



Kids' Connection

Session 4 "Handling Anger"

HANDLING ANGER

Goal: To identify ways to stay calm and stay out of fights.

Key Points:

- ⊗ When we lose control and react to situations with an angry behavior like fighting, there can be negative consequences.
- ⊗ Steps to handling anger:
 1. S = Stop – cool down and gain control.
 2. I = Identify – what are you feeling and why?
 3. T = Take Action – respond to your feelings in an appropriate way that shows respect for yourself and others.
- ⊗ Alcohol and other drugs can cause us to lose control over the way we feel and act.

Major Message: *I CAN stay calm when I feel angry and not get into fights.*

Pre-School

I. **Sunshine and Cloud** *(Review with the participants the process for this activity.)*

II. **Review and Introduction**

I am so glad that each of you could come back today. Let's go over our Group Promises before we start. *(Go over each promise briefly with the participants, using the poster as a visual aid.)*

Last time we talked about our feelings. Who can tell me something they remember about what we said about our feelings? That's right – we said all our feelings are okay but it is important to show our feelings in safe ways. One way we can do that is to talk to someone we trust.

Today we are going to talk about one feeling we all have. Sometimes the way we act when we have this feeling can get us in trouble. Sometimes we even hurt ourselves or someone else when we have this feeling. Can you guess what feeling I am talking about?

III. **Guided Discussion**

I would like for you all to think of a time when you had to learn something new. Maybe it was when you were learning to spell your name or tie your shoes. If you know how to tie your shoes, did you do it right the first time you tried? Of course not. Someone had to show you how to do it and then you had to practice over and over again. Watch me practice tying my shoes and then be ready to answer some questions. *(Act out practicing to tie your shoes and get frustrated several times. Say things like, "I will never learn to do this!" and "I am so mad at my brother for not teaching me right!" Finally, give up in a huff, hit your shoe, and pout.)*

Now, why did I get mad? That's right, because it was hard trying to learn to tie shoes. I was mad because I was trying to learn something new and it wasn't working out like I wanted it to. I didn't control myself, instead I got really mad and hit my shoe and pouted. I didn't show any self-control. Sometimes when I show my mad feelings like I just did, it can have consequences I don't like.

Okay – Watch me try this again and help me think of ways to control my actions. *(Throughout this discussion, act out appropriate motions.)* I am practicing tying my shoes. Wow, this is hard to do! I am getting really mad but now, instead of hitting my shoe and pouting, I can learn some new ways to act.

1. First I need to STOP and realize that I am getting mad.

H **How do you know when you are getting mad? What are some signals?**

Pre-School

2. Next I need to think about the real reason I am mad. Why am I mad? Yes, I am mad because it is hard to learn how to tie my shoes and I am tired of trying.
3. Finally I need to do something that will help me calm down.

H **What could I do to calm down? (Guide discussion to include several reasonable ideas for calming down-taking a walk, doing jumping jacks, coloring, talking to a friend.)**

H **Would it help me feel better if I used alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs when I am feeling mad?**

Using alcohol and drugs can make us act strange. They can make us lose control over the way we act and feel. They sure won't help us if we are feeling mad!

You all had some great ideas about how to calm down and do things that won't hurt us or someone else when we are angry.

IV. Activity and Processing

(Facilitate the role play activity described on page 60.)

V. Closing Summary

Remember that all of our feelings are okay, even mad feelings, but we need to control how we act. It is important that we don't hurt ourselves or other people when we are mad. When we feel like we are getting mad we need to stop and ask ourselves why we are mad. We need to do something that will calm us down like taking a walk or talking to someone. Alcohol and drugs won't help – they can make us lose control over the way we act and feel.

Our Major Message for today is: ***I CAN stay calm when I feel angry and not get into fights.***

VI. Major Message Ritual

Elementary

I. Sunshine and Cloud

II. Review and Introduction

H Who can tell me what we talked about last time?

Last time we talked about our feelings. We said that all our feelings are okay and that how we choose to express or show our feelings is important. Remember, we said it is never a healthy choice to show our feelings in ways that hurt us or someone else and that using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to change our feelings is never okay for us to do.

Today we are going to continue to talk about feelings, but we are going to focus on one feeling in particular.

III. Guided Discussion

H What do you think a feeling might be that all of us have, that often gets us in trouble because of the unhealthy or inappropriate way we may choose to show it? (Allow time for them to discuss what they believe the feeling is. They will most likely identify anger or being mad.)

H Based on what we just discussed, do you think it is wrong for someone to be angry? Why or why not?

Being angry or getting mad or upset are normal feelings. They are okay for us to feel, just like all our feelings are okay. What becomes a problem for most of us is that sometimes we choose to show our anger in ways that are unhealthy or not appropriate. Unfortunately, sometimes the way we show our anger ends up hurting us or someone else and carries negative consequences. That is why this is an important feeling for us to spend time talking about.

H What are some things that make you mad or angry?

Based on our answers, we can see that some of us get angry about the same things. When we don't get something we want or think we deserve, we can get frustrated. When people say things about us that hurt our feelings or they "pick" on us, it can make us mad. If we think something is unfair or we don't get to do something we really want to do, that can cause us to feel angry. The list goes on and on, doesn't it? And while it is understandable that all of these situations can make us angry, when we lose control and react to situations with an angry behavior like fighting, there can be negative consequences. It is important to recognize that we are in control of how we act when things happen that we don't like. It is also important to learn some ways to stay calm and keep our self-control.

