

Anger Management:

A Cognitive Behavioral Group Intervention Protocol
for Students with Exceptional Learning Needs

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FOREWORD

This anger intervention group protocol was created by Monica Freedman through her work with the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland for use in the public domain. It is assumed that those administering this protocol have training in the mental health field, basic knowledge of cognitive behavioral intervention, and knowledge of group processes. Teachers and support staff may need to partner with another party with this background knowledge in order to gain the most positive outcome.

Basic clinical skills are necessary to discern when to discuss group processes versus content and to decide when it is appropriate to process issues brought to group over pushing forward with items on the agenda. This protocol as created to be modified to fit various student skill levels and functionality. Therefore, sessions can be combined or extended to fit a group's level and natural progression. For example, sessions 11 and 12 have been broken down into four sessions for students with lower functioning allowing for a better grasp of the materials and more practice time. Additionally, the protocol was written in simple language to allow for the greatest access to the materials.

Facilitators will need to create a behavior modification system that works for their group. Token economies with frequent tangible and verbal rewards work well, and consequences are best decided upon and agreed to by the group in the first session.

Pre and Post testing is helpful to document positive change.

Each session has an agenda at the beginning for quick review. It is recommended that this agenda be used to gather needed materials for each session. Most items are readily available in schools, but a few need to be purchased ahead of time. Assume that paper, pencils, and chalk are needed for most sessions. Also, it may be helpful to create a folder for each participant and place handouts of necessary activities and homework for that day's session in these folders for quick access. The folders can be distributed to the participants at the beginning of each session.

Group Session 1

Agenda

I. Introduction to the Group

Schedule
Confidentiality Promise
Group Rules
Ice Breaker

II. Explanation of Group

III. Goals

IV. Homework

Materials Needed

M&Ms

Index Cards

Identified Rewards

I. Introduction

Schedule

Welcome participants and review the schedule. Discuss the importance of coming to every session in order to get what they need from this group.

Confidentiality

Ask the group if they know what confidentiality means. Define the term and ask for reasons why it is important. Give an example of breaking confidentiality. It is OK to share one's own information regarding the group, but not any other member's information. Hand out folders and discuss the "*Confidentiality Promise*". Have students sign the form and place their folders under their chairs.

Group Rules

Discuss with the group why they think rules are needed. Ask the group to give suggestions for rules they think are needed. You may want to list them on the board and discuss each rule's importance. Also, it may be helpful to have a scribe write the list down if there is a student able to do so. "The Rules" can be transferred to a large poster board and posted or written on the board before each session.

Ask the group what consequences they think are fair for breaking the group's rules. List consequences along with the rules.

Ice Breaker

Use a game that will provide benign information about each member to help the group connect. An example is the Skittles Game. Buy a bag of Skittles. Take some index cards and write questions that all members are likely to feel comfortable answering. For example, "What is your favorite song?" A question can be created for each color Skittles. Draw cards out of a bag, or give a card to each participant and have them hold it so the writing is toward the center of the group if the group is small enough. The facilitator pours some Skittles in each participant's hand and reads one card at a time. Tell them that if they have a certain color Skittle they need to answer that question before they can eat it. Facilitators can model appropriate answers for the group.

This is a good place to discuss ongoing positive behavior recognition. Explain how participants will be rewarded for positive behavior and participation in group activities by praise and some tangible measure. Facilitators may choose a method that works for their students. An example would be to keep small candies, tickets or prizes on hand and set expectations for their distribution. Remember to identify allergies to chocolate or any sensitivities to sugar!

II. Explanation of Group

Ask members to share briefly what brought them to group. Normalize that everyone has reasons for being in the group and it often helps people feel more comfortable to hear that others have similar issues. Reflect similarities between members' reasons and praise members for their willingness to share.

Pose the question, "What is anger?" to the group and listen to the responses. Define anger.

"Anger is a normal feeling that comes naturally when we think someone or something will hurt us or someone we care about. Also, we may become angry when we think that someone has wronged us. Finally, it is normal to become angry when our needs, wants, and goals are not being met."

III. Goals

Describe the importance of the goal setting activity. This is good place to begin to reinforce that individual needs are important and obtainable.

"Now we are going to pick what you want to get out of group. This group is for you and it is important that you get what you need from it."

Have participants get their folders and turn to the Goals worksheet. Hold up an example to ensure everyone understands which sheet to take out. Work with the participants to identify their goals. Remember to instruct them to choose goals in the "Do" section that are things that may be hard for them now and they want to do those things better by the end of group.

IV. Homework

Have the students pull out the Care Giver Goals worksheet and ask the participants to take it home and have their caregiver fill it out before the next session. Let the participants know that there will be times they will be asked to discuss things that we go over in group with their caregivers. This will help them reach their goals. Also, let them know that they will have homework for group sometimes, and they will be asked to practice what they learn in-between sessions. Explain that the homework will help them reach their goals, and the more they practice the things they learn, the easier it will be to use those tools when they really need them. It is best to practice things when they are calm, because it is very hard to try new things when they are angry.

Praise participants for their attention and participation during group and let them know that you are looking forward to working with them to meet their goals.

GOALS

NAME: _____

BY THE END OF THIS GROUP

I want to feel *LESS*:

SAD



ANGRY



HURT



OUT OF CONTROL



DEFENSIVE



I want to feel ***MORE***:

CALM / RELAXED



HAPPY



SUCCESSFUL



UNDERSTOOD



CONFIDENT

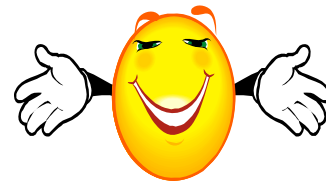


I want to change the way I think and do things so that I am **BETTER** at:

Calming myself down



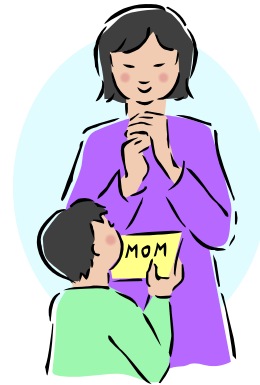
Not being aggressive



Asking for what I need



Talking to my parents and teachers



Getting along with others



Caregiver Goals

What would you like to see changed in your child by the end of the anger management group?

