



Exploding me

Information for parents and carers

Hamish & Milo is a programme which gives children the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities about a particular theme of emotional wellbeing as part of a small group. We are delighted to be able to welcome your child to the group.

In this theme, we are focusing on understanding why we might have strong feelings that can be difficult to manage and how this affects us. We will explore how, at times, we can feel angry and that sometimes we need to feel angry to be able to protect ourselves and to feel empowered or motivated about things that are important to us. There will be opportunities to share ways we can express and regulate ourselves and a range of activities to help manage these feelings.

Having strong emotions and feeling angry sometimes is an essential part of our wellbeing!

It's important to acknowledge that we can all get angry and we need to sometimes as a way of self-protection. It's an important part of standing up for ourselves and we need permission to be able to feel and express it. We need help to regulate and soothe our feelings with people close to us who can empathise, understand and validate our feelings while enabling us to feel heard, safe and acknowledged.

We also need to learn ways to recognise angry or strong feelings and sensations within us and to then be able to express and expel these feelings safely so that we don't hurt ourselves inwardly or externally and so that we don't hurt other people.

Helping your child

We know that it can feel hard to help our children with strong or angry feelings and it's hard for them to manage and express themselves too.

As parents and carers, we invite you to talk with your child about their experiences of being in this group and about the activities they have been involved in to support them with us. We welcome your thoughts as you know your child best and we hope to offer some ideas to help your child learn and thrive.



Helping your child continued...

As parents/carers, we know that you're already supporting your child and suggest that it's important to notice and recognise how our children are feeling and to respond with understanding. This validates how they are feeling and then helps them manage these big and powerful feelings.

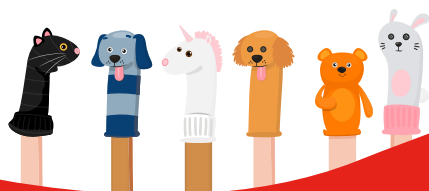
When we feel anger and angry feelings burst out, it can be scary for others around us. This might cause them to react in defence, from their own fear of the situation or from not knowing how best to help.

It is important that we try to recognise that when someone is angry, it is a primitive reaction to defend themselves.

That person has an unspoken need within or a range of other feelings that may be masked by the anger, such as fear, sadness, painful feelings of loss or rejection, jealousy or hurt. We need to hold this in mind when we are helping to support people with angry feelings and respond with care, curiosity about what is happening for the person and with compassion to help them.

As part of the 'Exploding me' group, your child will be involved in 10 weekly sessions.

These sessions will help them to think about, understand and find ways to manage their feelings.



Sock puppets

An expressive, interactive and hands-on way to engage

For each of the sessions, we use sock puppets to help the children talk about and share their feelings. Your child will make their own sock puppet to use in each session as part of this group.

You may like to make one at home too as a way of helping your child to talk about their feelings or just for fun! Sometimes it's easier for them to tell you what they're thinking about through describing the puppet's feelings or situations.



The children will also receive their own journal to reflect on the sessions as they move through the programme, 'reward' stickers and a certificate!

Here we outline all the programme activities, along with suggestions of what you might like to do or say to support your child at home.

Session and overview	Ways to help
Session 1: When I'm feeling angry A look at how we might experience anger and the words to describe it.	Encourage your child to put words to the sensations they have when they're angry. Where in their body do they feel the different sensations?
Session 2: My inner guard dog How our brain and body react to protect us and trigger fight, flight and freeze responses.	Ask your child to tell you about how their brain works to protect them.
Session 3: It's okay to be angry Recognising when we need to be angry and why we need to have permission to feel angry.	Help them to think about why we need to have angry feelings sometimes and tell them that it's okay.
Session 4: Drawing my angry feelings Expressing feelings through drawing them symbolically.	See if they would like to share their drawing or they might like to do another at home.
Session 5: Exploding feelings An art activity to create expressive rockets, volcanoes or fireworks.	Talk to your child about the words they used to express some of their exploding feelings.
Session 6: Volcanoes and earthquakes Understanding the feelings underneath anger.	Talk together about how anger can mask other hidden feelings and share thoughts.
Session 7: Better out than in! A look at ways to safely express angry or strong feelings.	Discuss and try some ways of releasing anger at home, e.g. stamping, jumping, shouting, scribbling etc.
Session 8: Anger and conflict Recognising the link between anger and conflict and looking at how to mediate, communicate and find resolutions.	Ask about the 'Listen and solve approach' and the stages of listening, empathy and repair. Practise it together.
Session 9: The rhythm of angry feelings Using rhythm as a release.	Have a go at using rhythm together. Notice how it can feel and have fun!
Session 10: Sculpture of emotion An expressive activity using clay.	See if your child would like to share their model with you and ask them what they enjoyed most about being in the group.

If you feel concerned about how your child is feeling and their wellbeing, talk to someone at school so that you can share ideas.



Suggestions to help

Initially, validate and connect with their experience. Try to say the following with an energy that matches the intensity of the feeling they have:

"Wow, I'm not surprised you are angry..."

"Those are big and powerful feelings you have!"

Stay grounded and containing. Tell them:

"I'm here no matter what!"

Speak in a way that is calm but not flat. Respond with an energy which matches that of the child's feeling so they feel heard and that their feeling is not diminished, dismissed or lessened. Try not to react or retaliate.

Try to help regulate and soothe your child, bringing them back to a place where they can feel things are manageable. You could do this by trying the following:

Do something together to alleviate the angry strong feelings, for example stamping, jumping, shouting, expressing energy.

Then enable them to allow the rush of feelings to subside until they feel calmer and more able to think, reflect and begin to make sense of what they might be feeling and why.

Give them space and time to calm down.

Try to reassure and contain rather than question.

Think and reflect. Only when your child is calmer and the wave of anger has passed through, can they begin to think about what they want or need to do in order to manage or resolve the difficult feelings or situation.

Help them understand what happens to them when they are angry and notice that it can feel scary to be angry. Think together about what feelings might be hidden beneath the anger.

Think together about what helps them to manage the difficult feelings. Think together about the triggers or situations that cause the angry feelings.



Sensation & Emotion Cards

These cards are a great way to help children put language to sensations and emotions, to help regulate their feelings and increase self-confidence. Our unique cards consist of 60 different emotions, guidance and 20 activities.

Hamish & Milo Pals

Our Hamish and Milo Pals are precious cuddly friends that help children to feel comforted, cared about and listened to. Perfect to snuggle and they are great fun too.

Find out more at hamishandmilo.org