

PART 1

What We'll Learn

Figuring out what makes us angry can be a little tricky. Anger seems to come out of nowhere, and sometimes when we least expect it. Some of us get angry around certain people, and others get angry when going to certain places. When we are unsure when anger will show up or what our anger is like, it is much harder to know what to do.

This section introduces you to anger. You'll learn more about when anger may visit and how it makes you and other people feel. Using your curiosity, you can get to know your habits better, like a scientist discovering something new by looking at it with a microscope. Thinking about your anger habits will help you see patterns more clearly and find healthy ways to feel calm again.

Understanding *why* you feel angry and how it affects your friends and family will help you make better choices *when* you feel angry.



THIS IS HOW ANGER FEELS

In this section, you will learn how detectives find clues and solve mysteries. In this section, the mystery you will solve is how you anger feels and how to recognize and describe it.

Every day the police find things we need to and people do things we don't. If we are not in the mood to do something, like go to school, do our homework, or have with friends, we can feel frustrated, annoyed, and angry.

When you are angry, you might say things you don't mean. You know how? By taking it out on someone else. You are able to think about what makes you angry, you will be able to think of the way you are acting when you feel angry.

You will also learn to pay attention to the clues your body gives you that you are starting to feel upset, and you'll be able to describe them. Your body lets you know it's angry by speeding up your heartbeat, heating you up, or making you feel like you want to break or smash something.

Let's solve the mystery of anger.

ACTIVITY 1

Say Hi to Your Anger

When we feel angry, it is natural to want to make the feeling go away as quickly as possible, especially when we feel like we lose control of ourselves. However, when we use curiosity to get to know anger, we welcome the feeling instead, as though offering the difficult visitor some tea and cookies.

Take some time to get to know what your anger is like. As you think about your answers to the following questions, close your eyes and imagine all the different parts of anger. When you are done, you can draw a picture of you welcoming and getting to know your anger.



What does anger look like? _____

What does anger smell like? _____

What does anger sound like? _____

What does anger feel like? _____

Say Hi to Your Anger, *continued*

If anger was a character from a book or TV show, it would be:

.....

A motto is something a character says a lot. It represents their personality and what they're about. If your anger had a motto, what would it be?

.....

Take a few minutes to write a letter to your anger. Here are a few lines to start you off. Feel free to make your letter as long as you would like.

LETTER TO ANGER

Hi Anger, my name is

If you had a color it would be

I notice you most when

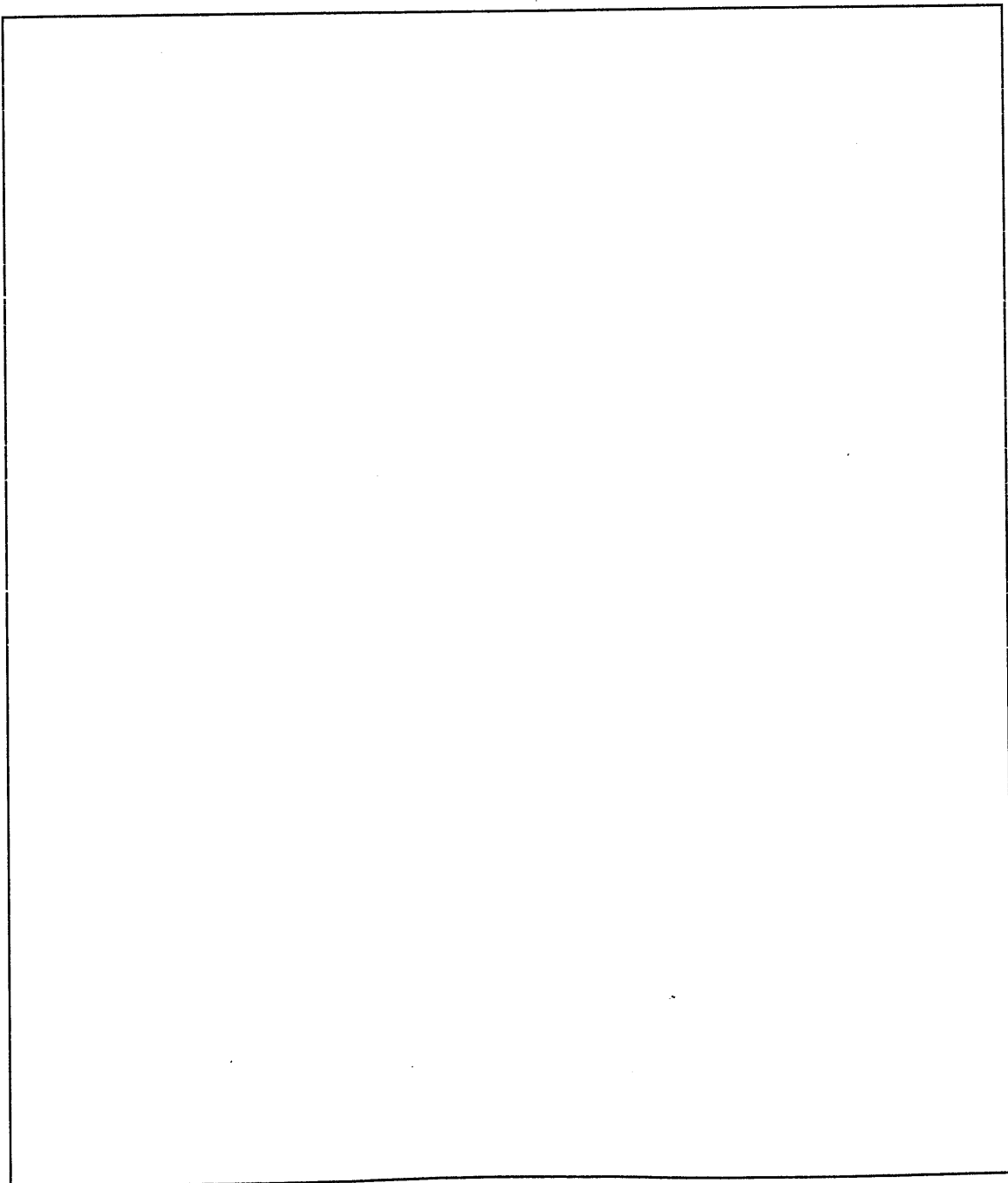
I would like to get to know you a little bit better.

