

**BLOW-UPS AND RAGES:
Learning to Manage
Your Anger**

DVD Version

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Teacher's Resource Book

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MAIN MENU

- **Play**
- **Play with Spanish Subtitles**

This option allows you to view the program with Spanish subtitles. Subtitles are enabled/disabled by selecting a button on the DVD player remote or by using the remote to select subtitles from the menu button.

- **Chapter Selection**

From here you can access many different paths of the DVD, beginning with the introduction and ending with the credits.

1. Introduction
2. A Problem with Anger
3. Negative Consequences
4. Finding the Source
5. Don't Suppress, Express Your Anger
6. Finding Solutions
7. Getting Help
8. Credits

- **Teacher's Resource Book**

A printable file of the accompanying Teacher's Resource Book is available on the DVD. Load the DVD onto a computer that has a DVD-disk drive and Adobe Acrobat Reader.

For PC users: From the "Start" menu, click on "My Computer," then right click on your DVD disk drive and select "Explore." Double click on the PDF document to open the Teacher's Resource Book.

For Mac users: In "Finder," click on the DVD under "Devices." Then click on the PDF document to open the Teacher's Resource Book.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone gets angry. Anger is an emotion like any other. It's normal to get angry, and it's impossible to resist feeling angry sometimes. The problem with anger is not the simple fact that it happens—it's that some people feel it too intensely and too often and don't use the right skills to manage their anger effectively.

Partner abuse, road rage, workplace violence and divorce are a few examples of the results of poor anger management skills. Moreover, anger can lead to physical problems when not properly handled. Long-term anger has been linked to chronic headaches, sleep disorders, digestive problems, high blood pressure and heart attacks.

For some adolescents, anger is especially difficult to control. When this powerful emotion gets mixed with surging hormones and the stressful situations that teens often face, it can quickly become a problem. Explosions of teen anger can be troubling, harmful and hurtful. Hostile expressions of anger can devastate a teen's life, destroy relationships, cloud effective thinking, affect physical health and ruin future plans. Yet it is possible for teens to learn how to prevent, express and cope with their angry feelings. The key is to better understand one's personal triggers, recognize thoughts and feelings associated with the anger and learn how to react in ways that are productive rather than destructive.

In prehistory, anger was often an effective defense mechanism because it prepared the body for "fight or flight." In today's world, expressing anger is more complex, yet our bodies continue to react in ways similar to our primitive ancestors. Sometimes our perception of an insult or threat is enough to ignite our anger, even if there is no real threat or confrontation.

On the other hand, anger can be useful when it promotes positive change. Anger is often the result or consequence of other difficult emotions. When these feelings are addressed, it's possible to learn about ourselves, grow from our experiences and build stronger relationships—all positive, empowering behaviors.

The video ***Blow-Ups and Rages: Learning to Manage Your Anger*** uses dramatic, thought-provoking interviews with real teenagers to assure viewers that anger is a natural emotion. It is our response to anger that may need attention—not the simple fact of feeling the emotion itself. The video and activities in this Teacher's Resource Book offer your students a range of common-sense tips and advice that will help them more confidently cope with their angry responses to daily stresses. These tips include the basic strategies of anger management: recognizing anger triggers, taking a breath before reacting, defusing situations by talking, learning relaxation techniques and more.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching the video *Blow-Ups and Rages: Learning to Manage Your Anger* and participating in the activities in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- recognize physical and emotional signs of anger in both themselves and others
- understand that anger is a normal emotion
- define the types of anger and recognize their various dangers
- understand the triggers that cause anger in themselves and others
- learn effective strategies for managing anger before it gets out of control
- discover healthy ways to express anger and angry feelings
- establish critical cool-down techniques to reduce stress and avoid angry outbursts
- replace hurtful communication with positive communication that leads to resolution
- use "I" statements to reach a resolution during disagreements with family, friends and teachers
- learn how to listen more effectively
- determine their level of anger
- learn when and how to seek professional help
- find ways to use anger positively

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The program begins with several teens describing moments of anger. One girl says, "When you let your anger out in the wrong way, it's going to come back and haunt you." A young man adds, "It just came to the point where I would just lock myself in my room and not want to be around anybody." Another says, "I would physically lash out...I'd push other teammates and yell at them."

Robin F. Goodman, PhD, a clinical psychologist specializing in teen anger, appears on-screen. "It's unfortunate that we grow up with people telling us that being angry is bad," she says. "Actually, being angry is normal. Anger can get you into trouble when the feeling of anger turns into aggression, which is actually acting out your anger. There are all sorts of other ways you can act out your anger that can be helpful if you do it in a positive way."

Next we meet four teens: Jeffrey, Alexa, Beryl and Jetaime. They describe their problems with anger: Jeffrey exploded over a missed shot during his senior championship basketball game; Alexa clashed with her father over attending a party; Beryl has always had trouble getting along with his mom and Jetaime got into a fight while defending her cousin from bullies. One speaker, a young man named Zyron, explains that his anger was usually directed at himself. He says: "I don't know, at times I would just cry tears of anger from not handling situations well, I would constantly just replay back things, like *why didn't I do things this way, why didn't I say something, why didn't I speak up?*"

The young people explain the extreme reactions brought on by their anger. Jeffrey punched himself in the head and began yelling at his teammates, Jetaime responded to the bullies' threats with violence, Alexa slammed the door to her room and cried uncontrollably and Zyron regularly skipped meals to punish himself.

"Lots of times what happens with anger is [that] we try and stuff it down," Dr. Goodman explains. "It's almost like a Jack-in-the-box: it blows up. Then it's much more hurtful. If you think about it: little anger, little solutions; big anger, big consequences."

