

Supporting Children with Emotional Regulation

Identifying, exploring and de-escalating the feeling of anger.

Delivered by:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service **CAMHS**

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Fostering Self-Regulation

Children are sponges, they watch and take in everything that we do – even if it doesn't directly involve them.

Show your child what you do to calm down when you feel stressed. **Talk about what things you enjoy** and **explain that you need to look after yourself** to be healthy.

Rest doesn't need to be earned.



Modelling Self-Regulation



When dealing with an immediate ‘meltdown’, **swan-parenting** is the best approach so that you can be seemingly **calm, collected and open** to deal with your child’s emotions.

Children pick up on irony! If you are displaying the very same behaviour that you would reprimand your child for, they are less likely to correct their own behaviour.

Instead, **have the upper ground** by relaxing your shoulders, taking deep breaths and using tone rather than volume to show seriousness.

What is our goal?

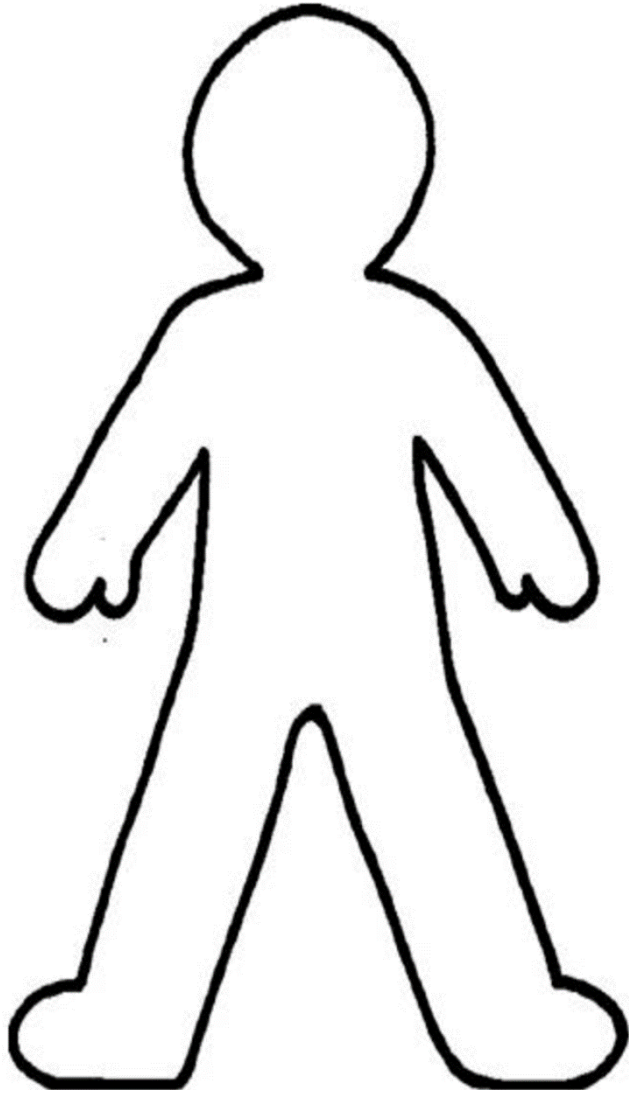
Value and explore their **feelings** while guiding and correcting their **behaviour**.

We need to **support them** as they explore their emotions and learn to understand and manage them, but we also need to **live with them and keep them safe** in the mean time! We need to encourage healthy emotional development that allows children to **delight in the happy times** and **recover quickly from bad times**.



Escalation

Psychoeducation



Education around anger can give your child **insight into what is happening to their body**. A child noticing the **very first signs that they may be angry**, can help them to become self-aware and regulate their body before they become uncontrollably angry.

