

Stages of an angry outburst



1. The trigger

- Intervene promptly and divert or distract the child if possible
- Move the child or other children who may be involved
- Give positive direction or instruction.
- Allow time for the child to act on the direction or instruction
- Make a note of triggers for the future

What an adult can do to manage an angry outburst in a pupil

2. Escalation stage

- Try and diffuse the situation quickly
- Make a change of activity
- Encourage the use of calming strategies such as 'star breathing', 'counting', 'self-talk', 'time out', or a physical activity such as running or jumping.

3. Crisis stage

- Safety first – make sure you are safe, the child is safe and other children are safe. Remove all items from around the child which could cause damage.
- Avoid physical restraint unless trained to do so or unless essential i.e.. The child may be hurt if you do not restrain.
- Remain calm at all times. Use a quiet, slow and clear voice. Keep your language simple so the child can understand what you are saying. Try the broken record technique. This is where you repeat the same instruction over and over again.
- Make sure your body language and your voice is non threatening at all times. You must NOT be confrontational.
- Ask for help. Send another child to get help for you.

4. Recovery Stage

- Allow sufficient time for the child to calm down in a safe and quiet environment. Give the child a simple low demand activity which they might enjoy such as threading paper clips together to make a chain, colouring or drawing. It may take a while and possibly up to an hour for the child to feel calm again..
- Be positive and encouraging at all times.
- Avoid discussing the incident at this time.

5. Post-crisis Depression Stage

- Reassurance and encouragement at all times.
- Make sure you demonstrate personal acceptance even though there has been unacceptable behaviour.
- The child may feel guilty, sad, tired or depressed as all the chemicals in their body returns to normal
- Avoid adding to any guilt or sadness the child may feel.
- Keep communicating at all times.
- Help to build damaged self-esteem.

6. Follow up

- Talk, listen and reflect
- Make a shared plan to avoid future angry outbursts

