

Centre for Clinical Interventions  
in collaboration with YouthLink\*

# getting along



# & keeping cool

**A group program for aggression control**

\* YouthLink is a state-wide service administered through the Inner City Mental Health Service of Royal Perth Hospital in Western Australia. YouthLink targets at-risk young people aged 13 to 25 who have difficulty in accessing more mainstream mental health services.

# Getting Along & Keeping Cool

## A Group Program for Aggression Control

Centre for  
Clinical  
Interventions

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Centre for Clinical Interventions

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTION**



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

| SESSION   | SESSION CONTENT   | WORKSHEETS & HANDOUTS  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Session 1</b><br>Introduction to program                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions</li><li>• Icebreaker exercises</li><li>• Establishing goals and group rules</li><li>• The difference between anger and aggression</li></ul>   |  |
| <b>Session 2</b><br>Overview of how anger works                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to the Pressure Cooker Model</li><li>• Recognising the signs of anger - the 'steam'</li><li>• Introduction to triggers</li><li>• Introduction to self-monitoring (Hassle Logs)</li></ul> | Hassle Logs  |
| <b>Session 3</b><br>Identifying anger triggers & behavioural strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Triggers and Hassle Logs</li><li>• Learning ways to 'let off steam'</li></ul>   | Letting off Steam<br>Deep Breathing                                |
| <b>Session 4</b><br>Identifying feelings & Looking at consequences      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying feelings other than anger</li><li>• Recognising the costs and benefits of aggression</li></ul>  |  |
| <b>Session 5</b><br>Effective communication                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anger rights and responsibilities</li><li>• Introduction to assertiveness skills - 'loosening the lid'</li></ul>  | Anger Rights and Responsibilities<br>How to be Assertive           |
| <b>Session 6</b><br>Effective communication (cont.)                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assertiveness skills</li></ul>  |  |
| <b>Session 7</b><br>Using self-talk to manage anger                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Influence of thoughts on feelings</li><li>• Using self-talk to manage anger - 'turning down the flame'</li></ul>  |  |
| <b>Session 8</b><br>Putting it together                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review</li><li>• Reflection on program</li><li>• Closing activity</li><li>• Preparation for relapse</li></ul>   | Booklet - Getting Along & Keeping Cool: A Guide to How Anger Works |



# **INTRODUCTION**

## **AGGRESSION IN YOUNG PEOPLE**

The effect of aggressive behaviour on young people and others in their lives can be far-reaching. Aggressive behaviour may jeopardise employment status, family and other relationships as well as physical and emotional well-being. The cost to the community can be high through damage to property, days of work lost and through the physical and emotional harm which is inflicted.

There is no clear cause of aggression among young people, with a number of factors likely to be playing a role. Some sources cite the role of endemic violence portrayed through the media, and a peer culture which reinforces violence as 'cool' (Rose, 1998). However, specific variables such as parent modelling of aggression are, in many instances, clearly influential. For example, the young person may have witnessed aggression and violence within the family and learned that these are acceptable ways of dealing with conflict. In these cases, in addition to the modelling influence, the young person may lack prosocial skills. For other young people a dysfunctional family context can result in a sense of powerlessness with aggression being a means of asserting control. Broadly, aggression can be both proactive and reactive (Fuller, 1999; Rose, 1998). Aggression is proactive when it is designed to have needs and wants met. Reactive aggression is that which occurs as a response to a particular triggering event. Aggression can be verbal, physical and/or sexual.

Typically, young people referred to YouthLink for aggression are experiencing a range of problems, and aggression or 'anger outbursts' is only a part of the picture. However, the aggressive behaviour often precipitates the referral because of its 'visibility' and the impact it has on the young person and others in his/her life. On referral to YouthLink the young person is always first allocated an individual counsellor. Group therapy will be considered when the young person has recognised that aggression is a problem and has indicated some degree of motivation to change.

'Getting Along & Keeping Cool' is a skills-based group program which allows the young person to learn and practice the skills needed for aggression control. Individual therapy sessions are usually continued while the young person is completing the group. If the presenting issues are particularly complex, individual sessions may be used to deal with other issues of concern to the young person. Learning aggression control skills in a group setting has the advantage over individual treatment in being able to use the group process to learn alternative ways of re-



sponding to conflict and in its provision of a supportive and motivating group environment in which to change.

The 'Getting Along & Keeping Cool' group program is based on Novaco's (1975) cognitive-behavioural model of anger and aggression. It recognises that the emotion of anger is usually a response to a specific trigger which is mediated by the person's beliefs and expectations about the situation. Along with the emotion of anger is an adrenalin-based physiological reaction. An aggressive response, along with the physical tension, usually leads to an escalation of the triggering event and the associated thoughts and angry feelings. In the program it is also recognised that alongside or underlying the feeling of anger may be other feelings such as humiliation and shame. The components of the program are: learning to recognise signs and symptoms of anger; identifying feelings other than anger; reducing physical tension; evaluating and changing cognitions; and learning prosocial ways of responding to anger, particularly being assertive. Of importance is the distinction between anger (the emotion) and aggression (the behaviour). The program teaches that anger is a normal and sometimes useful emotion but that aggression is an unhelpful and unhealthy way of expressing anger.

The core components of the Getting Along & Keeping Cool program are delivered through psycho-education, self-monitoring, facilitated group discussion, handouts, videos and role plays. The program uses a central theme of a pressure cooker. The use of the visual model of the pressure cooker model is another way of helping participants remember concepts and to apply skills. Note that the video *Dealing with Emotions* must be purchased separately. Details are in the References section.

The session plans within this manual provide a guide to the content and to the process issues which could apply from week to week. They are, however, intended only as a guide. Young people with aggression problems tend not to respond well to a structured atmosphere which is reminiscent of school. The atmosphere should be both dynamic and informal, and the discussion guided to maximise the constructive and positive suggestions, ideas and contributions of participants. For example, if a particular group appears to be deriving particular benefit from assertiveness role plays, more time could be spent on that. Where possible, consultation with group members about what they are finding helpful and what they would like to spend extra time on gives them a greater sense of 'ownership' of the group. However, facilitators may also judge that extra time needs to be spent on a specific area; for example, members of a group may see aggression as part of their identity, so facilitators could increase the focus on the consequences of aggressive behaviour with the aim of enhancing motivation to change.