.....

.....

.....

Now that you've gotten to know your anger, draw a picture of what it looks like when it comes to visit.



ACTIVITY 2

Naming Our Emotions

Anger is a difficult emotion that can make us want to do something quickly, without thinking first. We react this way because of the part of our brain called the *amygdala* (pronounced ah-mig-dah-la), which turns on when we have a big emotion like anger. The amygdala is like an alarm going off in the brain. This is helpful when you touch a hot stove, for instance, because you will get burned if you don't move away fast. Our ancestors needed to react quickly because predators such as lions and tigers could eat them if they weren't paying attention.

The world we live in now is very different from that time, but we still have that part of our brain. It can make us want to fight or destroy things when anger comes around.

Luckily, we also have another part of our brain called the *prefrontal cortex*, or PFC. This part of the brain gives us the ability to pause before we react, and to think of the consequences our actions will have for others. When we use the PFC to name an emotion like anger, it is like applying the brakes on a fast-moving train.

We help ourselves by pausing and thinking about the feelings moving through us. This calms the part of the brain that reacts quickly (the amygdala) by turning on the more responsible part of the brain (the PFC).

It helps to learn the right words so we can get better at understanding and explaining just what we feel.

Below you will find some words that describe different types of uncomfortable feelings. Read them to yourself or aloud to an adult, and ask for help with words you don't know yet.

FEELING WORDS FOR DIFFICULT MOODS

- Angry
- Careless
- Cranky
- Frustrated
- Impatient
- Irritated
- Rushed
- Sad
- Tired
- Worried

Imagine yourself in the following situations, then find one or two feelings from the word list that may come up in each of those situations. Write the feeling words down. Then add a situation of your own and write in a feeling word that describes how you feel in that moment.

When I leave for school in the morning, I feel

.....

When I am waiting to be picked up after school, I feel

.....

When I am late to a party or to play with friends, I feel

.....

When I share a toy when I don't want to, I feel

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When I don't sleep well because of bad dreams, I feel

.....

When I

I feel

.....

ACTIVITY 3

How Does My Body Feel?

