

## **Handling Anger**

### **Week 1**

- Introduction to group, review of protocol
- Anger Inventory
- Anger Styles
- Sampling of anger management skills

### **Week 2**

- Introduction to weekly anger worksheet
- Fight/Flight/Freeze Responses
- The Eight Tools of Anger Control

### **Week 3**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- The Angry Volcano worksheet
- Discussion of how anger escalates

### **Week 4**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Thoughts, Feelings, Actions worksheet
- Discussion of how anger and other emotions go hand-in-hand

### **Week 5**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Anger Buttons worksheet
- Discussion on how to identify the things/situations that can "push your buttons"

### **Week 6**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Identifying Emotions worksheet
- Discussion about how difficult it is to accurately identify emotions and how this can trigger anger responses

### **Week 7**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Anger: The Tip of the Iceberg worksheet
- Discussion of how to recognize the emotions under the surface of anger
- Feelings Underlying Anger crossword puzzle given for homework exercise

### **Week 8**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- How Would You Feel... worksheet
- Discussion and role play of different scenarios to help identify feelings surrounding each.

**Week 9**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Are You Threatening Me? Worksheet
- Discussion of how anger is usually a response to a threat

**Week 10**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Early Anger Messages worksheet
- Discussion about identifying expressions of anger and anger management as handed down by role models/primary care givers

**Week 11**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Drugs, Alcohol, and Anger: What's the Link? Worksheet
- Discussion of how unresolved or built up anger can result in an increased likelihood to use substances as a way of relieving stress

**Week 12**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- The Conflict Cycle worksheet
- Discussion of how people can get caught up in cycles during arguments that often lead to escalation, unresolved issues, and consequences of getting caught in this cycle

**Week 13**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Body Language
- Discussion about how body language can trigger conflicts or confrontations

**Week 14**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- To Forgive or Not to Forgive? Worksheet
- Discussion on forgiveness, and does 'forgiving and forgetting' help or hinder

**Week 15**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Letter for Letting Go
- Writing a letter to a person who you have been angry with and unable to forgive. Write everything you would say if there would be no negative consequences. (This letter is not to be sent)

**Week 16**

- Weekly anger worksheet
- Plan for Anger Management
- Termination

**Putnam Family & Community Services**  
**PROSper**  
**GROUP PROTOCOL**

**DATE:** 10/1/09

**TITLE:** Handling Anger

**COMPONENT:** Community Rehab. & Support (CRS)

**SERVICE:** Wellness Self management (WSM)

**POPULATION:** Any PROSper member

**FREQUENCY:** 1x/week

**DURATION:** 50 minutes

**DESCRIPTION:** This is an interactive and didactic group which will provide members with information about anger, its purpose and biological effects, as well as provide the opportunity for members to discuss past patterns of anger expression. Members will come up with personalized plans of action to express anger in healthy, socially accepted ways, and will role-play such plans in group.

**MODE OF WORK:**

- A. **PURPOSE:** To help group members identify with their anger and express it in healthy, socially appropriate ways.
- B. **GROUP FRAMEWORK:** Group will be didactic and use group discussion in conjunction with role-playing.

**EXPECTED OUTCOME:** Group members will develop a personalized plan of action for when they are angry and be able to execute it successfully.

## ***Myths about Anger***

***Myth #1: Anger Is Inherited.*** One misconception or myth about anger is that the way we express anger is inherited and cannot be changed. Sometimes, we may hear someone say, “I inherited my anger from my father; that’s just the way I am.” This statement implies that the expression of anger is a fixed and unalterable set of behaviors. Evidence from research studies, however, indicates that people are not born with set, specific ways of expressing anger. These studies show, rather, that because the expression of anger is learned behavior, more appropriate ways of expressing anger also can be learned.

It is well established that much of people’s behavior is learned by observing others, particularly influential people. These people include parents, family members, and friends. If children observe parents expressing anger through aggressive acts, such as verbal abuse and violence, it is very likely that they will learn to express anger in similar ways. Fortunately, this behavior can be changed by learning new and appropriate ways of anger expression. It is not necessary to continue to express anger by aggressive and violent means.

***Myth #2: Anger Automatically Leads to Aggression.*** A related myth involves the misconception that the only effective way to express anger is through aggression. It is commonly thought that anger is something that builds and escalates to the point of an aggressive outburst. As has been said, however, anger does not necessarily lead to aggression. In fact, effective anger management involves controlling the escalation of anger by learning assertiveness skills, changing negative and hostile “self-talk,” challenging irrational beliefs, and employing a variety of behavioral strategies. These skills, techniques, and strategies will be discussed in later sessions.

***Myth #3: People Must Be Aggressive To Get What They Want.*** Many people confuse assertiveness with aggression. The goal of aggression is to dominate, intimidate, harm, or injure another person—to win at any cost. Conversely, the goal of assertiveness is to express feelings of anger in a way that is respectful of other people. For example, if you were upset because a friend was repeatedly late for meetings, you could respond by shouting obscenities and name-calling. This approach is an attack on the other person rather than an attempt to address the behavior that you find frustrating or anger provoking.

An assertive way of handling this situation might be to say, “When you are late for a meeting with me, I get pretty frustrated. I wish that you would be on time more often.” This statement expresses your feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction and communicates how you would like the situation changed. This expression does not blame or threaten the other person and minimizes the chance of causing emotional harm. We will discuss assertiveness skills in more detail in sessions 7 and 8.

***Myth #4: Venting Anger Is Always Desirable.*** For many years, the popular belief among numerous mental health professionals and laymen was that the aggressive expression of anger, such as screaming or beating on pillows, was healthy and therapeutic. Research studies have found, however, that people who vent their anger aggressively simply get better at being angry. In other words, venting anger in an aggressive manner reinforces aggressive behavior.

## My Anger Narrative

Write a short narrative about how mismanagement of anger has affected your life and relationships.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Why am I choosing this group? What do I hope to get out of it?

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# Anger Inventory

Everyone gets angry. Getting to know what triggers your anger and how you react can help you manage it in a positive way. Check any of the following boxes that apply to you and use the blank lines to add anything not listed here.

## What do you do when you get angry?

- ☐ clench your jaw
- ☐ get a stomach ache
- ☐ raise your voice
- ☐ want to hurt someone
- ☐ refuse to speak
- ☐ want to get away
- ☐ become verbally or physically abusive
- ☐ sweat or turn red
- ☐ get sarcastic
- ☐ never get angry

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## How do you feel when you get angry?

- ☐ guilty
- ☐ anxious
- ☐ depressed
- ☐ ashamed
- ☐ withdrawn
- ☐ don't feel it until later

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_



**SPECIAL NOTE**  
This inventory  
is confidential.  
No one should  
see it but you.

## What is your anger like? Does it...

- ☐ last too long?
- ☐ flare up frequently?
- ☐ express itself even when you try to suppress it?
- ☐ go away quickly?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## What is the outcome of your anger? Does it...

- ☐ interfere with your job or relationships?
- ☐ contribute to physical problems?
- ☐ lead to accidents?
- ☐ get you into legal problems?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## What situations make you especially angry?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Are there people you have trouble dealing with when you're angry? Family members or employers often fall into this category:

**PERSON**

**HOW YOU RESPOND**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# What's Your Anger Style?

Anger comes in three basic styles. We may switch styles depending on who or what is triggering our anger, but most of us lean to one style or another. Check the boxes that describe your anger style and use the blank lines to add any other appropriate descriptions.

## Lock it up!

### BEHAVIOR

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> withdraw emotionally        | <input type="checkbox"/> deny anger, but show it in other actions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> give the "silent treatment" | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> become ill or anxious       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                    |

### REASONS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have the right to be angry.     | <input type="checkbox"/> I may lose my job, or a relationship. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger is inappropriate or childish.     | <input type="checkbox"/> I fear I will hurt or offend someone. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I may lose control of myself.           | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't cope with strong feelings.      | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People will dislike me if I show anger. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |



## Turn it loose!

### BEHAVIOR

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> blowing up at people               | <input type="checkbox"/> flying off the handle at small things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> getting physical or hurting people | <input type="checkbox"/> bringing up old grievances            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> threatening, shouting or swearing  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> blaming people                     | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> breaking things                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                                 |

### REASONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I need to assert my power over people.             | <input type="checkbox"/> The best defense is a good offense. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm afraid of getting close to someone.            | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't stand to be wrong.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know how to communicate calmly when angry. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               |

## Manage it!

### BEHAVIOR

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> remaining calm                               | <input type="checkbox"/> allowing discussion to happen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> focusing on the behavior, not the person     | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> using "I" statements: "I feel angry when..." | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sticking to the subject                      | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                         |

### REASONS

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger is a normal emotion—it's OK to be angry.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When I'm angry, I want to solve the problem that's causing my anger. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be able to express anger appropriately.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



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## The A-B-C-D Model

Albert Ellis developed a model that is consistent with the way we conceptualize anger management treatment. He calls his model the A-B-C-D or rational-emotive model. In this model, "A" stands for an activating event, what we have been calling the red-flag event. "B" represents the beliefs people have about the activating event. Ellis claims that it is not the events themselves that produce feelings such as anger, but our interpretations of and beliefs about the events. "C" stands for the emotional consequences of events. In other words, these are the feelings people experience as a result of their interpretations of and beliefs concerning the event.

According to Ellis and other cognitive behavioral theorists, as people become angry, they engage in an internal dialog, called "self-talk." For example, suppose you were waiting for a bus to arrive. As it approaches, several people push in front of you to board. In this situation, you may start to get angry. You may be thinking, "How can people be so inconsiderate! They just push me aside to get on the bus. They obviously don't care about me or other people." Examples of the irrational self-talk that can produce anger escalation are reflected in statements such as "People should be more considerate of my feelings," "How dare they be so inconsiderate and disrespectful," and "They obviously don't care about anyone but themselves."

Ellis says that people do not have to get angry when they encounter such an event. The event itself does not get them upset and angry; rather, it is people's interpretations of and beliefs concerning the event that cause the anger. Beliefs underlying anger often take the form of "should" and "must." Most of us may agree, for example, that respecting others is an admirable quality. Our belief might be, "People should always respect others." In reality, however, people often do not respect each other in everyday encounters. You can choose to view the situation more realistically as an unfortunate defect of human beings, or you can let your anger escalate every time you witness, or are the recipient of, another person's disrespect. Unfortunately, your perceived disrespect will keep you angry and push you toward the explosion phase. Ironically, it may even lead you to show disrespect to others, which would violate your own fundamental belief about how people should be treated.

Ellis' approach consists of identifying irrational beliefs and disputing them with more rational or realistic perspectives (in Ellis' model, "D" stands for dispute). You may get angry, for example, when you start thinking, "I must always be in control. I must control every situation." It is not possible or appropriate, however, to control every situation. Rather than continue with these beliefs, you can try to dispute them. You might tell yourself, "I have no power over things I cannot control," or "I have to accept what I cannot change."

People may have many other irrational beliefs that may lead to anger. Consider an example where a friend of yours disagrees with you. You may start to think, "Everyone must like me and give me approval." If you hold such a belief, you are likely to get upset and angry when you face rejection. However, if you dispute this irrational belief by saying, "I can't please everyone; some



people are not going to approve of everything I do,” you will most likely start to calm down and be able to control your anger more easily.

Other beliefs that may lead to anger include, “Everyone should follow the rules,” or “Life should be fair,” or “Good should prevail over evil,” or “People should always do the right thing.” These are beliefs that are not always followed by everyone in society, and, usually, there is little you can do to change that. How might you dispute these beliefs? In other words, what thoughts that are more rational and adaptive and will not lead to anger can be substituted for such beliefs?

Another common irrational belief is, “I must be respected and treated fairly by everyone.” This also is likely to lead to frustration and anger. Thus, to dispute this belief, it is helpful to tell yourself, “I can’t be expected to be treated fairly by everyone.”