## **REFERRAL TO THE GROUP**

The Keeping Cool program is intended as an adjunct to individual therapy. The group forum is an efficient and developmentally appropriate means of teaching the knowledge and skills of anger control. However, since YouthLink clients generally have multiple presenting issues, it is important that participants are linked with an individual therapist so that any other issues are being addressed as needed. To be suitable for the group, the young people should recognise that they have a problem with anger and aggression, show some commitment to making changes and be relatively stable in therapy (ie not experiencing on-going crises).

## **ASSESSMENT**

An individual assessment session should be held with each group member both pre- and post-group. This has several functions: to assess the young person's motivation and suitability for group work; to obtain both qualitative and quantitative measures of how the young person believes that anger is affecting his/her life; to provide information about the group; to convey therapists' expectations about participation in the group; and to answer any questions or address any concerns of the young person about the group. The pre-group session can be used to enhance the young person's motivation for doing the group and develop his/her initiative if there has been some degree of coercion.

### *Standardised measures*

Two standardised self-report measures can be used to assess the effectiveness of the Keeping Cool program. The Youth Self Report (YSR; Achenbach, 1991) is a modified version of the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986;1987) and assesses a range of adolescent disorders or syndromes. The eight syndrome scales are withdrawal, somatic complaints, anxious/depressed, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, delinquent behaviour and aggressive behaviour. The YSR is a useful tool for providing a relatively thorough picture of the presenting issues of the young person and to identify any other areas of potential concern. The second standardised assessment tool is the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI; Spielberger, 1988). This specifically measures four dimensions of anger: how the young person is feeling at that moment, how they generally feel, their level of control over their anger and how they express anger. It also provides composite measures of trait anger and anger expression.

Both the YSR and the STAXI have norms for adolescents.



### *Pre-group assessment*

A semi-structured interview is used to record the young person's perception of the extent to which anger and aggression is affecting their lives (Appendix 1). The questions are designed to be motivational by focussing the young person on the specific difficulties they are experiencing and identifying goals toward which they will work during the group. During the pre-group session the two standardised measures are administered with an explanation of why they are being used. It is explained that feedback will be given on the results of these measures after the group has finished and we have some comparison data.

### *Post-group assessment*

Details can be found in Appendix 1. During the post-group interview consumer feedback is obtained on the content areas of the group and standardised questionnaires are re-administered. The 'Therapeutic Factors' questionnaire can also be given (see below). It is also an opportunity to give reinforcement for changes, and to encourage the young person to continue the work started during the group.

### *Other self-report measures*

A 'Therapeutic Factors' questionnaire is used to assess the young person's perception of the helpfulness of aspects of the group experience. It is administered on only one occasion during the post-group interview. It assesses the dimensions of: insight, altruism, guidance, catharsism, existentialism, universality, acceptance and interpersonal learning. This questionnaire was included because it is recognised that people gain therapeutically from group work other than from the content alone.

The Therapeutic Factors questionnaire has been modified from Yalom's (1995) Q-sort measure. The modified version has now been tested on several groups of adolescents at YouthLink and been found to be easily understood and takes only a short time to administer. Further information and score guides can be obtained from YouthLink.



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# SESSION 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ To begin to develop trust and safety amongst group members.
- ☺ Establish group rules.
- ☺ Establish goals and commitment for change.
- ☺ To understand the difference between anger (feeling) and aggression (behaviour).
- ☺ To understand the physical and cognitive changes that occur with anger.



## Session 1 Outline

| ACTIVITY                              | DURATION |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Introduction                          | 5 min    |
| Programme Overview                    | 5 min    |
| Icebreaker                            | 40 min   |
| Break                                 | 10 min   |
| Group Rules                           | 10 min   |
| Identify Individual Goals             | 5 min    |
| Difference Between Anger & Aggression | 13 min   |
| Closure                               | 2 min    |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Facilitators introduce themselves and group members to one another as they arrive. When everyone has arrived, go-around again with each person giving their name.

Offer drink if feasible, eg coca cola.

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW (5 minutes)

Give a brief explanation of the programme which includes the following detail:

- Number of sessions
- Length of sessions
- Structure of sessions (including breaks)
- Brief overview of the programme.

An example:

“What we’ll be doing is getting to understand anger better – you’ll see that it’s a bit more complicated than just a trigger and an explosion – and most importantly you’ll learn ways to manage anger better. Today and next week we’ll start on this, but we’ll also be spending time just getting to know each other.”

### ICEBREAKER (40 minutes)

Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to get to know each other a little better.

A choice of icebreaker activities are described at the end of Session 1 therapist’s notes.

### BREAK (10 minutes)

### GROUP RULES (10 minutes)

- Introduce the exercise by saying, for example: “although this is a course where you’ve come to learn something, some people may choose to talk about things that are personal and that they wish only the group to know. Group rules are a way of making it safe for people to talk about their experiences and to share their ideas, and a way of making sure that everyone is treated with respect. What rules would you like to

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

Drinks (eg Coca cola)

Note: This will be brief, as the young people will be feeling uncomfortable at this stage.

Pencils and paper or other equipment as described in the instructions.

Note: Facilitator’s should join in the activities. Therapist self-disclosure should be limited, but can help young people in their development of trust of group lead-

Butcher’s paper & Marker

Note: For young people it’s very important that they feel they ‘own’ the group. It is therefore preferable that they themselves generate the group rules. If they have difficulty prompts may be used, eg



## DETAILED CONTENTS

- make for this to happen?"
- Brainstorm rules on butcher's paper.
- The following rules should be considered:
  - if unable to attend let the group know by calling the facilitator;
  - confidentiality;
  - respect individuality/ differences (no put downs);
  - support each other;
  - no drugs or alcohol before group.

### IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL GOALS (5 mins)

Ask group members to remember the two goals they set before the course began. Participants may not remember. Pin up butcher's paper with complete list and ask participants to name which goals they set.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANGER & AGGRESSION

(13 mins)

- Aim of this exercise is for participants to recognise that anger is a feeling and that aggression is a behaviour.
- Ask group members to think of as many words for anger that they can think of.
- Write the words on butchers' paper in two lists (no headings at this stage) according to whether they describe anger (feeling) or aggression (behaviour).
- If group members have difficulty generating words, hand out pieces of paper and pencils and have them do it anonymously by writing them down.
- Ask: which list is anger, and which is aggression?

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

"other groups have thought it important that confidentiality be a rule. Is that something you'd like to consider?"

However, the group facilitators may also need to add rules, eg "In other groups we've also found it's very important that people don't come to the group under the influence. They can't take things in properly and it's a waste of their time and ours. Is it okay with everyone if we add that in?"

Pre-prepared butcher's paper with list of all goals identified in pre-group interviews (no identifying information).

Note: Group members are likely to recognise that goals set by other members are also a problem for themselves. This exercise helps motivate the group members to change, as well as building group cohesion through recognising similarities.

Paper and pencils.  
Butchers' paper & marker.

Note: If group members have difficulty generating words, hand out pieces of paper and pencils and have them do it anonymously by writing them down.



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

sion? What's the difference?

- Elicit distinction between feeling and behaviour (action).
- Discuss which of these is giving them problems and in what ways.
- Recognise different ways of being aggressive (eg physical, verbal, hurting self, destroying property).

### CLOSURE (2 mins)

- Motivate the group to attend the next session by
  - thanking them for their attendance
  - reiterating the essential components of the program and how useful it will be to them
  - addressing any concerns.

For example:

"Thanks for coming along today. This week and next we'll be learning some basic, but central ideas about aggression and anger control, as well as spending a bit of time just getting to know each other. Over the next 8 weeks we'll add to each session bit by bit so that by the end of the course you'll have learned some really useful skills and have a much more complete picture of how it all works. Does anyone have any questions or concerns about the course at this stage? Are you all okay to meet here next week at the same time?"



# SESSION 2

## OVERVIEW OF HOW ANGER

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review: the difference between anger and aggression; recognise the physical and cognitive signs of anger.
- ☺ Introduce the pressure cooker model.
- ☺ Gain awareness of their own physical signs of anger.
- ☺ Introduce Hassle Logs (self monitoring).



## SESSION 2 OUTLINE

| ACTIVITY                                 | DURATION |
|--|----------|
| Icebreaker Exercise                      | 15 min   |
| Review of Last Week                      | 5 min    |
| Recognising Signs of Anger               | 10 min   |
| Introduce Pressure Cooker Model          | 15 min   |
| Break                                    | 10 min   |
| Relate Signs of Anger to Pressure Cooker | 10 min   |
| Breathing Exercise                       | 5 min    |
| Introduce Triggers and Self-Monitoring   | 10 min   |
| Closure                                  | 5 min    |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### ICEBREAKER EXERCISE (15 minutes)

- Choose short ice-breaker exercise from those suggested in Session 1; or
- each young person to focus on someone else in the group (nominated by facilitator) and say their name and two things about them that they remember from last week.

This exercise aims to continue to build a sense of trust and safety within the group.

### REVIEW OF LAST WEEK (5 minutes)

Ask:

- what do they remember from last week
- what do they remember about the difference between anger and aggression?

### RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ANGER (10 minutes)

The aim of this exercise is to have them recognise their own signs of anger.

- Draw stick man on butcher's paper.
- Ask: what happens when they get angry - eg red face, pace up and down, thoughts racing.
- Emphasise that when you get angry there are both physical changes as well as mental changes, and that this distinction is very important in understanding how to deal with anger.

Butcher's paper & Marker

### INTRODUCE PRESSURE COOKER MODEL (15 mins)

- Draw picture of pressure cooker on butcher's paper.
- Explain:  
"The match lights the flame which boils the pot. If you have a very hot flame, lots of stuff in the pot, lid on tight and no steam release, the lid blows off quickly. The alternative is to put out the match, lower the flame, empty the contents as much as possible, loosen the lid and open the steam release.  
Blowing your top when you're angry is a bit like a pressure cooker blowing its lid. You have anger triggers (the matches) which sets off angry or aggressive thinking (the flames). If you have left over stuff from the past. Which is simmering away in the pot, this begins boiling rapidly. If you have no outlet for getting rid of physical tension (steam release) and keep your

Butcher's paper & Marker



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

feelings clamped in very tightly (tight lid), you're likely to 'blow your top'."

### **BREAK (10 minutes)**

### **REVIEW THE 'SIGNS OF ANGER' AND RELATE TO THE PRESSURE COOKER (10 mins)**

- Explain the concept of 'steam release'.
- Relate this to the signs of anger, as discussed earlier.
- This could be explained as follows:  
"Thinking back to before the break when we looked at how to recognise when you're angry – you can think of the physical tension as the 'steam' that you have to release so you don't explode. This is a really important first step in anger control. There are lots of ways of releasing steam and you probably already do some of these things".
- Group brainstorm of strategies that could be used to reduce physical tension. Put ideas on the drawing of the pressure cooker next to the steam release valve.

Note: Strongly reinforce the strategies that they already use.

### **BREATHING EXERCISE (5 mins)**

- Teach participants a quick breathing exercise which can be used for 'steam release'.
- This exercise may need to be sold to participants, eg "this exercise is used a lot in sports psychology, for example in martial arts it's essential that you have control when you're practising or fighting, and breathing is one very effective method that's taught so you can get this control."
- Breathe in for 4 and out for 6.
- Demonstrate with co-facilitator.

Note: Participants may feel self-conscious about this. If so, get them to turn their chairs around so that they are back-to-back.



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### TRIGGERS AND SELF-MONITORING (10 mins)

- Introduce concept of anger triggers. Explain, for example:

“We’ve talked about steam release as a really important way of gaining control. Another thing that’s really important is knowing what triggers off your anger. Everyone has different anger triggers – for example, for one person a trigger may be someone putting them down. Another person may not worry at all about what people think of them, but get very angry if they’re told to do something. Looking at the pressure cooker you can see that the trigger is like the match or spark that sets the whole thing off. You can get more control over your anger by knowing what your triggers are so that you can prepare for them in advance.”

