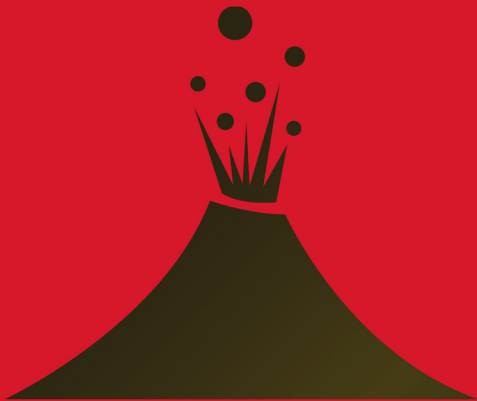


# Adolescent **VOLCANOES**

Helping Adolescents and their Parents  
to Deal with Anger



**Warwick Pudney and Éliane Whitehouse**



## Early warning signs of feeling anger in your body

People experience anger in different ways. If we know what happens to us when we feel angry we get more time to make choices about what we do. The better we know the warning signals, the better we'll be able to deal with our anger.

They can be divided into:

- ◆ Signs and sensations inside the body
- ◆ Signs and behaviours outside the body
- ◆ Thoughts and words that go on inside the head

Imagine a situation where you the caregiver or you the adolescent were recently angry about something or with someone. See, hear and feel yourself there. Take yourself to the angriest moment then check out the early warning signs in the three categories below. What are the signs that you are feeling? Whenever you feel like this you can choose what you will do. You now have extra time to do something positive.



### Body (inside)

Heartbeat:

- Fast
- Can hear and feel it

Breathing:

- Fast
- In the chest
- Heavy
- Deep
- Short
- Catch breath

Sweating:

- Hot
- Damp



Head tension:

- Bursting
- Band of steel

Tense jaw:

- Tight
- Rigid
- Aching
- Teeth hurt

Stomach:

- Knotted
- Exploding
- Concrete lump
- Hunger
- Churning
- Feel like crying
- Fire in me

Scalp rises:

- Head tingles
- Hair prickles

Other signs inside my body . . . . .

. . . . .

. . . . .

### Body behaviour (outside)

These are things we often do if we're feeling angry.

- Ignore others
- Tense laugh
- Fold arms
- Narrow eyes
- Agitated movement
- Take drugs
- Tense toes
- Narrow focus
- Withdraw inside self
- Evil eye
- Stand up
- See red
- Clench fists
- Pretend others aren't there
- Twitch
- Stamp
- Tighten/purse lips
- Slam doors
- Staring eyes - squinting
- Walk out
- Tense eyes
- Smoke
- Walk away
- Drink alcohol
- Say 'Nothing'
- Squirm
- Frown
- Slam things down
- Kick foot
- Tears in eyes



Bang walls

Hang head

Shout

### Thoughts (head)

Can't think

'Bloody mothers/fathers!'

'You wait!'

Scheming

'I'll get you'

'I'll smash \_\_\_\_\_!'

'It always happens to me!'

'Here we go again'

'F\_\_\_ you!'

'Wanker!'

Messages from mother

'Leave me alone'

'I'll kill my brother/sister!'

'I hate brothers/sisters!'

Messages from father

'I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ you!'

'I don't give a s\_\_\_!'

'That's it!'

Fantasy of violence/revenge

Other. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .

**Key concept**

- ◆ If we know early signs of anger we have more choice about our actions.



# The anger scale

Get to know your levels of anger better. When you can think 'right now I am on a 3 or a 9' then you are getting to know your anger. Then you can do something about it. The lower levels are the hardest to have that instant knowing. The lower you are on the scale when you realise you are angry, the more space you have to choose something different!

Write your anger words in the spaces to match the level of anger on the scale.