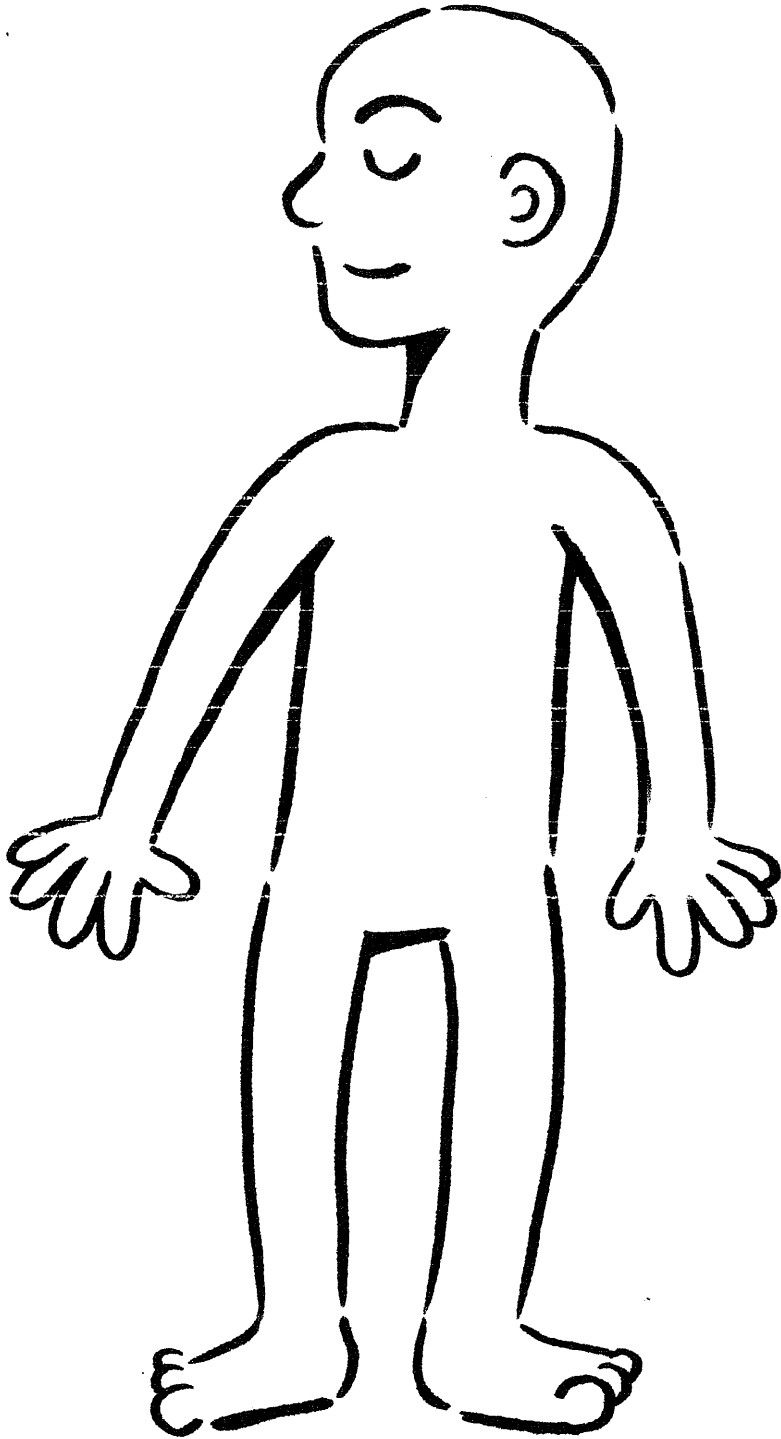
When we pause to notice our body sensations, our anger slows and starts to fade. It may be easy to notice how we feel when we get hurt or are really hungry, but there are many other body sensations that give us clues that something needs our attention. When we notice our sensations and name them, the wiser part of our brain (the PFC) turns on and we can soothe the reactive part of our brain (the amygdala).

Close your eyes and think back to a time when you were angry. Can you remember how you could tell you were angry from the clues your body gave you?

Use the sensation words below and your own words to identify the sensations you feel in your body when you feel angry, then draw them on the diagram. You can also use colors, shapes, and other drawings to show how anger feels for you.

SENSATION WORDS

- Dark
- Dizzy
- Fast breathing
- Fast heartbeat
- Hard to breathe
- Heavy
- Hollow
- Hot
- Nauseous
- Numb
- Tight
- Tingly
- Shaky
- Sharp
- Warm





THIS IS WHAT ANGER DOES

When we feel angry, we feel out of control. It is hard to control our body, our thoughts, and our words. For example, we may fall to the floor and kick and punch, think that we hate someone we really love, or scream and cry.

Anger makes a lot of our thoughts appear more intense, so much so that the intensity of the anger we feel. It can be difficult to notice while it is happening, but when you are calm, it is easier to think about what anger does.

When you are relaxed, it is also a good time to think about how you respond to anger, and how your angry actions affect others. The things we do and say when we feel angry can hurt or upset those we love. Friends may not want to play with us, or we may get in trouble at school. Think about the consequences of your angry words and actions. Thinking about the consequences will encourage you to find better ways of dealing with your anger.

ACTIVITY 1

What Happens in Your Brain and Body When You Feel Angry

When we are angry, our body usually feels a lot of energy. It is as though our body and mind are screaming, "Do something!" Anger tells the body to act, and many bodily changes happen to help us act. You may notice some of these feelings in your body: your muscles tensing, your heart beating faster, and your belly feeling tight.