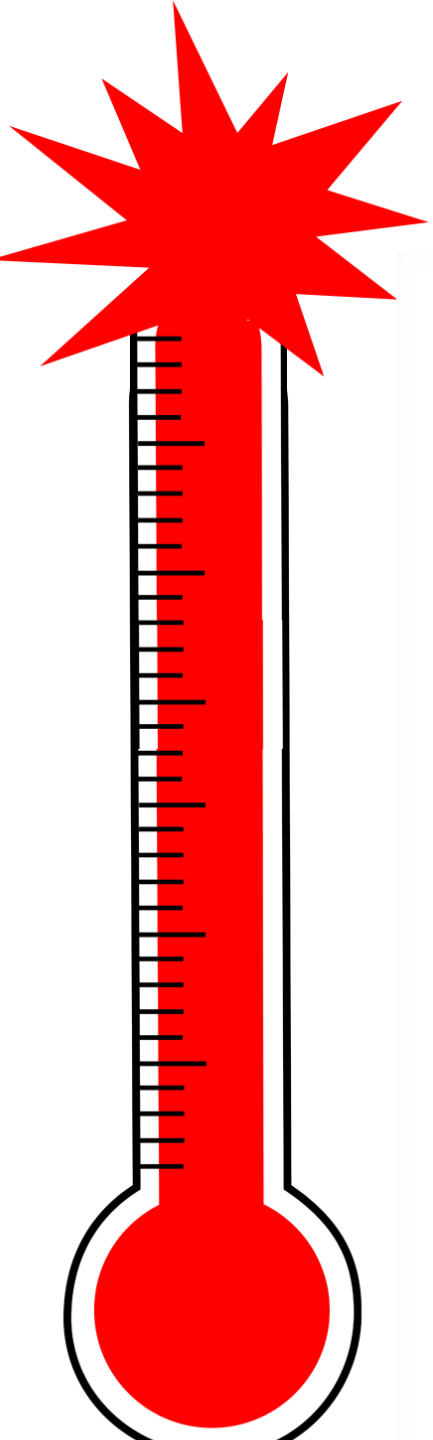
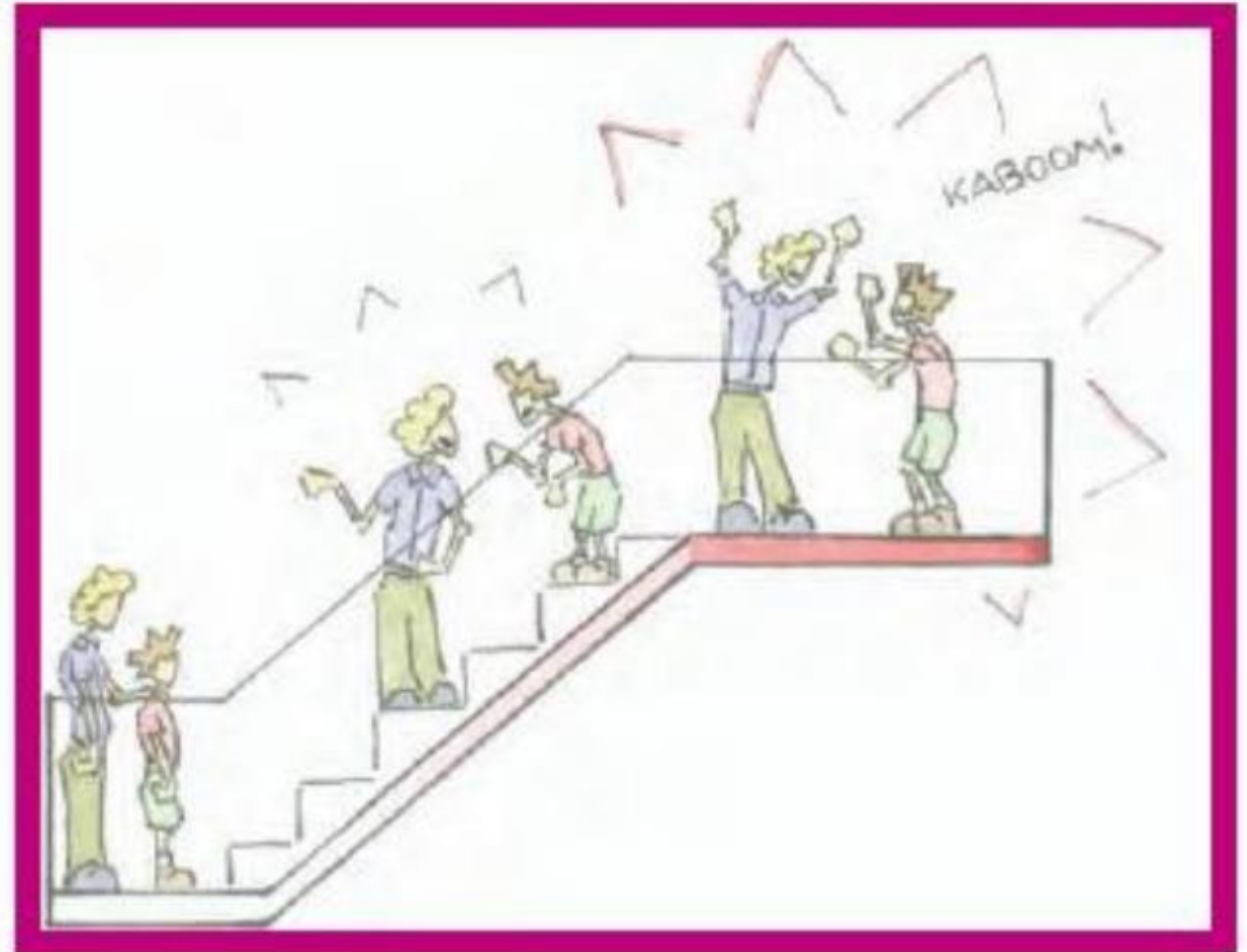
Escalation