- Introduce hassle logs. Explain, for example: The way to get to know your triggers is by filling out a ‘Hassle Log’. (Hand out Hassle Logs.) You don’t need to fill out the whole book – just record about two times when you get angry. And you don’t have to record times when you explode. You can record times when you get angry but manage to deal with it effectively.”
- Open Hassle Logs and explain how to record.
- Ask participants to bring hassle logs next week.
- Check that participants understand the task.

Hassle Logs (See Appendix 3 for the master copy; this is best made into booklet form with the cover provided.)

Enlarged page from Hassle Log for demonstrating (on next page).

### CLOSURE (10 minutes)

- Brief review.
- Motivate participants to return, for example: We’ve now covered the basic things you need to know about anger and aggression (the difference between anger and aggression and how to recognise when you’re angry) and showed you the pressure cooker model. Over the remaining few weeks you’ll get to grips with how it all works and the different strategies you can use to gain control over your anger. Try to remember to bring your Hassle Logs. Any thoughts or questions?

## HASSLE LOG

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

**Where were you?** \_\_\_\_\_

### What happened?

Somebody put me down \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody yelled at me \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody told me to do something \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody was doing something I didn't like \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody started fighting with me \_\_\_\_\_

I did something wrong \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Who was that somebody?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What were your feelings?** angry \_\_\_\_\_ frustrated \_\_\_\_\_ scared \_\_\_\_\_  
shamed-out \_\_\_\_\_ put down \_\_\_\_\_ sad \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

### What did you do?

hit someone \_\_\_\_\_

breathe deeply \_\_\_\_\_

visualise \_\_\_\_\_

cried \_\_\_\_\_

count backwards \_\_\_\_\_

ignored \_\_\_\_\_

yelled \_\_\_\_\_

walked away calmly \_\_\_\_\_

talked to friend \_\_\_\_\_

was restrained \_\_\_\_\_

took time out \_\_\_\_\_

was assertive \_\_\_\_\_

ran away \_\_\_\_\_

used chill-out phrase \_\_\_\_\_

changed thinking \_\_\_\_\_

broke something \_\_\_\_\_

talked to someone \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

### What happened next?

\_\_\_\_\_

### How full-on were your feelings?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
not at all      slightly      quite a bit      very full-on      extremely

### How did you handle yourself?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
poorly      not so well      okay      good      great



# SESSION 3

## TRIGGERS AND STEAM RELEASE

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review session 2: anger vs aggression; physical signs of anger; pressure cooker.
- ☺ Recognise anger triggers (relate to the concept of 'the match or spark').
- ☺ Recognise existing skills in reducing tension ('letting off steam'). Learn new ways of letting off steam.



## **SESSION 3 Outline**

| <b>ACTIVITY</b>  | <b>DURATION</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Review           | 10 min          |
| Steam Release    | 40 min          |
| Triggers         | 10 min          |
| Break            | 10 min          |
| Triggers (cont.) | 15 min          |
| Closure          | 5 min           |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### REVIEW (10 minutes)

- Ask participants to remember what was covered in the previous two weeks.
- Prompt if necessary:
  - Anger vs aggression
  - Signs of anger - physical and mental
  - Pressure cooker model
  - Steam release
  - Triggers & Hassle Logs.

### STEAM RELEASE (40 mins)

- Go-around group and ask them to share a Hassle Log entry with the other participants.
- If they have left them at home or forgotten to about them, ask them to remember an incident from the previous week when they got angry, and tell the rest of the group using the Hassle Log format.
- Reinforce any control strategies used.
- Turn focus to steam release strategies.
- Emphasise the importance of being able to cool yourself down physically before you respond to a trigger. For example:
 

“Cooling down by releasing steam allows you to then *choose* your response. This gives you heaps more control. Last week we made a list of things that you already do to let off steam and we also did a breathing exercise used by athletes and experts in the martial arts. I’ve also got a list here of other things that people find helpful to cool down. I’ll give this list to you before you go.”
- Explain the importance of practice.

### TRIGGERS (10 mins)

- Using examples from hassle logs, think of their triggers.
- Brainstorm, and add to the pressure cooker illustration completed last week. A participant can act as scribe. Relate to pressure cooker model. For example:
 

“These are like the matches, the things that spark you off. Over the next few weeks you might think of other things to add to it.”

Note: Involve all group members in discussion as each Hassle Log is discussed, rather than giving too much focus to the individual. Group members are likely easily to become distracted or bored if not included.

Butcher’s paper drawing of pressure cooker.

Note: The ‘triggers’ of some participants may also be part of the ‘contents’ of their pressure cooker; eg one person may have a history of being teased, so that they have become very sensitive to comments about their appearance. While the emphasis in the Keeping Cool pro-



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

gram is on learning strategies, in some groups it has been helpful to have some discussion about the contents of the cooker. Group leaders must feel confident in being able to guide the discussion so that feelings related to these 'deeper' issues can be validated while remaining contained. The focus should remain on understanding and managing their anger, and acknowledging the contents of their cooker can be helpful to this. However, they may need reminding that their individual therapists will be able to give them the time and help they need to look properly at some of their deeper issues.

### BREAK (10 mins)

### TRIGGERS (cont.) (15 mins)

- Use video to facilitate discussion.
- Explore:
  - What were the triggers?
  - How did they respond?
  - What was the consequence?

Video: Dealing with Emotions, vignettes 23 & 24.

### CLOSURE (5 mins)

- Ask group to continue completing Hassle Logs.
- Hand out 'Steam Release' worksheet & 'Deep Breathing' sheet. Remind participants that they tried the deep breathing exercise last week and that this sheet will help them remember what to do.
- Again emphasise the need for practice. (Add: "Steam release techniques can be used in many situations, not just when you're full-on angry.")

Hassle Logs (spare booklets to use if needed)  
Steam Release worksheet (Appendix 2).  
Deep Breathing sheet (Appendix 2).