What's happening at each level		Anger word to match	
Danger exploding		10	.....
Stop stop stop		9	.....
Notice anger getting out of control		8	.....
Take Time Out now		7	.....
Calm down		6	.....
Say what you need to		5	.....
Let go of small tensions or angers		4	.....
Say to yourself, 'I'm OK'		3	.....
Noticing niggles		2	.....
Really relaxed	1	.....	
	0		

### Key concepts

- ◆ Everyone gets angry. Anger is OK.
- ◆ You need anger to protect and help you.
- ◆ What you DO with anger is what matters.
- ◆ If we know the early signs of anger we have more choice time.
- ◆ The lower you know the more you can choose not to lose.



# Anger scripts

Tracking what you learned from your family about expressing anger can be very helpful. You then have a choice about how you do it for yourself instead of copying others without realising.

How does/did your father act when he was angry? . . . . .

. . . . .

What similarities and patterns do you notice? . . . . .

. . . . .

How does/did your mother act when she was angry?. . . . .

. . . . .

Is this how you want it to be?

YES

NO

How would you like it to be? . . . . .

. . . . .

How did they handle conflict? . . . . .

. . . . .

What will you change to make it how you want it?

I'll stop doing these things: . . . . .

. . . . .

Was anybody afraid at home? . . . . .

. . . . .

I'll start doing these things: . . . . .

. . . . .

What did you learn at home about:

How men are angry? . . . . .

. . . . .

Things that I'll find difficult will be: . . . . .

. . . . .

How women are angry? . . . . .

. . . . .



Ways I'll overcome the difficulties are: . . . . .  
. . . . .

Resolving conflict? . . . . .  
. . . . .

How did you express anger as a child? . . . . .  
. . . . .

The name of someone who will support me in this is: . . . . .  
. . . . .

How do you express anger now? . . . . .  
. . . . .

**Key concepts**

- ◆ You can change the things you were taught about anger and abuse.
- ◆ Behind every anger there is a hurt, loss, fear or shame.



## **Cycle of abuser and loser**

If we abuse and disrespect others we are losing relationships and opportunities. Before we can change from loser behaviour we need to know what it is that we are doing wrong.

Mostly when we hurt others we have a period of tension-building beforehand and after hurting someone we have a period of feeling bad about it and maybe trying to make up for it.

Think about the times that you have hurt someone in your family or close to you. Then think about the lead-up to that. If we know the lead-up signs then we can avoid damaging other people.

### ***Tension***

Tension has inside signs like breathing, pulse, temperature, sweat, stomach, energy and muscles. Then there are outside signs like fists tightening, feet shifting or wanting to kick, arms raising, jaw tightening, lips pursing, eyes narrowing, hair standing up.

These have already been covered in this chapter (see the 'Early warning signs of feeling anger in your body' handout).

### ***Triggers***

Triggers are things that we have sore spots about – like money, times to come home, boyfriend/girlfriend, pimples, names.

What are yours? Write them in the top box of the 'Cycle' diagram on the next page.

### ***Abuse or hurt***

Consider the ways you most commonly abuse or hurt someone – physically, verbally, emotionally, socially, with property or sexually.

Write down the details in the 'Abuse' box e.g. punching, swearing, stealing, lies, hiding things and making up gossip.

### ***Regret***

Then think of the things you do to make up for what you have done because you regret 'losing it' or hurting a person that much: do jobs for Mum, buy presents, offer to take them out, sweet talk, do what they want. Write those down in the 'Regret' box.