The best way to manage an anger outburst is to not allow it to happen in the first place.

Joint escalation

Your child raises their voice, you raise your voice, your child shouts, you shout, your child shouts louder, you shout louder. The argument can end in violence on both sides.

Pattern 1



Reinforcing Cycle of Behaviour

Behaviour that is reinforced is more likely to occur again.

If we see all behaviour as a means of gaining or removing something, we need to think about what is happening as a consequence of their behaviour...

Positive Reinforcement

What are they gaining?

Attention

What they want

Affection

Stimulation/Sensory

Negative Reinforcement

What is being removed?

Stress

Something they
don't want

Responsibility

School

A feeling

Escalation Quick Wins

WIN!

Tactical Ignoring

This can seem like you are letting your child 'get away' with behaviours, but it is more about **picking your battles** and **avoid being overly critical**.

You ask your child to tidy away their toys into the toybox.

They roll their eyes and huff.

They take their time.

Throw something into the box a little bit too hard.

Eventually the toys are away.

Good job. Thank you for putting everything away.

Escalation Quick Wins



WIN!

Presumed Compliance

This puts your child in a position where they almost feel obligated to do it! Most children want to do what's expected of them.

**Take these things up to your room,
thank you.**

**Time to come in now then, good
boy for coming in on time.**

**Lay this cutlery on the table,
thank you, you're so helpful.**

**Put you school shoes on, thank
you, on time today!**

Escalation Quick Wins



WIN!

Partial Agreement

Acknowledge their point of view, but reemphasise what you expect.

Time to come off the PlayStation now, you'll be tired.

I've been on this late before! I'm not tired.

That might be true, but today you need to come off now. I can see you're not tired now but you will be in the morning.

Escalation Quick Wins



Partial Agreement

Acknowledge their point of view, but reemphasise what you expect.

You can't have sweets now, we need to have dinner first.

I can eat sweets and dinner!

Okay, I agree you might be able to eat sweets and dinner, but we need to eat dinner first.

Escalation Quick Wins



WIN!

