

Lesson # 9: TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ANGER

Divorced Fathers Network
Advocates Of Shared Parenting
'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'

Effective ways to deal with anger

- Know and understand your own responses to anger and anticipate the ineffective responses you might be inclined to give
- When people are expressing anger they are sending a strong message. The message may be, "Pay attention to me "I don't like what you are doing;" or "I need something to change." Ask yourself: What does this person's anger mean?
- Accept the person's right to be angry. The other person has a right to his or her feelings - even if you do not agree with his or her anger or the way that it is expressed. This does not mean that you have to accept personal abuse!
- If necessary, you may need to ask for an agreement to use ground rules that call for mutual respect and no interruptions. If people cannot abide by these guidelines, a productive discussion is difficult
- Allow the angry person to talk so that you can understand how she or he sees the situation. Then give feedback demonstrating that you understand and respect the anger being expressed and that you are interested in working out an acceptable resolution
- An angry person will often misinterpret what you say or do. Try to say only enough to show that you are listening and trying to understand. When the person is ready to listen to you, try to match, his or her level of concern. Be aware of "trivializing" comments
- If you know of a quick solution to the situation, offer it. For example, if you can correct misinformation or provide needed assistance, do so. Remember, however, that this is a "first aid" measure, not a final resolution of the problem
- If you have been part of the problem, admit it. If the person is angry because you have not done something you said you would do or are responsible for doing -- do it. Remember, too, the power of a sincere apology

Adapted from materials developed by the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center & Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County 1997 Page 20

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