# SESSION 4

## IDENTIFYING FEELINGS & LOOKING AT CONSEQUENCES

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review concepts learned to date.
- ☺ Identify and label feelings other than anger.
- ☺ Distinguish between different types of feelings.
- ☺ Recognise both the costs and benefits of becoming aggressive.



## **SESSION 4 Outline**

| <b>ACTIVITY</b>                      | <b>DURATION</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Review                               | 10 min          |
| Introduction to Identifying Feelings | 15 min          |
| Identifying Feelings: Exercise       | 25 min          |
| Break                                | 10 min          |
| Looking at Consequences              | 20 min          |
| Closure                              | 10 min          |



**DETAILED CONTENTS**

**EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY  
PROCESS NOTES**

**REVIEW OF LAST WEEK & INTRODUCTION TO IDENTIFYING FEELINGS**

**(25 mins)**

- Briefly review previous weeks and introduce today’s session. For example: “In the last couple of weeks we’ve been concentrating on trying to work out triggers, we’ve talked about how important it is to open the steam release to avoid the lid blowing off. Remember back to the difference between anger and aggression. What is the difference?”
- From above discussion, draw out – anger is a ‘normal’ feeling. Give example of another emotion, eg: “If someone close to us dies we would think sadness is a very normal and okay reaction.”
- Comment on the fact that there are quite a few different types of feelings and ask “How can you tell which feelings are which?”
- Out of the discussion, reflect the fact that feelings can be confusing and it’s sometimes difficult to tell the difference between one feeling and another.

**IDENTIFYING FEELINGS: EXERCISE (25 mins)**

- Ask group members to close their eyes, sit quietly and imagine a strong feeling – any feeling. Ask questions such as: What does it feel like? What colour does it have? How does it feel in your body?
- Write responses on white board.
- Facilitate a general discussion about feelings: Some questions to promote further discussion about feelings might include: “What have you learned about feelings?” “What’s difficult about feelings?”
- Use Hassle Logs to look at different situations and different feelings associated with each.
- Highlight the idea that different feelings can result in aggressive acts. Eg If you’re feeling sad but do not allow yourself to say so, you may become frustrated and aggressive.
- Introduce the idea that being true to yourself and your feelings means being able to identify what the real feeling is and being able to say so.

White board



## DETAILED CONTENTS

- Emphasise that it's okay not to know exactly how you're feeling, and that it may be a whole mixture of things.

### **BREAK (10 mins)**

### **LOOKING AT CONSEQUENCES: Introduction (20 mins)**

- Discuss the consequences of aggression.
- Have another look at hassle logs to consider the consequences of aggressive behaviour.

### **CLOSURE (10 mins)**

- Reinforce participants for progress made.
- Ask participants to try to notice over the next week the different feelings that they may experience and to also note to themselves how it feels in their bodies.
- Remind them to continue to fill out Hassle Logs because we'll continue to use them next week.

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

Most young people experience at least some 'rewards' for their aggressive behaviour. For example, they may receive strong peer approval, or they may feel that it is part of their identity. The discussion about consequences needs to acknowledge these 'rewards' without condoning the aggression. It is important that group leaders remain non-judgemental. The discussion should then be turned to what has motivated the young people to attend the group (ie the costs of being aggressive), so that the 'costs' of aggression can be weighed against the 'benefits'.



# SESSION 5

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review concepts learned to date.
- ☺ Clarify why they get angry: introduce the notion of 'anger rights and responsibilities'.
- ☺ Introduce the concept of 'loosening the lid' by using assertiveness ('straight talk').



## **Session 5 Outline**

| <b>ACTIVITY</b>                        | <b>DURATION</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| Review, and Introduction to Rights and | 25 min          |
| Assertive Communication                | 25 min          |
| Break                                  | 10 min          |
| Assertive Communication (cont.)        | 20 min          |
| Closure                                | 10 min          |



### DETAILED CONTENTS

### EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

#### REVIEW OF LAST WEEK & INTRODUCTION TO 'RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES'

(25 mins)

Briefly review previous weeks and introduce today's session. For example: "Last week we talked about different types of feelings. We also talked about anger being a normal feeling which is telling you that you've reacted strongly to something and you might need to choose a way to deal with it.

- Ask: "When do you think it's okay to be angry?"
- Brainstorm. Write on white board - participant to act as scribe.
- Reframe as 'anger rights'.
- Introduce the 'flip side' (ie responsibilities). Eg "As you've just pointed out there are some circumstances when it seems okay to be angry, but along with that comes responsibilities. What do you reckon your responsibilities are when it comes to being angry?"
- Brainstorm. Write on white board - participant to act as scribe.

White board & Marker

#### INTRODUCTION TO ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION (25 mins)

- Drawing from discussion on 'anger rights', begin to introduce the concept of appropriate anger expression. For example: "So, okay you're angry and you think you have a right to be angry - how can you express this in an effective but non-aggressive way?"
- Group brainstorm on butchers' paper under headings:

Butcher's paper & Marker

PASSIVE   AGGRESSIVE   ASSERTIVE

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| Non-verbal |  |  |
| Verbal     |  |  |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### **BREAK (10 mins)**

### **ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION (cont) (20 mins)**

- Use video clips to illustrate verbal and non-verbal examples of passive, aggressive and assertive communication.
- Use pause button – eg “has person responded passively, assertively or aggressively. How can you tell?”
- Add to butcher’s paper any extra things the participants think of.

Video: “Dealing with Emotions”, vignettes no 18 and 21.  
Butcher’s paper & Marker (from previous exercise)

### **CLOSURE (10 mins)**

- Reinforce participants for progress made.
- Ask participants to notice over the next week passive, aggressive and assertive behaviours in others.
- Give handouts - Assertiveness and Anger Rights & Responsibilities, and ask them to read it for next week.
- Remind participants to do Hassle Logs because we’ll use them again next week.

Handouts (Appendix 2):  
Anger rights and Responsibilities (A5 size)  
Assertiveness (A4 folded to A5)



# SESSION 6

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (CONT.)

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review anger rights and responsibilities.
- ☺ Further consolidation of assertiveness skills.



