

What to do when we have gone over the edge

So it's all got too much and we've really lost our temper – in terms of the Anger River, we've hit the rapids and gone right over the waterfall!.

The damage has been done, but there are things we can do to repair it.

- Say sorry – for example, “I was out of order.” It's not always easy to apologise, but it's a very important skill and we need to model it to our children.
- With younger children you could say, “I'm sorry I was so cross. What you did was naughty up to here” (show level with your hand), “but I got cross up to here” (show a higher level).
- Don't expect your child to make you feel better when you have just lost it with them. You are the adult and they are the child.
- Give yourself and your child plenty of time before trying to resolve the conflict.



Anger diaries

Some people find it helpful to keep an anger diary. This lets you look in detail at specific instances when you've been angry – your anger triggers and how you responded – and helps you work out how to manage better another time.

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| Date: | Time: |
| What were the circumstances? | |
| What happened? | |
| What physical signs did you get when you were angry? | |
| What were the thoughts you had at the time?! | |
| Were you able to use any strategies? | |
| Is there anything you could do differently next time? | |

Sometimes it can seem as if you're not making any progress, but if you look back at old diaries, you may find you've improved more than you thought.

When reviewing your anger diary, try asking yourself these questions:

- What kind of things make me angry?
- Am I becoming more aware of these anger triggers?
- Are there any patterns to my getting angry? For example, do I always get cross when I don't feel in control?
- Is there anything I can do to reduce my stress level?
- Have I tried using any of the strategies to help keep me from losing my temper?
- Are there any management strategies I haven't tried for a while?