Next, all the teens share the consequences of their anger. Zyron missed out on spending time with his friends, Beryl scared his friends away by fighting with his parents in their presence, Jeffrey alienated his teammates and coach and Jetaime caused physical injuries during her fight. "I think I could have done a lot better," she admits.

Dr. Goodman says, "It's great to be a detective about your anger. Look at all the clues. The anger is the result, and you want to figure out how you got there. Let's say you're feeling rejected, frustrated, disappointed, threatened or guilty. Sometimes it provokes feelings of anger, and so it may be the result of other feelings you experience."

Jetaime, Beryl, Zyron and Alexa explain how fear, sadness and peer pressure might have propelled their anger. Alexa felt pressure from her friends to go to a party. Zyron set unrealistic goals for himself in school and with his part-time job, and then got depressed when he couldn't meet them.

Blow-Ups and Rages: Learning to Manage Your Anger

PROGRAM SUMMARY CONTINUED

Jeffrey recalls that his friends helped him identify the sources of his anger. “We’d put things into perspective. They’d help me realize, *you’re feeling guilty, you’re feeling shameful, you’re feeling insecure,*” he says. “It’s hard to think that about yourself, but when you finally realize, *I’m not perfect, this is who I am, these are the feelings I’m feeling,* it helps you make progress.”

Dr. Goodman tells viewers that anger is one of our most primitive emotions, which is why our body taps into anger when we feel stressed or overwhelmed. “Your body is thinking, *I’m not going to survive this, I need to do something,*” she says. “The anger is not really related to a survival situation, but your body and mind are reacting as if it was. So you need to learn an appropriate response.”

Each teen returns to explain how verbal expression—not suppression—of anger can help diffuse strong feelings and lead to positive solutions. “When you hold anger in, that’s a punishment within itself, to do to yourself,” says Zyron. Alexa adds, “By not saying my feelings, and by not even trying to have a dialogue with my father, I think that was really bad. It’s so much better to say, instead of, *I hate you or I’m angry, to say, I feel hurt. I feel belittled. I feel embarrassed.*”

Dr. Goodman shares the importance of identifying specific activities that make you feel better and cope with the stress immediately. They might include sports, music, calling a friend, cooking, painting and journaling. “It changes the track your emotions are on and it’s also a physical outlet. Anger can cause a physical reaction in your body. You want to do something to change that reaction, calm it down, channel it somewhere else,” she advises. “When you take a step back and look at what part you might have played in the situation, or what you contributed to a situation that made you angry, it also means that you can also do something to make it better.”

Beryl, Alexa, Jeffrey, Jetaime and Zyron all describe the personal activities they use to calm themselves down. “I usually like to step away from the situation for a few minutes, like maybe at school, if I’m upset I might go to the bathroom and just take a breather, wash my hands, wash my face,” Alexa says. Journaling helps Zyron control his anger. “It’s helped me a lot by just writing down how I feel,” he says. “A journal is definitely a necessity. I keep a journal and whenever I’m feeling emotional, it’s important for me to have that outlet.”

Dr. Goodman reminds viewers that, although learning techniques for calming down is important, it’s equally important to recognize when outside help is needed for serious anger management problems. “Sometimes you really need that outside help, especially if it’s getting in the way of getting along with family and friends, how you’re doing in school or on a job,” she says. “When you talk to a counselor, therapist or trusted adult, they can be a sounding board and a nonjudgmental, neutral observer. They can give you solutions you didn’t think of.”

Jeffrey and Beryl describe the kind of anger management help they found. “When I was 12 years old, I started seeing a psychologist on a weekly basis,” says Beryl. “Going to this woman’s office,

PROGRAM SUMMARY CONTINUED

talking to her and playing games...when I think about it, it was so simple, it was giving me an outlet, giving me the ability to express myself." Jeffrey adds, "Human beings get over things because we talk about things, we get through things together. That's why you have friends, that's why you have professionals—because they're there to help you."

Dr. Goodman returns to list some of the warning signs that may indicate a need for help in managing anger. "Are you overreacting? Is your anger hurting other people? Is it hurting you? And do you need to learn a better way to manage it to have a better, happier, more productive life?"

All the teens return to offer final words of positive inspiration based on their own struggles with anger. "Don't let the anger get the best of you. Just walk away from it and let them be," says Jetaime. "If I could go back in time and talk to myself, I would definitely just look at myself and say, *Jeff, it doesn't matter, it's a basketball game, it's sports, you have the rest of your life, and this is so small compared to the rest of your life.*" Beryl remembers, "Eventually...I was able to say, you know, *these are situations that people go through. They're difficult, and they're frustrating, and you could respond in so many ways, but you have the power to choose that.*"

Pre/Post Test Answer Key

1. a
2. c
3. a
4. d
5. a
6. a
7. b
8. b
9. d
10. a

This page has been left blank intentionally.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

1. Being angry is:
 - a) normal.
 - b) bad.
 - c) rare.
 - d) none of the above

2. Complete this phrase: *Little anger, little solutions; bigger anger, bigger* _____.
 - a) solutions
 - b) problems
 - c) consequences
 - d) reactions

3. True or false? Anger can be a result of feeling threatened, rejected or sad.
 - a) true
 - b) false

4. Anger is one of our most _____ emotions.
 - a) sophisticated
 - b) appropriate
 - c) realistic
 - d) primitive

5. Which of the following is not an appropriate way for someone to channel anger?
 - a) throwing rocks
 - b) listening to music
 - c) playing sports
 - d) writing in a journal

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

6. True or false? Anger management therapists help their clients by listening to their concerns and providing a neutral outlet for their feelings.
 - a) true
 - b) false

7. True or false? Anger is not a problem if it is turned toward yourself.
 - a) true
 - b) false

8. Acting out your anger is known as:
 - a) suppression
 - b) aggression
 - c) repression
 - d) drama

9. What are some signs you may need professional anger management help?
 - a) Your anger hurts other people.
 - b) Your anger affects your schoolwork.
 - c) You recognize that you often overreact.
 - d) All of the above

