

# Improving Anger Behavior

“**I** THINK THE ISSUE IS we really don’t communicate, even with ourselves, to know what we need in our world, or we don’t communicate well enough with others to tell them what we need and how we can each help to make each other’s worlds better,” says Dayle Malen, LCSW, MEd, a therapist based in Round Rock, Texas.

While everyone experiences anger, many individuals with ADHD experience anger more often. This is because many people with ADHD have trouble with self-control, managing their emotions, or have co-occurring disorders that also include symptoms that trigger angry feelings. Those who are on the receiving end of a loved one’s anger may themselves have trouble staying calm and lose their cool in the heat of the moment. This results in an endless cycle of anger and denial or regret. If families do not find ways to manage anger in their home, whether or not family members have ADHD, it may severely damage relationships over time.

CHADD invited Malen to share her expertise during an Ask the Expert webinar titled “Parents—Help Your Child to Be Angry Better.” Highlighted here are some of her answers to questions from attendees. You can watch the recording of the full presentation on the CHADD website. You can also visit the calendar of events to register for upcoming live webinars or to find other previous webinars that discuss education, social, and workplace issues.

**Q: What if the child refuses to do what you have explained what you want?**

**Malen:** You made the request. They made the choice to refuse the request. Now, it’s up to you. They don’t have to comply with the request, but the parent gets to decide. So, a parent might say, “I want you to have your Nintendo, but the choice is yours, sweetie. You can do what’s asked of you and have your world okay, or you can decide not to do what’s asked of you and your world probably won’t look the way you like it and you’re going to be angrier. So take a few minutes and decide.” We need them to know that they’re putting us in a position to take the next step.

**Q: Would you use the same approach for a young adult that is living at home with you?**

**Malen:** You know, this is a growth mindset. When you are asking a young adult to change the way they look at things and think about things, it’s a matter of practice to make this happen. You will have to work with them to find better ways to respond. It doesn’t really matter how old this person is. You may need to consult with a mental health professional to provide tools that you can use if things are just not working. **A**

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