

SESSION I—WHAT BUGS YOU?

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

This session will serve as an introduction for the children to group process. It also will provide an opportunity for the children to become acquainted, to share at least one thing that makes them angry, and to realize that everyone in the group is interested in learning how to deal more effectively with anger.

GOALS

1. To provide the structure and purpose for the group.
2. To help children realize that the need to learn to manage anger more appropriately is common to all group members.
3. To encourage each child to identify at least one anger-producing situation.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Various colors of construction paper
2. Pipe cleaners
3. Scissors
4. Paste or glue
5. Chart paper
6. Markers

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce yourself and have each of the group members introduce himself or herself by first name. Tell the children that everyone in the group is interested in learning to manage anger more effectively. During the course of this group, we will begin to talk about the causes of anger, reactions to anger, and coping with anger.
2. Begin to set the stage for the group by discussing ground rules. List the ground rules on a chart or on the chalkboard for future reference. Examples of possible group rules are as follows:
 - a What is said in the group, stays there.
 - b No put-downs are allowed.
 - c Only one person talks at a time.
 - d It is important to attend all sessions.

Note: If children do not suggest these rules, you as facilitator should bring them up as part of the brainstorming process.

3. Introduce the topic of anger with the question, "What are some things that really bug you?" Provide plenty of time for the children to identify these anger causing situations.
4. Provide construction paper, glue, scissors, and other work materials, and tell the children that they are going to make "bugs" for the bulletin board to describe some things that really "bug" them. Tell them that these bugs can be as strange, way out, and weird as they want them to be.
5. Allow enough time for the artistic bug creations to be developed. (While the children are working, continue to talk about the anger producing situations and allow for general group chatter.)
6. When each bug is completed, allow each child to place his or her bug on the bulletin board. Beneath the bug, place a piece of paper or notecard that describes the situation that "bugs" that child.
7. When all bugs have been placed on the bulletin board, allow time for each child to tell about his or her bug and anger-producing situation.

CLOSURE

To bring closure to this session, tell the children that everyone has things that bug them and that anger is a perfectly legitimate feeling. What gets us all in difficulty is our response to that anger. Remind the children that in the upcoming weeks, we will begin to identify ways to deal more productively with that anger.

HOMEWORK

For homework, ask the children to begin to think about the things they do when they get angry and what have been some of the consequences of that anger. This will be the topic for next week's session.

SESSION II—DON'T EXPLODE

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, children will begin to look at the consequences of "exploding" anger, how it causes problems both for them and for the people around them. They also will begin to look seriously at ways to help them deal more effectively with their anger.

GOALS

1. To assist children in looking critically at their reactions to anger-provoking situations.
2. To begin to present some techniques for more effectively handling anger.
3. To provide time for practicing the techniques through role-play.

MATERIALS

1. Balloon.
2. Role-play situations on 3" x 5" cards

PROCEDURE

1. Briefly review the anger-provoking situations that were identified in the previous session. Ask the children to describe their reactions to those situations.
2. Show the deflated balloon to the children and compare it to how we are prior to the anger-provoking situation. Then begin to blow it up a little at a time and compare it to what happens when anger builds up in us. Continue to blow the balloon almost to the breaking point and compare this to the explosion of our anger when we get out of control.
3. Ask the children how we can keep the balloon from popping. Show them what happens when we let the air out a little at a time. Compare this to finding ways to talk out our anger and letting out angry feelings out a "little bit at a time." Provide a few moments to allow the children to describe times that they were able to diffuse their anger by talking things out with someone who cares about them. Remind them to think about the balloon experiment as a way of handling anger-provoking situations.

4. Present the following anger-provoking situation for the children: "You have worked very hard to earn enough money to go to the movies with your friend and his parents. Now your mother is refusing to allow you to go because you failed your spelling test yesterday (even though you had studied very hard for it)."

5. Discuss the situation in terms of (a) What could you do? and (b) What would happen if you did that?
6. After you have discussed several options, encourage group members to role-play the child and his or her mother in a discussion of the situation. Talk about the effects of "blowing one's cool" as a possible reaction.
7. Encourage role-play of the other role-play situations as listed below (each may be printed on a 3" x 5" card).
 - a. A friend wants to borrow your homework and tells you that if you do not share it he will tell the teacher you copied from Davy Smith.
 - b. Someone in your class took 25 cents from the teacher's desk. Because you sit closest to the teacher, you are being blamed.
 - c. The principal gives you two nights' detention for running in the hall. The girl who was running with you didn't get any detention.

