

## **Adolescence and Anger Control: The Special Challenges**

1. Many adolescents are sleep deprived. Lack of sleep makes teenagers dramatically more susceptible to anger triggers.
2. The drive for independence from adults makes it far more likely that adolescents view parents and teachers as over-controlling. Since perception of control is an important dimension of anger triggers, this makes adolescents more susceptible to anger problems.
3. Anger is an energizing emotion that adolescents often find pleasurable since it gives them a heightened sense of power and control.
4. Hormonal and neuropsychological changes increase the sensitivity to anger triggers, while the “thinking” part of the brain is not developed sufficiently to fully manage the anger experience.
5. Adolescence is a particularly stressful time and the associated stress hormones sensitize the emotional centers of the brain.
6. Many adults expect adolescents to be able to control their anger, even though there are many reasons why this is difficult for teenagers to do. Adults often respond to adolescent anger with condemnation and punishment, not with understanding.
7. As adolescents mature physically, they become more powerful, and their anger is perceived as a threat and more problematic.
8. Many adolescents do not get the proper exercise and nutrition necessary for emotional well-being. Skipping breakfast and eating high sugar, instant energy foods are particular problems.
9. Adolescents don’t readily appreciate the impact their anger has upon others and, as a result, are not necessarily motivated to control their anger. Learning to control one’s temper requires time and energy that adolescents are not prepared to expend.
10. Adolescents are not generally receptive to the idea of medication or psychotherapy. They don’t read about anger control and often perceive anger control as a parental or teacher agenda. Participating in an anger control program not a socially accepted thing to do.
11. While adolescents search for their identity and seek autonomy, they still expect unconditional support from their parents. As parents attempt to teach their teenagers a sense of responsibility, they withdraw their support in some areas. The teenager often responds with anger.