

Session 42: Things We Do When We Get Angry

anger management • self-control • personal responsibility

Session 42 reinforces the important understanding that we each have the ability to choose a response rather than simply react when we get angry.

Note: Review Sessions 10 and 11 (pages 40–41) prior to conducting this session.

Students will

- evaluate the outcomes of negative choices they might still make in response to anger
- identify things they can do to gain greater self-control when angry

Materials

- handout: “What Real Kids Do When They’re Angry” (pages 104–105)
- chart paper; black and red marker

Introduction. Say: You’ve been learning a lot of ways to better control anger. Change takes time, and sometimes it’s hard to let go of old habits. Today we’re going to evaluate how we’re doing with managing anger now.

Discussion. Distribute the handout and ask volunteers to read the comments from students about what they do when they’re angry. Have students pair up and discuss what they do now when they get angry, noting positive changes and places where they may be stuck in negative patterns.

After a few minutes have students share in the large group about things they do when they get angry, noting positive changes or negative choices that still remain. List students’ answers on chart paper.

When the list is complete, point to each action, one at a time, and ask: **Does doing this tend to make things get better or worse? How?** Put a red X by each action that makes things worse.

Ask: **What negative things happen when we do the things marked by an X?** (Punishment, guilt, retaliation, disappointing people we care about, disappointing oneself, etc.)

Then ask: **What can you do to help yourself avoid the choices that make things worse?** List these on a separate sheet of chart paper.

Activity. Ask for three volunteers to role-play the following scenario:

Three students have to come up with an idea for a science project. Student A keeps interrupting. Student B feels ready to lose his or her temper and say something mean. Student C notices and decides to say something that might help.

Have the role players act out the scenario, first using one or more of the negative actions on the list. Then have them replay it, this time using some of the positive strategies they’ve been learning. If they need prompting, here are some choices the players might make:

- Student C might suggest that they all take a break.
- Student B might excuse him/herself, get a drink of water, and think about an I-message to say. He or she can return to the group and deliver the I-message.
- Student B might use Stop, Breathe, Chill to calm down and then talk about the problem.

After the role play, debrief with the class. Ask what made things get worse the first time the scenario was acted out. What made things work out better the second time? What other choices could the players have made that might have helped?

Wrap-Up. Remind students to use the strategies you’ve been practicing together at home, after school, and throughout the day. Let them know you’ll check in with them to hear how it’s going.

Acknowledge acts of respect, listening, and compassion you observed during this session. Ask students if anyone wants to acknowledge somebody else.

Follow-Up. Have students answer the questions on their handout, either in writing or in discussion with a partner.

What Real Kids Do When They're Angry

In a national survey of more than 2,100 students in grades 3–6, kids wrote about negative ways they deal with anger. Here are the top 5 things boys and girls reported doing when they're angry:

Top 5 Things Kids Do When They Get Mad

Boys

1. Walk away or ignore/avoid the person or situation.
2. Fight or do physical things such as hit, kick, push, or shove.
3. Try to stay calm.
4. Tell an adult.
5. Tell the person to stop.



Girls

1. Walk away or ignore/avoid the person or situation.
2. Tell an adult.
3. Talk/work it out.
4. Tell the person to stop.
5. Try to stay calm.



Here are some other things students said they did when they're angry:

"When I get mad sometimes I freak out."

"I count to ten, take a deep breath, and try to relax."

"When someone gets me mad I egg them on."

"I try to stay calm and not get worked up."

"I scream into my pillow when I get home."

"I usually stomp away."

"If someone makes me mad I call them names."

"I just try to sort it out in my head."



What Real Kids Do When They're Angry (continued)

What do YOU do when you're angry?

What helps?

Is there something you still do in response to anger that you need to change? Explain.

What can you do to make this change?

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