly about the anger.

1. Anger is a one of many human feelings and how we respond to the anger is what is important.
2. The process of voicing angry feelings should focus on the specific problem, avoiding personalizing statements.
3. Boundaries should be created allowing for healthy communication of feelings that are free from other's definition of how the teenager "should feel".
4. Give the teenager time and space to process angry feelings and develop healthy solutions to the problem in a supportive and non-judgmental environment.

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