Agenda

- I. Review Homework
- II. Myths of Anger
- III. Anger Vs. Aggression
- IV. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

Group Session 2

I. Review of Homework

Review each participant's Caregiver's Goals. Ask for volunteers to share and reflect commonalities in their caregiver's goals and their own. Express hope in the ability to obtain these goals and reframe goals that may not be appropriate for this group. Also, ask the group if they were surprised by any of the goals their caregivers listed or by anything their caregivers wrote.

For those who did not bring their goals back or do not want to share, normalize that things can happen to make it difficult to get homework finished, and discuss how to overcome some of those things with the group.

"It's true that caregivers may be busy or it may be difficult to ask them to fill things out. How about if those who didn't bring get their Caregiver Goals share some goals you think they might choose?"

Ask participants to place their Caregiver Goals worksheet behind their Goals worksheet in their folder.

II. 3 Myths of Anger

Ask participants to open to the All About Anger: True and False sheet in their folders. Explain that people have beliefs about anger

that may not be true. Read each statement to the group and ask group participants if they think the statement is true or false. Comment on how many members report true or false on each one to assist in building connections between participants. Read the answers and explanations.

Let participants know they are going to learn ways to control their anger better, learn to talk about how they feel and what angers them, and they'll learn how to check their thoughts to see if they are right because we often think very fast and sometimes have thoughts about a situation that are not true. Finally, they will learn healthy ways to get what they need or want.

III. Anger Vs. Aggression

Explain that the words anger and aggression are used together a lot, but they mean different things.

"Anger is a feeling, and aggression is an action or something we do. Aggression is something a person does that may harm someone else. Ask participants for examples and add to them. Acts of aggression may include:

<i>Fighting</i>	<i>Yelling</i>
<i>Pushing</i>	<i>Kicking</i>
<i>Destroying</i>	<i>Sexual Assault</i>
<i>Stealing</i>	<i>Lying</i>

Keeping information from someone

Saying something hurtful on purpose.”

Ask participants to discuss examples of when they have been aggressive and what aggressive acts they do the most. Also, ask the group to discuss what the consequences of their aggression have been in the past. Universalize common threads of negative consequences for acts of aggression, and then ask the participants to share how they have expressed their anger without using aggressive acts. There may not be many examples, but praise participants for any nonaggressive examples given and express hope that participants will learn other ways to deal with and express their anger during this group that will lead to more positive consequences.

V. Homework

Ask participants take the Caregiver All About Anger: True and False worksheet home, and share it with their caregiver.

Caregiver Sheet

All About Anger: True and False

1. False. *You are born with your anger and you can't change the way you deal with it.*

True. You have learned how to show your anger over time. You can learn other healthier ways to express anger.

2. False. *Aggression/fighting is the only way to deal with anger.*

True. There are other ways to deal with anger like:

- Learning how to control how much anger you have
- Learning how to talk about what angers you
- Learning to think about things differently and check your thought to see if they are right
- Learn tools to handle and express your anger

3. False. *You have to be aggressive to get what you need or want*

True. You can get people to hear what you want or need without harming others or acting in a way you will feel bad about later. This is called being *assertive*.

Group Session 3

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Cognitive Triangle

III. Identification

Feelings

Poster/Sheet Activity

IV. Homework

Materials

Feelings Poster/Sheet

Index Cards

1 Die

Identified Rewards

Introduce the cognitive triangle by drawing a triangle on the board and anchoring the corners with “*Feel*”, “*Think*”, and “*Do*”

Think

Feel Δ *Do*

Discuss how the corners are related in that everyone has thoughts and feelings when something happens, and people usually choose their actions or “*Do*’s”, based on how they think and feel.

Ask the group for examples of feelings, thoughts, and “*do*’s” and write them on the board. Ask the group where aggression fits. Sometimes students with learning challenges or those who are not yet familiar with describing thoughts or feelings have a hard time separating feelings and thoughts. Stating that thoughts are like clouds that float through your mind and giving examples may be helpful. Discuss that “*do*’s” are not automatic but are chosen based on thoughts and feelings.

“The good news is we can learn to change things at each corner. By the end of group you will learn how to think about things differently, learn ways to feel better, and do less of what gets you into trouble.”

Next, ask the group for John’s feelings, thoughts, and “*do*’s” from the story. Although the story did not give John’s thoughts, ask the group to guess what he might have been thinking. Discuss the feelings that the group brings up that are not feelings of anger like “*used*”, “*upset*”, “*sad*”, etc. If the group does not bring them up, discuss the possibility that John may have been feeling other feelings besides anger, like “*disappointed*”, because he thought he was not going to be able to see his show.

I. Review Homework

Ask participants to discuss their experiences with sharing their Myths of Anger worksheets with their Caregivers. Ask participants to place homework in their folders.

II. Cognitive Triangle

Ask participants to pay close attention as you read the following scenario and let them know it will be used for discussion throughout the group.

John has been waiting for weeks to watch a new episode of his favorite TV show. He has been talking about it at home and at school. The day has finally arrived. John comes home from school does his homework and turns on the TV. Just as he sits down on the couch and the show begins, his mom comes in and says, “Turn off the TV. I need you to watch your brother and sister while I go to the store.” John becomes very angry, yells at his mother, pushes his sister to the ground, and goes to his room and slams the door.

III. Identification

Feelings

Discuss that although we often say sad, bad, mad, and happy when people ask us how we feel, there are many more feelings that we experience everyday. Explain that it is important to be able to identify what we are feeling in order to deal with those feelings better. Either pass out a feelings list or direct the participants' attention to a feelings poster. (There are many feelings posters and sheets available with corresponding faces to assist students who have difficulty reading. A feelings poster is available at feelingsunlimited.com for about \$15.95.)

