

JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS

## Parent Support Sheets

### Lesson 3: Big Feelings – Anger

#### Lesson Summary:

In class today, the children created a volcano experiment using baking soda and vinegar. As the mixture fizzed and bubbled, we discussed how the feeling of anger can sometimes bubble up inside us. We returned to our story “Along Came a Cloud” to focus on when the red cloud of anger appeared. The children took part in a role play, acting out an angry bull and using the “Shake It Off” strategy for self-regulation to help the bull manage his anger.

#### Try It At Home Activity: “Shake it off”

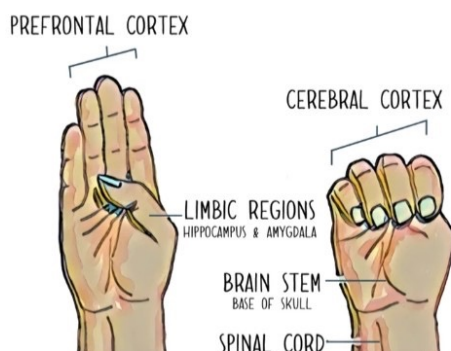
Listen to your favourite song with your child/the child in your care and Shake It Off together, practising a positive outlet to express and manage anger. Tell your child/the child in your care about a time when you were angry, focusing on where you felt it in your body, and what helped you to calm. Share other ideas on how we can manage feeling angry. Colour in a picture of Orion and Amari “shaking it off”.

#### Dr. Malie and Linsey’s Top Tips:

One of the first steps to helping children with anger is to externalise it. Talking about anger as “coming in and taking over” can help a child to practise trying to take control of that anger before it takes over. In the story “Along Came a Cloud”, we use a red cloud appearing above the characters’ head as a way of externalising the anger.

Dan Siegel has a lovely way of describing to children the neuroscience behind anger. He uses the hand model of the brain to describe how we “flip our lids” when our upstairs brain and downstairs brain stop communicating with each other. Describe to your your child/the child in your care that our brain has an upstairs where all our thinking happens and a downstairs where all our feelings live. When the stairs between them are blocked, we flip our lids and lose control of our emotions.

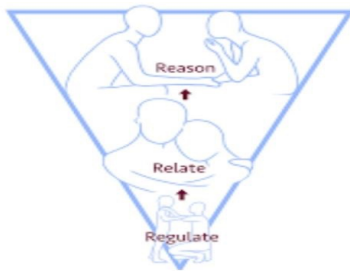
Dr Dan Siegel’s  
Hand Model of the Brain



When parenting, it is helpful to remember Dr. Bruce Perry’s 3 R’s when a child becomes dysregulated. These are Regulate, Relate, Reason. Dysregulation happens when the brain responds to the environment by triggering the alarm system. In the case of anger, the anger takes over and the child may become very distressed. During this “emotional meltdown”, they are dysregulated and will be unable to listen, comprehend or cope.

## Lesson 3: Big Feelings – Anger

First, we need to start with the first R - **Regulate**, and help the child to feel safe, calm and loved. We need to figure out what helps them to feel soothed. This can take some practise, as all children are different, and will have their own unique ways of feeling regulated. Once the child is regulated you can then move on to the second R, **Relate** - we can validate their feelings with our words, *"I know you are feeling upset, anger really took over there, it's hard"*. Focus on connecting with your child/the child in your care. When you feel your child/the child in your care is ready, you can move to the third R of **Reason**. You can discuss alternatives to behaviours. You can reassure them that you love them but the behaviour they exhibited was not okay.



Another approach that works well to help set limits when behaviours become challenging is **Gary Landreth's ACT model**. In this model, you **Acknowledge** your child/the child in your care's feelings or desires in a voice that conveys empathy and understanding. Then **Communicate** the boundary – briefly, specifically and clearly, letting your child/the child in your care know what they are not allowed to do. Then **Target** acceptable alternatives – provide one or more choices of things they can do instead.

If the child breaks the set limit, the second time the behaviour occurs, the parent gives the child a warning, naming what the consequence of continuing will be, giving them a chance to choose the right decision. If the child breaks the same boundary for the third time, the parent must enforce the consequence. This procedure helps the child learn that they are responsible for their own choices and behaviours and the outcomes associated with them.

Example: **A** - *"I know you want to bounce the basketball in the house"*, **C** - *"The rule is no bouncing the basketball inside"*, **T** - *"You can bounce it outside or play with a soft ball inside"*. If not stopping - *"If you choose to continue to bounce the basketball, the basketball will be taken away for today"*, third time - **follow through** and remove the basketball.

### Resources:

- Here is a video to explain the Hand Model of the Brain to children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx7PCzg0CGE> and an explanation below <https://buildingbetterbrains.com.au/hand-model-of-the-brain-to-explain-stress/>
- There are some nice ideas here for helping children to manage anger: <https://innovativeresources.org/furious-helping-children-manage-anger/>
- Here is a video to explain the 3 R's of Regulate, Relate and Reason to children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufKM8ihb6Sc>
- The ACT model is described with examples here: <https://www.childandfamilydevelopment.com/blog/setting-limits-the-a-c-t-method/>