## SESSION 6 Outline

| ACTIVITY                 | DURATION |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Review of Last Week      | 10 min   |
| More on Assertiveness    | 25 min   |
| Break                    | 10 min   |
| Assertiveness Role Plays | 20 min   |
| Review Hassle Logs       | 20 min   |
| Closure                  | 5 min    |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### REVIEW OF LAST WEEK (10 mins)

- When is anger okay?
- Assertiveness - introduce by asking if they had a chance to look at handouts. What is assertiveness? Why be assertive? Did they notice during last week how other people responded?
- Discuss.

### MORE ON ASSERTIVENESS (25 mins)

- Relate assertiveness to pressure cooker: For example:
- "When the lid is clamping the feelings in tight, there is a huge build up of pressure. Assertiveness allows the feelings to be expressed in a way that doesn't cause more problems. Being assertive is like having a loose lid, so that steam can escape when it needs to and there's no build up of steam. Being passive means keeping the feelings clamped in tight. Being aggressive means letting everything explode in one big mess."
- Discuss the verbal and non-verbal characteristics of passive, aggressive and assertive expression (review from last week).
- Write responses on whiteboard with a participant acting as scribe.
- Note that they are probably familiar with the aggressive response so we need to spend some time looking at the assertive response.
- Introduce a guide for assertive communication. Explain, for example:  
It has non-verbal elements eg eye contact, voice steady, as well as verbal elements. A good guide to responding assertively is the following -  
(assume you're angry about something)  
"I hear what you are saying.  
This is how I feel..  
This is what I'd like to happen..  
This is what I'll do about it."
- Point out the use of 'I' messages when being assertive. This avoids placing blame on anyone

White board & Marker



## DETAILED CONTENTS

and is more likely to diffuse the situation.

- Emphasise the need to stay calm.

### **BREAK (10 mins)**

### **ASSERTIVENESS ROLE PLAYS (20 mins)**

- Facilitators to enact role plays.
- Ask participants to notice the non-verbal and verbal characteristics, and add any to list on white board.
- Emphasise the use of 'I' messages, and that the young person in the role play stayed calm when being assertive.

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

Facilitator role play scripts (pages 4 & 5 of Session 6)

### **REVIEW HASSLE LOGS (20 mins)**

- Any examples of assertiveness? If so, focus on these.
- Take some other examples when participants responded aggressively and work out alternative assertive response.
- Participants or facilitators can role-play.
- Brainstorm problems that the participants might encounter when they try to be assertive, eg people thinking that they're "acting smart".
- Problem-solve solutions to these.
- Reflect on the earlier role play. Remind participants that when the son/daughter was assertive, the parent first got angry, and the son/daughter had to remain calm.



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### CLOSURE (5 mins)

- Emphasise the need to practise skills.
- Remind participants of skills they've learned.
- Give brief introduction to next week's session.
- Remind participants to use Hassle Logs.

For example, all this may be explained as follows:

"There's just two weeks left now and next week we're going to look at another really effective strategy for managing anger - one that can stop you being angry in the first place. In the meantime, practice the other skills you've learned as much as possible. Think about your triggers and whether you can avoid them, let off some steam before you do anything else, if you decide you're still angry and it's worth being angry, say what you need to say in a 'straight way' by being assertive. Use the Hassle Logs next week to record a couple of times when you get angry."



## ROLE PLAY SCRIPTS – For Facilitator demonstration

To illustrate passive, aggressive and assertive responses

### **Passive Script**

Parent (somewhat aggressively) - Look you're going off to this group every week, I want to know what you're talking about. I reckon as your parent I've got a right to know what's going on. I bet you talk about me! What is it you're saying?

Son/daughter (Looking sheepish and avoiding eye contact) - Gee I'm sorry mum. I didn't mean to upset you. I guess that was really selfish of me.

Parent - Too right it upset me - yeah you are pretty selfish sometimes.

Son/daughter (eg hand to head and quiet voice) - Gee I feel really bad - I'll try and think what we did.

Parent - well get on with it then, I haven't got all day.

Son/daughter - Well they told us something about cooking pots or saucepans or something and (gp members name] told us how she kicked her cat last week, and [gp members name] told us that he got in a fight and I said that everything's great at my home.

Parent - well I should think so too.

Son/daughter - do you want to know anything else?

---

### **Aggressive Script**

Parent (somewhat aggressively) - Look you're going off to this group every week, I want to know what you're talking about. I reckon as your parent I've got a right to know what's going on. I bet you talk about me! What is it you're saying?

Son/daughter (Looking very aggressive, moving closer, puffing out chest etc) Just lay @\$%^ off would you. You just go on and on and on and on. I can't believe what a \$@%\*# you are sometimes. You're ALWAYS sticking your damn fat nose into my affairs. You NEVER leave me alone.

Parent (*shouting*) - Watch your mouth! Just who do you think you're talking to young lady/man. You think you run this place. All I want to know is just a little tiny bit about your day and you treat me like @#%\*. I just can't wait for you to grow up!

Son/daughter (*Even louder*) - Me to grow up??!! ME??!! You're the one who needs to grow up! You're an idiot. You act like a 2 year old, you're unbelievable!

Mum/Dad (even louder) - Don't you dare shout at me!



## ROLE PLAY SCRIPTS (cont.)

### **Assertive Script**

*Mum/Dad (somewhat aggressively) -*

Look you're going off to this group every week, I want to know what you're talking about. I reckon as your parent I've got a right to know what's going on. I bet you talk about me! What is it you're saying?

*Son/daughter (Looking parent in the eye; keeping voice level)*

Look mum/dad. I can see you're worried (pause) but when you say things like that, it makes me feel really irritated.

*Mum/dad (shouting)*

Hey, don't you give me that cheek, I have a right to know what's going on.

*Son/daughter (Staying calm)*

Mum, look I CAN see you want to know, but I just feel angry when you shout at me. If you just cool it down a bit then we'll be able to talk.

*Mum/Dad (A bit less aggro than before)*

Well! All right then. [pause] All right, so you'll tell me.