Introduce and go over the feelings listed on the sheet or poster and discuss how this can give them a "cheat sheet" for the next activity. Ask for a brave volunteer to go first and hand them a die. Explain to the participants that each of them will draw an index card. The index card will say happy, mad, sad, or bad, or good. Each participant

will then roll the die and name that number of feelings that are like the index card they picked. For example, if they rolled a "3" and picked "Sad", they would name three other feelings that are like sad. Then, they would give an example of when they felt one of those feelings. A suggestion would be to give an identified reward to the participant who volunteered to go first and after each feeling listed for all participants.

IV. Homework

Ask participants to complete the homework sheet by listing two situations and the feelings that they felt. Let the participants know that they cannot choose happy, mad, sad, bad, or good as their feelings. Explain that it is OK if they do not write down their homework, but they need to come to group ready to share their situations and feelings.

Feelings Homework

What Happened?	Feelings?

Group Session 4

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Identification Continued

Mask Activity

III. Homework

Materials

T-shirts

Sheets of Paper

Index Cards

Fabric Markers

Identified Rewards

I. Review Homework

Ask participants to share their experience and feelings with the group. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify two feelings on the list and share a time when they felt those feelings.

II. Identification

“The Mask”

Remind the group that anger is a normal natural feeling and then let them know that anger is different than some other feelings because often there are other feelings behind anger. Ask the group what a mask is and why people wear masks.

“People wear masks so others see who they are pretending to be and to hide who they are. Anger is not a pretend feeling, but it is often a feeling used to hide other feelings. For example, someone may say something about a wrong answer you gave in class and you may feel angry, but you also feel embarrassed and are worried that other

people in the class may figure out you are having trouble with the assignment and say more mean things and laugh at you. Remember John? He was feeling disappointed and used along with feeling angry. We often show the anger, but hide the other feelings. The hidden feelings are often driving the “Do’s” on our triangle. ”

Ask the group to give more examples and list them on the board or on paper. Ask for a brave volunteer to give a personal example of a time when he/she expressed anger in his/her “Do”, but also felt another feeling listed by the group.

Provide each group member with a white t-shirt or a piece of paper and give members fabric or regular markers to share. Ask the group to use the front of the shirt/paper to show feelings they let the world see, like anger, and the back shirt/paper to show feelings that are “behind the mask” feelings that they do not show anyone. Give group members the suggestion of using different colors to represent feelings, like red for anger. They can make a key on a piece of paper. Let them know they can use words, drawings, or anything they like to show their feelings. It is helpful to have a few examples of completed works with one abstract example and one that has drawings and/or words. There are no real guidelines here, just a creative way for self expression that allows the group to name underlining feelings.

Give ample time for the group to complete the activity, and then ask each member to describe their work.

This activity may take some guidance for the facilitator/s. Allow for this, as it is important to know what feelings are experienced when the group moves on to thought changing and problem solving. Remember to be a cheerleader and praise participants for any efforts they make.

V. Homework

Ask Participants to think about “behind the mask feelings” they experience throughout week and be ready to discuss them at the beginning of the next session. Those who wish to can use the homework sheet to record their situations and feelings.



“Behind The Mask” Homework Sheet

WHAT HAPPENED	BEHIND THE MASK FEELING

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Identification, Continued

Physical Reactions to

Anger

Anger Meter

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

I. Review Homework

Ask participants to share their experience and feelings with the group. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify two feelings on the list and share a time when they felt those feelings.

II. Identification Continued

Physical Reactions to Anger

Explain that as humans our bodies have ways of sending us signals. Ask the group if anyone has ever been sick. Ask members to share what kinds of signals their bodies sent them to let them know they were sick. Then discuss the fact that our bodies also send signals to let us know that we are getting angry. Identifying these signals can help us know it is time to do things that help us calm down or let us know we may not be thinking clearly. Also, let them know that looking at what their bodies go through when they are angry can also show them how anger or stress may be unhealthy.

Give one example of a physical reaction to anger.

“One thing that can happen to your body when you get angry is your stomach may hurt.”

Ask the group what happens to them when they get angry. Ask the group to take out the Signals worksheet and write their signals on the sheet. Provide assistance where necessary. List their responses on the board or a sheet of paper. Add to those responses, comment that these responses are common, and state that everybody has their own warning signals. Read the list and ask participants to raise their hand if they have that response and reflect how many participants share similar responses.

The Anger Meter

The goal of this section is to give participants a way to identify and track how angry they are getting in certain situations and begin to notice that when they are higher on the meter (more aroused) it is more difficult to make good decisions. Also, they will learn that even when they do nothing, their bodies will calm down at some point. Also, they can identify what calms them down already.

Remember, the things they are doing now may be aggressive, but it is important to identify that they are using something and that strategy can be replaced with something healthy that will work without harming anyone.

Introduce the “Anger Meter” by holding up a copy of one. Explain that a low number is less anger and that a higher number means a more intense anger. A “0” is calm and happy, where a “10” is feeling like your going to explode. Ask the group to help anchor the numbers by giving examples of how each would feel and what they might be doing at each number. This part can be tough for students who lack self-awareness. It may be helpful to give a few suggestions for each number and then let members choose for themselves.

“Now that we have decided what each number feels like and what we might be doing, you are ready to

start to keep track of how angry you are getting, what you are getting angry at, what feelings might be behind the “mask” of anger, and to know if what you are doing to express your anger is aggressive or may harm someone.