10. True or false? When we get angry, our bodies and minds automatically react as if we were in a survival situation.
 - a) true
 - b) false

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 2

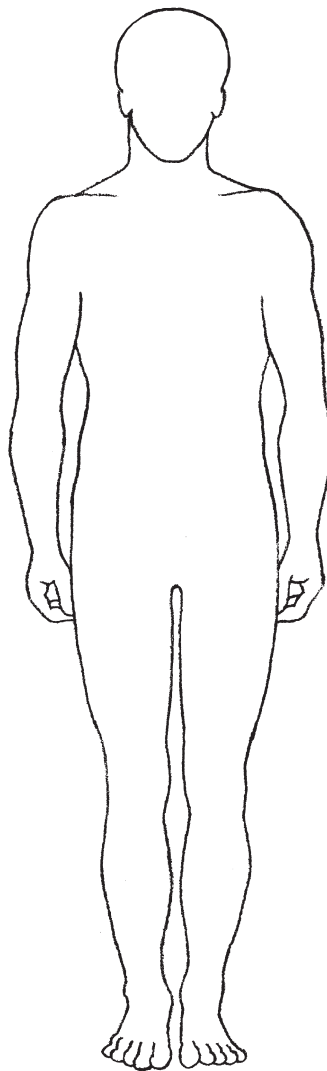
ANGER AND YOUR BODY

You have probably heard the phrase, “I’m so mad, my blood is boiling!” While our blood doesn’t exactly boil, the expression still gives us an idea of what happens internally when a person flies into a rage.

Most of us think of anger as a mental state—an emotion that occurs solely in our minds. But anger affects us physically as well as emotionally. When we’re angry, many changes are triggered in our bodies: our adrenaline surges, our blood pressure rises, our pulse rate quickens, our hearts beat faster and our muscles tighten.

On the diagram below, draw lines to various points on the body where a person might feel physical reactions to anger. On each line, describe what is happening to the body.

When you are done, consult *The Physical Effects of Anger* (fact sheet 2) to see whether you have missed any important physiological effects of anger.



Name: _____

ACTIVITY 3

LOOKING BACK

Getting angry is nothing to be embarrassed about—unless your angry reaction goes overboard, making you do or say things that you later regret. We can all learn a few new tricks to help us handle tense and angry situations in more positive and constructive ways.

For this activity, you and your classmates will anonymously share some of your less-shining moments from the past—a time when you let your anger get the best of you—and brainstorm ways that the situation could have been avoided or defused.

In the box below, write a few short sentences to describe a past incident where you lost your cool and said or did something in anger that made things even worse. Be specific about what happened and what role you played in making the situation blow up. Do not use people’s names in your account—just refer to “my sister” or “my boss” or “my friend X,” so that your story will not be recognized by others.

When you are done, cut off the bottom half of this page and turn it in to your teacher.

Your teacher will share these stories with the rest of the class. Discuss and offer solutions for how the person in each story might have handled their anger in a better way or how the person could have prevented the situation from escalating in the first place.

Name: _____

Research one of the topics below and write a brief paper on your findings. You may consult books, magazines, journals and reputable Internet websites for your information. Use a *Resource Tracker* to keep track of your sources.

Fight or Flight

Our bodies have not changed much over the centuries—when we feel great anxiety, our hearts pound and our bodies tense up. Our autonomic nervous system consists of two branches: the *parasympathetic* and the *sympathetic* systems. Describe these systems and how they function to ready our bodies for the “fight or flight” response.

Cultural Differences in the Expression of Anger

Do certain cultures express anger differently? Choose two cultures and compare their attitudes toward the expression of anger.

Anger and Gender

Do males and females typically express and cope with their anger differently? If so, what are these differences? Do females get angry less often than males? How do you explain the differences in how some males and females express anger?

Conduct Disorder

Conduct disorder is a psychiatric diagnosis given to individuals who repeatedly violate the rights of others by being physically and verbally abusive, stealing, breaking rules, etc. It is often assumed that these individuals have great difficulty coping with anger. Research this diagnosis.

Anger Management

In recent years many self-help books have been written on the topic of anger management. Choose one of these books and summarize its main points as to why people get angry and how to better handle anger.

Anger and Violence

Several well-publicized tragedies have depicted angry teens harming or even killing classmates at school. The national media has been quick to attribute this violence to a variety of factors: problems in enforcing gun control, poor parenting, drug/alcohol abuse, emotional problems, etc. Explore the relationship between anger and violence, and consider whether anger is the fundamental emotion behind such extreme acts of violence.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 4B
RESOURCE TRACKER

Title of book or article:

Title of book or article:

Author(s):

Author(s):

Published by/website address:

Published by/website address:

Copyright date:

Copyright date:

Subject covered:

Subject covered:

Quote(s):

Quote(s):

Notes:

Notes:

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 6

IN THE NEWS

Incidences of extreme teen violence make headlines. Whether it is a devastating, planned attack like the Columbine massacre or a local school rivalry that explodes into tragedy, one common theme is the fact that the participants—and sometimes the victims—acted in a moment of uncontrollable rage that could have been avoided if others had stepped in.

Using the Internet and newspapers, identify a recent instance of teen anger turned into violence. Analyze the story and answer these questions on the back of this page:

1. What happened in the incident?
2. Was it the fault of one person, or were both parties to blame?
3. What were the triggers to cause such a violent outburst?
4. Were there any prior hints or warnings that others (friends, family members, authorities) could have recognized as a sign of impending rage?
5. Could the incident have been avoided? How?
6. What strategies could the individuals have used to keep the incident from becoming so violent?
7. Could adults—such as parents, school officials, coaches or others—have done anything to preempt the violence?
8. What are the legal consequences involved in this incident of anger gone too far?
9. Have you ever seen anger in your school or among your friends go too far and turn into violence? What happened?
10. After reading about this incident, what advice would you give young people who often engage in violent or aggressive behavior?
11. When does a person need professional help?
12. What should you do to help someone who is having problems with anger?