*Son/daughter*

Mum, I know you want to know what we do and say in the class but it's not something that I feel like talking about at the end of the day, and it does irritate me when you ask me. If you don't ask me in future I'll probably feel more like telling you things in general.



# SESSION 7

## USING SELF-TALK TO MANAGE ANGER

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Understand that thinking affects feeling.
- ☺ Understand the use of self-talk in managing anger.
- ☺ Prepare for group completion.



## SESSION 7 outline

| ACTIVITY                                | DURATION |
|---|----------|
| Review                                  | 20 min   |
| Using Self-Talk to Manage Anger         | 20 min   |
| Break                                   | 10 min   |
| Using Self-Talk (cont.)                 | 15 min   |
| Relate Self-Talk to the Pressure Cooker | 10 min   |
| Closure & Preparation for Final Session | 15 min   |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### REVIEW (20 mins)

- Ask how they went with using the skills learned last week.
- Using the 'hassle log' format go through any examples they have of assertiveness.
- Reinforce examples of assertiveness.
- Notice and point out any other skills used that relate to previous weeks, eg letting off steam, dealing with triggers.
- Put up illustration of pressure cooker done in previous week, and relate their triggers and responses to the pressure cooker model.
- Point out that Loosening the Lid is a constructive way of dealing with angry feelings.

Illustration of pressure cooker model.

### USING SELF-TALK TO MANAGE ANGER

#### (20 mins)

- Move on to recognising how thoughts affect feelings, by telling the group something like:

"Loosening the lid (being assertive) is a really handy way of dealing with things once you're angry. Another really powerful way to prevent explosions is to not get angry in the first place. You can do this by turning down the flame. Turning down the flame means simply thinking in cool ways. How does this work?

"Imagine this scenario:

[Write this up on butcher's paper or white board as you say it, under headings of 'trigger', 'self-talk' and 'feeling'.]

"You're at work and your boss yells at you for not getting enough done. Let's look at what could happen. If you were to think to yourself, 'what an arsehole- he's always picking on me, that's so unfair', how do you think you'd feel? [Angry] If, on the other hand, you were to think - 'gee, he must be having a hard day, I'd better keep out of his way' - how do you think you'd feel?." [Calm/the same as before]

Butcher's paper or White board & Marker

- Discuss with group.
- Ask for examples when they could have been angry, but their self-talk made them calm.



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### BREAK (10 mins)

### USING SELF-TALK (cont.) (15 mins)

- Watch video to illustrate concept of self-talk.
- Use pause button after each 'option' to discuss what the young person was thinking and feeling.
- Explain how this is effective, for example: "This is a really powerful strategy in anger control because your self-talk can stop you getting angry in the first place. This gives you heaps of control. If you think about it in terms of the pressure cooker, if the flame is right down, the pot won't be able to get to more than a simmer."

Video: Dealing with Emotions, vignette no. 26.

This vignette shows a young man being accused by his supervisor of not working fast enough. In 'option 1' the young man gets angry; in 'option 2' the young man uses cool self-talk to remain calm.

### RELATING SELF-TALK TO THE PRESSURE COOKER (10 mins)

- Use hassle logs for getting their real-life examples of anger incidents.
- Write each strategy on diagram of pressure cooker under headings of triggers, cool self-talk, feelings.
- Have participants brainstorm and write up other examples of 'cool' self-talk which could be used in each situation.
- Reflect on what the resulting feelings are likely to be using the different self-talk.

Illustration of Pressure Cooker Model

### CLOSURE & PREPARATION FOR FINAL SESSION (15 mins)

- Explain to participants that they've now covered all the essential skills needed for aggression and anger control.



## DETAILED CONTENTS

- Emphasise that the most important thing is to hone these skills through practice.
- Use the analogy of driving a car – ie. that you can be shown the brake, clutch, steering wheel etc – but it's essential to practice so that you become really good at it, your reaction time improves etc.
- Emphasise that these skills can be used and practised in lots of different situations – you don't have to be 'full-on' angry.
- Give some examples – eg someone wants you to go out on Friday night and you don't feel like it – say 'no' assertively; you're feeling a bit annoyed that your mum and your sister are fighting – you can use self-talk to feel less annoyed, like 'I guess that's their problem, not mine'.
- Encourage group members to try the skills, but emphasise that it will take time to get the hang of it, and just do the best they can.
- Discuss with participants what they would like to do for the last session in next week.. Be clear about restrictions as they apply to the setting or the facilitators, eg can't go off-site. They may like all to bring something special for afternoon/morning tea.
- Again remind participants that over next week they'll be learning a lot just by trying to practice what we've covered in the sessions.
- Ask participants to continue with hassle logs and we'll use these again next week.

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

Giving participants warning that the group is finishing next week is important. The group will be cohesive by this stage and they are likely to experience disappointment about the impending finish. Discuss any feelings they may have about this – reflect and normalise.



# SESSION 8

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

### SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ☺ Review all concepts learned to date.
- ☺ Discuss what group members have found helpful and unhelpful.
- ☺ Prepare for possibility of relapse.
- ☺ Group closure.



## **Session 8 Outline**

| <b>ACTIVITY</b>                        | <b>DURATION</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| Review of Previous Week                | 15 min          |
| Reflection on the Keeping Cool Program | 15 min          |
| Closing Down Activity                  | 50 min          |
| Relapse Prevention & Closure           | 10 min          |



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

### REVIEW OF PREVIOUS WEEK (15 mins)

- Give the participants the opportunity to discuss any incidents from the previous week.
- Elicit help from other group members where appropriate.

### REFLECTION ON THE KEEPING COOL PROGRAM (15 mins)

- Ask the group members what they've found most helpful about the course - anything that comes to mind. Write the responses on butcher's paper.
- Ask what they found unhelpful, noting their responses.

Butcher's paper & Marker

This is a good 'closing down' exercise. Participants are likely to be in agreement about what they liked and didn't like about the course, leaving them with a feeling of cohesion from the group. Their responses may have more to do with group process than content, eg "knowing others have the same problem".

### CLOSING DOWN EXERCISE (50mins)

The remaining time should be spent informally doing whatever the group has decided for the final session.