III. Homework

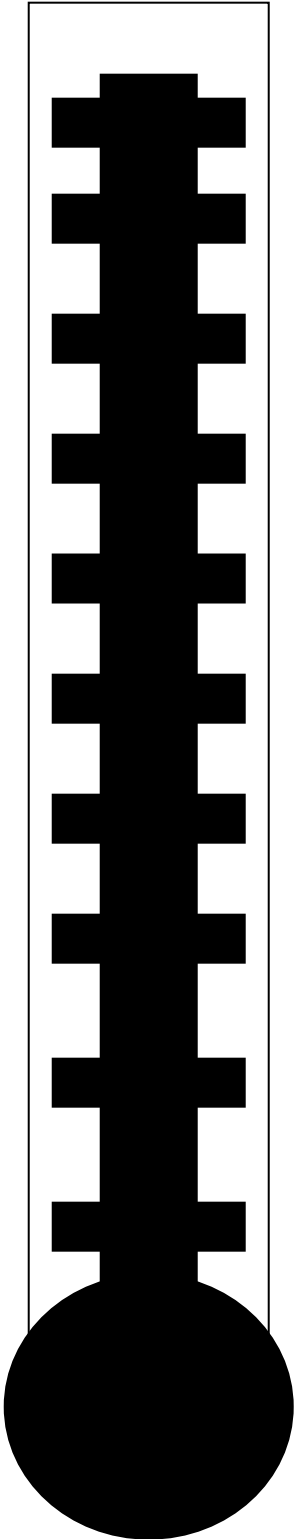
Have Participants look at the “**Anger Meter Activity**” worksheet and go over it. Let them know that for the next session, they will begin with sharing their experiences.



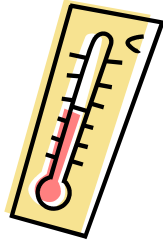
My Signs

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

ANGER METER



10.	_____
9.	_____
8.	_____
7.	_____
6.	_____
5.	_____
4.	_____
3.	_____
2.	_____
1.	_____



Anger Meter Homework

What Happened

Meter #

Feelings

“Do”

Agenda

- I. Review Homework
- II. Identification, Continued
Triggers
- III. Review
- IV. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards
Index Cards

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences, place on the anger meter, feelings, and actions with the group. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they remember feeling angry and ask them to identify parts of the homework sheet for the group by memory.

II. Identification, Continued

Triggers

The goal here is to help participants understand that certain people, places, or events can trigger their feelings of anger. Give an example.

“Let’s say John just got off of the bus and was looking forward to playing football with his friends. He was feeling happy and thinking, ‘We are going to have a good game today.’ On his way home, he saw the boy who beat up his best friend. As soon as he saw the boy, he felt his face get hot and his heart begin to beat fast. He chased after the boy and pushed him to the ground yelling. John was feeling calm and happy and was looking forward to football, but that changed when he saw the boy who hurt his friend.”

Group Session 6

Discuss how a thermometer needs heat to rise. Triggers are everyone’s individual “heat sources”.

“Just like anger signals, different people, places, things, or events can trigger anger signals for different people. It is important to know what triggers anger in order to be prepared and have a plan to help ourselves feel better, think better, and choose more helpful actions or “Do’s”. It may also be helpful to know why a trigger bothers you and think about the “mask feelings” that are behind it. We will practice how to “check our thoughts about our triggers later to see if they really are a big deal after all.”

Activity

Place cards with “Person”, “Place”, “Thing” or “Event” in a bag or hat. Have participants draw a card and give an example of a person, place, etc. that they know angers them. Reflect commonalities among members and explain that what we think about those people, places, things and events can bring up angry feelings pretty quickly right now because of past experiences. Open it up to the group to share other triggers other than those linked to the card they chose. Reinforce that two people can be in the same place at the same time and only one may have their anger meter go up or get mad.

III. Review

Tie the materials the group has learned together. Use the cognitive triangle to demonstrate that a situation or event triggers feelings and thoughts. This can raise the anger meter and then lead to choosing an action. Review with group on how well

people think when they are at a “7” or higher on the meter. Ask the group to link an event with thoughts, feelings, anger meter level, and possible actions or “Do’s”.

Choose a possible trigger such as a teacher yelling at them and a positive event such as a getting compliment from a teacher or adult. Students may bring up negative thoughts about the compliment scenario such as” they are only doing this because someone else is in the room. Honor that thought and let them know the group is going to be talking about “checking our thoughts” at the next group session.

V. Homework

Ask members to complete another sheet that now includes identifying their triggers Let them know that the group will discuss their assignment at the beginning of the next session. Let them know that from now on they will be learning how to think and feel differently to help them manage their anger and meet their goals.



My Triggers

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____



My Triggers Homework

WHAT HAPPENED?	ANGER METER #	TRIGGER	FEELINGS	“DO”

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Management Breathing

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

Balloons

Group Session 7

the group did not mention. Facilitators may offer to type another sheet that includes the group's ideas for next session.

Discuss how there are a lot of tools that can help manage anger, and from this point on they will be the ones in charge of how they feel no matter what other people do or say. Let them know that the group will be trying new tools out. The key is to choose healthy ways to take care of yourself that help and do not harm anyone else. Let the group know that some tools will work for them while others may not be a good fit. It is important to be open to trying all of the tools a few times to see what happens.

Breathing

Explain how breathing can be used as a tool to calm down and is something everyone does without thinking most of the time. When anger is triggered and signs of anger are recognized it can be very helpful to focus on breathing to calm down.

Activity

Deep Breathing

It may be helpful for a facilitator to stand up to model this skill. Ask participants to report where they are on the anger meter now. Then ask students to find a comfortable position in their chair or to stand. Instruct them to breathe through their noses and out through their mouths.

“Take in a really deep breath. Bring the air all the way into the bottom of your lungs near your stomach. While you do this, place

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences, place on the anger meter, trigger, feelings, and actions or “Do’s” with the group. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they remember feeling angry and ask them to identify the parts of the sheet for the group by memory.

II. Management

Finally! Let’s talk about how to help ourselves feel better. A great place to start is with bringing down the anger meter. Remind students that their meters come down over time even when they do nothing. Now let them know there are things they can do to bring them down faster. Ask the group to share what they are already doing to calm down. List these on the board and comment on how even “Do’s” that are aggressive may also bring anger meters down because they release negative feelings that build up in the body just like exercise. However, there are healthy ways to release anger that will not get them in trouble, and they will feel better about themselves. Distribute the sheet “Deal With It”, and discuss ideas that are on it that

one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach and see if which rises more. Practice bringing in air so that you push your lower belly out more than your chest when you breathe in the air. Picture blowing up a balloon in your stomach.

