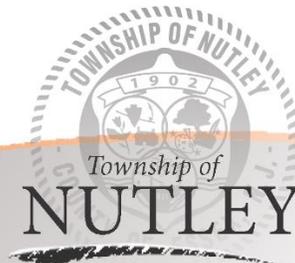




NEWSLETTER



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8 Ways to Teach Teens Anger Management Skills

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Whether your teen throws his smartphone against the wall when he's frustrated an app won't work, or he yells and swears when he doesn't get his way, lack of anger management skills can be a real problem.

Although anger is a normal, healthy emotion, it's important to learn how to express it in a socially appropriate manner. Teens who lack anger management skills may experience serious consequences as a result of angry outbursts.

While some teens lash out verbally, others may become physically aggressive. And if they don't learn how to manage their anger better, they'll have difficulty in relationships, in their careers, and throughout their educational endeavors.

Most teens can learn healthy anger management skills with appropriate teaching and coaching from parents. Show your teen how to deal with uncomfortable emotions, such as disappointment and frustration. Here are eight ways to teach teens anger management skills:

1. Establish Anger Rules for Your House

Every family has different expectations about how anger should be handled. Some families have very little tolerance for yelling while in other families, yelling is a normal means of communicating.

Create rules about what constitutes acceptable behavior and explain what behaviors will not be tolerated. Don't allow name calling, physical violence, or threats in your home.

Establish clear consequences for breaking the rules.

2. Discuss the Difference Between Anger and Aggression

Teach your teen the difference between angry feelings and aggressive behavior. Angry feelings are completely acceptable. Aggressive behavior, however, is not OK. Teach your teen that it is not appropriate to throw things, slam doors or break objects because he feels angry.

Teens need to know that aggressive behavior—even if it is only verbal aggression—can have serious ramifications. Making threatening comments over social media, for example, could lead to legal problems. Discuss the potential academic, social and legal consequences of aggressive and violent behavior.

3. Teach Assertiveness Skills

Teach your teen how to speak up for himself in an appropriate manner. Assertive teens can ask for what they want without demanding it.

Instead, they can express themselves in a socially appropriate manner without violating anyone else's rights. Coach your teen by teaching specific strategies that can help him learn how to behave assertively.

4. Teach Your Teen to Recognize Physical Warning Signs of Anger

When people begin to grow angry, there are physical warning signs. For example, someone may experience a rapid heartbeat and facial flushing as his emotions begin to take over. Teach your teen to recognize his own warning signs that he's growing angry.

Encourage him to take a break when he feels his anger beginning to increase. If he waits until he feels really angry, it will be more difficult to think clearly enough to remember to take a break to calm down.

5. Allow for Self Time-Outs

Avoid using time out as a punishment.

Instead, use it as a way to help your teen calm down and gain self-control.

Create time out rules. For example, agree that if anyone in the house is getting too angry to continue a discussion, you'll take a 15 minute break before continuing the conversation.

If your teen chooses to take a time out, don't follow him or insist on continuing the conversation while he's still upset. Instead, agree to revisit the conversation after a brief cool down period.

6. Teach Socially Acceptable Coping Skills

Teens need to know socially appropriate ways to deal with angry feelings. Teens who lack coping skills are more likely to become verbally or physically aggressive.

While drawing may help one teen calm down, while another teen may benefit from going for a walk when he's angry. Work with your teen on identifying specific coping strategies that help diffuse his anger.

7. Teach Problem-Solving Skills

Teach your teen the basics of problem-solving. If your teen understands there are many possible solutions to a problem, he's more likely to spend a few minutes examining his options rather than resorting to aggressive behavior. Problem-solving skills help teens identify the pros and the cons of potential solutions before taking action, which is an important anger management skill.

8. Role Model Appropriate Behavior

You'll teach your teen more about anger with your behavior than your words. If you yell, swear, and break things, don't expect your teen to control his anger. Role model appropriate ways to deal with angry feelings.

Show your child how to talk about angry feelings and how to express those feelings appropriately. For example, say, "I'm really angry that you didn't clean your room like I asked you to. I'm going to go take a break for a few minutes and then we're going to talk about your consequence." Show your teen strategies that he can use to deal with anger appropriately.

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