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 7A
WORKING IT OUT

Anger is not always a bad thing. It's a normal emotion just like happiness, sadness, fear or guilt. The key is to learn how to express your anger and cope with your feelings in **CON**structive, not **DE**structive ways.

The stories described below are meant to represent typical angry moments that teens might face. In each of the situations, an angry response threatens to spin out of control and cause conflict. For each story:

- identify the trigger that causes the anger
- identify whether the anger is being expressed or suppressed
- invent a coping strategy that you could use to calm down
- briefly explain how you might peacefully resolve the conflict and move on

Consult *The Sequence of Anger* and *Temper-Taming Tools* (fact sheets 3 and 4) before you begin.

Example:

Your best friend, Jeliza, promised to go to the movies with you tonight, but she cancels at the last minute so that she can spend time with her new boyfriend. Normally, you'd just go out with your boyfriend, but you broke up last week. You feel like calling Jeliza right now and telling her off.

Trigger	<i>Disappointment in Jeliza; hurt at breaking up with your boyfriend</i>
Coping strategy	<i>Talk about your feelings to another friend or a parent to cool off</i>
Resolution	<i>Call Jeliza and share your frustration and disappointment, but make plans to hang out next week instead</i>

1. Gustavo always borrows soda money from you at lunch. He usually takes a few days to pay it back. Normally, this isn't a big deal, but this weekend you want to buy a new videogame and you are a few dollars short. When you ask Gustavo to reimburse you, he says he doesn't have the money yet. You get so mad, you feel like shoving him right there in the cafeteria.

Trigger	
Coping strategy	
Resolution	

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

2. Your coach forbids talking during basketball practice warm-ups. But Stacy and Felicia aren't paying attention. You quietly try to warn them, but the coach catches you—and only you—whispering! He makes you stay late to run laps around the court. Stacy and Felicia get off without any penalty. Now, you're so mad that you feel like quitting the team.

Trigger	
Coping strategy	
Resolution	

3. Three nights a week, you work at an ice cream shop to earn extra money. While you're at work, a friend sends you a text message about a concert tonight. *"I got free tix, u want 2 come?"* The problem is, you won't be able to make it unless you can get out of work early. You ask your boss to get off early, but he insists he needs your help tonight—someone has to wash out all the empty ice cream tubs. You feel like dumping ice cream on his head.

Trigger	
Coping strategy	
Resolution	

4. Your history teacher assigns a class project. You want to partner with your best friend. You always come up with great ideas together. But when it's time to pair off, your teacher says you can't work together because you'll be a distraction to each other. So now you are paired with some kid you barely know. You slam your books down next to your new "partner" and warn him that he'd better not annoy you unless he wants to BE history.

Trigger	
Coping strategy	
Resolution	

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 8A
USING "I" STATEMENTS

When people are angry, they don't always express themselves accurately or effectively. According to psychologists, most angry communication belongs to one of these four distinct categories:

aggressive response: hitting someone, damaging property, calling names

passive response: not reacting, accepting blame all the time, not defending yourself

passive-aggressive response: showing anger indirectly by being late, procrastinating, making excuses or being purposely vague

assertive response: showing respect for others while expressing your needs clearly

Of the above, an assertive response is the best hope for resolving a conflict and defusing anger. Assertive people stand up for themselves and their rights in a controlled way. They manage to communicate their anger without crossing the line into hostility and aggression.

For each of the 10 statements below, first identify the type of angry communication that is being used. Then rewrite the statement as a clear and respectful request in the form of an "I" statement. You will need copies of these fact sheets:

Assertive Communication (fact sheet 7)
The Power of "I" Statements (fact sheet 8)

Note: If you think that the statement is already an assertive request, don't change it.

<p>1. You borrowed my car without asking! Next time you do that, I'll punch you in the face!</p>	
<p>2. You want to copy my math homework again? I guess it's okay.</p>	
<p>3. I can't believe you wore the same dress to the prom as I did. But it doesn't really matter—you look fat in it, anyway.</p>	

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 8B

USING "I" STATEMENTS

<p>4. Fine—I'll stay at home and watch my little sister so you guys can go have fun like you always do.</p>	
<p>5. I feel jealous when you talk to other girls. I understand that's not fair to you, but I just need a little more reassurance when we're out together in public.</p>	
<p>6. My brother always acts like a jerk when he's stressed out. But I probably shouldn't say anything—he'll probably just get more upset.</p>	
<p>7. If you talk to him again, you'll be sorry.</p>	
<p>8. Of course I want you to do well on the test, but I'm not going to help you cheat. Let's calm down and then we can study together.</p>	
<p>9. We always have to hang out wherever Sarah chooses. Does she think she's royalty or something? I'm just going to stop talking to her until she figures out her problem.</p>	
<p>10. I feel abandoned when you ditch me to hang out with your girlfriend. I know she's important to you, but let's make plans for a guys' night out, okay?</p>	

The Answer Key for this activity appears on the next page.