Have a facilitator demonstrate deep breathing while holding his/her hands on his/her chest and stomach to show the lower stomach being pushed out farther than the chest. Have a facilitator blow up a balloon to demonstrate how we bring air into our lungs just like we blow air into a balloon.

“Now we are going to take in air in through our noses for four counts, hold it for two seconds, and then let air out through our mouths for six counts. You can count out loud or silently. Clear everything out of your head except to notice the air going in and out of your body. If you would like, you can imagine clean calm air going in and angry air going out. It may also be helpful to picture someone’s negative words about you going out of your body when you breathe out and then not bothering you anymore. Some students have said that thinking of a positive song that they really like, but does not make them angrier, while they practice breathing may be helpful in calming them. You can try that too if you would like.”

Explain that this is something everyone can do without anyone noticing in class or at home. Discuss the connection between exercising to the point where they are breathing heavily and how practicing deep breathing can have the same effect.

Give each participant a balloon.

“Let’s practice blowing up these balloons to notice how much effort it takes and to get air into them. Let’s use the same effort in

practicing deep breathing so we get the best results. We are going to practice this for four minutes and see how we feel afterwards. You can do this exercise with your eyes open or closed.”

When the four minutes are up, ask the participants to share how they feel and where they are on the anger meter. Do they feel calmer? Did this help? Was it difficult to stay focused? Did anyone use any of the extra thoughts to help them out? Ask participants if this might be something they will use outside of group? Where might they use deep breathing to calm themselves down and lower their anger meter?

III. Homework

Ask members to practice deep breathing when they are calm and not angry twice over the next three days. Remind participants that it is easier to learn new skills when they are calm. They are more likely to use skills they know when they are higher on the anger meter because people do not think well when angry or stressed out. Ask participants to then try using deep breathing twice during the rest of the week when they notice their anger signs and when their anger meter is going up. Ask them to record their number on the anger meter before using deep breathing and after they try using the skill.

Deal With IT



Drink water



Phone a friend*



Watch TV*



Listen to music*



Run



Walk



Play a sport



Watch a movie*



Write in a journal



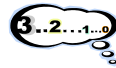
Yell (In private)*



Slam a door (when home alone)



Walk away*



Count



Talk to an adult you trust



Punch a pillow



Shop*



Draw/Paint



Read



Eat*



Help out someone else



Take care of/hang out with your pet



Play a video game*



Ride your bike



Clean/organize your room



Sing



Dance



Go out with friends to a place you like



Cry*



Take a shower/bath



Put on your pjs



Hang out in a place that relaxes you



Paint your nails



Do your homework



Go to sleep*



Ask for a moment to get yourself together



Go to the bathroom (with permission, of course)



Keep quiet



Ask for a neck or foot massage from a friend



Squeeze a stress ball



Make a list of all of the great things about you



Think of your favorite place

Think of something you did really well

Think, "My problem will not be as bad tomorrow/next week."

Think, "I will get through this."

Think, "I will be home at ____."

Think of something funny/Laugh

*Remember, these are good if you do them at the right time and you don't pick something/someone that will anger you out more. Also, some of these you cannot do without creating more stress. For example, if you walk away from a teacher while they are still talking to you there will be more stress!! Finally, eating, shopping, sleeping, and crying are good if you don't do too much of them. If you find you're doing too much of these, you still can't calm down, or you are hurting yourself. TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST and get some help!



Deep Breathing Homework

WHAT HAPPENED	ANGER METER # BEFORE BREATHING	ANGER METER # AFTER BREATHING	“DO”

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Management

Muscle Relaxation

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

Squeeze Stress Balls

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences with the deep breathing skill and their anger meter numbers before and after using deep breathing. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they could have used deep breathing and ask other participants who found it lowered their anger meter numbers to share how it may help those participants. Ask participants who did not practice to commit to practicing deep over the next week. Have participants place completed homework sheets in their folders.

II. Management

Muscle Tension and Anger

Ask participants to take out their “signs” sheet from their folders and look to see if any of their anger signs had to do with tight or sore muscles. Did anyone list that their neck or shoulders are tight? Headaches or make a fist? Explain that these are related to tightening of the muscles called tension. When tension is released our muscles are more relaxed and it can be a good tool to use to calm down. Relate this to contact sports like football, boxing, and lifting weights.

Activity

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Many students report that fighting releases their energy related to anger. This is understandable because some people respond well to heavy tension or impact on their bodies. Getting the muscles to tense and then relax can also have the same effect of releasing negative energy. Explain progressive muscle relaxation as a way to work with their bodies to release tension and anger by tightening certain muscle groups at a time until all the groups have been worked on and relaxed.

Have the members either sit in their chairs comfortably or lie down on the floor. Pass out a stress ball to each participant to use for the activity and keep to use in the future.

“We are going to try something to release tension from our bodies. Let’s start with our toes and work up the body. Squeeze your toes as hard as you can by curling your toes towards the bottom of your feet. Hold it (about 5-7 seconds), hold it, now let your toes go and relax. Next, the legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and tense or squeeze your thighs, your upper part of your legs, your knees, and your calves, and the lower part of your legs. Squeeze them so tight that they raise up off of the ground. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Now on to our rear ends. Squeeze them really tight. It should feel like you are rising out of your chair. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Now we are going to tighten our stomach and lower back. Squeeze them tight and you should be feeling yourself become like a rock in the middle. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Next, the hands. Ball

your hands up in fists and squeeze as hard and you can. You may pick up your stressball and squeeze it if you would like. Hold it, hold it, and now relax. Now the arms. Hold them down at your sides and squeeze your lower arms, your elbows, and your upper arms. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Next the shoulders and upper back. Squeeze and lift your shoulders up toward your ears and head. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Now for the face. Tense or squeeze your jaw, squeeze your eyes shut, and squeeze your cheeks and forehead. Hold it, hold it, now let go and relax. Now we are going to tighten up everything at once. Hold it, hold it, and now relax. Take a minute to notice what parts of your body are heavy and relaxed and if any parts are still tense. Go back and do that body part now and see if you can feel a difference. Ready? Squeeze it, and hold it, now let go and relax. Great job!"

