



PAT CRONIN  
FOUNDATION

# Understanding & Managing Anger

Practical tools for schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, and families



*This guide helps teachers, parents, coaches, managers and young people explore their own responses to anger, model healthy coping strategies, and create safe environments where everyone can express and manage strong emotions.*

# Self-Reflection

Adults need awareness of their own anger before effectively guiding children, teens or teams. Children and colleagues often mirror adult reactions, so self-reflection is critical. Whether you're a teacher in a classroom, a coach on the field, or a manager in the workplace, your response to anger sets the tone for those around you.

- ▶ Anger is normal, but adults' reactions influence how children learn to manage it.
- ▶ Reflecting on personal beliefs and past responses prevents reinforcing unsafe behaviours.
- ▶ Awareness of biases helps avoid stereotyping or unfair assumptions about children's anger.

## Prompts:

How do I personally experience anger?

How do my beliefs about anger influence my teaching, coaching, parenting or leadership?

Have I ever reacted in ways I regret?

What biases might I hold about how others express anger?

How comfortable am I leading conversations about anger?



*Tip: Journal your answers over time to track growth and awareness.*



# Understanding Anger

## What is Anger?

Anger is a natural response to feeling threatened, frustrated, or unfairly treated. It signals that something is wrong.

## Signs of Anger

- ▶ Racing heart, tense muscles, clenched fists.
- ▶ Feeling hot or flushed.
- ▶ Irritability, impatience.
- ▶ Thoughts like: "That's not fair!" or "I can't believe this!"

## Healthy Anger vs Unhealthy Anger

	Healthy Anger 	Unhealthy Anger 
<b>What it does</b>	Solves problems, sets boundaries, motivates change.	Hurts others, damages trust, keeps you stuck.
<b>Child</b>	"I feel upset when my friend takes my toy. Can you ask next time?"	Hitting, shouting, refusing to play.
<b>Teen/Adult</b>	Calmly disagreeing at work & suggesting solutions.	Angry texts, snapping at coworkers, yelling, passive-aggressive behaviour.
<b>Sporting</b>	A player feels frustrated when benched but calmly asks the coach how to improve.	Throwing equipment or yelling at teammates.
<b>Workplace</b>	Staff member raising concerns in a meeting respectfully.	Undermining colleagues with sarcasm.

### Benefits of Healthy Anger:

Builds trust, models good communication, encourages problem-solving.

### Risks of Unhealthy Anger:

Damages relationships, increases stress, teaches unsafe patterns.



*Fun Fact: Your brain reacts to anger in milliseconds—before your body even realises it.*



# Tools for Adults

## Anger Diary

An anger diary is a simple yet powerful tool for tracking and reflecting on your emotional experiences. By recording when, where, and why you feel angry, you start to see recurring patterns and themes that may not be obvious in the moment. Can also be used to manage team conflicts, performance pressure, or workplace stress.

<b>TRIGGER</b> <i>What caused my anger. What set me off?</i>	<b>THOUGHTS</b> <i>What was I thinking?</i>	<b>WARNING SIGNS</b> <i>What did I feel in my body? Physical and emotional cues</i>	<b>RESPONSE</b> <i>How did I react? What did I do?</i>	<b>OUTCOME?</b> <i>What were the consequences? Good or bad?</i>

## Body Scan Check-In

A body scan is a simple mindfulness practice that helps you tune into the physical signs of anger before it escalates. Helpful before stepping into a big meeting, onto the field, or when managing children at home. By noticing early warning signals in your body, you gain the chance to pause and choose a calmer response rather than reacting automatically.

- ▶ Notice physical signals (clenched jaw, racing heart, tense shoulders) that often appear before anger fully surfaces.
- ▶ Use a simple prompt: "What's happening in my body right now?"

## The "5 Whys" Technique

- ▶ When anger arises, ask "Why?" up to 5 times to uncover the root of the anger.
- ▶ Example: I'm angry because my partner was late → Why? → Because I felt unimportant → Why? → Because I equate lateness with disrespect.