Name: _____

ANSWER KEY

1. "You borrowed my car without asking! Next time you do that, I'll punch you in the face!" **(aggressive)**
2. You want to copy my math homework again? I guess it's okay. **(passive)**
3. I can't believe you wore the same dress to the prom as I did. But it doesn't really matter—you look fat in it, anyway. **(passive-aggressive)**
4. Fine—I'll stay at home and watch my little sister so you guys can go have fun like you always do. **(passive-aggressive)**
5. I feel jealous when you talk to other girls. I understand that's not fair to you, but I just need a little more reassurance when we're out together in public. **(assertive)**
6. My brother always acts like a jerk when he's stressed out. But I probably shouldn't say anything—he'll probably just get more upset. **(passive)**
7. If you talk to him again, you'll be sorry. **(aggressive)**
8. Of course I want you to do well on the test, but I'm not going to help you cheat. Let's calm down and then we can study together. **(assertive)**
9. We always have to hang out wherever Sarah chooses. Does she think she's royalty or something? I'm just going to stop talking to her until she figures out her problem. **(passive-aggressive)**
10. I feel abandoned when you ditch me to hang out with your girlfriend. I know she's important to you, but let's make plans for a guys' night out, okay? **(assertive)**

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 9

FREEZE OUT UNHEALTHY ANGER

Together with a partner, devise a short skit involving anger getting out of control. (If you need help, look at the sample skit below.) You don't need to write out an entire script, but make sure to identify the specific trigger that will escalate the argument. Write down a few key lines on a separate sheet of paper as a guide for your scene.

Once every group has completed their scene, each group should perform their skit in front of the class. For each scene, students in the audience should look for a trigger that causes the argument to escalate. When they do, they should shout "freeze!" The players onstage should stop in their tracks as if frozen.

The first student to shout "freeze" will come up join the cast and insert him- or herself into the script after identifying the trigger. He or she will get the chance to rephrase the line to remove the trigger, using "I" statements, active listening or other coping strategies listed in *Assertive Communication* (fact sheet 7) and *How to Listen* (fact sheet 10).

Note:

If two students shout "freeze" at the same time, they should each get a chance to rephrase the trigger in their own way. Once a student has performed, he or she must wait until everyone else has had a turn before shouting "freeze" again.

Sample skit:

Jake is hanging out in his room when his mom knocks on the door.

JAKE: Yeah?

MOM (walks into the room): What are you doing?

JAKE: Just relaxing before I get started on my huge pile of homework.

MOM: Well, I need you to mow the lawn.

JAKE: I'll do it later.

MOM: Jake, I've already asked you to do it twice. It's going to be dark in an hour, you can't wait any longer. The Andersons are coming over this evening and it needs to be done before then.

JAKE: Geez, Mom! I have way too much to do! Why can't you ever give me a break? I'm not your servant!

FREEZE!

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 12
TOP 100 WAYS TO BLOW OFF STEAM

PART ONE: Sometimes expressing anger in a safe physical way can be good for you. Read the following list of useful strategies that you can use to blow off steam when you're angry.

- take deep breaths
- count to 10
- take a drink of water
- dance around your room with music blaring
- write an angry letter (without sending it)
- shout into a pillow
- throw a tennis ball as far as you can

PART TWO: What other strategies can you think of? Below, list your top five favorite ways to blow off the negative energy that comes from anger. They should be healthy ways to vent—not actions that are likely to make matters even worse.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

PART THREE: Survey your class. How many different ways of blowing off steam did you come up with? Were there some common themes? What were the most unusual methods of blowing off steam? Were there any suggestions that you might want to try in the future?

PART FOUR: When you have collected enough answers, work as a class to create a bulletin board or mural that lists your Top 100 Ways to Blow Off Steam. Compile a master list, making sure to eliminate duplicate answers. Next, brainstorm a creative way to share your list with others. For example, you might design a bulletin board or mural and hang it in the cafeteria or hallway, make brochures to hand out during lunch or post your list on your school's website.

FACT SHEETS

Name: _____

Sometimes people use “anger” as a catch-all term to describe a variety of feelings. Keep in mind that we can have more than one feeling at a time. For example, if you get a bad grade on a test, you’re likely to be upset about the grade, mad at yourself for not studying harder and worried about the impact on your grade point average. Some people are also more prone to having their anger come out when they are faced with stressful situations—for instance, having financial troubles at home, being overscheduled with after school activities, feeling lonely starting at a new school or struggling with guilt about making new friends and not spending time with old ones.

But even though anger is a product of your mind, it can often cause intense physiological changes. When you fly into a rage, your body reacts: adrenaline flows, your heart rate spikes and your blood pressure rises. Your face may feel warm and flushed your skin might even feel tight or tingly. There’s a reason why we describe getting mad as “my blood is boiling” or “I’m going to blow my top.”

When anger ignites, sometimes the threat is real; at other times, it’s just the way we perceive a situation. But either way, it’s important to realize that anger isn’t the problem—it’s often a side effect of another painful emotion, like disappointment or guilt.

To effectively deal with a problem, you must:

1. manage the thoughts and feelings triggering your anger

and

2. use assertive communication and constructive behaviors

Of course, this is much easier said than done. In fact, one in five Americans has an anger management problem. When anger becomes a problem, it can lead to everything from road rage to school violence to addiction and self-harm. If the anger management problems are allowed to persist in the long term, it can cause lifelong and life-threatening physical disorders. Anger has been linked to chronic headaches, sleep disorders, digestive problems, high blood pressure and even strokes and heart attacks.

But when one learns how to manage anger, it can create positive effects. You can communicate more effectively with loved ones and friends, and possibly even deepen your relationships with them.

Name: _____

Most scientists believe that anger is tied directly to our **fight-or-flight response**: the instinctive body and brain reactions that help us deal with threatening situations. When you get angry, your brain triggers a flood of chemicals called *catecholamines* from your adrenal glands. The release of hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline and dopamine creates a sudden burst of energy. These hormones also cause rapid physical and mental changes throughout the body. For instance:

BRAIN: Pituitary gland releases testosterone.

BRAIN: Medulla in your brain triggers a release of adrenaline.