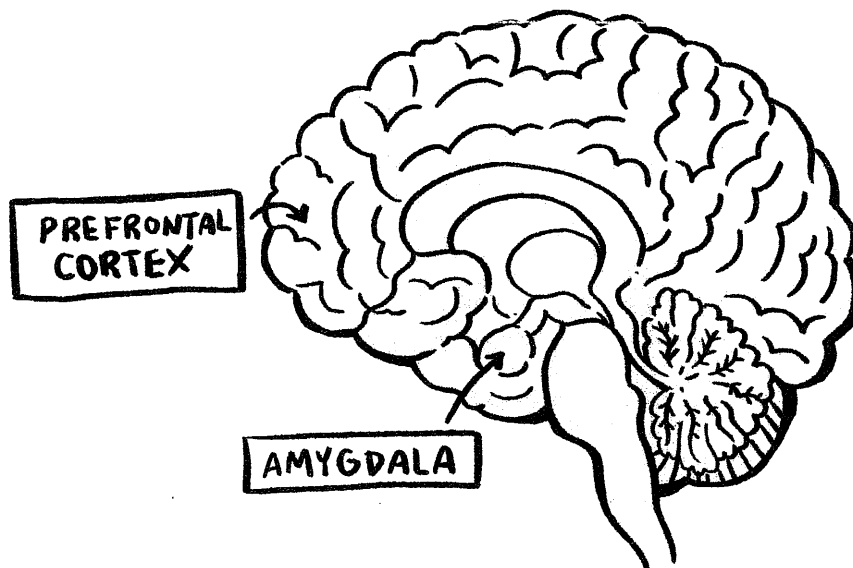
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Amygdala: Our emotional alarm system, which tells the body to fight danger, run from it, or freeze.

Prefrontal cortex: Calms the amygdala by naming our feelings and imagining the consequences of our actions.

Adrenaline: A chemical in our body that gives us the energy to do something fast.

When we have a big emotion like anger, the amygdala fires. Then adrenaline flows throughout the body, making the body want to do something quickly. The prefrontal cortex then comes in to help. It puts the brakes on by identifying our feelings and body sensations.



What Happens in Your Brain and Body When You Feel Angry, *continued*

What does your amygdala tell you to do when you're angry?

Example: "You should break your brother's Lego building!"

What does your prefrontal cortex tell your amygdala in order to put the brakes on your angry urges?

Example: "Wow! You are very angry. I can tell because your face is hot and you have a lot of energy in your body."

ACTIVITY 2

Decoding Our Anger

Now we know why anger makes us want to do certain things. Let's explore the different kinds of urges we feel when angry. It is important to remember to decode our anger when we are calm, so we don't get angrier by being hard on ourselves.

As you look over the list of urges, think about which ones you have most often. Then fill in your top five instincts and describe a time you have felt each one.

URGES

- Bullying (teasing, spreading rumors, and name-calling)
- Destroying something (breaking toys or furniture)
- Having a tantrum (screaming and punching)
- Ignoring people
- Losing control of my body (kicking and screaming on the floor)
- Making threats ("I won't be your friend ever again!")
- Moving too quickly (running or crashing into something)
- Punishing someone (refusing to answer them, call them back, or invite them to an event)
- Slamming doors
- Thinking of ways to get revenge (wanting to hurt someone who has hurt you)
- Using foul language (using words you know upset people)
- Using words to hurt someone's feelings (saying unkind things to someone)

Example: I feel like *yelling or crying* when *my mom tells me to stop playing video games*.

I feel like _____

when _____

I feel like _____

when _____

Decoding Our Anger, *continued*

I feel like

when

I feel like

when

I feel like

when

I feel like

when

ACTIVITY 3

Consequences of Acting Out

Saying or doing something out of anger can have some big consequences. Some of the consequences may affect how people feel or how they treat us or act around us. Other consequences may include having our favorite things or privileges taken away, or not being able to go places we like. On the next page, you'll find a list of some of the possible consequences of anger.

Name a place where you felt angry:

.....

What did you do when you felt angry?

.....

What were the consequences of your actions (like punishment, making others angry, or sadness)?

.....

Name a person you were angry with:

Why were you angry with them?

.....

What were the consequences?

.....

Consequences of Acting Out, *continued*

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF ANGER

- Feeling frightened
- Feeling unsafe
- Getting in trouble at school
- Losing others' trust
- Not being able to go places we like
- Others getting angry or embarrassed
- Punishments (having things taken away, like video games or privileges)