

Introduction

Manage Your Anger – Curriculum for Children utilizes a skillstreaming psychoeducational approach to teach psychological and social competencies to children ages 6 to 11. It provides the following core components:

- 1) Empathy training, in which students identify their own feelings and those of others.
- 2) Impulse control, in which students are presented a problem-solving strategy and behavioral skills.
- 3) Anger management, in which students are presented a coping strategy and behavioral skills for tense situations.

The Curriculum is intended for both *aggressive* and *withdrawn* children who lack proficiency in prosocial cognitive and emotional competencies. The children suited for this curriculum may be assessed as displaying moderate or strong tendencies toward aggression, and antisocial behavior on the one hand, or asocial behavior, withdrawal, and social isolation on the other. The authors recognize that this program will be used primarily for those youngsters who tend toward the aggression and antisocial behavior realm. The Curriculum provides a program for reversing the developmental delays which may lead to more acute levels of aggressive or withdrawn behavior.

Users of the Curriculum in any given setting will need to be responsive to the demands of their particular setting, as well as the characteristics and qualities of the students involved. Therefore, we recommend that you freely make any changes in the program that you deem helpful for your particular situation.

Background Information

Program Objectives

The *Managing Your Anger* curriculum for children is designed for elementary and middle school students and will teach them to:

1. better understand their anger
2. respond with healthy and effective choices
3. build more satisfying prosocial relationships
4. develop practical skills and strategies to manage feelings
5. realize behavior management
6. increase self-esteem

The objectives of the curriculum are achieved through the following activities:

1. role playing
2. identifying feelings
3. problem solving
4. recognizing negative behaviors
5. anticipating consequences

About the Lesson Plans

This 12 Lesson *Managing Your Anger* curriculum for children is designed for small groups (6-10 students) who agree to participate. The group should meet consistently with the same participants and facilitator on a weekly basis (35 – 45 min.) in a space that supports confidentiality. Because the programs' focus is on developing skills, and each new skill relies to some extent on what has previously been learned, you will need to do the lessons in sequence. Some of the middle lessons can be combined to customize the timeframe of the group. Each lesson includes objectives, a brief description of the required preparation, a list of supplies needed for the various activities, background explanations of learning activities, and a closing exercise.

Main Concepts

The Main Concepts of *Manage Your Anger* are:

- Realize the consequences of behavior
- Take responsibility for mistakes
- Identify the triggers of anger
- Identify healthy ways to manage anger
- Explore the 'Primitive Brain' and 'Evolved Brain' response
- Explore painful feelings underneath anger
- Explore why people provoke others anger
- Recognize how family members express anger and its influence
- Better understand bullying behavior

Primary Activities

The Primary Activities of *Manage Your Anger* are:

- Establishing trust within the group
- Develop effective problem-solving skills
- Learn key steps to managing anger
- Recognize and practice naming feelings
- Understand and discuss the consequences of behavior

Working Effectively With Groups

The *Managing Your Anger* curriculum for children is specifically designed for small groups of willing participants. Because each participant has a level of motivation and realizes some of the consequences of their anger problem members are often willing to learn from each other and be supportive of the group. The process of the program fosters the development of skills, strategies, and helpful concepts.

The *Managing Your Anger* lesson plans may be modified to fit the particular needs of a group. The following is a list of suggestions that are helpful in working effectively with groups:

- **Group size is significant.** More than nine or ten participants can affect the talking comfort level. Less than five or six participants can affect sense of community and significance of the group.
- **Group composition is important.** Think carefully about who is invited to be part of the group. It is helpful to have a mix of personality and behavior types. For example, it may not be wise to invite all asocial students to participate.
- **Group consistency is helpful.** Trust and cohesion of the group is fostered and by the same students and one facilitator regularly attending meetings. It is not recommended to bring new students into the 12 week ongoing group process.
- **Utilize teachable moments.** Immediately address conflict between participating students in the group as it arises. This should not be done by shaming the students but by simply pointing out how different needs and 'conflict of needs' are inevitable. This is an opportunity to learn about resolving conflict by compromise or negotiation.
- **Responsibility.** Hold the participants responsible for their commitment to the rules agreed to during the first session.
- **Affirm.** Name and communicate the students' positive and healthy responses and behavior.