

Healthy Minds Lincolnshire

Exploring Anger

An information and education pack for young people

What is anger?

Anger is a normal reaction and emotion. It can be very helpful as it gives us motivation to make changes to something we feel is wrong or unfair. It can also lead us into problems. Anger is often a result of thinking that we have



been unfairly treated or disrespected, or that we or others have behaved outside of expectations, morals, or rules. Anger can be an immediate response to feeling threatened, and is often related to events in our past. Current situations can feel the same in our bodies, therefore triggering our angry response.

Thinking this way leads us to feel angry. Anger is the body's natural response to a perceived threat. When we are faced with danger our bodies release adrenaline into the bloodstream, increasing our heart rate and breathing. This then leads to blood and oxygen to be pumped around the body to our muscles which enables us to 'fight or flight'.

Have a look at the list below and tick which physical feelings apply to you when feeling angry:

- Feeling sick
- Breathing faster
- Heart beating faster
- Knotted stomach
- Hot and sweaty
- Headache
- Fists/Teeth Clenched

Something else (please state):



The Fight or Flight Response

Anger can be the body's way of responding to danger. When we feel like we are in danger, or we feel threatened, our body triggers the fight or flight response.

For example, if you were hiking in the woods and you came across a bear, there are three main things that your body would do:



Flight

Run away from the bear as fast as you can

Fight

Try to make yourself look big and scary, shout and fight the bear

Freeze

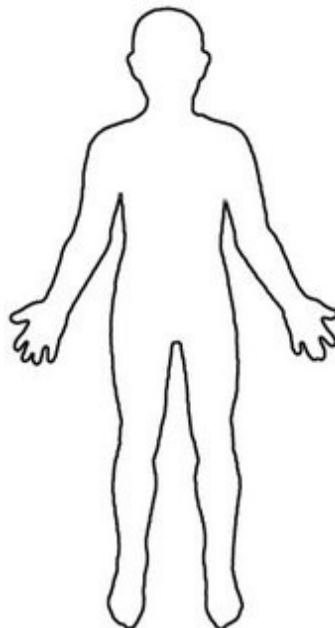
Become frozen to the spot with fear

We need this response to help our bodies react really quickly to threat. But the response can also be triggered when something feels threatening, but really isn't. For example, when someone questions or goes against our morals, breaks a rule, or when we are in an uncomfortable social situation. In these situations when we are not really in physical danger, it is usually our thoughts about the situation or our interpretation of it that sets off the fight or flight response.

Our Body's Alarm System

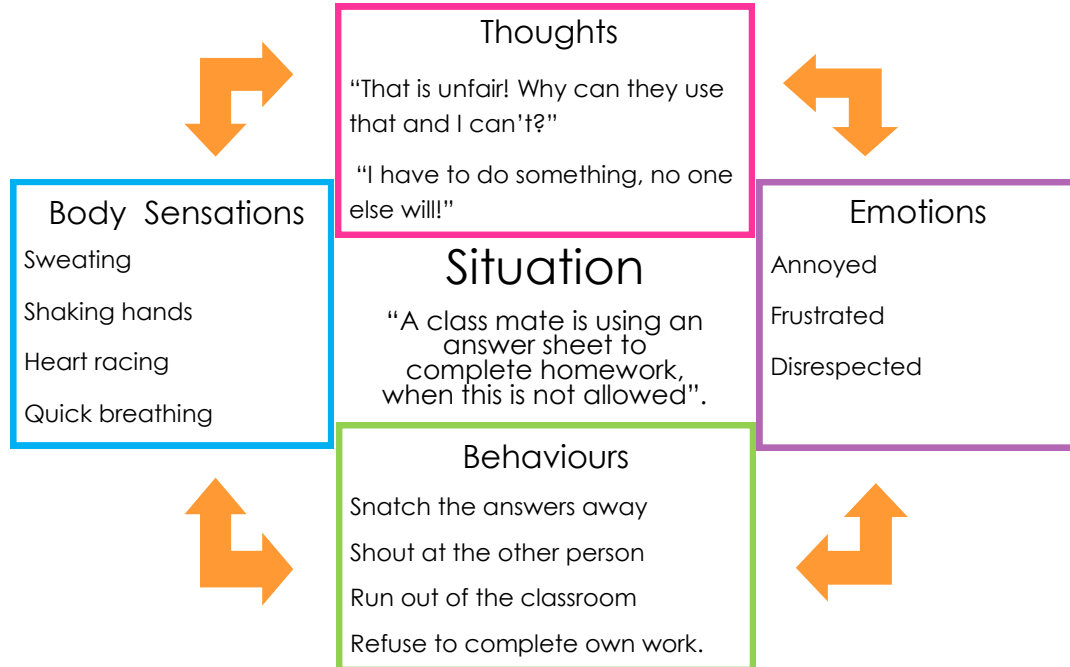
When the brain perceives a threat, it activates the body's "fight or flight" alarm system. We experience uncomfortable feelings because adrenaline is released and makes the body's systems speed up, diverting blood towards the big muscles, preparing us to attack (anger) or escape (anxiety).