CLOSURE

Following the role-plays, bring closure to the session by telling the children that not all anger-provoking situations are "fair"; that is what makes it so frustrating. However, we need to find some appropriate ways to deal with the situations rather than exploding. Again, blow up the balloon and let the air out slowly as a reminder to "let off steam" a little bit at a time.

HOMEWORK

For a homework assignment, ask the children to make a list of five clues to anger for them. These may be physical reactions, emotional reactions, or cognitive (thinking) reactions. Provide a 3" x 5" card for each child to make his or her list.

SESSION III—CLUES TO MY ANGER

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, children will begin to personalize anger producing situations in terms of the clues that may precede an anger response from them. These clues will be categorized in terms of whether they are physical, emotional or "thinking" clues.

GOALS

1. To assist children in gaining an awareness of physical, emotional, or cognitive clues to anger.
2. To help students identify their personal response to anger.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Copies of "Anger Anecdotes" worksheet (Activity Sheet 8.1)
2. Chart
3. Markers

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by discussing the reality that anger does not just happen, that there are situations or "triggers" that provoke anger. These situations are followed by some type of reaction from us that is either physical (in the body), emotional (in the feelings), or cognitive (in the mind).
2. Ask the children to share items from their homework assignment in terms of how anger-provoking situations most often affect them. Categorize them on a chart in the following manner:

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Cognitive</u>
Face gets flushed	Yelling	Thinking about getting in
Fists clench	Crying	trouble—someone talking
Stomach gets tight	Name calling	about you, etc.
Heart pounds		

3. Discuss the anger clues that seem most common among group members. Ask the following questions:

- a What do you most often do when you get angry?
- b What can you do with this awareness?
- c Will you be alert to these clues in the future?

4. Work with the children on suggestions for avoiding these angry responses. List the brainstormed ideas on the chart. Some of these ideas may include

- a Find a way to relax (deep breathing, counting).
- b Try ignoring the situation.
- c Talk yourself out of anger by using calming self-talk (e.g., "I can deal with this.")
- d Think about what will happen if you follow through on your angry response.
- e Walk away.

CLOSURE

Ask the children to talk about how any of the suggestions have worked for them and what were the positive effects of the actions.

HOMEWORK

As a homework assignment, ask the children to keep track of anger-producing situations and their reactions for the week. This record should be kept on the Anger Anecdote worksheet (Activity Sheet 8.1).

description of self-talk and give an example, such as, "If someone tells me I have on a weird looking outfit, I could get mad or I could say to myself, 'Well, she doesn't like my outfit, but then I don't like everything she wears either. We just have different tastes in clothes.'")

4. Give the children a copy of the "Coping Statements" worksheets (Activity Sheet 8.2) and allow a few moments for them to read and react to them. Ask if they feel that using "self-talk" to tell themselves these positive things might help diffuse their anger.

5. Use one of the anger-producing situations from the "Anger Anecdotes" and have two of the children role-play the situation, first using the anger reaction, then using "self-talk" from the "Coping Statements" worksheet as a possible option.