For people with anger control problems, these irrational beliefs can lead to the explosion phase (10 on the anger meter) and to the negative consequences of the post-explosion phase. It is often better to change your outlook by disputing your beliefs and creating an internal dialog or self-talk that is more rational and adaptive.

“D” = Dispute

“How can people be so inconsiderate? They just push me aside to get on the bus. They obviously don’t care about me or other people.”	
“People should be more considerate of my feelings.”	
“People should always respect others.”	
“If he doesn’t like what I have to say then screw him. He should before forced to listen to me.”	
“Everyone should follow the rules.”	
“It’s not fair!”	
“I must be respected and treated fairly by everyone.”	
“They don’t get it. No one gets it.”	

## A-B-C-D Handling Anger Weekly Assessment

**Activation Situation/Event:** Something that triggered my anger within the past week.

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**Belief System:** What you tell yourself about the event, list your “self-talk” statements.

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**Consequences:** How you feel about the event based on your self-talk.

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**Dispute:** Examine your beliefs/expectations. Are they realistic or irrational?

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Something I did well in this situation:	Something I could have done better:

Fight/Flight/Freeze responses are essential for survival in both humans and animals. Often, a sense of “hyperalertness” accompanies FFF responses. Hyperalertness allows for senses of touch, smell, hearing, sight, and taste to increase in order to sense danger.

### **Fight**

- Evoked when feeling trapped, attacked, or when aggression equals safety.
- Impulses to fight are experienced as tension in hands/arms, shoulders, fists, blocking motions, narrowing of eyes, clenching of the jaw, kicking, and struggling.
- Fight responses are often paired with the emotional state of ANGER

### **Flight**

- Running away from danger and towards a person or place of safety
- Sometimes flight is “running from nothing, to nothing” aka avoidance
- Experienced as leg movements, turning the body or twisting, backing away
- Flight responses are often paired with the emotional state of FEAR

### **Freeze**

- “*Alert Mobility*” – complete cessation of all movement except for breathing and eye movement. Breathing is quiet to avoid detection.
  - Type 1: aware of the environment, threat cues, escape route, protective impulses, feeling energized and tense, ready and able to run if needed. Motionless, panic-stricken, pounding heart but ready and able to act.
  - Type 2: paralyzed, “feigned death,” total submission, activated under entrapment with no possibility of action or escape; limp, passive, shutdown, fainting, helpless/submissive behaviors, the aim of this is to prevent aggression or to interrupt it. This often results in dissociation, memory impairment, or amnesia.

## **The Eight Tools of Anger Control**

### ***Tool 1 - Recognize Stress***

Stress and anger tend to go hand and hand. The higher one's stress level, the easier it is to allow our anger to get out of control. It is a challenge for most of us to manage our stress levels in a complex world with many demands and expectations. Learning stress management techniques us an effective way to reduce the physical, behavioral, and emotional problems caused by too much stress.

Stress is often the trigger that takes us from feeling peaceful to experiencing uncomfortable angry feelings in many common life situations. Whether the stressor is external or internal, scientists have discovered that the major systems of the body work together to provide one of the human organism's most powerful and sophisticated defenses; the stress response which you may know better as "fight-or-flight". Before your stress response turns into anger or aggression, use stress management strategies to get it under control.

### ***Tool 2 - Develop Empathy***

Have you ever been in a restaurant and noticed that the customers at the table next to you were speaking louder than anyone else? It was as if they had no idea that they were being so loud and intrusive to the rest of the patrons. This lack of awareness is often a sign of not being emotionally or socially alert. Or, have you ever been in a situation where you tried to express your feelings and it backfired in some way?

Some of us are very good at knowing how we feel and expressing it, while others struggle to do so. It is crucial to express emotion in order to relate to those around us. Our ability to know how we are feeling as well as our ability to accurately sense the feelings of those around us help us make positive connections with others. This characteristic is often called "empathy."

To empathize is to see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another, and to feel with the heart of another. Lack of empathy leads to poor communication and a failing to understand others. To manage anger, it often helps to see our anger as a combination of other people's behavior and our lack of empathy toward them or their situation.

### ***Tool 3 - Respond Instead of React***

Many times we become angry because we find people and situations that literally "push our buttons", and we react just like a juke box that automatically pulls down a record and starts playing when you make a selection. Rather than reacting to anger triggers in this fashion, you can learn to **choose** how to deal with frustrating situations — to **respond** rather than automatically react like that juke box.

There are many advantages to learning to how be more flexible in dealing with the stresses and frustrations of life. At the top of the list is a sense of empowerment. It just feels good and powerful to know that you are in charge of your response, rather than being controlled by other people or circumstances. Many people notice their anger level going down as their feeling of empowerment goes up.

### ***Tool 4 - Change That Conversation With Yourself***

"For some reason whenever I get upset I am always putting myself down" said one woman in an anger management class. "Even my friends tell me I am just too hard on myself", she said. When I get upset, I will often say things like, "I'm such a loser", or, "if I don't make it on time, everyone will think I'm a jerk", the woman explained. "Sometimes I even tell myself that I am worthless and stupid when I make mistakes."

A crucial tool in dealing with angry feelings is that of challenging that conversation with yourself. Like the woman described above, you are constantly telling yourself all kinds of things which cause you to have certain feelings or emotions—even though you may not realize it. Learning to change that "self-talk" empowers you to deal with anger more effectively in terms of how strongly you feel the anger, how long you hold onto your anger, and how you express your anger.

### ***Tool 5 - Communicate Assertively***

Good communication skills are an essential ingredient to anger management because poor communication causes untold emotional hurt, misunderstandings, and conflict. Words are powerful, but the message we convey to others is even more powerful and often determines how people respond to us and how we feel toward them.

Anger expressed toward others is often a misguided way of communicating a feeling we have or a need that is not being satisfied by other people or situations. Assertive communication—as distinct from aggressive communication—is a set of skills to honestly and effectively communicate how you feel and how you are responding to things—without getting angry or hostile about it.

### ***Tool 6 - Adjust Expectations***

Have you ever been told your expectations are too high? Anger and stress can often be caused when our expectations are too far apart from what is realistic to achieve. In other words, anger is often triggered by a discrepancy between what we expect and what we get.

Learning to adjust those expectations—sometimes upward and other times downward—can help us cope with difficult situations or people, or even cope with ourselves. In marriage, research shows that much anger is caused by trying to solve problems which are unsolvable and perpetual. Successful couples learn to live with each other around these issues rather than getting angry about them.

### ***Tool 7 - Forgive But Don't Forget!***

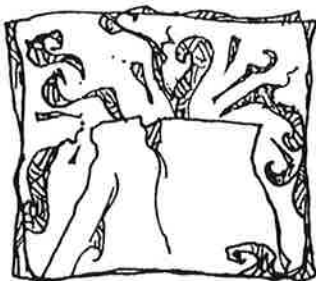
Anger is often the result of grievances we hold toward other people or situations, usually because of our perception and feeling of having been wronged by them in some way. Resentment is a form of anger that does more damage to the holder than the offender. Holding a grudge is letting the offender live rent free in your head.

Making the decision to "let go" (while still protecting ourselves) is often a process of forgiveness – or at least acceptance – and is a major step toward anger control.

### ***Tool 8 - Retreat and Think Things Over!***

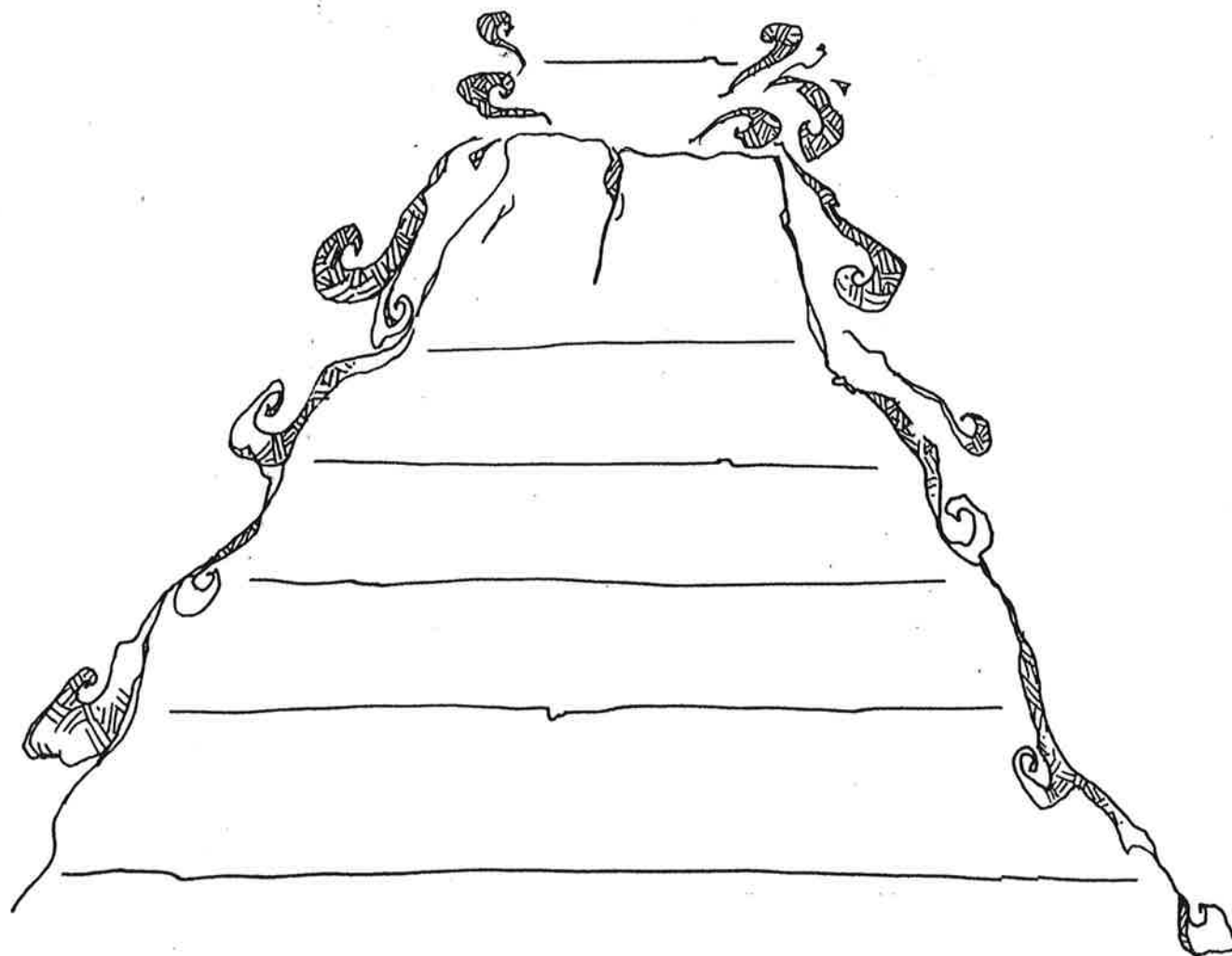
Jim and Mary Jones loved each other deeply, but often went into horrific verbal battles over any number of issues. However, they were unable to give each other "space" during an argument insisting they solve the issue immediately. Even worse, Mary often physically blocked Jim from leaving and would follow him from room to room demanding discussion. Needless to say, this is a dangerous practice as it can escalate levels of anger even further and cause partners to do and say things they don't really mean and may later regret!

Research shows that we are pretty much incapable of resolving conflicts or thinking rationally in an argument when our stress level reaches a certain point. To avoid losing control either physically or verbally, it is often best to take a temporary "time-out" - and leave. This tool of anger management works much better if (a) you commit to return within a reasonable amount of time to work things out, and (2) you work on your "self-talk" while trying to cool down.



# The Angry Volcano

**Think of yourself as a volcano. As the heat rises in a volcano, so does the lava, sometimes building until it erupts.**



1. Identify a time when your emotions got so hot that they erupted. Describe your most angry behavior (the "eruption") on the line on top of the volcano, inside the lava.
2. On the top line inside the volcano, write what happened just before the 'eruption.'
3. Continue to write the events that led up to your 'eruption' down the inside of the volcano. The bottom line should be the earliest event you can identify that began the escalation of your anger.

