

It can be a tough time for young people at this age. As they develop their emotions and hormones feel all over the place; one minute they are raging, the rest they want to cry, they go between moods and can act out. It may even feel like you have a toddler back in your home!

During puberty the brain goes through a development period, however the rational part of the brain does not fully form at this stage and teenagers are very much guided by their emotions. During gaming the only decisions they need to make was whether to shoot/challenge/score, when they finish they suddenly need to make harder decisions again (or what they feel are hard decisions, remember even deciding what to wear is classed as a hard decision at the moment) Depending on what they were playing they may be wired, have additional energy, be angry or aggressive and require some direction.

Here are some helpful suggestions from experts and young people to help manage those emotions when they finish playing online.

Help them to identify their own feelings.

This can be helpful for them to acknowledge how they are feeling and for you to know how to respond to them.

- Are they angry at something or angry because you have asked them to finish playing in the middle of a game and all their hard work for the last hour has been for nothing?
- Are they sad due to finishing playing or because they were talking to their friend or because it was nice escaping into their online world for a bit?
- Are they happy because they won, or they enjoyed chatting to their friends?
- Do they feel calm as they have relieved their frustrations on the game and shooting several opponents helped release negative emotions or they feel calm as they have been relaxing?

There can be many different reasons and it is good to acknowledge the positive feelings as well as the negative.

Girls are more in tune with their feelings and may answer this a lot easier than boys. Boys find it harder to express their feelings so you may be met with a wall of silence when asking this question. You may need to think about discussing it in a different way.

For example if they are angry, it's pretty obvious how they are feeling but if you asked them they may not acknowledge it, so instead try asking what they are doing and reflecting back what they say then enquire as to why they did that. This may seem a roundabout way but boys are more likely to open up using this method than if you asked them directly.

Think about how best to respond to those feelings.

Sometimes we may need to bite our tongue.

Sometimes they need to know their emotion is valid, it is ok to feel sad. Acknowledging the emotion and validating it can be beneficial for your child.

They may not want you to help them, they just need to vent that emotion and you happen to be in the firing line.

Be mindful of how you respond, saying things like “It’s only a game”, “Why are you getting upset you can play again tomorrow” etc can add fuel to the fire. Emphasising, acknowledging and listening can be better actions to take.

Remember they may vent their anger or frustration in a physical manner, make sure they are in a safe space to do this and do not pose any harm to themselves. Once they have calmed down then approach them and remain calm.

Taking Action

Ask them what they feel they need to help that emotion. If they are angry what will help calm themselves, if they are sad, what activities do they like to cheer themselves up?

More information – [secondary – activities – tuning into emotions](#)

Providing an outlet. Do they need some space to calm down? Do they have somewhere to do that? Creating a safe space allows your child to regulate their emotions in a safe manner and away from siblings who may try and help but end up making things worse! If they share a room, providing them with somewhere they can go to be alone can really help.

Look at activities they can do to help calm themselves down. It may be going for a run, reading a book, having a punch bag, yoga or an activity for their hands.

For ideas please see – [Secondary – activities – responding to emotions with practical solutions](#)

Safe networks – Sometimes they may find it hard talking to their parents, letting them know they have other people who they can speak to can help them. Other family members, family friends etc