Ask the participants to share how they feel now and report their number on the anger meter now. Do they feel calmer? Did this help? They can expect to feel heavy in some parts of their bodies. However, sometimes this activity is difficult for some

students, and the facilitator may want to continue asking participants if they would like to try ten push ups and then report how they feel. Have the participants list activities they already do or activities they can try that will release muscle tension. It may be helpful to list some activities that can be done at home and some that can be used at school. There is not a lot of opportunity to play football at school, but they can tense their muscles anytime!

III. Homework

Ask members to practice progressive muscle relaxation when they are calm and not angry twice over the next three days. Remind participants that it is easier to learn new skills when calm, and they are more likely to use skills they know when they are higher on the anger meter because people do not think well when angry or stressed out. Ask participants to then try progressive muscle relaxation and any other activity that is not aggressive that releases tension in their muscles during the rest of the week when they notice their anger signs and their anger meter going up. Ask them to record their number on the anger meter before muscle relaxation and after they try using the skill.



Muscle Relaxation Homework

WHAT HAPPENED	ANGER METER # BEFORE MUSCLE RELAXATION	ANGER METER # AFTER MUSCLE RELAXATION	“DO”

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Management

Distraction

Imagery Activity

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

CD or Download of Ocean Sounds

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences with the progressive muscle relaxation and their anger meter numbers before and after using this skill. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they could have used a muscle relaxation or release skill and ask other participants who found this type of skill lowered their anger meter numbers to share how it may help those participants. Ask participants who did not practice to commit to practicing a muscle relaxation or a tension release skill of their choice over the next week. Have participants place completed homework sheets in their folders.

Distraction

Remind participants of the cognitive triangle and how thoughts also affect how we feel and what we do.

“When we think negative or angry thoughts it can be very hard to keep our anger meters from going up. Sometimes it is really helpful to put other thoughts in our head to trick our brains into thinking something else that calm us. This is called distraction. Many of us may have been told we are easily distracted, and that would be a good thing for our next relaxation skill. We are going to replace negative angry thoughts with a mini vacation at the beach! Although we

Group Session 9

aren't really going to leave school and go to the beach, we will have our imaginations take us there to get our brains to stop thinking angry thoughts. This will then help us calm down and feel less angry.”

Activity

Guided Imagery

Ask members where their favorite place is and ask them to describe what that place looks like, sounds like, and smells like. Is it hot or cold? Remind the members that they are in charge of what they think and they can create a mini vacation right in their head. They can take their thoughts away from what is getting them angry and help them feel positive and calm at the same time. Voice that you do not recommend they spend all of their time thinking about this place, because that can get them into trouble. Imagery is used to create a short period of time, say 3 to 5 minutes, that can get them back on track and help them feel calmer. Ask participants to report what their number on the anger meter is now.

A sound track of the ocean may be used here to add a nice auditory piece. If one is not available, just proceed with the activity without it.

“For this mini vacation, we are going to go to the beach. When you do this on your own, you can go to a favorite place of your choice. Let's get comfortable in our chairs. (Model a comfortable posture for the group) Close your eyes and see the beach in your mind. The water is slowly coming up on the sand and then going back out the sea. See the white foam of the waves as they come on the shore and gets closer and closer to your toes. Feel the softness of the sand as you dig your toes into it and they sink down. Sand squishes between your toes. Feel the

heat of the sand and smell the salt in the air. The sun is warm and bright warming your whole body so you are sweating, but it feels nice and refreshing. Feel the water as it reaches your toes and is cold, cooling you off. Hear the seagulls over your head making noises as they dive into the ocean for food. You watch as the seagulls dive over and over again into the water. Let the sound of the waves relax you as you lay back and look up at the little clouds passing by. This feels relaxing with no worries or cares. Just hanging out enjoying the sounds of the water, the blue of the ocean and the feel of the warm sand. Now think about how calm and relaxed you are as you start to say good-bye to the beach and return to your day. Think about how the place you are going back to is only a small part of your day and will not last forever. Think about taking the warm sunshine with you in your mind and in your heart. Remember that you can come back here whenever you need to enjoy some quiet time or to get away. On the count of five open your eyes and start to get back into your day calmer and OK. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5. Open your eyes.”

Ask members to share their experiences. What did their beach scene look like? What did their bathing suit look like? Was anyone with them? What color was their ocean? Light blue or dark blue? Ask them how thinking about seeing, hearing, feeling, and smelling everything changed the experience for them. Explain that the more detail they can imagine the more distracted they will be from their angry thoughts. Ask participants to report what their number on the anger meter is now and discuss when they might find this useful.

III. Homework

Ask participants to practice imagery three times each over the next week. Ask them to record their numbers on the anger meter

before and after they do the imagery. Ask participants to practice when they are calm and when they are angry and to notice if they are thinking less negative or angry thoughts after they complete an imagery activity.



Imagery Homework

WHAT HAPPENED	ANGER METER # BEFORE IMAGERY	ANGER METER # AFTER IMAGERY	“DO”	LESS NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AFTER IMAGERY? Yes or No?

Group Session 10

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Management

Thoughts

Your Thoughts Activity

Correcting John's Thoughts

Change Your Thought Activity

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences with imagery and their anger meter numbers before and after using this skill. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they could have used imagery, ask other participants who found this type of skill lowered their anger meter numbers to share how it may help those participants. Ask participants who did not practice to commit to practicing imagery over the next week. Have participants place completed homework sheets in their folders.

II. Management

Thoughts

Remind participants of the cognitive triangle and discuss how thoughts can affect feelings and "Do's" or actions. Often thinking about negative thoughts over and over again can lead to more anger without any help from a trigger. That can make it difficult to calm down. Discuss last session and how participants learned that they have control over what they think, and by changing their thoughts to positive thoughts, they brought their anger meters down and felt calmer.

Introduce the idea of common thought errors or mistakes. Ask participants if they have ever had a thought that turned out to be false. For example, have they ever thought things would not get better after an argument with a friend and they did? Explain that there are nine common thought errors that people make all of the time, and these mistakes are what often keep our negative thoughts going.