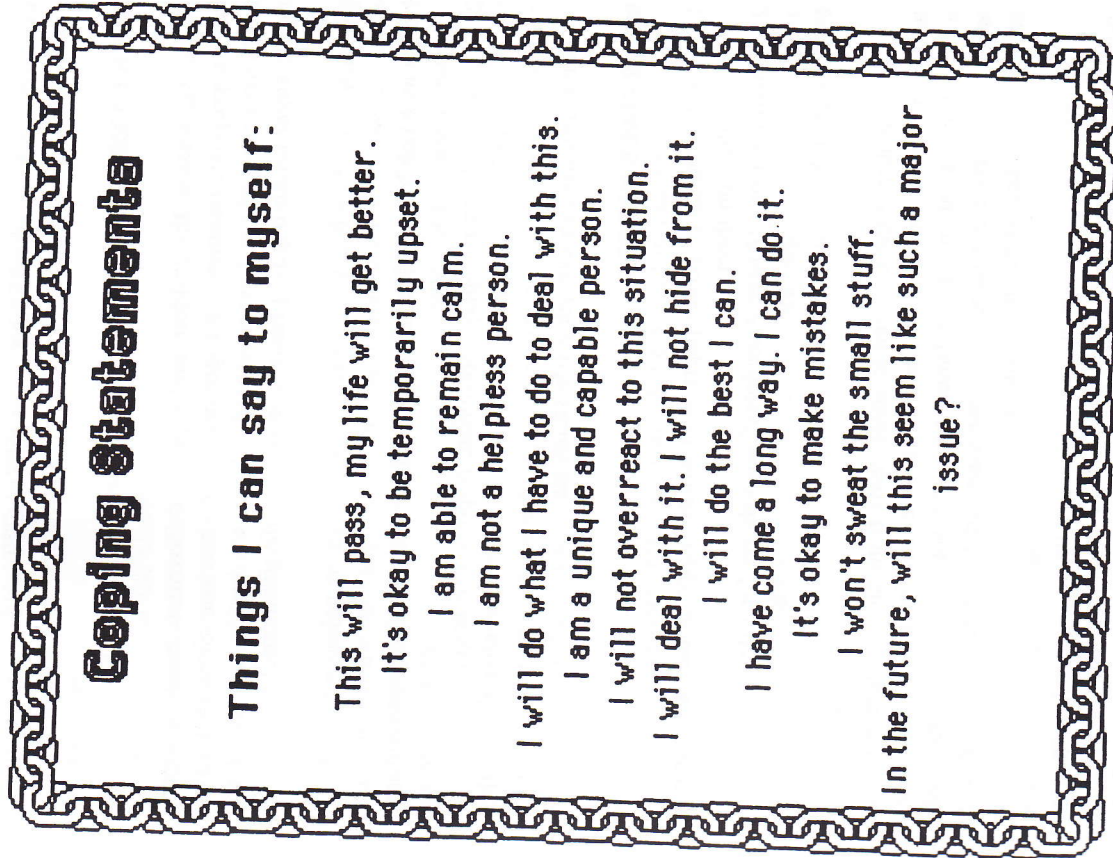
6. Discuss the differences with the children. Suggest that once they become comfortable with using this technique, they often will be able to diffuse their own anger and not have it escalate into a blowup.

CLOSURE

Ask the children to use the information they learned in today's session when they become involved in anger-producing situations. Remind them that we will again discuss this technique briefly next session.

HOMEWORK

Provide another "Anger Anecdotes" worksheet for each child and encourage the children to use the statements from the "Coping Statements" worksheet to deal with anger-producing situations this week.



Activity Sheet 8.2. Coping Statements worksheet. Permission is granted to enlarge and photocopy for classroom use.

SESSION V—OUR ACTIONS

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, the children will begin to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate responses to anger-producing situations. Since they have been practicing coping skills, they now need to begin to identify appropriate ways to handle anger on an ongoing basis in everyday life situations.

GOALS

1. To assist children in identifying and differentiating appropriate and inappropriate responses to anger.
2. To help children role-play appropriate responses to anger.
3. To provide an opportunity for children to begin to realize that, if they can handle anger-producing situations appropriately, they will be more effective communicators in everyday life situations.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. 3" x 10" sheets of poster paper with words "Appropriate" and "Inappropriate" written on them
2. Situations from "Anger Anecdotes" worksheets for role-plays

PROCEDURE

1. Encourage the children to share items from their "Anger Anecdotes" in which they used the "Coping Statements" that they learned last session. Spend a few minutes talking about times when the statements were successful and when they were not successful. (Save some of the unsuccessful situations for role-playing later on in this session.)
2. Place the cards with "Appropriate" and "Inappropriate" written on them on the wall where the children can see them. Remind them that today we are going to discuss these two terms in relation to reactions that they feel would fall into each category. Then provide the following scenarios and have the children discuss whether the reaction was "Appropriate" or "Inappropriate." The 3 R's Decision Making Model can be used to evaluate "appropriate" and "inappropriate."

