

## WEEK 22 – ANGER

### Wellbeing Element – Strengths and Control

### Character Strength – Self-Control

Preadolescence and adolescence is an emotionally challenging period of time for students, parents and teachers. Both at home and at school, outbursts of anger and stress attacks can often occur. The student brain is anatomically different to our brains; they are not little adults. While their brains are wired up to create emotions like ours, the control centre of their brains, the prefrontal cortex, is not. Therefore their emotions often go unchecked and their planning and forward thinking are often quite impulsive.

Combine this with the brain chemicals being released throughout puberty and it is little wonder that the preadolescent and adolescent brains are turbulent places. Most cases of their stress and anger are not deliberate, nor defiant; unfortunately many of the adults around them believe otherwise and react. A proactive approach is to initiate discussion both at school and at home about identifying the stressors that trigger emotional behaviours.

The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining, not when it is raining. Likewise, the time to have these conversations with students is when there is calm and no issues occurring, not during emotional episodes. Unfortunately, this is not the most common approach adopted by many of us.

An important thing for students to understand is that no one else makes them angry but themselves, except in cases of being bullied. They need to be very clearly made aware that adopting the 'victim' mentality of "it's not my fault" is a behaviour that will not benefit them in any shape or form. It also important for them to be aware that when their anger levels rise, their logical thinking levels drop.

To assist students to build self-managing and self-correcting habits, it is essential for teachers and parents to raise students' self-awareness of their moods and anger warning signals. This will enable them to put in place a series of 'off ramps' when they realise they are beginning to lose control.