



Youth 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.*

I. Sunshine & Cloud

II. Review & Introduction

★ Who can tell me what we talked about last session?

Remember, all of us have feelings and all our feelings are okay. How we choose to express our feelings is very important. We can learn how to handle and show our feelings in healthy, positive ways. Even though we are all faced with hard times in life that challenge us both emotionally and physically, it is never a healthy choice to show or express our feelings in ways that hurt us or other people. Drinking alcohol or using 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

- ★ **What do you think a feeling might be that all of us have and that often gets us in trouble because of the 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.)***
- ★ **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 not appropriate. Unfortunately sometimes the way we show our anger ends up hurting us or someone else and can have negative consequences. That is why this is an important feeling for us to spend time talking about.

★ 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? 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 we don't like. It is also important to learn some ways to stay calm and keep our self-control.

★ **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.” Some of us may have pretty good self-control and others of us may not. I bet we can all agree that at some point, each of us has had a time in our life where we were so mad that we “couldn’t see straight.”

★ **Can any of you think of a really tough time when either you or your friends had a hard time staying calm and how you acted?**

Fighting, yelling or screaming, destroying property, throwing things, slamming doors, hitting, etc. are examples of losing self-control and almost always have negative consequences for us and others. A consequence of these behaviors might be getting a bad reputation. Sometimes our behaviors can even hurt us and someone else, can’t they?

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.

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. ***(Distribute Handout YC 4:7 – I Can Choose to the group participants. 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, e.g. a friend at school starts spreading gossip about you and calling you names; your parents won’t let you go out with some of your friends; someone who you really likes suddenly starts ignoring you; etc.)

- 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.

★ **What are some signs or signals we might have 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. The important thing is to take a minute and gain control as soon as you see your anger signs.

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

★ **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 talk to a friend. 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.

★ **What could be some of the consequences for someone who loses control?**

A consequence of losing control might also be 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! 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.

★ **What are some things we can do to calm down when we are feeling angry?**

★ **What are some appropriate ways in which we can express our feelings?**

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

- ★ **How could using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs like marijuana and 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. Using alcohol or drugs is never a good choice.

IV. Activity and Processing

(Choose an appropriate activity for your group and upon completion of the activity process what they learned and how it relates to the discussion.)

V. Closing Summary

- ★ **What do you think was the purpose of our group today?**

Being angry or upset is normal, but if we react to situations with angry behavior it can have negative consequences. When we are noticing signs or signals that we are getting angry or upset, it is important to 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. Alcohol and other drugs can cause us to lose control over the way we feel and act and 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.***

VI. Major Message Ritual