

## **Lesson 7: My Boiling Point**

### **Objectives:**

- Students will identify anger as a normal emotion that varies from person to person.
- Students will recognize that individuals express anger in different ways.
- Students will demonstrate how to manage their own anger in a constructive manner.

### **Preparation:**

- Gather needed material.
- Duplicate the Family Resource Sheet, Skills for Peaceful Conflict Resolution: Identifying and Communicating Emotions, Managing Anger, so that each student will have one to take home.
- Duplicate the student worksheet, Reaching the Boiling Point for each student.
- Prepare Triggering My Anger example cards

### **Material:**

- Paper bag or similar container
- 1 blank index card for each student
- Teacher prepared Triggering My Anger example index cards
- Bulletin Board Puzzle Piece: Managing Anger
- Family Resource Sheet: Skills for Peaceful Conflict Resolution: Identifying and Communicating Emotions, Managing Anger

### **Procedure:**

Ask the students if any of them remember the things that got Adam, Matt, and Amy angry in the video they saw in the last health class.

#### **Activity A**

1. Ask students how many of them have been angry in the past week. Give students one index card each and tell them to think about one thing that made them very angry in the past week and, without using names, write what happened to cause the anger. Have them place their cards in the container with your prepared cards.
2. Explain that feeling angry is a normal emotion and that each person experiences anger at different times and for different reasons. In fact, in the same situation, a person might become angrier than usual because of the circumstances. Tell students it's important for them to know what makes them angry, to recognize when their angry feelings are building up, and to learn how to manage their anger in a positive way.

3. Ask students:

*What kinds of things make you angry?  
How does getting angry feel physically? mentally?*

4. Give each student a copy of the student worksheet, Reaching the Boiling Point. Shake the paper bag. Draw “anger triggers” out of the bag 1 by 1 and write them on the board. Explain that as you read each anger trigger, students should indicate their level of anger from the situation, by writing it at the appropriate place on the anger thermometer. If you draw a duplicate from the bag, acknowledge it and put a checkmark next to the anger trigger written on the board. When all anger triggers have been drawn from the bag, have students evaluate their anger thermometer. For each level of anger from “Calm” to “Blowing Your Top,” have students describe their anger response in the space on the worksheet.
5. Explain to students that like other emotions, when we get angry we have physical changes that happen. Then ask the students to visualize themselves in 1 or more of the situations in the “Blowing Your Top” section and identify their personal physical responses to the anger (i.e. muscles tense, feeling hot, shaking, and so on).

Explain to students:

*Anger is a natural response to a threat and it triggers the “fight or flight” response and these physical reactions are the body’s way of preparing to protect them from harm. Because of this many times our instinctive way to express anger is to respond aggressively. This is necessary to our survival. However, we can’t physically lash out at every person or object that irritates us. There are laws, social norms, and common sense that place limits on how far we can go.*

Have students share what they do at that level of anger. (Possible responses: hold it all in, hit something, yell and scream, move away from the situation.)

6. Tell the students:

*People usually express their anger in one of three ways. Assertively, which is the healthiest, makes clear what your needs are and how to get them met. It is using the Formula that Works, otherwise known as the “I” Statement. It is pushy or demanding and is respectful of yourself and others.*

*If anger is suppressed, and then converted or redirected you stop thinking about it and focus on something positive. An example of this is what Matt did*

*in the video, When You're Mad! He redirected his anger into practicing basketball harder.*

*Unexpressed anger can cause problems. Holding anger inside can lead to someone becoming passive-aggressive or getting back at people indirectly without telling them why. Examples of this are road rage, putting others down, criticizing everything. These people need to figure out ways to get rid of their angry feelings; otherwise the feelings could lead to harming themselves or others. (i.e. fighting, saying something inappropriate, physical illness for holding it in such as high blood pressure, stress related illnesses).*

### Activity B

#### Managing anger in a positive manner.

1. Tell students:

*Anger is a normal emotion, and like all feelings it isn't right or wrong, but problems arise when a person's anger response is not healthy, such as fighting, holding it in or when it is unresolved which can affect your relationship or health.*

*If someone holds in their anger and doesn't resolve the problem how can this affect friends? (Passive-aggressive – treat person differently because angry, relationship doesn't grow)*

2. On the board generate a list, from the students' ideas, of ways to manage anger.

**Teacher's Note: The following ideas for handling strong emotions have been taught in New York Health Central at previous grade levels:**

- Tell yourself, "Uh-Oh! I need to stop and think."
- Tell yourself, "I need to take a minute to settle down."
- Sit down away from the situation for a minute. Take a "time out."
- Count to 10
- Lay your head on your desk.
- Find a quiet activity to do for a few minutes, such as read a book, draw, or listen to music.
- Shake your hands; shrug your shoulders.
- Ask permission to run around the house or gym
- Ask permission to sit away from the group or play alone or walk alone on the playground during recess