"When we learn how to "check" our thoughts to see if they are even correct before getting angry, it is a lot easier to keep our cool and stay calm. Also, when we catch a mistake in our thoughts we can change that thought to a more realistic and positive thought that helps us deal with the situation better and choose "Do's" that don't get us into trouble."

Your Thoughts Activity

Pass out the Your Thoughts sheet and read each thought error. If you have a group that can read, have participants take turns reading them. If the group has difficulty reading, read the sheet to them stopping after each item to give examples. Ask group members to share examples of when they have made these thought mistakes as well.

Correcting John's Thoughts Activity

Remember John from session 3. Ask participants to listen to the story about John again, and explain that as a group they are going to John's thoughts for errors that are listed on their sheet.

"John has been waiting for weeks to watch a new episode of his favorite TV show. He has been talking about it at home and at school. The day has finally arrived. John comes

home from school does his homework and turns on the TV. Just as he sits down on the couch and the show begins, his mom comes in and says, "Turn off the TV. I need you to watch your brother and sister while I go to the store." John becomes very angry, yells at his mother, pushes his sister to the ground, and goes to his room and slams the door."

"Do's" after the activity if they would like. That way than can also track if changing their thoughts affected the other corners of the triangle; "Feel" and "Do".

Let the participants know that the story does not list John's thoughts, but as a group they can guess what he might be thinking. Assist the group in identifying John's possible negative thoughts, and ask participants to identify which thought mistake from their sheet they might be. Inform the group that some thoughts may fall under more than one mistake. Prompting may be necessary for this activity because it is challenging. Provide a lot of praise and continue to universalize John's errors with everyday examples that they might run into.

Change Your Thought Activity

Remind participants that they are in charge of their thoughts, and they have the power to change them. Let participants know you are going to give each participant a thought and they are going to name the mistake and change the thought to a more realistic positive thought. This is a good activity to have participants work in pairs. Or keep the activity open to the whole group if working independently is too difficult.

III. Homework

Ask participants to record two negative thought mistakes over the next week and list possible realistic positive thought to take the place of the negative thought. Ask them to record their number on the anger meter before they begin the activity and after. Let participants know they can list feelings and



YOUR THOUGHTS

1. **All or Nothing** – Everything is perfect or awful. Things *always or never* happen.
2. **“Yes, But” Thinking** – Throw out the +s and only see the – s.
3. **Mind Reading** - You can read people’s minds and can tell what they are thinking.
4. **Telling the Future** – You can see the future and are sure you know what will happen.
5. **“Feel” Thinking** – You are letting the way you feel tell you what to think.
6. **Labeling**: Because something happened you now say you are a _____, he is _____, I am a _____.
7. **Should Thinking**: I should have, he should have _____. Also, be careful of “have to”. There are many ways to do things, not just one.
8. **Know it All Thinking**: Because of one or two things you think you know it all.
9. **End of the World Thinking** – You think everything will turn out in the worst possible way.



Your Thoughts Homework

What Happened?	Meter #	- Thought	Mistake	+ Thought	Meter #	Feelings	“Do”

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Management

Problem Solving

Now and Later Activity

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

I. Review of Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences with “checking” their thoughts. Did their anger rating go down? How did their thoughts affect their feelings and “Do’s”? What were the most common thought mistakes in the group? Universalize that everyone makes thought mistakes by linking similar participant mistakes. For members who did not complete the homework, ask them if they can identify a situation in the past week where they made a thought mistake and ask them to change that negative thought to a more realistic positive thought and that might affect their feelings and actions. Ask participants who did not practice to commit to practicing imagery over the next week. Have participants place completed homework sheets in their folders.

II. Problem Solving

Having clear steps to take to choose a “Do” that has positive consequences is helpful. Discuss the idea that even “Do” choices that get participants into trouble have at least one positive for each person or they would not choose it.

“Here is an example. John told Tim that he is stupid in front of the class, and Tim chose

Group Session 11

to punch John because in that moment he thought the other students in the class might think he is tough. Maybe, Tim releases his anger and tension pretty well by hitting. Both of those ideas are positives for Tim, so he may go with his choice to hit John. For every “Do” there are positive and negative “now” consequences and positive and negative “later” consequences. The situation I just gave about Tim and John gives examples of positive “now” consequences.”

Pass out the “Now” and “Later” sheet and ask participants to fill in what happened when John said that Tim is stupid and list the above consequences under Now +’s. Ask participants to give examples of some negative “now” consequences and list them in “Now” - box. (If participants have difficulty writing, a facilitator can take dictation for that participant or choose to fill out a sheet for the group.) Some examples might be Tim gets yelled at by the teacher, John punched Tim back, Tim’s girlfriend tells him she is angry with him for fighting. Move on to “later” consequences and discuss both positive and negative things that could happen because of Tim’s choice to hit John. Explain that sometimes it is hard think of positive consequences for aggressive or negative behaviors. Assist the group in identifying some if they get stuck. Gaining a reputation of someone who is tough is an example. Fill out the rest of the sheet using John and Tim’s example. Assist the group in also thinking of “later” consequences that affect their life goals.

Examples are graduating from school and getting a job.

Discuss that it is important to know both positives and negatives of the “Now” and “Later” to make a choice that you want instead of making a quick choice without thinking. Ask participants to pick another more positive behavior that Tim could choose to do instead of punching John, and fill in the boxes for “now” and “later” positive and negative consequences as a group. Ask the group to decide which behavior they want to choose and discuss how they came to that choice and if that choice fits their own personal goals.

III. Homework



Ask participants to take a situation and list the “now” and “later” positive and negative consequences for an aggressive “Do” choice that they might have chosen in that situation in the past and an alternative positive “Do” choice. Ask them to go through the process for each behavior and then make a choice. They will need to be able to explain how they made their choice to the group next session.

Inform the group that next session is a review session where they will be split into two groups to complete a final task where which they will be asked to explain things that they have learned in past sessions and put everything together,



Let's Make a Choice

What Happened?