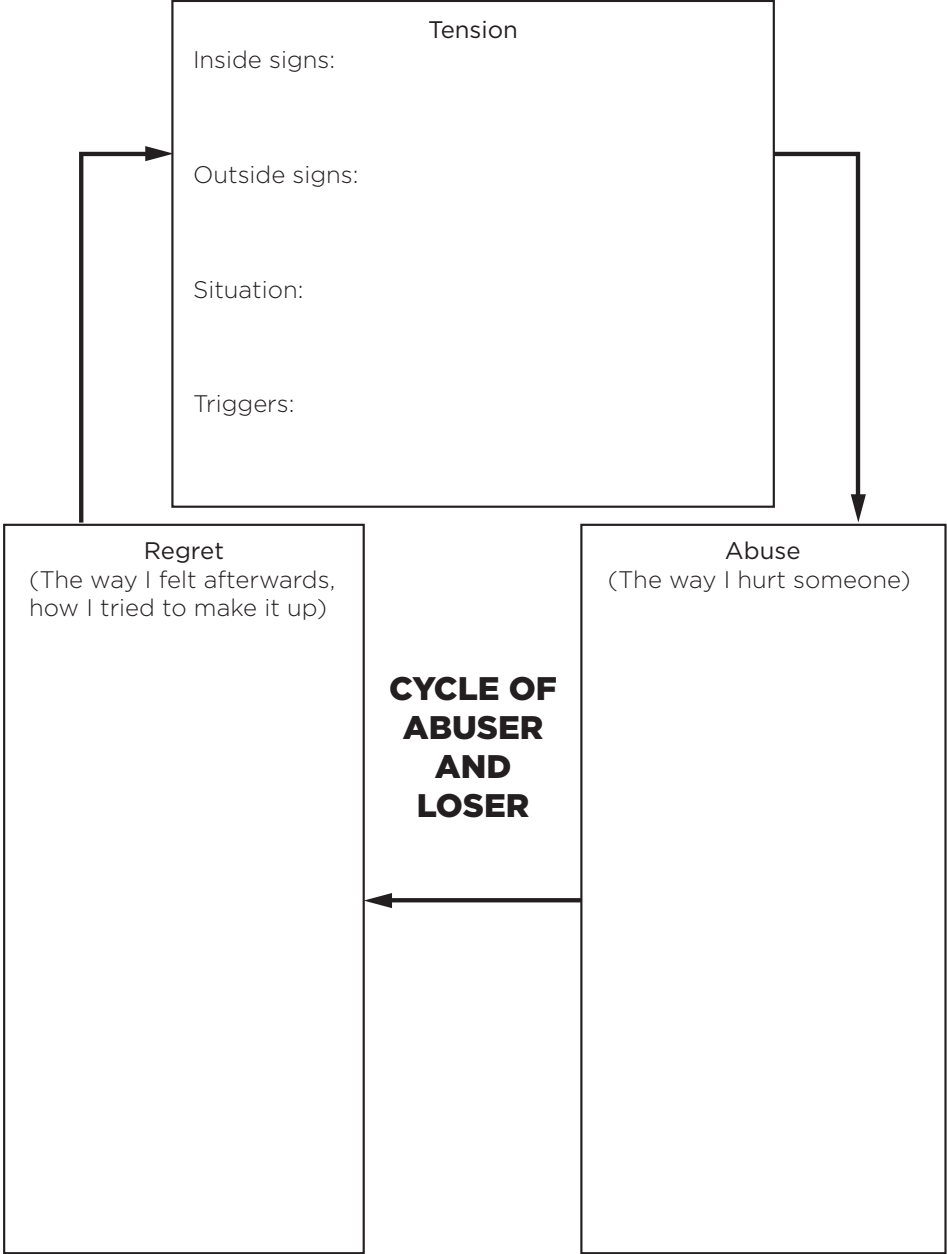
### ***Stopping the cycle***

This is a cycle so the more often that you do it the more you may hurt someone and the less you regret it. That's bad for your later life and for your current living. Be good to people that you love and who support you and would probably help you whenever you asked.





The cycle can be stopped by being aware of the tension building and choosing to do something else to release the tension and not hurting anyone. Take Time Out, or start talking so that the tension can be brought down. If you feel regret, then the best thing that you can do is to find a way you can be absolutely sure you will never do the same thing again. Talk to someone about your patterns. Ask your parents to do the exercise too.



**Key concepts**

- ◆ We need to break negative cycles.
- ◆ If we know early warning signs of anger then we have more choice.