Elementary

H What do you think “self-control” means?

Self-control means “the ability to stay calm even when the situation may be hard, challenging, or difficult.”

H What are some examples of ways that someone might act who lost their self-control when they were feeling angry?

Fighting, yelling or screaming, destroying property, throwing things, slamming doors, hitting, etc. All of these are examples of losing self-control and almost always have negative consequences for us and others.

H What could be some of the consequences for someone who loses control? *(Consequences could include getting sent to the principal’s office, getting sent to alternative school, getting hurt, hurting someone else, etc.)*

A consequence of these behaviors might also be getting a bad reputation. Even though we may not like what is happening, and even though it may be unfair and feeling mad or angry is normal, we need to keep control over how we act and what we say. Remember, we always have a choice about how we act!

H Why would it be important to use “self-control” – to stay calm – when we feel angry? *(Reasons might include to keep from doing things we might regret, or that might hurt someone’s feelings, or that could start an argument or fight, etc.)*

When we stay calm, even though we are angry, we are showing ourselves and others respect. We are also protecting our reputation and earning respect from others.

To help us handle our anger in healthy ways, that won’t hurt us or someone else, there are three simple steps we are going to learn. We call these our “Sit It Out” steps because the steps spell “s-i-t,” “sit!” *(You may want to put the steps on a poster or flip chart before group.)*

- 1. S = Stop – Cool down and gain control.**
- 2. I = Identify – What are you feeling and why?**
- 3. T = Take Action – Respond to your feelings in an appropriate way that shows respect for yourself and others.**

We are going to talk about each step one at a time and then have time to practice them. *(You may want to use a specific situation as an example for discussing these steps, i.e. your brother takes your basketball without asking; you want to play instead of cleaning up your room or doing your homework; a friend at school starts saying mean things about you, etc.)*

Elementary

1. **S = Stop – Cool down and gain control.** As soon as you start to feel angry it is important to take a minute and gain control.

H **What are some signs or signals that would warn us we are getting angry?**

Everyone has different “anger warning signs” and it is important to know what yours are. The important thing is to take a minute and gain control as soon as you see your anger signs. Count to ten, take some deep breaths, think about something you like to do, etc. Pick the activity that helps you cool down.

2. **I = Identify – What are you feeling and why?** Ask yourself what are you *really* feeling.

You may think the feeling you have is anger, but it might be something else like fear. In fact fear and anger are two feelings that go together sometimes. For example, I may be afraid I won't do well on a test or be afraid of not reaching a goal I have, but rather than admit I am afraid, it is easier to blame someone else for the situation. Other times what you are *really* angry about isn't what just happened but something else. For example, let's say you just spilled a soft drink on the carpet when your brother walks in the room and changes the T.V. station. You begin yelling at him. Are you really angry with him or upset about spilling your drink?

H **When was a time something like this has happened to you?**

3. **T = Take Action – Respond to your feelings in an appropriate way that shows respect for yourself and others.** Say to yourself “*I need to calm down. I am going to....*”

The important thing is to calm down and not lose control. You may decide to take a walk or go outside and play. Maybe the best thing for you to do is express your anger to the person you are mad at like we discussed in the session on feelings.

(Restate the steps:

1. **S = Stop – Cool down and gain control.**
2. **I = Identify – What are you feeling and why?**
3. **T = Take Action – Respond to your feelings in an appropriate way that shows respect for yourself and others.)**

H **What are some things you can do to calm down when you are feeling angry?**

H **What are some appropriate ways in which you can express your feelings?**

H **How many of you want to have a reputation for being able to control yourself and stay calm when you are angry?**

Elementary

Some people choose to fight or hit when they get angry. You may even be thinking “cool kids fight” when they get mad or disagree with someone. The truth is that most kids try to stay away from getting into fights. They choose to walk away rather than fight. Fighting is never the best way to settle disagreements or differences. You won't hurt yourself or other people, you won't get into trouble, and you won't get a reputation for someone who fights if you choose to walk away. You will get a good reputation for being someone who stays calm.

Remember last week how we said that drinking alcohol or using tobacco or other drugs to change our feelings is never okay for us to do?

H How could using alcohol, tobacco or drugs like marijuana or inhalants make it hard to practice self-control when we are feeling angry?

Alcohol and other drugs make it hard to keep self-control. In fact, they can cause us to lose control over the way we feel and act. They end up being in control of our feelings, our choices, and how we act. They can cause us to say or do things we wouldn't normally do or say and using them will only make the situation much worse.

IV. Activity and Processing

(Choose and facilitate the appropriate role play activity as described on page 60 or 61.)

V. Closing Summary

Being angry or upset is normal, but reacting to situations with angry behavior can bring negative consequences. When we are noticing signs or signals that we are getting angry or upset, it is important to “sit it out” for a bit: Stop and gain control; to Identify what we are feeling and why; and to Take Action that is appropriate and won't hurt us or someone else. It is always better to stay calm and walk away from a fight. Also remember that alcohol, tobacco, inhalants and other drugs can cause us to lose control over the way we feel and act. Using them will only make the situation much worse.

Our Major Message for today is: ***I CAN stay calm when I feel angry and not get into fights.***

(Make copies of the Major Message Bookmark – Handout KC 4:6 - on colored cardstock and cut them into bookmarks to distribute.)

VI. Major Message Ritual