EYES: Pupils dilate, sharpening vision and awareness.

FACE: Face flushes and reddens.

FACE: Eyebrow muscles move inward and downward, causing a hard, direct stare.

FACE: Nostrils flare and widen.

FACE: Jaw clenches, teeth clamp down.

HEART: Heart rate quickens, preparing the body for quick movement.

HEART: Blood pressure rises.

LUNGS: Breathing quickens, bringing more oxygen into the system.

SKIN: Increase in temperature and electrical conductivity (this is why you feel tingly and hot).

HANDS: An increase in blood flow to the hands prepares them to strike.

ARMPITS: Perspiration increases.

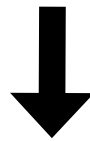
ARMS, LEGS: Blood is detoured away from internal organs toward your muscles for strength.

ARMS, LEGS: Muscles become tense and are poised for action.

Anger usually progresses in a specific sequence. Learning how to recognize this sequence of events can help you manage your anger.

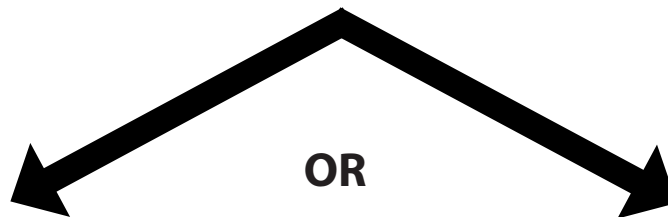
Trigger

A trigger can be a single event, like getting cut off in traffic, stubbing your toe or someone saying something mean to you. But often, it's the tip of the iceberg, the result of multiple events or the final straw from ongoing issues. The expression "mad at the boss, kick the dog" refers to how people might be angry about one thing and take it out somewhere else with someone else who is totally unrelated to the trigger.



Emotional Takeover

Immediately after the trigger, your brain floods with hormones and other chemicals, often causing a powerful surge of emotions that overrides logic. You may think something like, "What did I do to deserve that?" or "Why did this happen to me?" or "I'm going to get back at him." This usually leads to you feeling ready to act on your anger by either expressing or suppressing it.



Suppression

Suppressing your anger is a very common reaction to angry feelings. But while burying this emotion may lead you to believe you have it under control, it doesn't necessarily solve the problem. Suppressed anger doesn't go away; it builds up and can lead to mental and physical health problems such as depression, headaches and high blood pressure. Attempts to blot out or numb your anger with alcohol, drugs or self-harming behaviors are dangerous and counterproductive. Depression is also possible for those who turn their anger inward toward themselves instead of confronting the problem.

Expression

Surprisingly, this is the correct way to act—anger needs to be released. But don't confuse expression with aggression. Aggressive displays of anger may cause harm to yourself or others. Instead, find healthy ways to express your anger, cool down and peacefully resolve the problems that cause it.

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Listed below are some of the most important tools for taming your anger—but luckily, you’ve had a lot of practice, whether you know it or not.

Practice self-awareness.

Self-awareness is your ability to notice and understand the feelings that are going on inside of you. When you were younger, you might have just let your emotions take over, leading you into tantrums or crying. But as you got older, you gained the mental ability to be self-aware. When you feel yourself becoming angry, take a second to step outside yourself and pay attention to what you’re feeling and thinking.

Use self-control.

Self-control relates to your ability to think before you act. It delays instant gratification, giving you time to process your thoughts and feelings. This creates space between feelings and actions, which helps keep you from doing something you might later regret. Self-control gives you time to analyze all your choices, instead of acting upon the first impulse that comes to mind.

Don’t react—respond.

When you’re angry, it’s easy to react. It is an instinctive response to whoever or whatever is making you angry. A reaction is usually the first thing that comes to mind. Instead, try to respond. Examine the solutions and consider what the effects might be, and then decide which option is best suited to solve your problem.

Ask for help.

Sometimes situations that cause anger can be overwhelming. When this is the case, don’t be afraid to reach out to parents, friends, counselors or other trusted adults for help. Admitting you’re angry about something can be hard at first. But sharing the burden can help you relax and realize you’re not alone in dealing with a problem.

Source: *Kidshealth.org. How Can I Deal With My Anger?* <<http://www.angermanagementtips.com/teens.htm>>

Name: _____

Sometimes it can be tough to sort through your emotions in the heat of anger. Moments like these can get in the way of effective communication and even cause you to lose control. When you feel that happening, you know it's time to manage your anger by cooling down. Here are a few strategies you can try to help lower your emotional temperature and clear the air.

Find your safe spot.

Go to a place where you feel comfortable and alone. This could be your bedroom, a nearby place in nature like a park, or a basement. Once there, vent your frustration with a physical activity that helps you release tension. What matters most is that you safely release your anger and that your anger doesn't harm anyone or anything.

Take a deep breath.

Deep breathing naturally slows heart rate, oxygenates the blood and forces you to take some time out to calm down, get control of your emotions and gain perspective on the situation. It's amazing how rarely we take time to notice our breathing; when you do, you'll notice the world slowing down, if only long enough for you to get your bearings and figure out the root of your problems. Consider meditating: A bit of peaceful, thoughtful reflection can go a long way toward clearing your head. Feeling calm physically can settle down the thoughts that are fueling your anger.

Count to 10.

This simple strategy is one of the easiest to pull off—and it can quickly switch your mind and body to a different track. Think of it as a mental "time out." It gives you time to step back from angry impulses and brings you back to rational thinking, where you can start to brainstorm solutions to the problem instead of reacting in anger. If after counting to 10 you still feel upset, count to 100; count as long as it takes to cool yourself down.

Listen to music.

Either alone in your safe spot or on headphones, listen to your favorite music. Research has shown that music tends to alter a person's mood.

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

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Get some exercise.

