



華人警訊服務中心 Chinese Community Policing Centre



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Why do we get Angry?

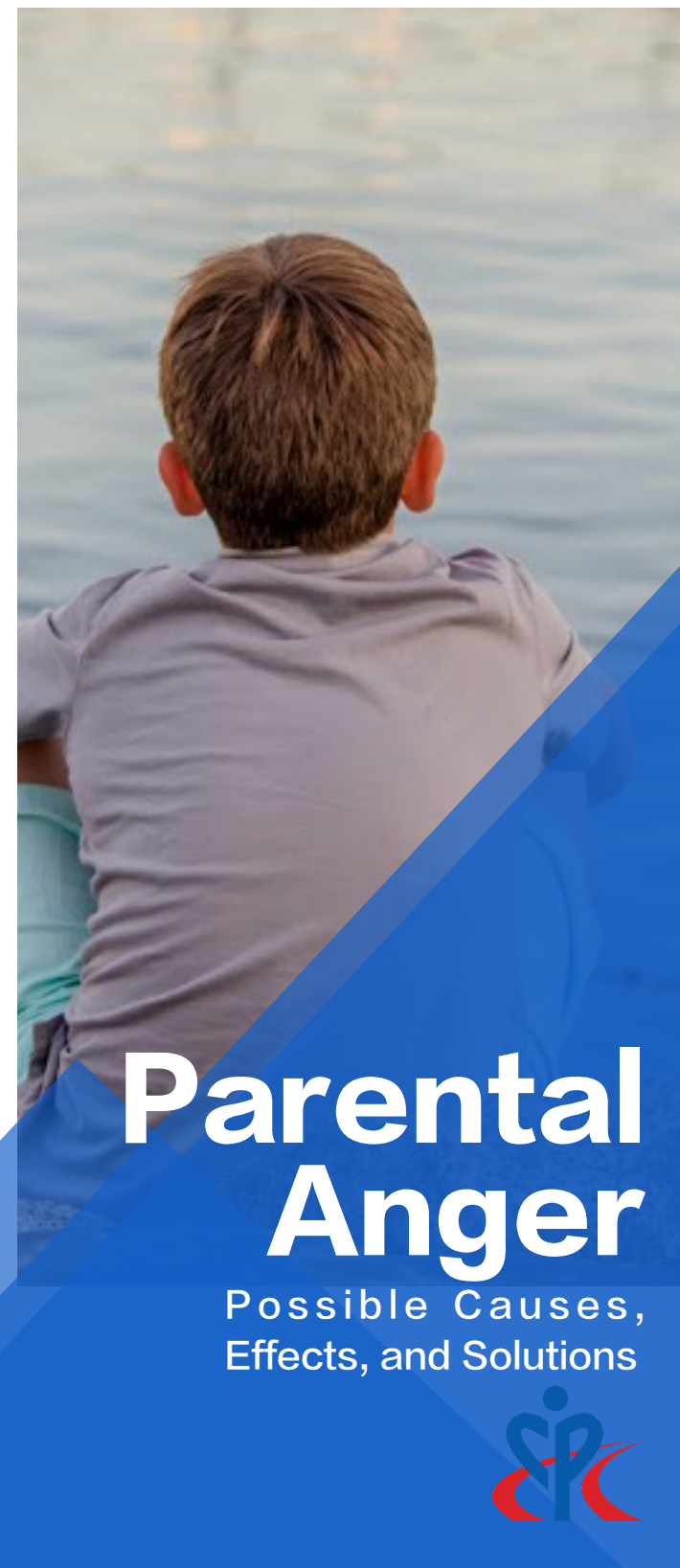
Sometimes anger can give us the energy to get something done or to stand up for what you believe in. However, it is never a good idea to act out of anger towards your loved ones - especially your children.

Why Acting out of Anger to Children is Problematic

- Picture a loved-one losing their temper and aggressively scolding you. Now imagine that person three times your size, towering over you. Imagine that person is your sole provider of food, shelter, comfort, and protection. Imagine they're your primary source of love and information about the world, and you have nobody else to turn to. Now take that dreadful feeling and magnify it by a factor of 100. That can be how your children feel when you lash out at them in anger.

- Children learn by watching you. Actually, all social mammals learn, in part, through a process called modelling, wherein the juveniles mimic the adults. When you respond to a child's wrongdoings with anger, you are inadvertently teaching them that the appropriate response to use when people aren't behaving how you want them to is to be aggressive.

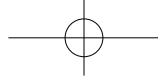
- Additionally, children who suffer aggressive (angry) scolding have been shown to exhibit lasting negative effects that impact later life: Lower IQ scores, poor adult relationships, and a higher likelihood of substance abuse, to name a few.



Parental Anger

Possible Causes,
Effects, and Solutions





Recognizing your own Anger

Pay attention to your body: When we feel overcome with anger, we have become physiologically armed to fight. Energizing hormones and neurotransmitters begin flooding our systems, tensing muscles, raising nutrient delivery through increased cardiovascular rates, and producing excess sweat to cool us down.

Pay attention to your thoughts: If you find yourself wishing anything but care for a loved one, your thoughts might be commandeered by negative emotion. Don't let these thoughts command your actions.

How to manage your anger

Find what works for you. Here are some suggestions:

- Consciously slow your breathing -- focus on the experience of the hot breath leaving your body, and the cool, refreshing air entering your lungs
- Visualize your calm self
- Practice self-care regularly. This will make you less likely to come to the 'breaking point' where you want to lash out.
- Make time to listen to relaxing music, take a nice shower, get some fresh air, do your best to get enough sleep, eat well.

Remember: "Calm is contagious," and so is anger.

What to do when Angry at Children

- Don't let your emotions hijack your behaviour. You may feel tempted to scold the child to teach them a lesson, but that's your anger talking. Your body might think the situation is an emergency, but it almost never is. Ask yourself: How important is this situation, really? What am I really angry at? -- e.g. is it really such a big deal that your child spilled juice, or are you on edge because of a tough week at work? You can teach your child after you've centred yourself, and it will be the lesson you actually want to teach.

- Managing your anger also gives you the chance to set a good example for your children, who learn much through modeling your behaviour. For example, when you take a few deep, calming breaths or walk away rather than yelling or scolding, you show your children how to be civil.

Tip: Be open and accepting when discussing mental health topics with your child.

We all make mistakes...

What can you do if you fail at managing anger towards your child?

Apologize and explain why the way you acted was wrong, and what you should have done instead. This models integrity for owning your mistakes, while teaching your child a lesson in self-control.

**Remember:
"Calm is Contagious"
(and so is anger)**