	NOW	LATER
 Aggressive “Do”	+S	+S
	-S	-S
 Alternative + “Do”	+S	+S
	-S	-S

Choice	Why?



Let's Make a Choice

What Happened?

	NOW	LATER
 Aggressive “Do”	+S	+S
	-S	-S
 Alternative + “Do”	+S	+S
	-S	-S

Choice	Why?

Group Session 12

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Review

Cognitive Triangle

Myths of Anger

Underlying Feelings Behind Anger

Physical Signs

Thought Signs

Anger Meter

Triggers

Relaxation Techniques

Problem Solving

II. Team Activity

Scenario to apply all learned techniques

III. Homework

Materials

Identified Rewards

I. Review Homework

Ask participants to share their situations, both positive and negative consequences for aggressive and alternative choices, and their final choice.

II. Review

It is time to wrap up and review learned materials. Have past session written materials handy to show participants to help jog their memories.

Ask the participants to talk about and give examples for the concepts of the cognitive triangle, myths of anger, some feelings that are “behind the mask of anger”, physical and cognitive signs of anger, thought errors, of their ratings on the anger meter, triggers, examples of relaxation techniques and “deal with it” ideas, and positive and negative consequences for behavior choices.

II. Team Activity

Divide the group into teams of two to three people for the final activity.

Provide the whole group with a scenario and a paper with all of those concepts listed.

Read the scenario aloud and ask them to complete their sheets letting the teams know the group will come back together to discuss their work. Give the teams approximately 20 minutes to work through their task.

Facilitators may need to assist groups or do the activity as a whole depending on group members’ functioning.

List each group’s answers on the board. As the first team gives their feedback, list their items on one side. Then list only items thesecond team provides that the first team did not list. Discuss all feedback, even answers that may not be helpful and let the group respond with their thoughts. A possible scenario is as follows:

“Max comes into class and sits down at this desk. He hears John talking to some other kids saying ‘Max’s shoes are lame. His Mother must have picked them out for him.’ The other students laugh and then Max feels a ball of paper hit him in the back. He feels his face getting hot and his fists ball up. He thinks, ‘He is always messing with me. Everyone is laughing. I know he will keep doing this all day. I am lame. I have to fight him or everyone will think I am letting him disrespect me.’ Max also thinks about how he just came back from suspension and got his privileges back at home. He doesn’t have much, but he has a bike. He does not want to lose it for 2 weeks again. He was also told that he may have to repeat the 8th grade if he misses any more school and fails Math and Science again. Max stomach is burning and he is trying to

figure out what to do. Tyra says to him, 'Don't listen to John, he's just jealous because his girlfriend likes you.' The teacher comes in and hands out the warm up activity."

III. Homework

Ask participants to really try to use their skills over the next week. Inform them that they will discuss how putting everything all together worked for them, their individual progress, and their progress as a group at the next session. Also, as the next session is the last one, facilitators can inform the group of any treats they can expect. For example, if the facilitators plan to provide pizza, the group can be asked their preferences and be informed not to eat lunch that day.

 **Review Activity**

 **Signs of Anger:**

_____, _____, _____

 **Thoughts:**

 **Your Thoughts. What errors is Max making?**

_____, _____, _____

Real and “KEEP  ” thoughts:

_____, _____, _____

 **Feelings Behind the Mask:**

_____, _____, _____



Number on Anger Meter: _____



Triggers:

_____, _____, _____

What relaxation techniques or *Deal With IT* activities can he try?





_____, _____, _____

_____, _____, _____



Choices!!

	NOW	LATER
 <p>Aggressive “Do”</p>	+	+
	-	-
 <p>Other + “Do”</p>	+	+
	-	-
My Choice		

 **Homework**

What Happened?



Signs of Anger:

_____, _____, _____



Thoughts:



Your Thoughts. What errors is Max making?

_____, _____, _____

Real and “KEEP  ” thoughts:

_____, _____, _____



Feelings Behind the Mask:

_____, _____, _____



Number on Anger Meter: _____



Triggers:

_____, _____, _____

What relaxation techniques or activities can he try?

Deal With IT





_____, _____, _____

_____, _____, _____



Choices!!

	NOW	LATER
 Aggressive “Do”	+	+
	-	-
	+	+
 Other + “Do”	-	-
My Choice		

Group Session 13

Agenda

I. Review Homework

II. Feedback

Review Goals

Growth

Group Input

Facilitator Input

Favorite Items

Future Suggestions

III. Termination

Next Steps

Certificates

Celebration

Materials

Identified Rewards

Certificates

Celebration Treats

I. Review Homework

Ask participants to share their experiences from the past week in putting all of their skills together.

II. Feedback

Review Goals

Ask participants to pull out their goals from the first session and take a moment to look through the goals they chose. Ask members to share what goals they believe they reached and what goals they would like to continue to work on.

Growth

Group Input

Ask participants to share thoughts on the progress they think they have made individually and as a group. How would

others in their lives like teachers and caregivers say they have changed?

Facilitator Input

Participants look to the facilitator/s for praise and feedback. Provide each participant with thoughts of how you think they have grown. Remember that no positive change is too small to mention. Also, take a moment to discuss how the group has grown as a whole and comment on the support participants have shown each other, the group's cohesiveness, and the responsibility the participants have taken for their progress as a group.

Favorite Items

Ask members to share some favorite things they learned in group. What tools did they find most helpful to manage their anger, and what tools might they share with friends to help them out?

Future Suggestions

Ask participants to share what they liked least and what they would like to change about the group format or items learned. How would they make it better for the next group?

III. Termination

Next Steps

Ask participants to share how they will use what they have learned going forward. When do they think they will need these skills the most? Provide encouragement stating that the more they practice, the more they will become experts of how to manage their anger, control their thoughts, and make positive choices. If they keep it up, they will be on their way to make their goals in life.

Certificates

Present each member with a certificate of achievement to acknowledge his/her efforts and accomplishments. Even high school students like to receive items of appreciation and positive feedback.

Celebration

Offer participants treats to celebrate the successful ending of the group!!!

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!