Observing the Positives

Negative or unwanted behaviours, evoke the most emotional response in us as adults so it is easy to focus on these. We should, however, try to create a praise focused environment.

If you have a 'walking on eggshells' atmosphere, this can be good to allow you to praise your child without an interaction.

If you have several children, this can be good to avoid criticising a child. Children are more likely to copy positive behaviours than change their own negative ones.

Escalation Quick Wins



Observing the Positives

Negative or unwanted behaviours, evoke the most emotional response in us as adults so it is easy to focus on these. We should, however, try to create a praise focused environment.

Well done for sitting at the table so nicely.

Good job going to school this morning.

Thank you for being kind to your sister.

You're such a good girl for being in your own bed.

Escalation Quick Wins

WIN!

Observing the Positives



Praise needs to be genuine and without condition.

Thank you for sitting nicely at dinner. See how easy it is when you listen, why don't you do that every day?

You've been so calm and played nicely today – look how much happier everyone is when you behave!

Good job with tidying up, if you'd done that yesterday you wouldn't have been on trouble last night!

You've done so well going to school, my life would be easier if you just went without tears all the time.



De-escalation

The ultimate goal of any de-escalation method is to bring your child **'down' from their heightened fight, flight or freeze response.**

Children lose rational thought, morality, fear of consequence and conscious control over their behaviour!

Until this is achieved, there is **no point** trying to establish consequences, explore emotions, repair relationships... anything!
Their brain cannot process information in this state.

We need to support children to **take control over their body** and return to a physical state where they can **engage with you and the situation.**



De-escalation

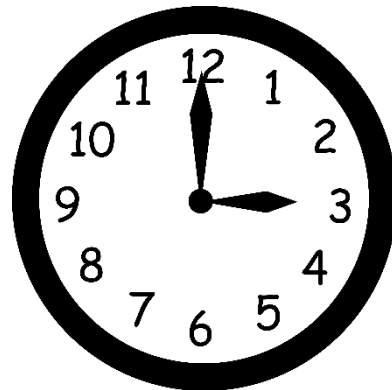
If your child is old enough, simply **giving them space** for their body to naturally return to a calm state is often the best method to de-escalate any situation!



Even if they need to have consequences for their behaviour, they will much better understand this after they have had time to cool off.

You can even tell them what time you will be back to discuss it.

*This gives you time
to cool off too!*



De-escalation

Language – calm, clear and concise

Try to **keep your voice quiet**. Try your best not to sound panicked, urgent or angry with the child when they are in a heightened state of arousal.

Speak in a **measured and slow manner** using as **few words** as possible. If your child has done something very serious, try to use **tone** rather than volume or complex sentences.

De-escalation Breathing



[#supersoulsunday](#) [#OWNTV](#) [#Oprahwinfrey](#)

What Children Can Teach Us About Dealing with Anger | SuperSoul Sunday |

De-escalation Calm Down Steps

5 Senses Grounding Tool

Name:



5 things you can see



4 things you can feel



3 things you can hear



2 things you can smell



1 thing you can taste

Rest and Relax

Sit on the floor, close your eyes and cross your legs.

Feel your whole body relax.

Breathe in and out slowly.

Notice the sounds around you.

Listen to your breathing.

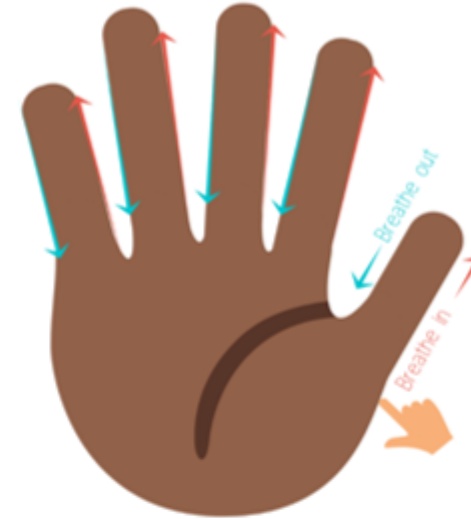
Feel your body on the floor.

