



PINK SHIRT DAY
FRIDAY 16 OCT 2020

Starving the Anger Gremlin:

A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on anger management for young people

Kate Collins-Donnelly (2012), Jessica Kingsley, UK

This book is part of a series that introduces cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) skills to kids to help them deal with stress, anxiety and anger. The author Kate Collins-Donnelly has worked as a therapist, psychologist, criminologist and anger management consultant based in the UK for many years.

She aims to provide the information in a 'simple, activity-filled, easily readable and interesting way'. I think she achieves this especially with the workbook format. The worksheets are set in a wider context by including an introduction for parents and professionals about evidence-based CBT. It also includes safety guidelines noting when people start to explore their anger it may raise some difficult issues and she encourages the reader to seek support.

Real-life examples

This version for young people, which she states is suitable for children aged 10 and over, has some examples from her real clients aged between 13–18 years. They refer to complex life issues such as a 14-year-old boyfriend cheating, a 16-year-old being picked up from the police station and a teen abusing a family member who has come out as gay.

I am not so sure my son, who is almost 10, would relate to these scenarios, though I guess it would give him a sense that uncontrolled anger can cause problems and get you in trouble! This book would be most suitable for young people who have more serious anger issues.

"I beat my mum up a lot when I was younger. I hurt her really bad once." (Sarah, 16)

"I lose it and take it out on my mum. I'm horrible. I punch her." (Sally, 13)

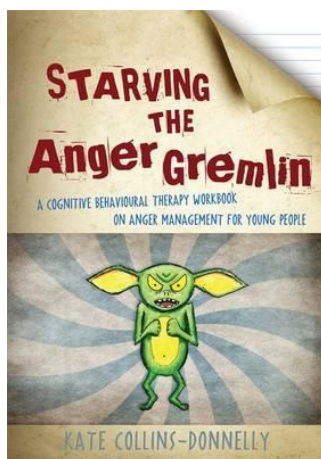
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Collins-Donnelly has also penned a similar workbook for younger children called *Starving the Anger Gremlin* for children aged 5–9. This has more of a focus on emotions and develops skills through a range of puzzles and drawing activities.

Clinically-based

I think both books impart valuable CBT skills that help young people identify unhelpful thought patterns and behaviours and give them tools to move towards more healthy ones. This therapy modality is accepted as effective and the author has clinical training. The choice of which book to read may not depend so much on physical age, but the emotional age of the child and what issues they may be experiencing.

Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information & Resource Specialist at the Mental Health Foundation



The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews this Pink Shirt Day on books with bullying prevention themes.

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