# Tools for Younger Children

## Anger Iceberg

Anger often hides other emotions like fear, frustration, or stress. The **iceberg model** shows what is visible (words, actions) vs hidden (thoughts, triggers, past experiences).

Encourage children to look beneath the tip of the iceberg and label or draw what's under their "anger iceberg."

Helps build emotional vocabulary and deeper understanding.

- ▶ Teachers can use it in circle time.
- ▶ Coaches can use it before/after games or training.
- ▶ Parents can use at home.

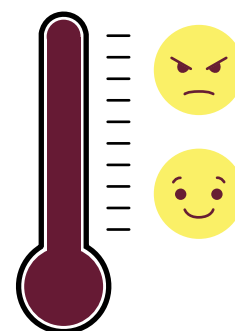


## Prompts

- ▶ My visible reactions.
- ▶ How I feel underneath.

## The Anger Intensity Scale

This scale helps children recognise how strongly they are feeling anger, communicate their emotions clearly, and practise self-regulation before anger becomes overwhelming.



Intensity Level	Feeling Words	When I feel this way (example)
1-2 Mild	Irritated, bothered, impatient, uneasy	
3-5 Moderate	Annoyed, frustrated, upset, agitated	
6-8 High	Angry, resentful, hostile, furious	
9-10 Extreme	Out of control, explosive, enraged	



*Tip: Teach children to pause at levels 3–5 and use calming strategies before anger grows.*



# Tools for Teens

## Thought Log

Write down not just the event but triggering events and related thoughts to see how interpretations fuel emotions.

- ▶ Purpose: Identify automatic negative thoughts that fuel anger.
- ▶ Benefit: Helps see how interpretation of events affects emotional response.



## Physical Signal Checklist

A checklist of cues (tight jaw, clenched fists, faster breathing).

- ▶ Purpose: Build awareness of bodily cues before anger escalates.
- ▶ Benefit: Encourages early self-regulation before reactions spiral.



## Graphing Anger

Involves recording anger episodes over time in a visual format, such as a line graph, bar chart, or heat map. Log details like frequency, intensity, time of day, context, and triggers. This method turns abstract emotions into concrete data that can be analysed for patterns.

**Sports & schools:** Track if anger spikes during exams, at training, or after peer conflict.

**Workplaces:** Use this tool to notice if work stress builds up at certain times.

- ▶ Create a simple chart with days or weeks on the x-axis and anger intensity on the y-axis.
- ▶ Record each anger episode with a symbol or dot at the corresponding intensity level.
- ▶ Use different colours or symbols to indicate triggers (red for peer conflict, blue for school)
- ▶ Review the chart at the end of each week to reflect on patterns and progress.

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										



*Tip: Can use apps, spreadsheets, or printed worksheets depending on what feels engaging. Some may prefer using emojis or stickers to make the tracking more visual and motivating.*



# ABC Of Healthy Coping Skills

Coping skills are strategies and techniques used to manage and lessen stress, emotions, and difficult situations. Remember, what works for one person may not work for another, so choose activities that you are comfortable with. If you create a toolbox of skills to cope with challenges, you're likely to face, you will feel better equipped to handle situations that arise.