Count to 30 slowly in your mind.



Open your eyes when you feel calm.

5 Finger Breathing



Wash it Away

Take some cold water and splash it over your face.

Now do the same with warm water.

Finish by splashing cold water again.



Stretch to the Sky

As you take a deep breath in, stretch up as high as you can.

Now breath out and bring your arms back down to your side.



Repeat 5 times

Balloon Belly Breathing



Inhale Fully

Place your Hands on your Belly.
Inhale and Blow Up your Balloon.
Feel your Belly and Lungs Expand.



Exhale Fully

Blow Out all of the Air in your Belly and Lungs.
Feel Your Balloon Deflate.
Notice how you Feel.

De-escalation Calm Down Steps

Spiral Swirling

Take your finger and slowly follow the swirl to the middle and out again 5 times.



Mind Garden

Close your eyes and imagine a beautiful garden. Walk around it. What is there? What can you hear? What colour are the flowers? **Make the garden yours by adding things that you like.** Picture yourself here until your body relaxes.



Cake and Candle Breathing

Face your palms towards you. Imagine you have a tasty cake in one hand and a candle in the other. Take a breath in and smell the cake. Now breathe out and blow out the candle.



Category Quiz

Choose a category and think of 3 names or items for it.

Films



Cereal



City



Books



Colour



Fruit



Vegetables



Sports



T.V Show



Name It

Spell out your name. Now think of something that begins with each letter of your name.

N

Netflix

NETFLIX

A

Apple



M

Mouse



E

Electricity



Still as a Statue

Lie down somewhere comfy. Breathe in and out slowly. **Make your body as still as you can.** Count to ten...

Start to move your body by wiggling your toes. Then move your ankles. Wiggle your legs. Move up your body moving each part at a time.

When you get to your head, roll it side to side gently.

Now gently sit up.



De-escalation Progressive Muscle Relaxation

A GUIDE TO PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

01 Find a quiet environment where you can get into a relaxed position either sitting or lying down. If you have any injuries, consult your doctor before engaging in this process.

02 You will slowly be working through major muscle groups, tensing and relaxing them one by one. You will learn to identify tension in your body/muscles and release it to help you relax.

03 Begin by getting your breathing into a natural soothing rhythm. Take a deep breath in through your nose and hold it for a couple of seconds. Now breathe out slowly through your lungs and breathe in again. Let the air gently fill your lungs and breathe out slowly releasing any tension in your own steady rhythm. As you breathe out, imagine the tension in your body being released and flowing out of your body. Breathe in and out and feel your body relaxing more and more.