**Other ways include:**

- Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm
- Slowly repeating a calm word or phrase such as relax, take it easy as you are breathing deeply.
- Talk positively to yourself
- Humor
- Talk to someone

3. Ask students to select one anger trigger from their “Boiling Point” section of the student worksheet, Reaching the Boiling Point. Ask them to monitor that situation during the next week and to attempt to use constructive anger-management skills from those listed on the board.
4. Have them write in their journals or on a piece of paper what happened and their immediate response. Then have them describe which anger-management skill they used and whether this skill worked for them.
5. Have the students finish their writing with reflecting on how it felt to handle their anger in a positive manner and what they would do differently, if anything, next time this situation arose.

**Closure:**

- Ask students:

*What would happen if you let your anger dictate your behavior?*

## Triggering My Anger Examples

Someone puts me down.

Someone embarrasses me.

A person has expectations I can't meet.

I do something really stupid.

Someone lies to me.

Someone disappoints me.

Someone is spreading rumors about me.

Someone breaks a promise.

I have to do something I don't want to do.

Someone betrays my trust.

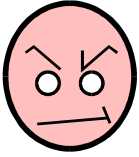
Someone doesn't listen when I'm talking.

## Reaching the Boiling Point

**Directions:** Write each anger trigger at the place on the thermometer where it fits for you. Then describe your response to each level of anger.

# New York Healthy Times

## Home/School Family Resource Sheet



### Skills for Peaceful Conflict Resolution

#### Identifying and Communicating Emotions, Managing Anger

Anger is a normal human emotion, but when it gets out of control it can be destructive and problematic.

A specific person, event, memory of a traumatic event, or worrying about personal problems can cause anger. Regardless of the cause, when we are angry, there is a physical response. People use a variety of conscious and unconscious ways to deal with their angry feelings. Expressing your angry feelings assertively is the healthiest way. Anger can be suppressed, and then it is usually redirected to someone else or turned inward where it may cause high blood pressure or depression. Unexpressed it can create other personality problems that affect our relationships with others.

Sometimes people believe it is good to let it all out when they are angry. Psychologists now believe that this is a dangerous myth. That "letting it rip" actually escalates anger and aggression and does nothing to help you or the other person resolve the situation.

Effective anger management skills can improve the overall quality of life.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 – 24. Closely followed by suicide, anger and relational issues are at the core of many of these statistics. Families, schools, and communities must work together to change these trends.

As a part of the health education program, *New York Health Central*, your child will learn skills for resolving conflicts peacefully and how to avoid and prevent violence.

Conflicts are a normal part of living and working with other people. In fact, conflicts can have positive results. We can learn new ways to look at situations and new ways to work effectively with others. Conflicts can have negative results, too. When we do not use skills to manage conflicts positively, conflicts can grow and ruin relationships or end in violence. While conflicts may be normal, dealing with them in a destructive or violent way is not acceptable.

# New York Healthy Times

## Home/School Family Resource Sheet

### Managing **ANGER**

#### Anger is...

- ...a normal emotion.
- ...an emotion everyone has.
- ...an emotion that everyone can learn to manage.
- ...an emotion that, if not managed, can lead to trouble in relationships.
- ...an emotion that, if not managed, can lead to violence.

#### Steps to Take When You Feel Angry

Your child has learned the following ways to manage anger:

- Take a “time out.” Put space between the feeling and action. Take time to think about what made you angry and what you can do to solve the problem.
- Count to ten.
- Talk to yourself.
  - “I need to stop and think.”
  - “I need to take a minute to settle down.”
- Sit down away from the situation for a minute.
- Lie down for a minute; or lay your head on your desk.
- Find a quiet activity to do for a few minutes, such as read a book, draw, or listen to music.
- Shake your hands; shrug your shoulders.
- Do something physical, such as run, play basketball, or walk.
- Write about the situation and your feelings.
- Talk to someone.

When children are upset, a parent’s natural inclination is to immediately remove the source of distress, but according to some psychologists, that isn’t always the best thing to do. Researchers have come up with five principles to guide you in helping your child manage emotions.

#### **Helping Kids Cope**

- Be an active listener. Give your child your full attention. Don’t interrupt while they explain what’s troubling them.
- Identify the emotion. If necessary, put a label on it for your child.
- Validate and empathize. Let your child know you understand and accept how she feels.
- Limit actions. Let your child know that while all feelings are acceptable, certain behaviors are not.
- Help devise alternate ways of behaving. Guide children in figuring out an appropriate way to vent their emotions.
- Realizing not every problem has a solution, and in these cases learning to accept that and just handle the problem.