## Facilitator's Information for The Angry Volcano

**Purpose:** To gain awareness of how anger escalates.

**Background Information:** Many people experience anger as a "sudden explosion," because they are unaware of when their anger is triggered and how it escalates over time. If participants can become aware of this process, they can begin to develop strategies for de-escalating their emotions before they explode.

**Individual Activity:** "LAVA RISING"  
*Materials:* One copy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils.

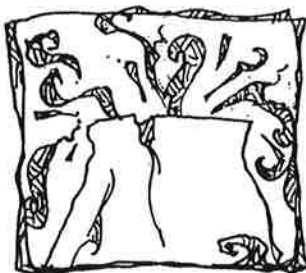
1. Give participant copy of worksheet and pen/pencil.
2. Read or have participant read directions aloud.
3. Assist participant in identifying a situation in which his or her anger exploded.
4. Assist participant in completing worksheet based on the above situation.
5. Process with a discussion of the following questions:
  - At each level of escalation, what were the participant's underlying emotions?
  - At each level of escalation, what was the participant's self-talk?
  - At each level of escalation, what were the choices the participant made? What were the consequences of those choices?
  - At each level of escalation, what were other possible choices the participant could have made?
  - What choices would the participant have made differently if s/he could do it again?

**Group Activity:** "LINE-UP"  
*Materials:* One copy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, index cards (at least six or more depending on how many times the 'line-up' is to be repeated).

1. Distribute worksheets and pens/pencils.
2. Read or have a participant volunteer to read the directions aloud.
3. Instruct participants to complete the worksheet, offering assistance and clarification as needed.
4. After worksheets have been completed, ask for a volunteer who is willing to share his or her worksheet with the rest of the group.
5. Using the volunteer's worksheet, write each step in the escalation of anger on a separate index card.
6. Shuffle the index cards, and distribute one index card to each of six participants. (If there are less than six participants, give more than one card to some or have the participants line the cards up on the table instead of lining themselves up.)
7. Give participants the following instructions: Without talking, they are to line themselves up in the order that they think the events on their index cards took place. The person holding the index card with the event that first triggered the anger should be on the left end of the line, and the person holding the index card describing the 'explosion' should be on the right end of the line.
8. After participants have lined up, the volunteer whose worksheet is being used should tell the group whether they have lined themselves up in the correct order or not. If not, s/he should identify the 'cardholders' who are in the wrong place and give them an opportunity to move until they are in the correct order.
9. Process by asking the volunteer to answer the questions in number five of the Individual Activity above.
10. The 'line-up' activity may be repeated several times, so that every group member has had an opportunity to participate.

\*'Angry Volcano' Worksheet concept contributed by Lisa Collett, M.A.





# Thoughts, Feelings & Actions

EVENT	MY THOUGHTS	MY FEELINGS	MY ACTIONS

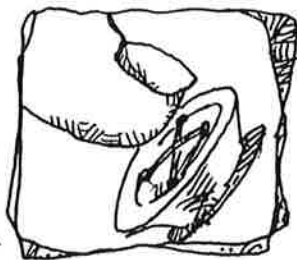
## Facilitator's Information for Thoughts, Feelings & Actions

**Purpose:** To increase awareness of the thoughts and feelings that precede one's actions.

**Background Information:** In this activity, participants are asked to take the events listed in the Angry Volcano exercise and examine them in more depth. By identifying the thoughts and feelings underlying each of their actions, they may be better able to understand the process of escalation of anger and conflict. With practice, this skill will allow participants to exercise more control over their own behavior in future conflicts.

**Group or Individual Activity:** "CHARTING WHAT'S UNDERNEATH MY ACTIONS"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, completed "Angry Volcano" worksheet(s), pen(s)/pencil(s).

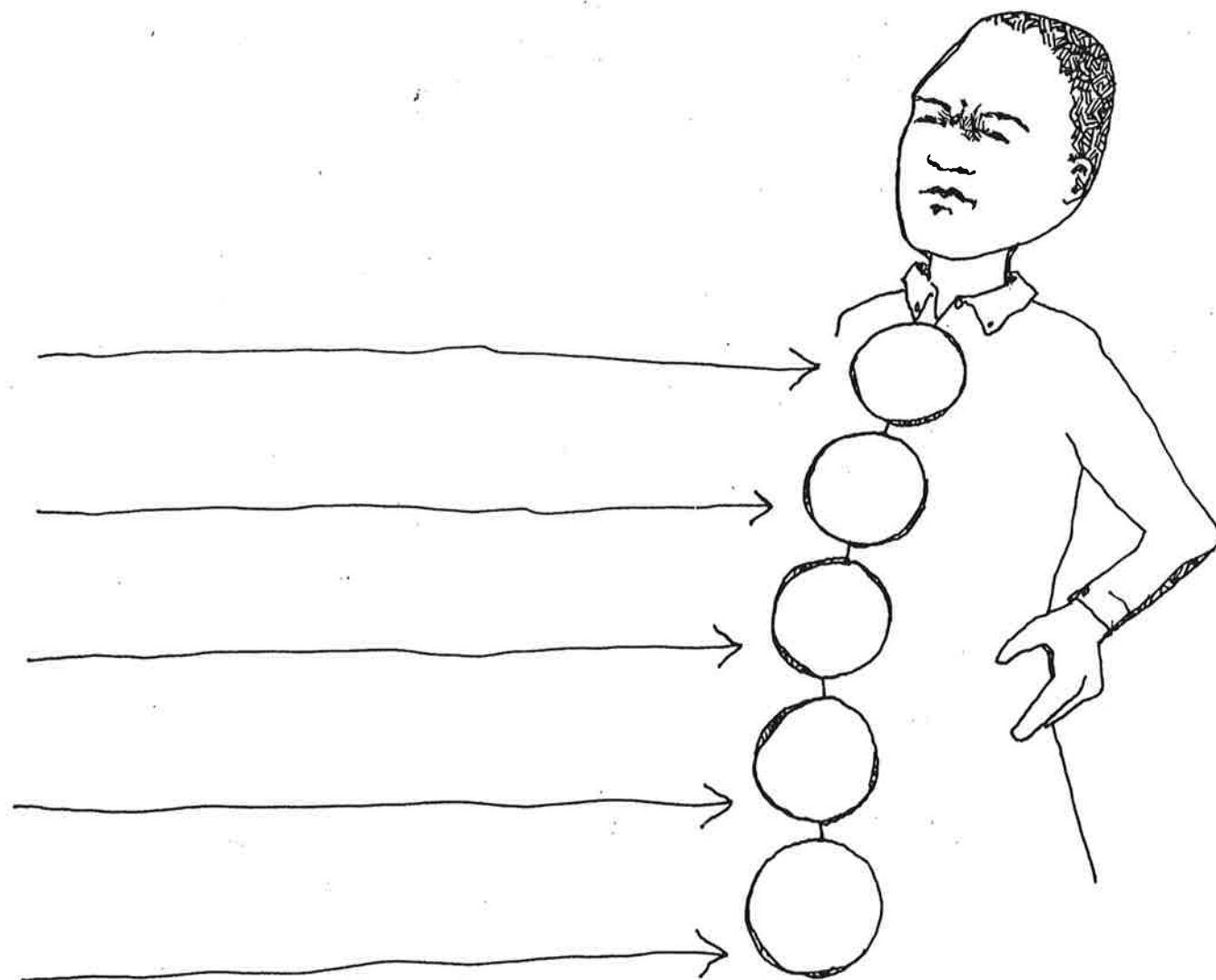
1. Give participant(s) copies of their completed "Angry Volcano" worksheet and one copy each of the "Thoughts, Feelings & Actions" worksheet.
2. Explain that this activity is a follow-up to the Angry Volcano activity, and will take the concepts discussed in that activity further.
3. Tell participant(s) to take each of the events listed on the "Angry Volcano" worksheet and write it in the left column labeled "Events" on the "Thoughts, Feelings & Actions" worksheet, starting with the first event in the top box and working down.
4. Instruct participant(s) to think about the first event, and write in the "Thoughts" box whatever thoughts they had at the time of the event; then, write whatever feelings they had in the "Feelings" box, and the actions they took in response in the "Actions" box. Encourage participant(s) to reach for the underlying feelings and thoughts, rather than stopping at the first ones that cross their minds (i.e., if the first feeling that comes to mind is anger, remember that there are usually other feelings beneath the anger).
5. Process with the following questions:
  - How did your thoughts affect your feelings?
  - How did your thoughts and feelings inform your actions?
  - If your 'self-talk' about the event had been different/more positive, how might your actions have been different?
  - Imagine you were able to go back and stop time right after the event listed in the left-hand box, and *before* you took the actions in the right-hand box. If you could fill out this worksheet as a sort of road map to plan your actions in advance, what would you have written in the right-hand box?



# Anger Buttons

Have you ever heard the expression “Pushing My Buttons?” Everyone has their own ‘Anger Buttons.’ These are certain things that really get you upset and trigger your angry behavior. But keep in mind that you are not a computer — when someone ‘pushes your buttons,’ you have a choice as to how you behave in response.

On each arrow below, describe something that regularly triggers your anger. (For example “When someone makes jokes about my family.”) Then, choose a one- or two-word phrase to represent that trigger and write it on the button that the arrow points to. (For example “Family Jokes.”)



Be aware of your anger buttons. Practice recognizing when they are triggered or when they are about to be triggered, so you can make conscious choices about how you will react in response.

## Facilitator's Information for Anger Buttons

**Purpose:** To identify common triggers of anger.

**Background Information:** The phrase 'pushing one's buttons' is often used to refer to actions that one person takes which trigger another person's anger. However, this term can be misleading because it can imply that the person whose anger is being triggered has no control over his or her own behavior once his or her button is pushed. Abusive people often use the concept 'pushing buttons' to blame their victims for their abusive behavior. Therefore, it is critical to emphasize that even when a person's anger is triggered, that person has control over, and is responsible for, his or her own behavior.

**Individual Activity:** "NAMING MY BUTTONS"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Read or have participant read the introductory paragraph and discuss.
2. By asking participant to recall real-life situations in which his or her anger has been triggered, assist him or her in identifying common anger triggers, writing them on the arrows, and choosing one- or two-word phrases to write in the 'buttons.'
3. Facilitate discussion about the participant's responses to his or her 'anger buttons' being pushed, whether those responses are healthy/effective or not, and what other responses might be possible.
4. Process with discussion of the emotions that underlie each of the triggers and how recognizing those emotions in the moment of conflict might allow the participant to 'diffuse' the trigger and make more constructive choices about his or her response.
5. Suggest that between now and the next session, the participant keep a journal of each time his or her anger buttons are pushed, his or her reactions, and the emotions underlying the triggers. Follow up by processing the journaling in subsequent sessions.

**Group Activity:** "ANGER BUTTON SHUFFLE"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, pieces of differently colored construction paper cut into large circles, 3" in diameter, (one per participant), one marker per participant.

1. Distribute three circles and a marker to each participant.
2. Ask participants if they have ever heard the term "Pushing my buttons," discuss and clarify the concept.
3. Instruct participants to write an 'anger trigger' on their circles. Participants may write triggers for their own anger, or they may choose to write triggers that they have seen in characters in movies, on television, in books or song lyrics.
4. Collect the 'anger buttons.' Shuffle and redistribute them so no participant has his or her own 'anger button.'
5. Instruct participants to draw a line down the middle of the blank side of the circle they are holding.
6. Instruct participants to consider the anger trigger they have in front of them and to write three emotions that they think might underlie the anger in that situation on one side of the line.
7. Remind participants that when a person's 'anger button' is pushed, s/he has a choice in how s/he responds and is always responsible for his or her behavior. Instruct participants to consider three ways a person might respond when the 'anger button' they have in front of them is pushed, and to write those responses on the other side of the line.
8. Ask for volunteers to share their 'anger buttons' and their ideas for the underlying emotions and responses. Ask other group members to brainstorm other emotions and responses for each anger trigger.
9. Distribute worksheets and pens/pencils.
10. Read or have a participant read aloud the introductory paragraph.
11. Instruct participants to complete worksheets.
12. Ask for volunteers to share what they identified as their own anger buttons and process.