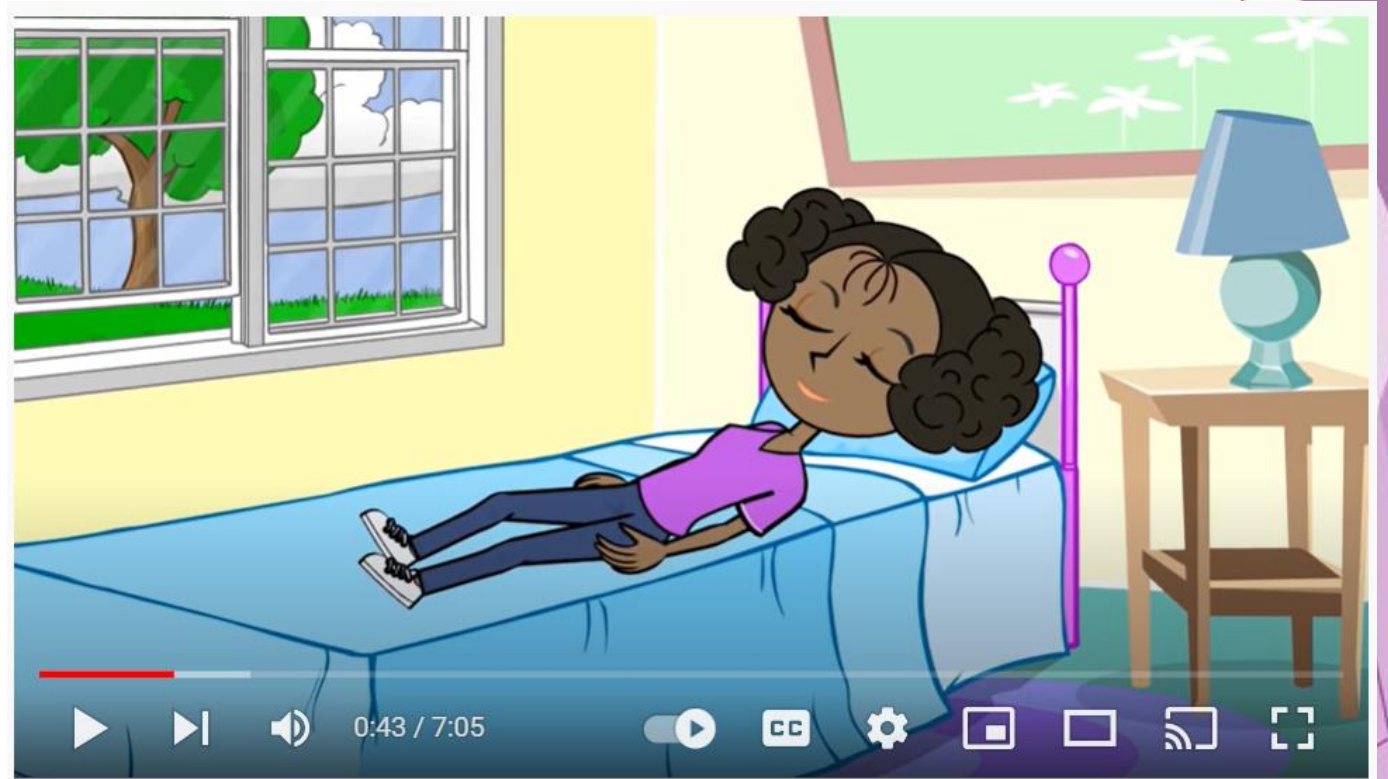
04 You will start the exercise at the top of your body and work all the way down to your feet. As you tense each muscle group hold for a couple of seconds and then relax slowly. After each relaxation have a 10 second pause and then move onto the next part of your body. Work slowly through the following parts of your body. Slowly tense each group and slowly release the tension. If you feel that your mind wanders try to refocus on the muscle group.

05 Forehead (Raise your eyebrows upwards)
Eyes & Cheeks (Squint your eyes)
Mouth & Jaw (Open mouth widely)
Neck (Tilt head backwards)
Shoulders (Raise your shoulders up high)
Arms (Stretch out your arms)
Biceps (Flex your biceps)
Forearms (Arch lower back)
Buttocks (Tense buttocks)
Legs (Stretch them out, tensing thighs)
Calves (Pull your toes towards feet)
Feet (Curl toes under)

06 Enjoy the feeling of the waves of relaxation going through your body and muscles. Slowly continue to breathe.

07 When you have finished slowly come back to the previous position. Count to 5 and feel more awake with each number.

Follow the steps as a guide to help you engage in some progressive muscle relaxation. You might find it useful to listen to an audio tape with this advice.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Kids

De-escalation Letting it Out!

We say: “Anger has three rules...”

You must not hurt yourself.

You must not hurt someone else.

You must not cause damage.





Consequence and Reflection



This is arguably the most important part.

How you provide a consequence for the behaviour, resolve an issue then allow the child to reflect will be integral to your child's emotional literacy and influence the likelihood of a behaviour happening again.



Consequence



A consequence is not a 'punishment' – it is simply what happens after a behaviour.