- a When it was snowing out and Mary could not go to the movies with her friends, she slammed her bedroom door and spent the afternoon in her room.
- b When Chad hit his hand with the hammer, he cursed loudly and threw the hammer in the closet.
- c When Stacy heard that the other girls were gossiping about her, she just ignored them and played with her other friends.
- d When Tom was teased for missing the basket in the basketball game, he gave the other guys the "silent treatment" for the next week.

3. After discussion of each of the situations, have the children role-play the situation and use an "appropriate" action to play out the scenario. Following the role-plays, talk with the children about their feelings about using more appropriate reactions:

- a What are the benefits?
- b What are the frustrations?
- c How will it help in the long run?

4. Select one or more of the items from the "Anger Anecdotes" and discuss how an "appropriate" response could have helped in that situation.

CLOSURE

Encourage the children to practice using more appropriate reactions to anger-producing situations. With frequent use, these reactions will become a part of their daily actions.

HOMEWORK

For a homework assignment, ask each child to be prepared to talk about one anger situation that he or she felt was handled in a way that made him/her feel proud of himself or herself.

SESSION VI—WAYS PEOPLE EXPRESS ANGER

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, the children learn that everyone has different styles of handling and expressing anger. They will look at six different ways that people deal with anger. They will identify which of the methods best describes their reaction to anger.

GOALS

1. To assist children in understanding that people handle anger in different ways.
2. To present six different ways people handle anger.
3. To help children identify which of the six ways most appropriately describes their reaction to anger.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Chart on the "Six Ways of Handling Anger" (adapted from Schmidt [1993], *Anger Management and Violence Prevention*, Minneapolis, Johnson Institute) as shown in Procedure #2
2. 3" × 5" card for each child

PROCEDURE

1. Allow a few minutes for the children to describe their successes from the previous week. Congratulate them on their hard work in trying to deal more appropriately with their anger-producing situations.
2. Show the chart on the "Six Ways of Handling Anger" (Schmidt, 1993) and describe each of the six types. The six types are as follows:

Stuffers—People who are stuffers tend to avoid anger at any cost. They always want things to be peaceful. They often have a lot of tension inside like the balloon that is just about to pop.

Withdrawers—These people hide their anger by ignoring situations, avoiding communication with others, or just by doing something else. They never get a chance to solve the underlying problem.

Blamers—People who are blamers tend to blame their anger on others: parents, teachers, other kids. They are not willing to accept responsibility for their own actions.

Trianglers—These people handle their anger by trying to pull other persons into the situation. For example, a girl who is angry at a friend may try to get another friend on her side. The problem with this technique is that the person never gets to the root of the problem.

Exploders—People who are exploders use violence to express their anger. This may show itself through hitting, pushing, and yelling. A major problem with this way of dealing with anger is that one never knows what to expect.

Problem Solvers—These people handle their anger by thinking about the situation and their feelings about it. They decide if it is a situation they can do something about and how they can handle it.

3. Present a situation to the group and ask if they can describe how each of the six styles would handle the situation. Use an actual problem from the group or pose one of the following situations:
 - a. Mary was friends with Sally for many years but then Erin came to the school. Now Erin and Sally are friends and Mary feels left out.
 - b. Charlie worked very hard on his science worksheet and was sure he would get an A. When he went to the office on an errand for the teacher, Mark copied all of the answers from his paper. Now the teacher is going to give both of the boys an F for cheating.
4. Role-play the situations based on the six anger styles.

CLOSURE

Ask the children to think about how they most often handle their anger situations and which of the six types best describes them.

HOMEWORK

As a homework assignment, ask the children to keep a list of at least three anger situations they deal with during the week and describe which of the anger styles they used to react to each. Provide a 3" × 5" card for them to list the situations and their reactions.

SESSION VII—CHANGING ANGRY THINKING

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, children will begin to look systematically at their anger-producing situations and work on ways to “rethink” the situation for more productive problem resolution.

GOALS

1. To help children realize that “rethinking” a situation may help them see the scenario in a more positive light.
2. To provide an opportunity for the children to practice this technique so that they will feel more comfortable using it in everyday life situations.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Situations from “Anger Anecdotes” (from Sessions III, IV, and V)
2. Chart with the following headings:

What was the situation?

What did you think about it?

How did you feel about it?

What else could you have thought that would be more positive?