<b>A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ask for help</li> <li>▶ Ask for a break</li> <li>▶ Ask yourself,</li> <li>▶ 'What do I need right now?'</li> </ul>	<b>B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bake a cake</li> <li>▶ Blow bubbles</li> <li>▶ Bounce a ball</li> </ul>	<b>C</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Chew gum</li> <li>▶ Count to 100</li> <li>▶ Colour</li> <li>▶ Cook</li> </ul>	<b>D</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Dance</li> <li>▶ Drink water</li> <li>▶ Draw</li> <li>▶ Deep breathing</li> </ul>
<b>E</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Exercise</li> <li>▶ Eat a healthy snack</li> <li>▶ Explore nature</li> </ul>	<b>F</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fidgeting tools</li> <li>▶ Fresh air</li> <li>▶ Feel your pulse</li> <li>▶ Find a safe space</li> </ul>	<b>G</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Go for a walk</li> <li>▶ Garden</li> <li>▶ Gentle stretching</li> <li>▶ Goal setting</li> </ul>	<b>H</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hum your favourite song</li> <li>▶ Hold an ice cube</li> <li>▶ Have a cry</li> </ul>
<b>I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Inhale and exhale</li> <li>▶ Identify positive solutions</li> <li>▶ I statement</li> </ul>	<b>J</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Jump on a trampoline</li> <li>▶ Jogging</li> <li>▶ Jigsaw puzzles</li> </ul>	<b>K</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Kick a ball</li> <li>▶ Knead playdough</li> <li>▶ Knit</li> </ul>	<b>L</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Listen to music</li> <li>▶ Laugh</li> <li>▶ Learn new skills</li> </ul>
<b>M</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Meditate</li> <li>▶ Make a gratitude list</li> <li>▶ Massage your neck and shoulders</li> <li>▶ Make a vision board</li> </ul>	<b>N</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nap</li> <li>▶ Name something positive</li> <li>▶ Never give up</li> </ul>	<b>O</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organise your room</li> <li>▶ Open up to a friend</li> <li>▶ Order takeout</li> </ul>	<b>P</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Paint</li> <li>▶ Play a game</li> <li>▶ Pop bubble wrap</li> <li>▶ Pat your pet</li> <li>▶ Positive self talk</li> </ul>
<b>Q</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Quiet time</li> <li>▶ Question your feelings</li> <li>▶ Quiet your mind</li> </ul>	<b>R</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Rip paper</li> <li>▶ Read a book</li> <li>▶ Rest</li> <li>▶ Reframe your thoughts</li> </ul>	<b>S</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sing</li> <li>▶ Sit in the sun</li> <li>▶ Set boundaries</li> <li>▶ Stretch</li> </ul>	<b>T</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Talk to a trusted person</li> <li>▶ Take a bath</li> <li>▶ Tense and relax your muscles</li> <li>▶ Take some time out</li> </ul>
<b>U</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understand and accept your feelings</li> <li>▶ Unplug from electronics</li> <li>▶ Use breathing techniques</li> </ul>	<b>V</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vent to someone you trust</li> <li>▶ Visualise your favourite place</li> <li>▶ Volunteer to help someone</li> <li>▶ Visit a counsellor</li> </ul>	<b>W</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Write in a journal</li> <li>▶ Watch something funny</li> <li>▶ Workout</li> <li>▶ Weighted blanket</li> </ul>	<b>X</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Xylophone playing</li> <li>▶ eXhale – breath out your feelings</li> </ul>
<b>Y</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Yoga</li> <li>▶ Yell into a pillow</li> <li>▶ Yoyo</li> <li>▶ Yodel</li> </ul>	<b>Z</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Zumba</li> <li>▶ Zone out</li> <li>▶ Zzzz (sleep on it)</li> </ul>		



# Next Steps



This guide gave you practical strategies to help children, teens and adults manage anger in healthy ways.

Take the next step: **Book a Be Wise Education Presentation** for your school, sporting club, community group or workplace.

[Enquire now →](#)

## Why Choose Our Sessions?

- ▶ **Schools** – Aligned with the Victorian Curriculum, helping teachers, students, and parents build emotional awareness and resilience.
- ▶ **Sporting Clubs** – Supporting coaches, players, and families to strengthen teamwork, respect, and positive role modelling on and off the field.
- ▶ **Workplaces** – Equipping staff and leaders with tools to manage stress, improve communication, and create safer, more productive environments.



Whether for children learning self-regulation, teens navigating peer pressures, or adults balancing work and family, our strategies are practical, engaging, and age appropriate.

Thank you for partnering with us to create safer, healthier futures for young people and the communities that support them.