Draw or write what physical sensations occur in your body...

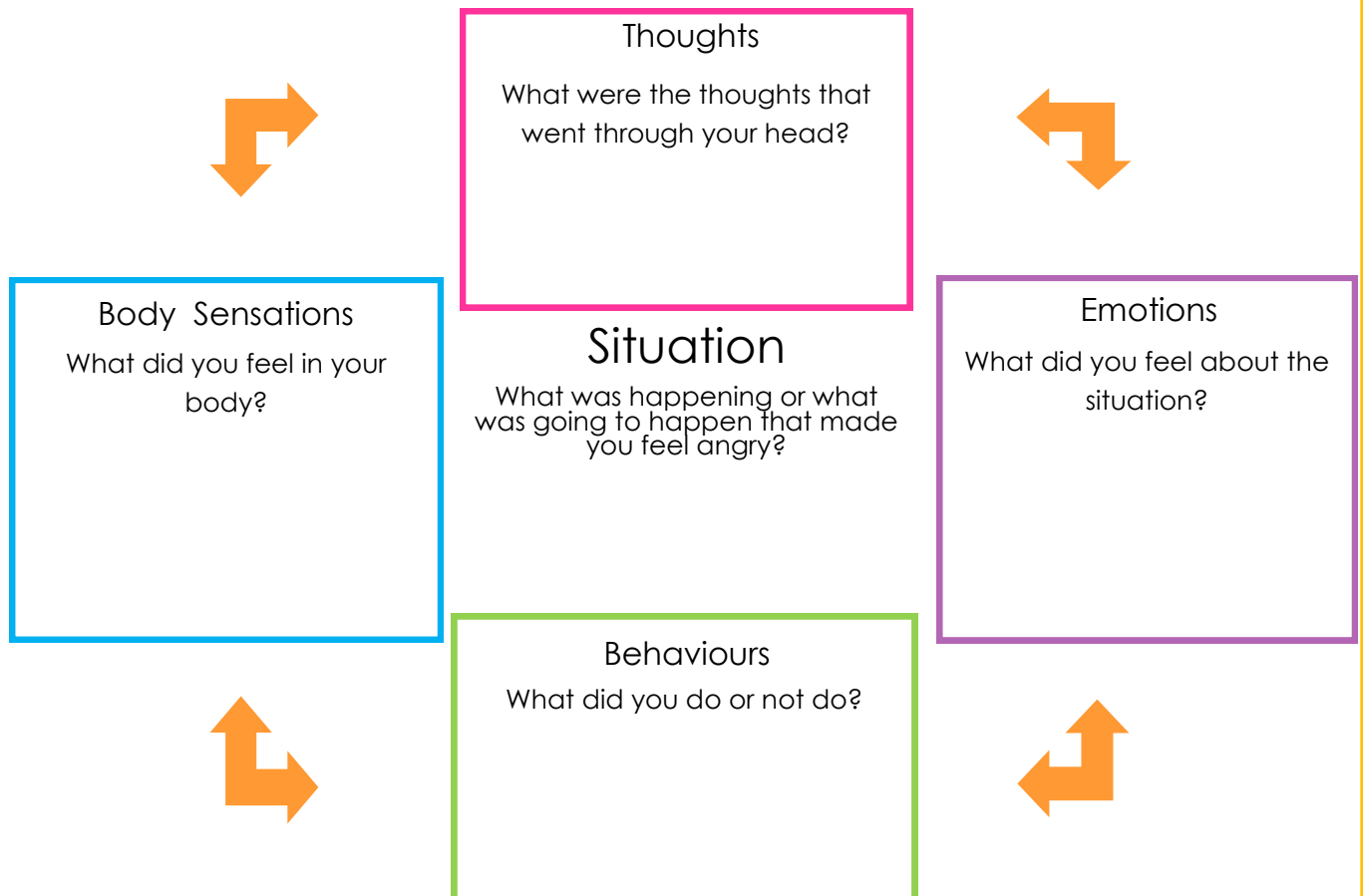


The 5 Areas

We can understand our experience of anger more by thinking about what situations trigger this reaction and exploring our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physical sensations related to these situations. We can explore this by using the 5 area model. Here is an example:



