

Anger Outbursts: What Do I Do as a Parent

One of the main symptoms for both depression and anxiety (and many other mental health disorders), include irritability and anger. When your child becomes stressed or triggered and struggles to manage their emotions, outbursts of anger can occur. Most commonly, these outbursts are expressed verbally. As a parent, attempting to navigate these moments can be overwhelming. Below is guidance on how you can aid in managing the situation:

- **Stay calm:** This may be extremely hard to do at times. However, escalating in your voice and behavior signals to your child at that moment you are increasing your anger to them. That, in turn, models to them that it is okay to express emotions through anger. If you struggle to remain calm, take up to 10 deep breaths to aid in resetting and calming yourself down.
- **Listen to what your child is telling you:** Usually what is being expressed in an outburst is an underlying feeling of sadness, hurt and/or disappointment. While staying as calm as you can, listening to what your child is saying in those moments can aid in understanding the reason as to why they are expressing the emotion through anger.
- **Establish boundaries with clear consequences:** Sticking to clear boundaries for inappropriate behavior is crucial. When your child is in a clear state of mind, explain what the consequence(s) could be so they are aware of this ahead of time.

Outbursts of anger are typically triggered by stressful events and instead of expressing their anger appropriately, they are expressing an underlying emotion through anger (e.g., hurt, disappointment, sadness, fear). Unfortunately, there could be a time where your child may feel extremely overwhelmed or sad and express suicidal thoughts. If this were to occur, please go to the local emergency room or call 911.