Consequences should be:

Timely

Proportionate

Consistent

Consequence should either give or remove.

Consequence

Consequences should be:

Timely – Children need to establish cause and effect i.e. how their behaviour results in something happening. Children find it hard to hold feelings and actions in mind, they need to remember it!

Proportionate – This can include not ‘over rewarding’ for positive behaviour but also keeping in perspective how much of an ‘issue’ an undesired behaviour actually caused.

Consistent – Children like rules and boundaries. They feel safe and supported when they know what to expect. Inconsistency can cause confusion.

Modelling Reflection

Children mirror your language, interactions and attitude.

They hear more than we give them credit for.



Don't make anger the elephant in the room.

Model how to reflect on behaviour.

We were arguing earlier, we both felt frustrated.

I shouted in the car earlier, that's because I was scared about...

I think you heard me slam the door, I was feeling really upset. I should have _____ instead.



Identify, Label and Explore

Children often find it difficult to **identify** what they have done, **label** how they felt and **explore** why they behaved/felt that way.

You threw the toys on the floor. You looked **frustrated**. I think you're telling me that you **need me to help you build the tower**, is that okay?

We don't hit in this house. When you did that, you looked **angry** to me. Is that right? Can you tell me **why/what** happened?"

You have just run away, we don't do that. You looked **excited**, is that right? Can you tell me **why you felt that you needed to run away?**

Give Them a Voice...



Always ask a child to recount what happened before and during a meltdown. This doesn't necessarily mean you are agreeing with them, but they feel valued and heard when you give them a chance to recount and explain.

Allow them to speak first. You may then disagree or offer your point of view, but allowing them to speak first removes their emotion from their mind and allows them to vent.

- 1. So, you're telling me... which made you feel...**
- 2. What I saw was... this made me think/feel...**



Reflection

What could you have done instead?

How do you think that made me/other person feel?

What could you do next time this happens/you feel this way?

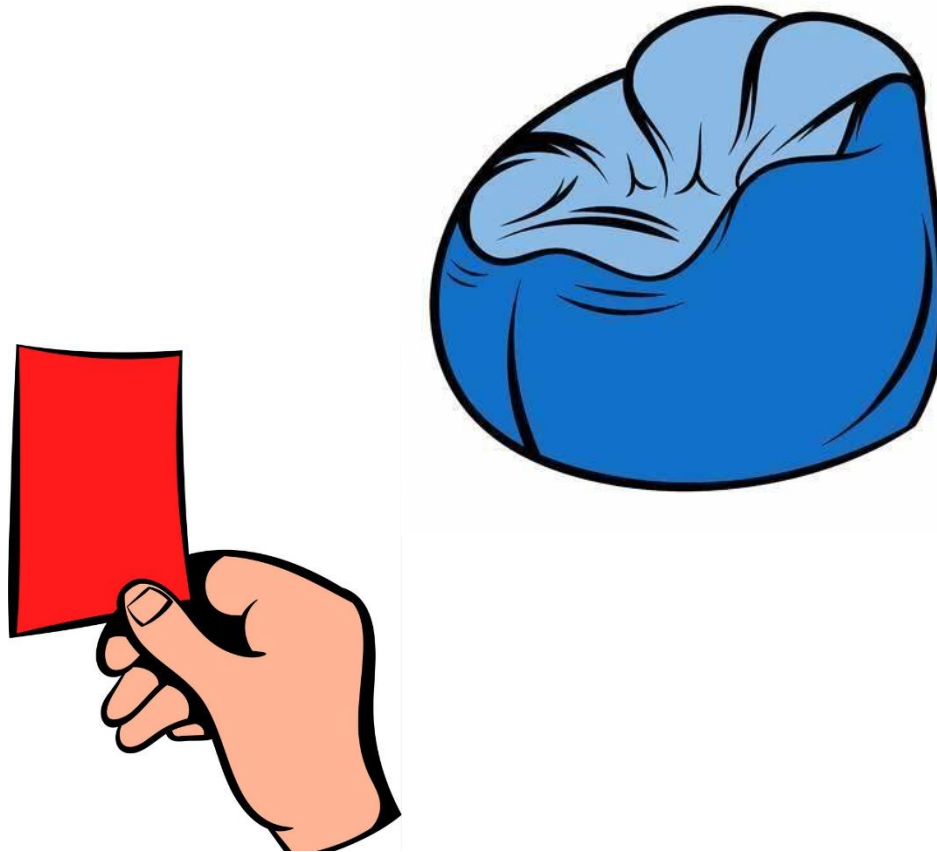
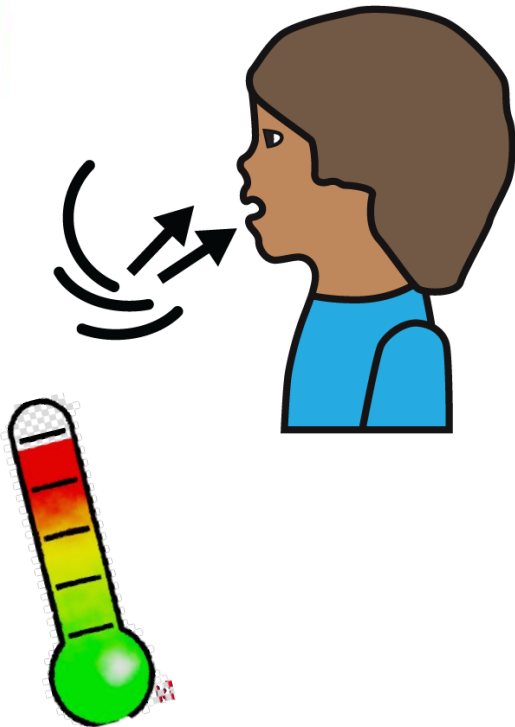
Is there anything you wish to say about it?