Getting your body active and exercising—even if it’s just a short walk—has been scientifically proven to boost chemicals called endorphins in your brain. These chemicals actually make you feel good, decrease negative feelings and improve your mood.

Describe your emotions.

Writing your emotions down in a diary keeps your angry feelings from building up. There are plenty of ways to do this: journal entries, poetry, songs or letters. If you’d rather not write, try doodling, sketching or sculpting. Making art is one way to channel your anger.

Take a break.

Treat yourself to something special or sit back with your favorite book. If you can unwind with an activity that involves exercise, like shooting hoops, that’s even better. The point isn’t to cover up your anger—it’s to soothe yourself with something positive, so you can return to the problem clear-headed and ready for logical, thoughtful action.

You can employ one or any combination of these techniques that you like to cool down. Don’t rush! Make sure to give yourself the time you deserve to recover and get past your anger.

Source: Kidshealth.org; Matthew K. Knock, Ph.D.

Name: _____

If you usually lash out or shut down as soon as you're faced with a situation that makes you angry, consider trying this approach next time. (It can be hard to remember these steps, but keep trying; write them down and carry them in your pocket if you need a helpful reminder.) These steps incorporate many of the suggestions listed in *Temper-Taming Tools* (fact sheet 4) and *Learning to Cool Down* (fact sheet 5). In addition, they provide a specific action plan for an angry encounter, which you can use as a cheat-sheet.

1. Identify your problem.

Ask yourself: Why am I angry? Where are these feelings coming from and why? Be as clear and specific as possible. Express your feelings and thoughts out loud.

2. Brainstorm potential solutions.

Ask yourself: What can I do? Think of at least three things. Even if you are tempted to respond in anger, make sure that you come up with at least one calm response to your problem.

3. Think through the consequences of each solution.

Ask yourself: What will happen if I choose one of these options? Different responses will have different consequences. Keep in mind that your goal is to resolve your conflict, not make it worse.

4. Make a decision and take action.

Ask yourself: What's my best choice? If you've taken this much time to think it through, you're probably past lashing out impulsively in anger. After considering your options, choose one that will bring you closer to a solution rather than a stalemate.

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Once you choose your solution, act on it. But you're not done yet:

5. Check your progress.

Ask yourself: How did I do? Did things work out as I expected? If not, why not? Am I satisfied with the choice I made?

Taking time to reflect on how things worked out after the angry situation is long gone helps you learn about yourself and others. It allows you to further understand which problem-solving approaches work best for different situations.

If your choice didn't work out the way you planned, go back through the steps to see if there were any better options you didn't pick or new options you missed.

Adapted from <http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/deal_with_anger.html>

Name: _____

We often express our anger verbally. We all have distinct communication styles that we use when expressing our anger. Psychologists have described four types of communication, each possessing its own characteristics:

Aggressive communication:

"My feelings are important but yours aren't."

Passive communication:

"My feelings don't matter."

Passive-Aggressive communication:

"My feelings are important. Yours are, too, but I'm not going to tell you about it."

Assertive communication:

"My feelings are important and so are yours."

As you might guess, angry people tend to use the **aggressive** and **passive-aggressive** postures. However, **aggressive** communicators are more likely to start an argument than they are to get the results they want. Being **passive** in your communications is also a mistake, as it communicates weakness and tends to invite further aggression.

The **assertive** communications style is the most useful and balanced of all the styles because it is the only posture that communicates respect for all parties. Communicating assertively is the most likely way to ensure that everyone involved gets their needs taken care of. Learning how to become assertive rather than aggressive or passive-aggressive is an important step in discovering how to communicate appropriately with others.

What's the difference between aggressive and assertive communication?

Aggressive communication tends to go on the offense—it attacks and berates the other person—while assertive communication is confident and clear but not offensive or hurtful. Assertive people stand up for themselves and their rights. Most importantly, they manage to do this without crossing the line into aggressiveness. They do not attack the person they are communicating with unnecessarily.

Source: Harry Mills, Ph.D., *mentalhealth.net* website,

http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=5818&cn=116

Name: _____

What is an "I" statement?

An "I" statement helps others hear what you're saying in a way that keeps them from becoming defensive. Try filling in this simple formula to get started:

"I feel _____ when you _____ because _____."

Be sure that you only discuss how you feel about **yourself** when you fill in the "I feel" part of the formula. Talking about how you feel usually brings better results because you're not attacking your listener with a criticism. For example,

"I feel like you don't care about me when you don't let me know that you are going to be late because I end up worried and upset."

The formula won't work if you say, "I feel that you are a jerk!" because you aren't addressing your own feelings. Instead, you have merely launched an aggressive verbal attack against the person you're trying to communicate with.

Other negative phrase beginnings to avoid include:

"You should..."

"You're wrong..."

"I demand..."

"We can't..."

"We won't..."

"We never..."

"You don't understand..."

"That's stupid..."

"You must be confused..."

"I'm too busy for this..."

"You have to..."

Learning to respond to anger with an assertive "I" statement takes practice, but mastering this important communication skill will help you peacefully solve conflicts in a way that makes you and the other person both feel respected.

Source: Harry Mills, Ph.D., *mentalhealth.net* website,

http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=5819&cn=116

Name: _____

One of the most important anger management skills is the common, but often overlooked, skill of listening. A few simple exercises will boost both your listening ability and your anger management skills.

➤ **Be attentive.**

Make non-challenging eye contact; nod your head to acknowledge you're hearing what the other party says. Don't interrupt.

➤ **Remove all distractions.**

Remove physical distractions like cell phones and quiet your mind so you can absorb what the other person is saying.

➤ **Stop talking.**

Try to curtail your own impulses to answer everything the other person says. Put aside your own needs for expression and let the other party express themselves uninterrupted.

➤ **Resist being drawn into anger.**

Put yourself into the other person's shoes and refrain from reacting judgmentally. Share opinions if asked; otherwise, wait your turn.

➤ **Ask meaningful questions.**

When prompted, ask questions that help the speaker reach his or her own conclusions. Use "I" statements framed as questions.

➤ **Summarize and restate.**

Without interrupting, restate what the speaker is saying to be sure you understand and to help the speaker recognize what he or she is saying. Ask, "Did I hear you correctly?"

➤ **Be patient.**

Give the speaker time to open up his or her feelings to you.

➤ **Be reassuring.**

Let the speaker know that the purpose of the discussion is to reach solutions, not to argue.

Name: _____

What kind of environment is most calming for you? A list of potential scenes is provided. Of course, there are thousands of other calming, serene images that you might want to explore. Once you decide on your own safe spot imagery, you should become familiar with the scenario so that you can recall the details whenever you need to calm down. Some people actually make a recording of themselves reading the scenario aloud and play it back when they need to calm down. You decide what works best for you.

1. You arrive alone at the beach. You have chosen a day when there are few people around. You look out over the beach and see lots of sand and waves. The wind is blowing just enough to provide a cool breeze. You have a big blanket or beach chair...
2. You are taking the ski lift up to the top of the mountain. It is a brisk, cool day but you do not feel cold. There are only a few skiers around. The snow is perfect. The blue sky shines beautifully against the white snow. You get off the lift and proceed to the entrance of your favorite trail. As you start down the trail, you feel great...
3. You have found the perfect trail to hike. It is a cool fall day and the woods are brilliant with color. The trees are vibrant red, orange and yellow. You have a small backpack with a few things in it for your comfort. Your legs feel great. The hike is easy. You notice some small animals getting ready for the winter. You pass by a pond and pause to watch the fish. You are heading for the top of the trail where you know there is a wonderful view...
4. You have designed the perfect room. You sit in the most comfortable soft leather chair. You have a remote system at your fingertips, and you simply need to push buttons to arrange the lights, TV or music just the way you like it. You may decide to listen to some music and recline in your chair. You might have a snack brought in from your personal chef...
5. You are driving your dream car. The seats are plush and seem to hug you. The temperature can be set however you wish. The music sounds like you are at a live concert. You have your favorite sunglasses on. The surrounding landscape is beautiful. You are in perfect control of the car...

Name: _____

Learning how to successfully deal with anger is part of growing up. But sometimes anger is caused by complicated life situations or psychological issues that teens can't handle on their own. That's when you may need to reach out to a parent, counselor or trusted adult to help you get on a healthy course. Trying to cope with extreme, long-term anger on your own could result in physical ailments, emotional stress and depression.

When people hide their angry feelings instead of showing them, it can lead to feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and depression. Those who repress their angry feelings may withdraw from others, create excuses for being out of touch with friends, or become so critical and dismissive that they reject their friends. It can be a vicious cycle: being mad at oneself or at friends, breaking connections, then feeling more abandoned, isolated and hurt...and then more depressed. The solution is always to get help to understand what's beneath the feelings and find healthy ways to handle them.

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may want to consider seeking outside help.

- You have lingering feelings of anger about events that have either happened to you in the past or are going on now that just won't go away.

- You feel irritable, grumpy or in a bad mood more often than not.

- You feel constant rage at yourself or others.

- Your anger lasts for days and makes you want to hurt yourself or someone else.

- You're can't stop getting into fights or arguments.

- You feel like no one can help you out of a certain mess.

- You distrust or have lost faith in people close to you.

Adapted from <http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/deal_with_anger.html>

Name: _____

American Psychological Association, <<http://www.apa.org/topics/anger/index.aspx>>

Harry Mills, Ph.D., <http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=5819&cn=116>

Anger Management Tips, <<http://www.angermanagementtips.com>>

TeensHealth, Matthew Nock, Ph.D., <http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/deal_with_anger.html#>

"Anger," Science Daily, <<http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/a/anger.htm>>

"Psychology Basics: Anger," Psychology Today, <<http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/anger>>

Suggested Electronic Resources

Conflict Resolution Network helps to create safe schools and civil communities by making conflict resolution education universally available. <<http://www.crnhq.org>>

Parenting Toolbox contains an article for parents entitled "Talking to Children About Violence." This article is for parents who are interested in helping teachers and administrators guide their child(ren) in dealing with anger issues. The article gives parents an idea of where and how to begin to deal with issues of anger.
<<http://www.parentingtoolbox.com>>

Name: _____

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OTHER PROGRAMS

<i>Essential Health: A High School Print/Video Curriculum</i>	20 DVDs, 10 modules, 50 print lessons
<i>Curriculum in a Box: Mental Health</i>	7 DVDs / print lessons
<i>Hallmarks of Good Mental Health</i>	video and print
<i>Coping with Disruptive Life Changes</i>	video and print
<i>Who Needs Therapy? Treating Psychological Disorders</i>	video and print
<i>Common Psychological Disorders of Adolescence</i>	video and print
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<i>Teen Depression: Signs, Symptoms and Getting Help</i>	video and print
<i>"Coming Out" in School: What Does It Mean?</i>	video and print
<i>Hazing and Harassment: Understanding It, Preventing It</i>	video and print
<i>I Was Cyberbullied</i>	video and print
<i>Bully Bystanders: You Can Make a Difference</i>	video and print
<i>Essential Physical Fitness: What Every Teen Needs to Know</i>	video and print
<i>Danger behind the Wheel: The Facts about Distracted Driving</i>	video and print
<i>The Five Essential Habits of Healthy Teens</i>	video and print
<i>Prescription Drugs Update</i>	video and print
<i>Do You Have an Eating Disorder?</i>	video and print

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