3. Copies of “Positive Thinking Worksheet” (Activity Sheet 8.3) for homework

PROCEDURE

1. Provide a bit of time for the children to share their three situations from the homework assignment. Ask if their knowledge of the six styles of handling anger made them more aware of how they react to anger-producing situations.
2. Tell the children that today we are going to further consider situations and learn a new way to think about those situations in a more positive light.
3. Present the following situation to the children.

Sharon has been having a lot of problems making friends at her new school. She has tried being nice to the kids and sharing things with them, but she often sees them whispering and looking in her direction.

4. Use the questions from the chart to assist the children in discussing Sharon’s situation. An example of how this might work out would be

- a. What was the situation? (see description above)
- b. What did Sharon think? (e.g., that the kids were making fun of her, that they didn’t want to be her friends)
- c. How did Sharon feel? (e.g., sad, left out, disappointed, lonely)
- d. What else could she have thought that would be a bit more positive? (e.g., *Since I am new here, it may take a bit more time for the kids to get to know me—I guess I just have to give them a little time.*)

5. Select one or two situations from the “Anger Anecdotes” for discussion and evaluation using the questions above.

CLOSURE

Bring closure to this session by encouraging the children to begin to use the technique learned this session in their everyday life situations.

HOMEWORK

Provide copies of the “Positive Thinking Worksheet” (Activity Sheet 8.3) for the children and ask that they complete it for one of their anger-producing situations during the upcoming week.

Note: An expanded anger management process is described on pages 226 and 227 that can be used with older children.

Positive Thinking Worksheet

1. Describe the situation. _____
2. What did you think? _____
3. How did you feel? _____
4. What could you have thought that would have been more positive? _____

Activity Sheet 8.3. Positive Thinking Worksheet. Permission is granted to enlarge and photocopy for classroom use.

SESSION VIII—PRODUCTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SESSION

In this session, children will have an opportunity to look at problem-solving techniques as a way to deal more appropriately with life situations. They also will become acquainted with passive, aggressive, and assertive reactions to situations.

GOALS

1. To assist children in realizing that there are some situations in their lives that they cannot change.
2. To help children become familiar with passive, aggressive, and assertive reactions to life situations.
3. To present problem-solving suggestions.
4. To bring closure to the group by having children validate each other.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Chart with "Passive," "Assertive," and "Aggressive" and their definitions
 Passive—handle conflict by doing nothing
 Aggressive—handle conflict by harming others (verbally or physically)
 Assertive—handle conflict by using problem solving
2. Student "Name Sheets" (a sheet of paper for each child with the child's name on it) for validation activity

PROCEDURE

1. Spend a few moments encouraging the children to share items from their homework assignment. Congratulate them for the efforts they have made to change their thinking as a way to handle anger.
2. Show children the chart with the words "Passive," "Aggressive," and "Assertive" on it. Explain each of the terms and give an example of how each conflict style may be played out using the following situation:

Joe and Charlie have been having a conflict over a library book that Joe borrowed from Charlie. When Charlie put the

book in his locker to return it to Joe, it was stolen. Joe wants his book back.

Passive—Joe pays for the book and does not mention it again.

Aggressive—Joe beats Charlie up after school.

Assertive—Joe asks Charlie if they can meet to talk about what they will do about the lost book. They decide together on a situation that is agreeable to both.

3. Encourage children to talk about how the “Assertive” method of behavior will help them solve problems.

4. Provide “Name Sheets” for the validation activity. Ask each child to write something positive about every other person in the group on that person’s name sheet.

5. Allow a few minutes for sharing.

CLOSURE

To bring closure to the group, encourage the children to share their feelings about group participation and complete the written evaluations.

HOMEWORK

Because this is the final session for the anger group, there will be no homework except to practice the skills they learned through participation in the Anger Management group.

EVALUATION

1. Do you feel that participation in the ANGER MANAGEMENT group was helpful to you? Why or why Not?

2. What part of the group did you like best?

3. What part of the group did you like least?

4. If you had a friend who needed help in dealing with anger, would you recommend that he or she participate in a similar group? Why or why not?

5. Did you attend all eight group sessions?

_____ Yes _____ No

If no, how many did you attend? _____

6. Comments, suggestions, etc.: