

Coping with Anger

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Part 1: Practical Guidance and Didactical Approach

Background and keywords:

Generally we can see anger as a positive and powerful emotion, a natural feeling. But there are some situations and cases where anger could be a problem and it is difficult to handle and manage and it can have devastating effect on our relationships, activity and our overall wellbeing. Anger is often connected with aggression but there are also other reasons for aggressive behaviour. Problems with anger are seen more as boys' problems because of their higher score of physical and verbal aggression compared to girls. Also if we compare models for boys and girls behaviour, anger occurs in boys' behaviour more often than it does in girls. Anger that is uncontrolled could have serious consequences, and we can expect worse behaviour in boys because of their physical dispositions.

And when we can say we have problems with anger? Here are some of them:

- when we become angry we feel out of control;
- when we become angry we say or do things we later regret;
- because of anger we have difficulties with relationships;
- feelings of anger make it difficult to concentrate on our activities;
- we may have verbally or even physically attacked someone in an angry moment (e. g. shove, slap, punch, kick, ...).

As we said previously, anger is not our enemy. We do not need to fight against it. Anger is a normal process which has allowed humans to evolve and adapt. It is not a bad thing in itself. Anger only becomes a problem when it is not managed in the right way. The aim is to keep our anger under control, to know how to manage it.

Keywords: Anger, aggression, violence, control, boys.

Similar topics:

Aggression, violence, emotions, hostility

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils

Duration:

1 hour in class or hobby group

Number of participants:

15 to 20 boys

Age:

9 to 11 years old boys

Aims:

- To learn how to keep feelings of anger under control.
- To know how to manage anger.

(Short) Explanation:

We can see many boys who are socially aggressive. One of the reasons could be the fact that they do not recognise or acknowledge their own feelings. To be able to “read” emotions by others they should be able to “read” their own ones, to understand them. They should know that anger is a natural emotion related to all people. And anger can be controlled and constructively managed when we know the sources of it and we have no need to suppress it. The group discussion about what makes us angry leads to reciprocal understanding and boys can better learn how to deal with anger too- how to ventilate it without injuring others.

Guidance for the game or exercise:

Angry cake

Each boy “cooks” his own angry cake. He splits his cake on different parts in different sizes. The pieces are associated to sources of personal anger. The size of each piece varies depending on the degree of anger generated in a given situation. The important point is that boys should think about and compare the sources of anger and try to find the appropriate associations and name them. Post- work discussion helps boys to realize that also the others could have the similar problems. In some cases they discover other sources of anger which have been unconscious.



Reflection:

Everybody should think about following:

- What makes me angry?
- How do I react?
- How my anger could help me?
- What can I do to be well- balanced?

Variations (continuation):

The anger protocol

Some boys can remain composed easily without getting angry, others suppress it and the others react explosively. This exercise develops the ability to manage feelings of anger.

Group discussion about what are the good reactions helping against anger and which are not is the opening part of the exercise. Then the individual work begins. Boys write their thoughts on pre-prepared paper, see below.

Step 1

What made me angry today?

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Step 2

How did I react? (Did I ignore it; did I scream, did I cry, did I run off, did I beat anybody else, did I try to find help by an adult person?)

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Step 3

How do I want to react next time?

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Step 4

Think about the situation that made me angry and consider the better, positive, constructive reactions which I identified in number 3 - I will breath more deeply, I will try to see the situation from different perspective.

Step 5

Each boy should have time to discuss the "anger protocol" with a pedagogue or parent. They should positively evaluate this work, give him an advice and stimulate him toward continuance.