*For groups with low literacy levels: Give participants the option of drawing pictures of anger triggers instead of writing them in words; after collecting buttons, the facilitator can hold each one up, identify the anger trigger, then facilitate brainstorming emotions and responses as a group.*



# Identifying Emotions

## A Time When I Felt...

Happy

Sad

Love

Frustrated

Accepted

Rejected

Joyful

Lonely

Supported

Embarrassed

Excited

Ashamed

Proud

Humiliated

Confident

Overwhelmed

Secure

Insecure

Silly

Shy or bashful

Surprised

Jealous

Hopeful

Remorse

Brave

Afraid

Other:

Other:

## Facilitator's Information for Identifying Emotions

**Purpose:** To practice identifying both positive and negative emotions and events that trigger them.

**Background Information:** Identifying a range of emotions is the first step in learning to express those emotions in healthy and productive ways. Done early on in group or individual work, this activity may result in discussion of only more superficial examples of the emotions. The facilitator should accept whatever examples participants give, but may want to repeat the activity in a later session when a greater level of trust has been developed and more 'intense' examples of emotional triggers may be shared.

### **Individual Activity:** "REMEMBERING EMOTIONS"

*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil. Optional: Blank paper and markers.

1. Explain to participant that the purpose of this activity is to practice recognizing different emotions and times s/he has felt those emotions.
2. Read or have participant read aloud each emotion. Ask participant if s/he knows what that emotion means and if necessary, clarify the definition or meaning of the word. Ask participant to think of a time when s/he felt that emotion, and briefly write it on the line.
3. It's okay if the participant can't think of examples for each emotion. During future sessions, when emotions or memories of these emotions are triggered, the facilitator can help the participant identify those emotions and go back to fill in the blanks on this page.
4. Optional: Ask participant to choose one or more of the emotions discussed, and draw a picture of him/herself at the time s/he felt the emotion. Use this activity as a starting point for a more in-depth exploration of the events and emotions represented in the picture.

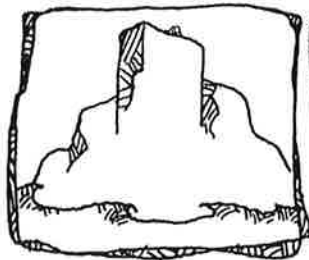
### **Group Activity:** "EMOTIONS CHARADES"

*Materials:* Index cards with one emotion written on each card, one photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils.

1. Give each participant an index card with one emotion written on it. Instruct participants that they should keep the emotions on their cards secret.
2. Ask for a volunteer to act out the emotions on his/her card. The facilitator may choose to instruct participants to act out the emotions using no words, or tell them they can use words other than the one on the card.
3. Instruct other participants to guess the emotion being demonstrated.
4. Once someone has guessed the emotion, ask participants to give examples of times they have felt that emotion.
5. Repeat until each participant has acted out his or her emotion, and other participants have given examples of times they have experienced the emotion.
6. Hand out worksheets and pens/pencils, and instruct participants to fill in a time they have felt each emotion.

### **Alternate Group Activity:** "EMOTIONS CHECK-IN"

1. This activity can be used as a check-in ritual at the beginning of each group session. Explain this check-in ritual to participants during the first group session.
2. Prior to each group session, choose one emotion to be the 'emotion of the day.' It is best to start with the more positive, less threatening emotions such as 'happy' or 'excited' during early group sessions.
3. At the beginning of each group session, the facilitator should state the 'emotion of the day' and if necessary, begin with a discussion of the meaning of the emotion.
4. The facilitator may choose to model by going first, stating the emotion of the day and giving an example of a time s/he felt that emotion.
5. Ask participants to take turns describing times they experienced that emotion.

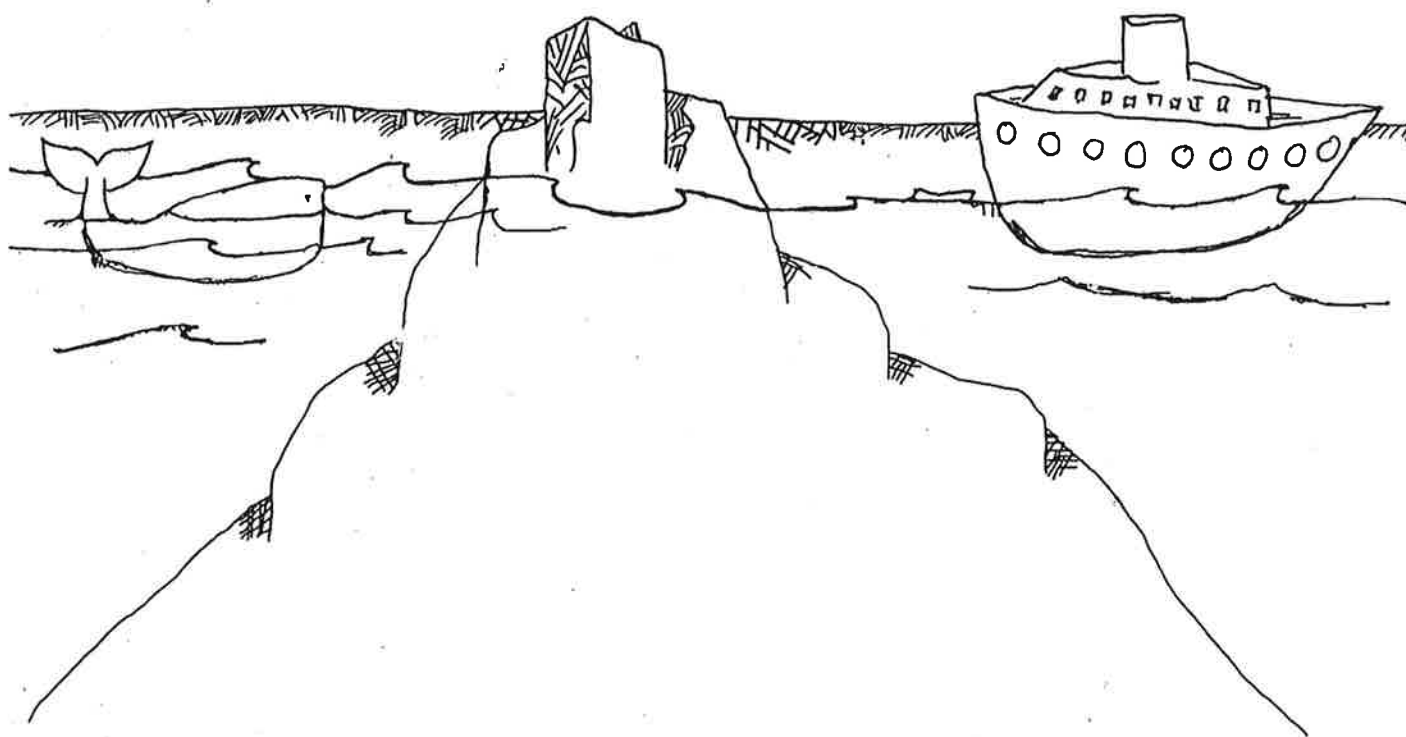


# Anger: The Tip of the Iceberg

Imagine you are a passenger on a cruise to Alaska. You see a giant iceberg that seems to be floating in the water. You may not realize that what you see above the surface of the water is only the very tip of the iceberg. Most of the iceberg is underneath the water's surface.

Anger is like the tip of the iceberg. People might see only the anger, without realizing that beneath the surface, there is much more to a person's emotions than anger.

Imagine the iceberg below represents your emotions. The tip of the iceberg is your anger. Below the water's surface, write all of the emotions that have been beneath the surface of your anger in the past.



**Below, practice recognizing the emotions under the surface of your anger:**

A time when I expressed anger: \_\_\_\_\_

The emotions below the surface: \_\_\_\_\_

A time when I expressed anger: \_\_\_\_\_

The emotions below the surface: \_\_\_\_\_

A time when I expressed anger: \_\_\_\_\_

The emotions below the surface: \_\_\_\_\_

## Facilitator's Information for Anger: The Tip of the Iceberg

**Purpose:** To recognize feelings that underlie anger.

**Background Information:** The activities below can help participants understand the feelings underlying their own and other people's anger. This step is necessary before they can learn alternate, healthier ways of expressing those emotions. However, when people identify painful emotions, they sometimes use those emotions to justify behavior that is abusive in themselves or others. It is very important to emphasize that no degree of hurt feelings ever justifies abusive behavior.

**Individual Activity:** "DIVING BENEATH THE SURFACE"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Read or have participant read the introductory paragraphs aloud and discuss.
2. Ask participant to think of examples of emotions that might be below the surface when people express anger, and write those examples inside the iceberg illustration on the worksheet.
3. Next ask participant to think about a situation in his or her own life when s/he expressed anger. Help him/her to identify and explore the feelings that were beneath the surface of the anger, and instruct him/her to fill in the blanks on the worksheet accordingly. Repeat with two more examples.

**Group Activity:** "LOOKING UNDERNEATH OUR ANGER"  
*Materials:* Blackboard or flipchart and markers, one photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils.

1. Instruct participants to sit in a circle.
2. On board or flipchart, write "A time when I was angry was..."
3. Ask participants to take turns completing the sentence, until all participants have given an example from their personal lives of a time when their anger was visible to others.
4. Distribute worksheets and pens/pencils.
5. Draw a copy of the iceberg illustration on board or flipchart.
6. Read or have a participant read the introductory paragraphs aloud and discuss.
7. Lead participants in brainstorming emotions that underlie anger, telling them they can begin with the emotions that were beneath the anger they expressed in their earlier examples. Write the emotions on the portion of the iceberg that's beneath the surface of the water.
8. Instruct participants to write on their individual worksheets any emotions that have ever been under the surface of their own anger.
9. Instruct participants to fill in the blanks at the bottom of their worksheets, beginning with the example they gave earlier, and adding two more examples. Encourage participants to write additional emotions in their icebergs if they think of more while doing the second part of this activity.

**Alternate Group or Individual Activity:** "OTHER PEOPLE'S ANGER"  
*Materials:* One or more videos depicting characters expressing anger.

1. Before or after completing one of the above activities, show participant(s) one or more clips from movies or videos in which a character expresses anger.
2. Instruct participants to guess at the emotions that might have been below the surface of the character's anger, and discuss.
3. Ask participants to volunteer to describe a situation in which someone else expressed anger at them, and to try to imagine what feelings might have been underlying that person's angry behavior. This activity can be used to help participants develop empathy and to understand other people's angry reactions to their own behavior.





# How Would You Feel...

If you were asked a question in class/at a staff meeting that you should have known the answer to, but didn't...

If you saw your boyfriend/girlfriend with his/her arm around someone you didn't know...

If you found out a co-worker who works half as hard as you, but is an old friend of the boss, got a promotion instead of you...

If the cashier at the grocery store gave you less change than you should have gotten, insisting you gave him a \$5 bill when you actually gave him a \$20...

If you were voted 'employee of the month'...

If two friends who you introduced went out to dinner in your neighborhood last night and didn't invite you...

If you tripped and fell in a restaurant as you were waving hello to your date...

If suddenly a news reporter thrust a microphone in your face, said you were on live T.V., and asked you what you thought about the latest news issue...

If you went into an expensive store to browse, and on the way out the security guard stopped you and asked to check your bags...

## Facilitator's Information for How Would You Feel...

**Purpose:** To practice anticipating, identifying and expressing emotions evoked in stressful situations.

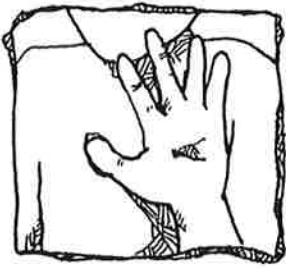
**Background Information:** This activity encourages the expression of emotions through visual images, rather than the written word. Participants should be encouraged to use a variety of media to express emotions creatively. It will probably be necessary to remind participants that while it is perfectly acceptable to draw a picture of a face expressing a particular emotion, this is not the only way to convey an emotion through art. They can be as abstract or as simple as they want, and use colors, shapes and symbols in their expression.

**Individual Activity:** "DRAWING OUT MY FEELINGS"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, an assortment of colored pencils, crayons and/or markers.

1. Give participant worksheet and colored pencils, crayons or markers.
2. Together with participant, read each scenario and discuss how s/he would feel in each situation.
3. As the emotions involved in each scenario are discussed, encourage participant to use the pencils, crayons or markers to create a visual image of the emotions being discussed.
4. Process by discussing how emotions are experienced by all five senses and how emotional expression can take different forms, including verbal, visual and auditory.

**Group Activity:** "EXPRESSIONS"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, one pencil per participant, several pieces of heavy paper or cardboard per participant (11" X17" or larger) and a variety of art supplies including: colored pencils and markers, paints, colored paper, glue, tape, scissors, old magazines, and other scrap materials.

1. Distribute worksheets and pencils. Scatter art materials on the table.
2. Instruct participants to read the scenario in each box and think about how they would feel in that situation. Then they can either draw a picture of how they would feel, or write it in words in the box.
3. Instruct participants to choose the feelings described in one of the boxes, and create a larger picture of those feelings using the art materials available. They can draw, paint or make a collage to express the feeling they have chosen. Specify the amount of time you have allowed for them to complete their projects, depending on time available.
4. After projects have been completed, seat participants in a circle.
5. Ask participants to take turns showing their completed projects to the group. The group can guess what emotions are being expressed, and the participant showing his/her work can explain why s/he chose the images s/he did.
6. Process by discussing how emotions are experienced by all five senses and how emotional expression can take different forms, including verbal, visual and auditory.



# Are You Threatening Me?

**Anger is usually a response to threat. The threat can be to one of the following things:**

Your sense of self-worth

Your core beliefs

Your physical well-being

The well-being of someone else who you believe it is your role to protect

First, decide what each of these things means to you.

## **YOUR SELF-WORTH:**

What are the things that you believe makes you valuable and worthy as a person?

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## **YOUR CORE BELIEFS:**

What are the ideas and values that are at the very foundation of your belief system, your morals, what you think matters most in the world?

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## **YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING:**

What do you need to survive and to be physically healthy?

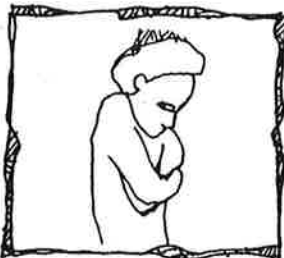
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# Passive Styles

**A passive person is indirect, anxious and inhibited. He or she often does not address problems with others, and does not speak up for his or her rights. Other people often respond to this behavior by taking advantage of or ignoring the passive person. Sometimes, this person's anger will build up inside and he or she will eventually explode or develop problems such as depression, physical aches and pains or anxiety.**

Below is a list of behaviors and characteristics that are common among people with passive styles of dealing with conflict. Think about each characteristic and check whether it sounds like you most of the time, sometimes or rarely.

**This is true of me:**

	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
1. I have a hard time saying no to people			
2. I often say "nothing's wrong" when it is			
3. I don't usually let others know my problems			
4. I often assume I'm wrong when there's a conflict with someone else			
5. I often look at the ground when someone I'm upset with or intimidated by is talking to me			
6. I often find myself being interrupted or 'talked over'			
7. I feel paralyzed when directly confronted with a conflict			
8. I tend to have poor posture (slouching or slumping)			
9. I withhold information from people I'm upset with			
10. I often question whether my opinions are valid			
11. I often feel resentful of other people			
12. I will walk out rather than deal with a conflict			
13. I sometimes apologize even if I don't believe I'm wrong			
14. I try to avoid conversation about sensitive or controversial topics			
15. I suffer from frequent headaches or stomachaches			
16. When I'm upset with someone close to me, they usually don't even know it			
17. I often have a hard time sleeping			
18. I tend to feel depressed			
19. I have a hard time speaking up for my rights			
20. Other people often take advantage of me			

Give yourself 2 points for each statement that applies to you "Most of the time," one point for every "Sometimes" answer, and no points for every "Rarely" answer.

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Are You Threatening Me?

(continued)

### THE WELL-BEING OF SOMEONE WHO YOU BELIEVE IT IS YOUR ROLE TO PROTECT:

Who are the people you most need or want to protect?

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**Next, consider your reaction in times when you have felt these things have been threatened:**

Name a time you reacted with anger to a physical threat (to yourself or to someone you believed it was your role to protect):

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Name a time you reacted with anger to a threat to your sense of self-worth:

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Name a time you reacted with anger to a threat to your core beliefs:

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### THINK ABOUT IT ANOTHER WAY:

Name a recent time you became angry:

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Were you feeling threatened?

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Why?

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Was there a real threat of danger?

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What emotions were underlying your perception of threat?

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What do you need to do to protect yourself from this threat, if anything?

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## Facilitator's Information for Are You Threatening Me?

Strategies for Anger Management

**Purpose:** To understand anger as a reaction to threat, and to identify situations in which one has or is likely to become angry in response to threat.

**Background Information:** If you probe deeply enough, you will almost always find that anger is on some level a response to a threat to one's sense of self worth, core values and beliefs, physical well-being or that of a loved one. In the case of self worth, this concept is a 'middle layer' between anger and the emotions underlying anger (such as fear, hurt, inadequacy). The 'core beliefs' discussed often include deeply held religious convictions, discrimination issues, politics, etc.

**Individual Activity:** "WHAT'S THE THREAT?"

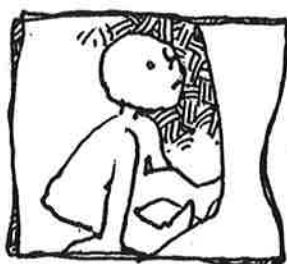
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Give participant worksheet and together read opening paragraph and discuss.
2. Assist participant in completing the first four boxes and process in terms of understanding the things listed as potential 'anger triggers' when any of them is threatened or de-valued.
3. Assist participant in completing the middle section of the second page in order to identify specific times when s/he has reacted with anger to the above things being threatened or de-valued.
4. Instruct participant to identify a specific incident in which s/he became angry, and write it in the space provided in the last box. Assist him/her in completing the rest of the box and exploring in more depth the specific threat, emotions associated with it, whether it was a real or just perceived threat, and what s/he can do in the future to protect him/her self from similar threats, if anything.

**Group Activity:** "PICTURE MY SELF"

*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant; flipchart/markers or blackboard/chalk, 'human figures' cut out or traced on large pieces of construction paper, fine-tipped colored markers.

1. On flipchart or board, write the following four questions:
  - What are the things that you believe make you valuable or worthy as a person?
  - What are the values or beliefs that are most important to you?
  - What do you need to survive and be physically healthy?
  - Who are the people you most need or want to protect?
2. Give each participant a 'human figure.' Instruct participants to put their names at the top of the paper.
3. Instruct participants to begin by drawing on the inside of the figures all of the things that they believe make them valuable or worthy people. They can use words or pictures to convey these things. They should write or draw all of these things in the same color marker.
4. Next, instruct participants to switch to a differently colored marker and write or draw all of the ideas, values and beliefs that are most important to them (clarify and process the idea of 'core beliefs,' giving examples as necessary).
5. Again, instruct participants to change marker colors and write or draw everything they need to be physically healthy.
6. Switching markers again, instruct participants to write the names or draw pictures of anyone they believe it is their role to protect (this can include pets or even inanimate objects if those objects hold a special significance).
7. After completing the human figures, explain to participants that they have created a picture of themselves in terms of what makes up their self-worth, core belief systems, physical needs and protective needs. Next ask them to imagine that someone or something was threatening to take away any one or more of the items in their human figures. Ask how they would feel, and write a list of the feelings they respond with on flip chart or board. Circle the word angry.
8. Explain to group members that anger is a natural response when any one of the things inside these figures is threatened. In other words, it is their job to protect these things, and if they perceive one or more of them as being threatened, they might react in anger.
9. Seat participants in a circle and ask them to take turns sharing examples of times when they perceived a threat to one of these things, and how they reacted.
10. Challenge group members to think about a time when they became angry that they do not believe was in response to a threat, and see if other group members can suggest ways in which a perceived threat might have been involved in the given situation.
11. Hand out worksheets and pens/pencils, and instruct group members to complete on their own based on the group conversation.



# Early Anger Messages

Take a look at the messages you got about anger and anger management from your early role models. The role models you choose for this activity can include parents, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors, clergy, community members, peers and even 'celebrity' role models — anyone who made enough of an impression on you to affect the way you behaved (and may still behave today).

Often children adopt behaviors from their role models without even thinking about it, and carry those behaviors into adulthood. As a child, you had no choice about the way your role models behaved or the lessons they taught you. However as an adult, you do have a choice. If you examine the lessons or 'anger values' you learned from your role models now, you can make conscious choices about which ones you want to carry on in your adult life, and which ones you want to "say 'no' to."

Role Model: \_\_\_\_\_

How did this person express negative or painful emotions?

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Describe a specific memory of a time this person was angry and how s/he handled it:

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What did gender have to do with the way this person handled anger? (his/her gender or the gender of the person s/he was angry with?)

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These are the 'anger values' I learned from this person which I believe are healthy and I now choose to keep as my own values:

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These are the 'anger values' I learned from this person which I believe are unhealthy and I now choose to reject:

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## Facilitator's Information for Early Anger Messages

**Purpose:** To understand how the anger management styles of early role models have influenced the participants' current anger management patterns and to make conscious decisions about which anger-related values to keep and which ones to reject.

**Background Information:** This activity can be empowering for people who grew up in abusive homes, as it teaches participants that they are more than just products of their environments, and can make choices about how they behave and what values they hold.

**Individual Activity:** "REMEMBERING MY ROLE MODELS"  
*Materials:* One or more photocopies of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Give participant worksheet and together read the introductory paragraphs. Discuss the importance of understanding how behavioral patterns are influenced by role models. Discuss the term 'role model' and clarify that while we often use the term to refer only to positive role models, a role model can be anyone who has had an influence on our behavior, and can set negative or positive examples.
2. Instruct participant to choose a role model — one of the people s/he feels had the most influence on him/her while growing up. For most people this will be a parent or other primary caregiver.
3. Assist participant in completing the first box. When exploring 'anger values,' clarify that this term can mean anything a person has learned to believe as a 'truth' about anger. Some examples of anger values are:
  - 'Never show your anger'
  - 'Don't get mad, get even'
  - 'Anger leads to change'
  - 'Anger is painful'
  - 'It's not too good to be angry'
  - 'It's okay for men to get angry, but not women'
  - 'It's okay to be angry as long as you express it appropriately'
  - 'I don't have control over my anger'
  - 'Anger = Violence'
  - 'Talk out your anger'
  - 'It's best not to talk about being angry'
  - 'Don't be mad'
4. If desired, provide additional copies of worksheet and explore other role models.

**Group Activity:** "STICKING WITH MY VALUES"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, several packages of 'sticky' notes, fine-tipped markers, plastic page protectors, waste-paper basket.

1. Hand out worksheets and pens/pencils.
2. Read or have participants read aloud the introductory paragraphs.
3. Instruct participants to complete worksheets individually, as in the Individual Activity above, processing as you go along.
4. After each participant has completed the worksheet, spread out 'sticky' notes and markers on table. Instruct participants to write all of their learned 'anger values,' negative or positive, on 'sticky' notes (one value per 'sticky' note).
5. Instruct participants to continue writing 'anger values' they may have learned from other sources, including peers, religion, culture, media, etc. They should write all of the values they can think of, negative or positive, on a 'sticky' note.
6. Instruct participants to stand in a circle, holding all of their 'sticky' notes with anger values. Put waste-paper basket in the center of the circle.
7. Tell participants to take turns holding up one of their sticky notes and reading the value that is written on it. They are to then decide whether it is a value they want to keep, or one they want to throw away. If it is a value they want to throw away, they should crumple the paper up and throw it into the waste-paper basket in the center of the circle. If it is a value they want to keep, they should stick it on their clothing to display their values.
8. Continue until all participants have made a choice about whether to keep or throw away each of their values.
9. Give each participant a plastic page protector and instruct him or her to place the values s/he has chosen to keep inside the page protector or on the back of the worksheet. Participants can keep these as reminders of their values and display them or put them in their portfolios or workbooks.





# Drugs, Alcohol & Anger: What's the Link?

**Built-up anger makes many people more likely to use drugs and alcohol as a way of relieving stress or forgetting about the anger.**

What percentage of the times that you use drugs and alcohol are you doing it, at least in part, to relieve stress or forget about anger? \_\_\_\_\_ %

**At the same time, drugs and alcohol make things worse for people who are already experiencing anger or aggressive impulses. Some effects of drugs and alcohol include:**

- ☐ Reduced impulse control, making people more likely to 'act out' angry feelings in aggressive or violent ways
- ☐ Difficulty thinking clearly, making people less able to think things through
- ☐ Decreased problem-solving ability, making people less able to make good decisions

If you have a tendency to become aggressive (verbally or physically), what percentage of the times that you have been aggressive have you been using drugs or alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_ %

**While under the influence of drugs or alcohol, have you ever:**

- ☐ Overreacted to something someone said or did and behaved verbally aggressively toward them?
- ☐ Gotten into a physical fight?
- ☐ Used weapons?
- ☐ Driven under the influence?
- ☐ Made a suicide attempt?
- ☐ Engaged in other risky behaviors such as unsafe sex?

**If you answered yes to any of the above, consider stopping your drug or alcohol use. If you don't think you can stop alone, get help.**

*Drugs and Alcohol are NOT an EXCUSE! Many people who act aggressively while under the influence blame their behavior on being drunk or high. This is a way of avoiding responsibility. The truth is, drugs and alcohol alone do not cause aggressive behavior in people who are not otherwise aggressive. Drugs and alcohol do reduce people's inhibitions so they are more likely to act on their aggressive impulses. Remember, you are still responsible for your behavior while you are drunk or high. So if you don't think you can control yourself while drinking or using drugs, stop using. If you can't stop, get help.*

**YOU DECIDE: DOES YOUR ALCOHOL or DRUG USE CONTRIBUTE TO DIFFICULTY IN MANAGING ANGER? Yes**  
**No** \_\_\_\_\_ **Unsure** \_\_\_\_\_

Resources for help with alcohol and substance abuse problems:

Alcoholics Anonymous: \_\_\_\_\_

Narcotics Anonymous: \_\_\_\_\_

Local programs: \_\_\_\_\_

**Drugs, Alcohol & Anger: What's the Link?**

**Purpose:** To understand the link between drug and alcohol use and anger. To determine whether participant is more likely to use drugs or alcohol when angry, and/or whether participant is more likely to behave aggressively when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

**Background Information:** This worksheet touches only briefly on the link between drug and alcohol use and anger, and will not necessarily apply to people who are experiencing addiction. Any client exhibiting signs of substance abuse should be referred to a program that specializes in treatment of drug and alcohol addiction.

**Individual Activity:** "ASSESSING AFFECTS OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS"

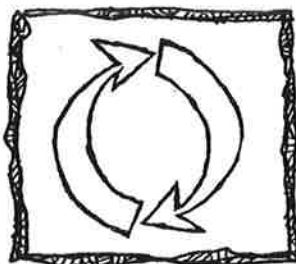
*Materials:* Photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil, phone numbers for local chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and/or other local substance abuse treatment organizations.

1. Read or have participant read through each section, discussing as you go along and assisting participant in completing worksheet.
2. Use activity as a way of engaging participant in exploration and assessment of his/her own behavior as related to drug and alcohol use.
3. At the end of the worksheet, participant is asked to indicate whether s/he believes his/her alcohol or drug use contributes to difficulty in managing anger. If yes, assist him/her in determining whether s/he is in need of, and ready to seek help from a substance abuse program. If so, assist with appropriate referral.

**Group Activity:** "LINKING ANGER"

*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk, one or more video clips depicting a link between anger and drugs/alcohol use (see resource section for suggested videos).

1. Introduce activity by explaining that during the current session the group will be exploring the link between drugs, alcohol and anger.
2. Ask group to brainstorm ways in which drugs, alcohol and anger are linked.
3. Show video clip(s) and process by discussing how characters' anger is affected by drugs and alcohol/drug and alcohol use are affected by anger. Process by discussing whether a character's behavior is caused solely by the drugs/alcohol, how the drug/alcohol use intensifies or de-intensifies anger, whether a character is using drugs/alcohol as a coping mechanism to deal with anger, etc.
4. Hand out worksheets, and instruct participants to complete on their own or as a group.
5. Provide phone numbers for local substance abuse treatment resources on board or flipchart and instruct participants to copy them into the box at the bottom of their worksheets, whether or not they intend to use them.



# The Conflict Cycle

**Stage 1: 'Conflict Occurs'** Conflict occurs when there are two or more opposing attitudes, values or beliefs. The conflict can be *internal* (a conflict within yourself, such as when you have two opposing beliefs), or *interpersonal* (between two or more people). A conflict can also occur between two or more groups of people (as in an international conflict).

☐ Write an example of an *internal* conflict you have experienced:

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☐ Write an example of an *interpersonal* conflict you have experienced:

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**Stage 2: 'Response'** How people respond to conflict can determine the consequences of the conflict. Your response to conflict is the easiest part of the cycle to control.

☐ How did you respond to the interpersonal conflict above?

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☐ How did the other person/people involved respond?

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**Stage 3: 'Consequences'** There are consequences to every conflict, but it is important to remember that the consequences can be negative or positive.

☐ List any negative consequences that came out of the interpersonal conflict above:

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☐ List any positive consequences that came out of the interpersonal conflict above:

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**Stage 4: 'Reinforcement' or 'Change'** As a result of the consequences, the conflict cycle can be reinforced, so it continues in the same old way. Or, the consequences can lead to change, so that the parties involved either exit the cycle altogether or continue but change the patterns in the cycle.

☐ Was the conflict cycle described above reinforced or changed, and how?

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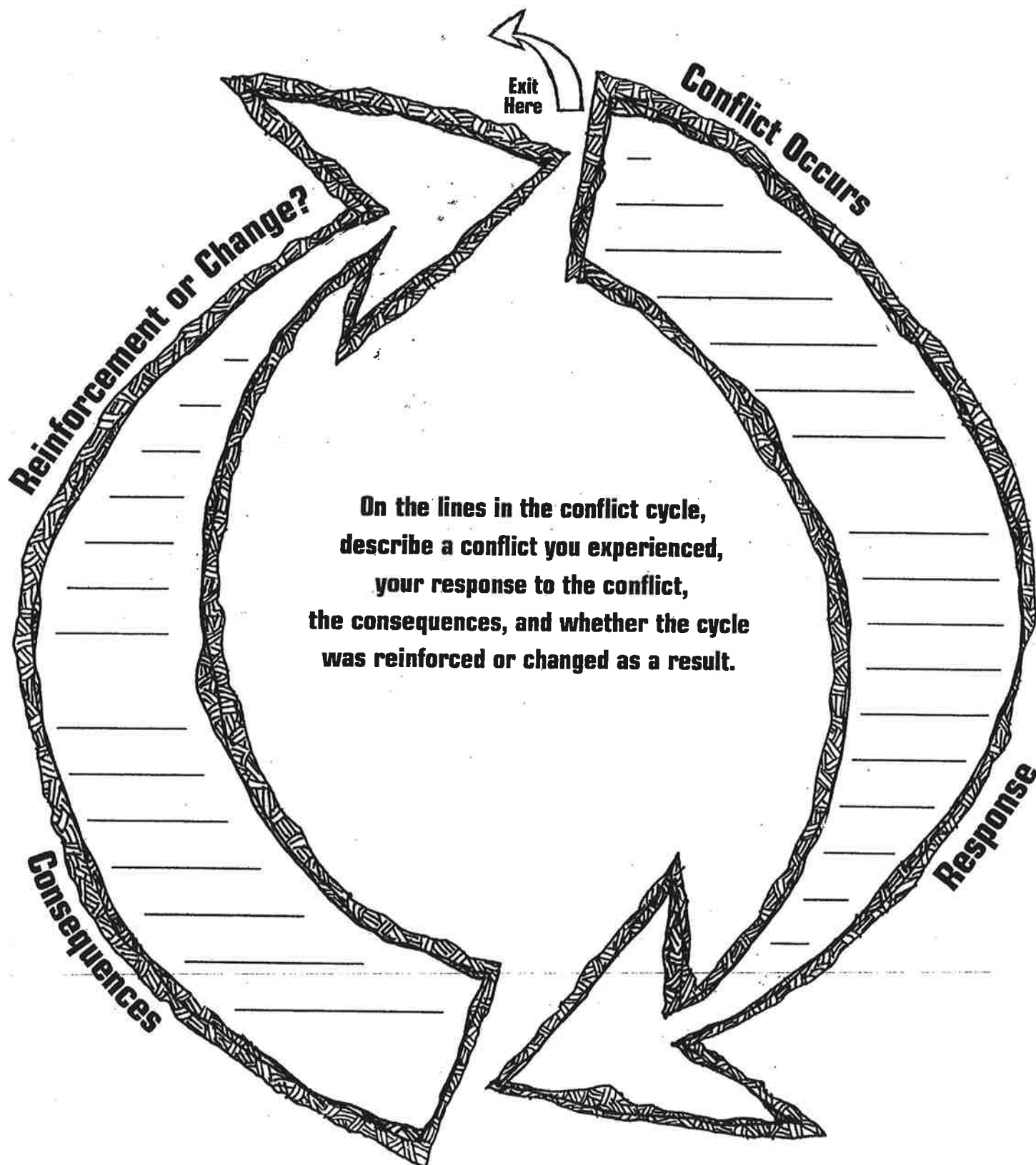


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# The Conflict Cycle

(continued)



## Facilitator's Information for The Conflict Cycle

**Purpose:** To identify stages of the cycle of conflict.

**Background Information:** While discussing these concepts with participants, it should be emphasized that not all conflict is negative — there are many positive outcomes to conflict, and in most cases conflict is necessary before positive change can occur. It is recommended that this activity be introduced after participants have learned concepts of assertive, aggressive, passive and passive-aggressive responses to conflict. This theory on the cycle of conflict was adapted with permission from material from the EARS Peer Mediation Student Manual, Bronx, New York and the Community Board for Policy and Training, San Francisco.

**Individual Activity:** "UNDERSTANDING MY CONFLICT CYCLE"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of each worksheet, pen/pencil.

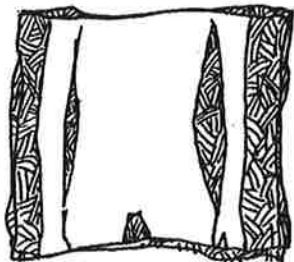
1. Give participant worksheet and pen/pencil, and review the Conflict Cycle illustration, explaining and discussing concepts as you go along.
2. Read or have participant read aloud the description of each stage of the Conflict Cycle, and assist him or her in completing the worksheet questions.
3. Instruct participant to identify a recent conflict and fill in the stages of the conflict cycle on the second worksheet. This can be repeated as often as necessary to explore different conflicts.
4. Use this as a starting-point for a more in-depth exploration of the participant's internal conflicts, patterns of interpersonal conflict, common responses to conflict, and attitude toward conflict in general.

**Group Activity:** "CONFLICT CYCLES IN THE MOVIES"  
*Materials:* One or more video clips with scenes depicting conflict (see list of videos in resource section of this book; if possible show one clip depicting an interpersonal conflict and one clip showing a person dealing with an internal conflict), one photocopy of each worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk.

1. Draw a copy of the conflict cycle on flipchart or board.
2. Hand out copies of worksheet and pens/pencils.
3. Review the conflict cycle with participants, discussing concepts, asking for examples and instructing participants to fill in the worksheet questions as you go along.
4. Show video clip and ask participants to answer the following questions regarding the video:
  - a. Did the clip depict an interpersonal, internal or inter-group conflict?
  - b. If an interpersonal or inter-group conflict, what were the conflicting attitudes, values and/or beliefs held by the different parties involved?
  - c. If an internal conflict was depicted, what were the person's conflicting attitudes, values and/or beliefs?
  - d. How did each person or group of people involved respond to the conflict? Did they use assertive, aggressive, passive or passive-aggressive conflict response styles?
  - e. What were the positive and negative consequences to each person or group of people involved?
  - f. Do you think the person or people involved exited the conflict cycle, or did the conflict cycle continue the same or change? If it continued, did it intensify, de-intensify or continue at the same intensity?
  - g. What could each person involved have changed in his/her response so that the conflict cycle could have been de-intensified or exited?
5. Instruct participants to fill in the stages of the conflict discussed on the second worksheet.

**Alternate Group Activity:** "CONFLICT ROLE-PLAYS"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, flipchart and markers or blackboard and chalk.

1. Begin activity as in group activity numbers 1-3 above.
2. Break participants into small groups of 3-4 people each.
3. Instruct groups that they are to develop conflict role-plays. They may use one of the examples used on a participants' worksheet, or make up their own conflict.
4. Allow ten minutes for groups to develop their role-plays, then reconvene the larger group.
5. Instruct groups to take turns performing their role-plays, then ask audience members to answer the questions in group activity number 4 above.



# Body Language

**Body language is an important part of conflict resolution.** A good goal is to present yourself in a way that makes other people feel comfortable, safe and willing to engage as partners with you in the process of resolving conflict. People are not likely to respond positively if you present yourself in a way that makes them feel like they are going to be attacked, either physically or emotionally, or like you don't care or aren't willing or able to work at resolving the conflict.

Circle the person below with whom you would feel most willing to work out a conflict.

Below each picture, list what the person is doing with each of his or her body parts and facial expressions, and why that body language would make you comfortable or uncomfortable trying to work out a conflict with that person.



**AGGRESSIVE  
BODY LANGUAGE**

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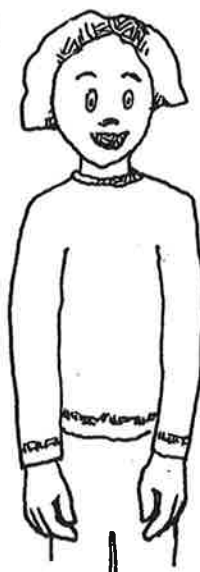
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**ASSERTIVE  
BODY LANGUAGE**

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**PASSIVE  
BODY LANGUAGE**

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## Facilitator's Information for Body Language

**Purpose:** To identify elements of assertive, aggressive and passive body language and facial expressions.

**Background Information:** Often people focus on saying the right things in conflict resolution, but do not realize that their non-verbal communication can mean more than their words. Likewise, people often feel threatened by or hostile toward another person without being able to put their finger on why, because they may not have consciously thought about how the person's body language has affected them. If participants can identify how other people's non-verbal communication makes them feel, they may be able to use assertive behavior to address these feelings.

**Individual Activity:** "NAMING BODY LANGUAGE"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Give participant worksheet and pen/pencil, and read or have participant read introductory paragraph aloud.
2. Assist participant in labeling body language characteristics for each picture as instructed.
3. Process with discussion of what kind of messages participant thinks s/he uses in different situations, depending on his/her feelings and level of confidence in the situation.
4. Ask participant to identify a recent conflict, recall the body language of the other person, and describe how that body language made him/her feel and react.
5. Process with a discussion of other forms of non-verbal communication, besides body language.
6. Point out that sometimes people 'misread' other people's body language and other nonverbal communication, so it is important to be able to verbally clarify the message; discuss how this can be done by using assertive "I" messages and asking clarifying questions.

**Group Activity:** "BODY LANGUAGE COLLAGES"  
*Materials:* One photocopy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, a variety of magazines (and comic books if desired), scissors (at least one pair for every two participants,) glue, three pieces of poster board and one thick marker.

1. Allow participants ten minutes to look through magazines and cut out pictures of people. Instruct them to pay special attention to looking for people with a range of facial expressions and body language. Also instruct them to look for larger pictures, because they will be held up in front of the group to be studied.
2. While participants are cutting out pictures, hang up the three pieces of poster board and label one "Assertive," another "Aggressive," and the third "Passive."
3. Ask for a volunteer to show the group one of his/her pictures, and use the picture to begin a discussion about body language. Ask what the person is communicating through his or her facial expression, the way s/he is standing or sitting, the position of his/her head, arms, legs, hands, etc. Ask participants how they would feel toward a person who approached them with this kind of body language.
4. If necessary, review the meaning of the terms "Assertive," "Aggressive" and "Passive."
  - Assertive people are confident, cool and in control of themselves. Others tend to feel comfortable and safe communicating with them.
  - Aggressive people are hostile, threatening and 'in your face.' Others tend to feel defensive and react by being aggressive back or withdrawing from them.
  - Passive people lack confidence and do not seem to care or be willing to communicate. Others tend to react by either 'walking all over them' or not bothering to try to communicate with them.
5. Ask participants to decide which category the picture falls into, and paste the picture on the appropriate poster board.
6. Repeat this process with all of participants' pictures. If a picture does not seem to clearly fit into one of the categories, put it aside.
7. Point out that sometimes people 'misread' other people's body language, so it is important to be able to verbally clarify the message; discuss how this can be done by using assertive "I" messages and asking clarifying questions.
8. Process with a discussion of other forms of nonverbal communication, besides body language.
9. Hand out worksheets and review introductory paragraph. Allow participants ten to fifteen minutes to complete them on their own, then share their lists of body language characteristics with the group.
10. If time allows during this session or another session, follow up with role plays in which participants use assertive, aggressive and passive body language in conflict resolution scenes.

Note: In the above activity, participants may cut out 'sexually provocative' pictures. You may engage in a short discussion about how body language is used to sell products and how sexuality can also be aggressive, passive or assertive. However do not allow this to sidetrack the group. Depending on the direction of the discussion, it might be appropriate to discuss the common dynamic in acquaintance rape, when one person perceives the other's non-verbal communication as being provocative, and takes that as license to force themselves on the other. This is a perfect example of why it is so important to use words to clarify the messages of body language and other non-verbal communication.



# Letter for Letting Go

Below, write a letter to a person you have been angry with and unable to forgive. You don't have to send the letter if you don't want to. Write everything you would say to this person if you were guaranteed that there would be no negative consequences.

To \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



## Facilitator's Information for Letter for Letting Go

**Purpose:** To aid participant(s) in the process of forgiving or letting go of unhealthy anger.

**Background Information:** Writing letters, even if they are never to be sent, is a powerful tool for letting go of anger. It allows the writer to organize his or her thoughts, identify his or her feelings, and to come to a deeper understanding of the reasons for his or her own anger. After writing the letter, the writer can decide whether or not to send it or to share it with others. Since self-forgiveness is difficult for many people, this activity can be done writing a letter to oneself.

**Individual or Group Activity:** "LETTER WRITING"  
*Materials:* Several photocopies of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils.

1. Ask participant(s) to identify a person for whom s/he is carrying around unresolved anger.
2. Hand out worksheet(s) and pen(s) / pencil(s). Instruct participant(s) to write a letter to that person, and to feel as free as possible to write anything s/he would like to say to that person if s/he knew there would never be any negative consequences to saying it. Specify that participant(s) will not have to share these letters with the facilitator or any other group members, and can choose to destroy or keep the letter after writing it.
3. Allow ample time for participant(s) to write letters. Supply extra photocopies of worksheet so participant(s) can feel free to throw away drafts and start over if need be.
4. Allow the opportunity for completed letters to be read aloud to facilitator/group. The participant may read his/her own letter, the facilitator may read it, or the group participant may choose another group member to read it.
5. Process by focusing on how it felt for participant(s) to write the letter rather than on the content of the letter. Discuss how it would feel to send the letter, and whether participant(s) will choose to do so now, or might ever choose to do so in the future.
6. Allow participant(s) the option of keeping the letter in a safe place, mailing or giving it to the person it was written to, or destroying it.
7. Consider leading a guided imagery exercise, in which the participant imagines tying his/her letter to a helium balloon and releasing it into the air, or putting it in a bottle to float out to sea.

**Alternative Group or Individual Activity:**

**"THROWING ANGER AWAY"**

*Materials:* Small pieces of paper (10-20 per participant), pens/pencils, garbage pail, paper shredder (optional), bucket of water (optional — see #4 below).

1. Instruct participant(s) to take a piece of paper and to write in a few words something s/he is angry about. Assure participant(s) that no one will see what is on the paper.
2. Instruct participant(s) to continue writing everything s/he can think of that s/he is angry about on the pieces of paper. Allow about ten minutes to do so.
3. After participant(s) has finished, instruct him/her to crumple up each piece of paper and throw it into the garbage pail.
4. *Optional:* After participant(s) has thrown his/her paper in the garbage pail, destroy the papers or at least render them unrecognizable. Since lighting the paper on fire is in most cases not a safe option, consider running it through a paper shredder, pouring a bucket of water on it and mixing it up until they fall apart, flushing it down a toilet (if the plumbing system allows) or coming up with any other creative but safe method of ruining it. Make sure this is done in front of participant(s).
5. Process with participant(s) how this symbolic process of 'doing away with' anger made him/her feel, how it would change his/her life if s/he could really do away with all of his/her angry feelings, and what it would take to do that.

## **Handling Anger:**

Additional Discussion Topics and Coping Skills

## *Anger and the Family*

In these sessions, you will explore how anger and other emotions were displayed by your parents and in the families in which you grew up. For many of us, the interactions we have had with our parents have strongly influenced our behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes as adults. With regard to anger and its expression, these feelings and behaviors usually were modeled for us by our parents or parental figures. The purpose of these sessions is to examine the connection between what you have learned in the past, in the families in which you grew up, and your current behavior and interactions with others now as adults. You will be asked a series of questions concerning your parents and families. This is an involved and often emotionally charged topic, so if you are not comfortable answering any questions, you do not have to do so. Also, because there is a natural tendency to want to elaborate on family issues because of their emotional content, please focus on answering the specific questions:

1. Describe your family. Did you live with both parents? Did you have any brothers and sisters? Where did you grow up?
2. How was anger expressed in your family while you were growing up? How did your father express anger? How did your mother express anger? (Possible probes to use: Did your parents yell or throw things? Were you ever threatened with physical violence? Was your father abusive to your mother or you?)
3. How were other emotions such as happiness and sadness expressed in your family? Were warm emotions expressed frequently, or was emotional expression restricted to feelings of anger and frustration? Were pleasant emotions expressed at birthdays or holidays?
4. How were you disciplined and by whom? Did this discipline involve being spanked or hit with belts, switches, or paddles? (An assumption of the anger management treatment is that no form of physical discipline is beneficial to a child. Empirical studies have shown that nonphysical forms of discipline are very effective in shaping childhood behavior [Barkley, 1997; Ducharme, Atkinson, & Poulton, 2000; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997]).
5. What role did you take in your family? For example, were you the hero, the rescuer, the victim, or the scapegoat?
6. What messages did you receive about your father and men in general? In other words, in your experience, how were men supposed to act in society? What messages did you receive about your mother and women in general? How were women supposed to act in society? (Note: Many of the messages group members have received differ from messages that are socially appropriate today. Point out the changing roles of men and women during the past three decades.)
7. What behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes carry over into your relationships as adults today? What purpose do these behaviors serve? What would happen if you gave up these behaviors? (The group leader should help group members see the connection between past social learning and their current behavior.)

### ***Anger as a Habitual Response***

Not only is the expression of anger learned, but it can become a routine, familiar, and predictable response to a variety of situations. When anger is displayed frequently and aggressively, it can become a maladaptive habit because it results in negative consequences. Habits, by definition, are performed over and over again, without thinking. People with anger management problems often resort to aggressive displays of anger to solve their problems, without thinking about the negative consequences they may suffer or the debilitating effects it may have on the people around them.

### ***Breaking the Anger Habit***

***Becoming Aware of Anger.*** To break the anger habit, you must develop an awareness of the events, circumstances, and behaviors of others that “trigger” your anger. This awareness also involves understanding the negative consequences that result from anger. For example, you may be in line at the supermarket and become impatient because the lines are too long. You could become angry, then boisterously demand that the checkout clerk call for more help. As your anger escalates, you may become involved in a heated exchange with the clerk or another customer. The store manager may respond by having a security officer remove you from the store. The negative consequences that result from this event are not getting the groceries that you wanted and the embarrassment and humiliation you suffer from being removed from the store.

***Strategies for Controlling Anger.*** In addition to becoming aware of anger, you need to develop strategies to effectively manage it. These strategies can be used to stop the escalation of anger before you lose control and experience negative consequences. An effective set of strategies for controlling anger should include both immediate and preventive strategies.

## Conflict Resolution Model

One method of acting assertively is to use the Conflict Resolution Model, which involves five steps that can easily be memorized. The first step involves *identifying the problem* that is causing the conflict. It is important to be specific when identifying the problem. In this example, the problem causing the conflict is that your friend is late. The second step involves *identifying the feelings* associated with the conflict. In this example, you may feel annoyance, frustration, or taken for granted. The third step involves *identifying the specific impact* of the problem that is causing the conflict. In this example, the impact or outcome is that you are late for the meeting. The fourth step involves *deciding whether to resolve the conflict* or let it go. This may best be phrased by the questions, "Is the conflict important enough to bring up? If I do not try to resolve this issue, will it lead to feelings of anger and resentment?" If you decide that the conflict is important enough, then the fifth step is necessary. The fifth step is to *address and resolve the conflict*. This involves checking out the schedule of the other person. The schedule is important because you might bring up the conflict when the other person does not have the time to address it or when he or she may be preoccupied with another issue. Once you have agreed on a time with the person, you can describe the conflict, your feelings, and the impact of the conflict and ask for a resolution.

**For example, the interaction may sound like this:**

*Joe: Hey, Frank, sorry I'm late.*

*Frank: Hi, Joe. Can I talk to you about that?*

*Joe: Sure. Is something wrong?*

*Frank: Joe, I've noticed you've been late for the last few days when I've come to pick you up. Today, I realized that I was starting to feel frustrated and a bit taken for granted. When you are late, we are both late for the meeting, which makes me uncomfortable. I like to be on time. I'm wondering if you can make an effort to be on time in the future.*

*Joe: Frank, I didn't realize how bothered you were about that. I apologize for being late, and I will be on time in the future. I'm glad you brought this problem up to me.*

Of course, this is an idealized version of an outcome that may be achieved with the Conflict Resolution Model. Joe could have responded unfavorably, or defensively, by accusing Frank of making a big deal out of nothing. Joe may have minimized and discounted Frank's feelings, leaving the conflict unresolved.

The Conflict Resolution Model is useful even when conflicts are not resolved. Many times, you will feel better about trying to resolve a conflict in an assertive manner rather than acting passively or aggressively. Specifically, you may feel that you have done all that you could do to resolve the conflict. In this example, if Frank decided not to give Joe a ride in the future, or if Frank decided to end his friendship with Joe, he could do so knowing that he first tried to resolve the conflict in an assertive manner.

### Exhibit 7. The Conflict Resolution Model

1. *Identify the problem that is causing the conflict*
2. *Identify the feelings that are associated with the conflict*
3. *Identify the impact of the problem that is causing the conflict*
4. *Decide whether to resolve the conflict*
5. *Work for resolution of the conflict*

How would you like the problem to be resolved?

Is a compromise needed?

## Conflict-Resolution Practice

*Identify the problem that is causing the conflict.*

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*Identify the feelings that are associated with the conflict.*

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*How has the problem impacted you and the other parties involved?*

You:

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Others:

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*Do you want to resolve this conflict? Is it beneficial to resolve it? Is it beneficial to let it go?*

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*Work for a resolution of the conflict:*

- How would you like the problem to be resolved?

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- Is a compromise needed? If so, what would it look like?

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## **De-escalation Skill Practice #1**

### **Breathing Exercise**

*(Use this script or put this in your own words.)*

Get comfortable in your chair. If you like, close your eyes; or just gaze at the floor.

Take a few moments to settle yourself. Now make yourself aware of your body. Check your body for tension, beginning with your feet, and scan upward to your head. Notice any tension you might have in your legs, your stomach, your hands and arms, your shoulders, your neck, and your face. Try to let go of the tension you are feeling.

Now, make yourself aware of your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and leaves your body. This can be very relaxing.

Let's all take a deep breath together. Notice your lungs and chest expanding. Now slowly exhale through your nose. Again, take a deep breath. Fill your lungs and chest. Notice how much air you can take in. Hold it for a second. Now release it and slowly exhale. One more time, inhale slowly and fully. Hold it for a second, and release.

Now on your own, continue breathing in this way for another couple of minutes. Continue to focus on your breathing. With each inhalation and exhalation, feel your body becoming more and more relaxed. Use your breathing to wash away any remaining tension.

*(Allow group members to practice breathing for 1 to 2 minutes in silence.)*

Now let's take another deep breath. Inhale fully, hold it for a second, and release. Inhale again, hold, and release. Continue to be aware of your breath as it fills your lungs. Once more, inhale fully, hold it for a second, and release.

When you feel ready, open your eyes.

How was that? Did you notice any new sensations while you were breathing? How do you feel now?

This breathing exercise can be shortened to just three deep inhalations and exhalations. Even that much can be effective in helping you relax when your anger is escalating. You can practice this at home, at work, on the bus, while waiting for an appointment, or even while walking. The key to making deep-breathing an effective relaxation is practicing it frequently.



***De-escalation Skill Practice #2***  
***Progressive Muscle Relaxation Exercise***  
***(Use this script or put this in your own words.)***

Last week you practiced deep-breathing as a relaxation technique. Today I will introduce progressive muscle relaxation. Start by getting comfortable in your chairs. Close your eyes if you like. Take a moment to really settle in. Now, as you did last week, begin to focus on your breathing. Take a deep breath. Hold it for a second. Now exhale fully and completely. Again, take a deep breath. Fill your lungs and chest. Now release and exhale slowly. Again, one more time, inhale slowly, hold, and release.

Now, while you continue to breathe deeply and fully, bring your awareness to your hands. Clench your fists very tightly. Hold that tension. Now relax your fists, letting your fingers unfold and letting your hands completely relax. Again, clench your fists tightly. Hold and release the tension. Imagine all the tension being released from your hands down to your fingertips. Notice the difference between the tension and complete relaxation.

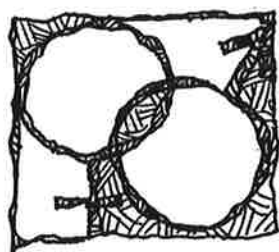
Now bring your awareness to your arms. Curl your arms as if you are doing a bicep curl. Tense your fists, forearms, and biceps. Hold the tension and release it. Let the tension in your arms unfold and your hands float back to your thighs. Feel the tension drain out of your arms. Again, curl your arms to tighten your biceps. Notice the tension, hold, and release. Let the tension flow out of your arms. Replace it with deep muscle relaxation.

Now raise your shoulders toward your ears. Really tense your shoulders. Hold them up for a second. Gently drop your shoulders, and release all the tension. Again, lift your shoulders, hold the tension, and release. Let the tension flow from your shoulders all the way down your arms to your fingers. Notice how different your muscles feel when they are relaxed.

Now bring your awareness to your neck and face. Tense all those muscles by making a face. Tense your neck, jaw, and forehead. Hold the tension, and release. Let the muscles of your neck and jaw relax. Relax all the lines in your forehead. One final time, tense all the muscles in your neck and face, hold, and release. Be aware of your muscles relaxing at the top of your head and around your eyes. Let your eyes relax in their sockets, almost as if they were sinking into the back of your head. Relax your jaw and your throat. Relax all the muscles around your ears. Feel all the tension in your neck muscles release.

Now just sit for a few moments. Scan your body for any tension and release it. Notice how your body feels when your muscles are completely relaxed.

When you are ready, open your eyes. How was that? Did you notice any new sensations? How does your body feel now? How about your state of mind? Do you notice any difference now from when we started?



# Gender Roles and Anger

**Everyone gets angry, male or female. The way people experience and express anger often has a lot to do with gender. Males and females learn different gender roles, and as a part of those gender roles they learn that different feelings and behaviors are acceptable for men and women.**

What are the messages you have received about what MEN are supposed to get angry about?

What are the messages you have received about what WOMEN are supposed to get angry about?

Do you agree with these messages? Why or why not?

What did the following teach you about how anger should be handled...	by MALES	by FEMALES
Your parents / primary caretakers...		
Other family members...		
Friends / peers...		
Other male role models...		
Other female role models...		
Television shows...		
Movies...		
Music...		
Print media...		
Other...		

We all learn gender roles from many different places. But ultimately, you decide whether the roles you've been taught are the roles you want to play in your own life. Read through each role you've listed above, and decide whether it is a role you accept (circle it) or a role you reject (put a line through it).

## Facilitator's Information for Gender Roles and Anger

**Purpose:** To understand how gender roles relate to the experience and expression of anger. To examine one's own learned gender roles relating to anger, and to make conscious choices about the acceptance or rejection of those learned gender roles.

**Background Information:** Gender role expectations play a tremendous role in how people experience and express anger. This dynamic is particularly intense in the male expression of anger through violence against women. Facilitators detecting any signs of domestic violence should refer the participant involved to a program that specializes in domestic violence. Anger management programs are not appropriate to address issues of domestic violence.

**Individual Activity:** "MAKING CHOICES"

*Materials:* Photocopy of worksheet, pen/pencil.

1. Read or have participant read aloud the introductory paragraph and discuss/process as necessary.
2. Assist the participant in exploring the messages s/he received about what men/women are supposed to get angry about, and completing the first three questions.
3. Review the table and assist participant in exploring messages about how anger should be handled s/he received from each of the categories listed. Ask participant to give specific examples whenever possible.
4. After the table is completed, read through each row and encourage participant to decide whether to accept or reject each value. Instruct participant to circle the values s/he accepts and put a line through the ones s/he rejects. Process with a discussion of how these choices can be put into practice in the participant's life.

**Group Activity:** "EXPLORING ANGER AND GENDER ROLES"

*Materials:* Video clip or clips depicting gender role socialization toward anger (see resource section), one copy of worksheet per participant, pens/pencils, flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk.

1. On flipchart or board, draw two columns, one with the heading "What men get angry about" and one with the heading "What women get angry about."
2. Ask participants to brainstorm the kinds of things that men and women typically or stereotypically get angry about. Discuss and process as you go along.
3. Show video clip and process with a discussion about what the different characters have learned about how men and women are supposed to experience and express anger differently.
4. Hand out worksheets and seat group in a circle. Ask group members to take turns sharing something they learned growing up from one of the categories listed about how men or women were supposed to handle anger.
5. Hand out pens or pencils and instruct participants to complete the worksheets on their own, offering assistance and processing as needed.
6. After group members have completed worksheets, ask members to share with the group examples of anger gender roles they learned, and which ones they are choosing to accept or reject or why.