Now think about a situation when you felt angry and fill in your own 5 area model below. You can do this as many times as you like using different situations that make you feel angry...



So what do I do about it?

When feeling angry, we often think and do things that are unhelpful and make us feel angry for longer.

Now you have explored one or more situations that make you feel angry, take a closer look at the thoughts and behaviours you have noted.

Do any of these seem unhelpful?



Are any of your thoughts negative? If so, try and challenge these thoughts - can you come up with some different thoughts that are more positive or more realistic for the situation?

If so, make a note of them...



Do you think any of your behaviours are keeping the anger going? Are any them 'avoiding' behaviours, resulting in further feelings of frustration?

If so, think about what you could do differently next time...





STOPP

One useful way of managing anger is STOPP!

1. **Pause**, take a breath, don't react automatically

2. **Walk away** you can come back and talk later



3. **Ask yourself:**



- What am I reacting to?
- What is it that's really pushing my buttons here?
- Am I getting things out of proportion?
- How important is this really?
- How important will it be in 6 months time?
- What harm has actually been done?
- Am I expecting something from this person or situation that is unrealistic?
- What's the worst (and best) that could happen? What's most likely to happen?
- Am I jumping to conclusions about what this person meant?
- Am I misreading between the lines?
- Is it possible that they didn't mean that? Is this fact or opinion?
- What do I want or need from this person or situation? What do they want or need from me?
- Is there a compromise?
- What would be the consequences of responding angrily?
- Is there another way of dealing with this? What would be the most helpful and effective action to take? (for me, for the situation, for the other).

4. **Visualise** yourself dealing with the situation in a calm, non-aggressive but assertive way, respecting the rights and opinions of all others involved.

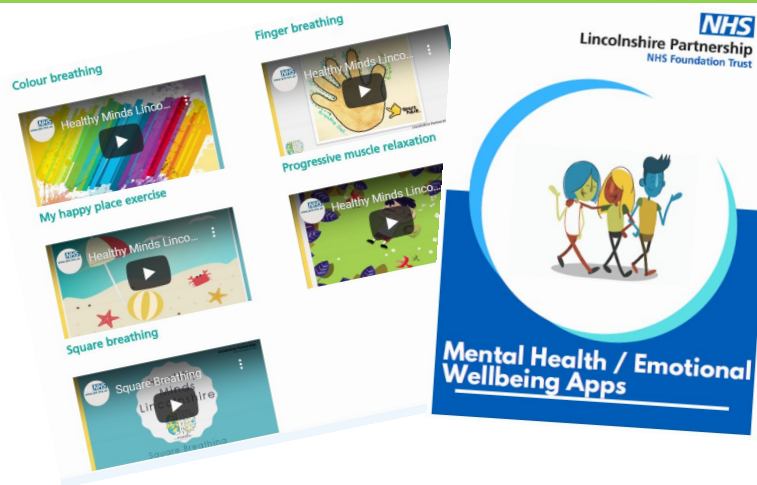


More Strategies

The Healthy Minds practitioner you or your parent/carer have spoken to may have sent some more specific strategies that can help you to manage anger. Start using these now. Ask someone to help you if you need to. And remember, it is ok to have set backs and forget to use strategies at times. Be kind to yourself and keep going!

Don't forget to check out our website, for lots of other useful information; such as our relaxation videos and our useful apps booklet!

<https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people>



Useful Websites & Numbers

Websites:

- **Get self-help**—www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- **Young Minds**—www.youngminds.org.uk
- **KOOTH** - www.kooth.com
- **LCC Emotional Wellbeing Pathway**—www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing
- **Mood Juice**—<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Numbers:

- **Here4You Advice Line:** 01800 234 63 42
(Healthy Minds & CAMHS)
- **ChildLine:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger (Shout);**

SHOUT to 85258