What do you want me to know/do?

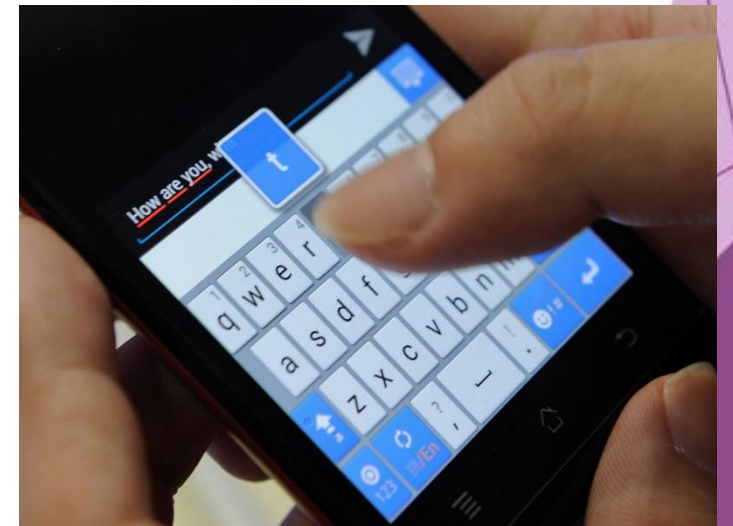
A Calm Down Plan

Planning **BEFORE** a meltdown or outburst happens helps children to utilise methods to calm down when they are angry without having to think about it in the moment – **we know they can't do this!**

Take deep breath



Code Word



A Calm Down Plan

My Calm Down Plan

What will I wear to feel better?



Where will I go to be calm?

How will I manage my emotions?



How will I tell someone I am angry?



Who will I speak to?



I can calm myself down in 3 steps...





GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board

tidyminds.org.uk – Coping with common issues > anger
camhs-resources.co.uk – Books, apps and websites

Search: ‘NVR for Parents Oxleas NHS Foundation’