### CLOSURE (10 mins)

- Thank participants for their attendance and reflect on many positives that you noticed as facilitators.
- Hand out summary booklets.
- Tell them the work they've done is a fantastic beginning and that with continued practice they'll become better and better at the skills. Remind them that if they would like or feel they need to do further work they should speak about this with their individual counsellors.
- Prepare them for relapse - For example:  
"you might find that you've been going just great

Handout (Appendix 3 - to be assembled ahead of time):  
A Guide to Getting Along & Keeping Cool [summary booklet]



## DETAILED CONTENTS

## EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY PROCESS NOTES

and then suddenly the old aggressive patterns start happening again. This is quite common and in this case go back and look at the summary booklet and if this isn't enough you might just need a booster session with your individual counsellor."

- Remind them that you will be contacting them next week for post-group interviews.



Centre for Clinical Interventions

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **INTERVIEW GUIDELINES & ASSESSMENT TOOLS**



**PRE-GROUP INTERVIEW: Guidelines for Therapists**  
***GETTING ALONG & KEEPING COOL***

The pre-group interview is the place to address any concerns the young person may have about attending the group. It can be helpful to know whether they've attended such a group before, how it was for them, their expectations for this group and whether they're worried about anything to do with group membership. Normalise any feelings of concern.

The following information may help to put them at ease:

- other participants - numbers, gender
- number of sessions - ie **8** plus post-group interview.
- purpose of the group
- where it will be
- when it will be
- name of the co-facilitator
- assessments, what's used and why – explain also that a post-group interview will assess things found helpful and unhelpful
- between-session expectations - hassle log, trying out things. Doesn't matter if not 'successful'
- try to attend all sessions - both for the content and for the fact that group members are missed by others when they can't make it.

When the young person appears to be more relaxed and to have had concerns addressed the more structured parts of the pre-group assessment can begin. First, the semi-structured interview is administered. This includes ascertaining participant goals and assessing motivation. Next, the standardised questionnaires are administered. It is important to explain to potential participants the purpose of the questionnaires; that is, that the questionnaires will be a really good way of comparing how things are for them at the conclusion of the group with how they are at the moment. Reassure participants that the results of the questionnaires will be discussed with them in full at the conclusion of the group.



**PRE-GROUP INTERVIEW**  
***GETTING ALONG & KEEPING COOL***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Client's expectations/goals**

Brief history of problem

What do you see now as your main problem with anger?

What happens when you're angry?

What effect is this having on your life?  
(Explore self-esteem, relationships, social life, work/school.)

If you had to rate your problem out of 10 for how bad it is, what would you give it?  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Not bad at all Terrible

How much does it worry you (rate out of 10)  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Not at all Extremely

What would you like to change about your anger/aggression?

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3 (optional):

What do you think will be most helpful in doing the anger management group?

How will things be different for you when this problem is gone?

How much do you want to do the group?  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Not at all Extremely



**POST-GROUP INTERVIEW: Guidelines for Therapists**  
***GETTING ALONG & KEEPING COOL***

The post-group interview should be held approximately two weeks after the group has finished. It has several functions. Standardised measures can be completed to enable formal evaluation of outcomes. It provides an opportunity for participants to consider and rate how they believe their problems changed during the course of the group. It provides an opportunity for facilitators to give feedback on how participants progressed in the group and, in particular, to provide positive reinforcement for participants' strengths. It is also an opportunity for participants to give feedback to the facilitators on what they found helpful/unhelpful about the group program or group process.

The post-group interviews should have a standard structure. First, the standardised questionnaires are readministered with the STAXI being completed before the YASR. While the participant is completing the YASR, the STAXI can be quickly scored and the bar-graph completed so that immediate feedback can be given. Results of the YASR will need to be given by the individual therapist to the participant at a later session. Both these questionnaires can be used to give valuable feedback to participants as well as to evaluate the group program. The 'Therapeutic Factors' questionnaire can also then be administered. This is used to assess outcomes relevant to the group process; however, note that it is not standardised.

After completing these more formal questionnaires, facilitators can use the rest of the session to discuss progress made and to gain feedback on the program. The following pages contain the structured interview which will help this process. Before meeting with the participant the facilitators should fill in the goals that were identified at pre-group interview.

In the post-group interview it is important to notice and reinforce positive changes as well as to be realistic about further work which the participant will need to do. It should again be emphasised that the more they practice the skills they have learned, the greater the sense of control they will gain. Participants should also be reminded that their individual therapists can help them address any concerns they may have in the future.



**POST-GROUP INTERVIEW  
GETTING ALONG & KEEPING COOL**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*These questions relate to the questions you were asked before the group began:*

What do you see now as your main problem with anger?

\_\_\_\_\_

What happens when you're angry?

\_\_\_\_\_

What effect is this having on your life?

\_\_\_\_\_

If you had to rate your problem out of 10 for how bad it is, what would you give it?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Not bad at all Terrible

How much does it worry you (rate out of 10)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Not at all Extremely

Before the group began you said that you would like to change the following:

1. (State 1<sup>st</sup> goal):

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Worse than before No Change Much better than before

2. (State 2<sup>nd</sup> goal):

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Worse than before No Change Much better than be-  
fore

3. (State 3<sup>rd</sup> goal):

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10  
Worse than before No Change Much better than be-





For you, what was the best thing about the group

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What would you have liked to do more of?

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What do you think needs changing about the group?

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Any other comments?

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## Group Experience

**Instructions:** Below are some things that you may or may not have experienced as helpful during the group. Please give each statement a rating from 0 to 4, where a rating of 0 is “not helpful at all” and a rating of 4 is “extremely helpful”.

|  | Not at all helpful | A little helpful | Quite helpful | Very helpful | Extremely helpful |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Helping others has made me feel good  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 2. Learning that I must take responsibility for my own actions                       | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 3. Learning that things can get better   | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 4. Learning new ways of doing things   | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 5. Being listened to by group leaders  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 6. Learning why I think and feel the way I do  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 7. Getting things off my chest   | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 8. Group members suggesting or advising something for me to do                       | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 9. Improving my skills in getting along with people                                  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 10. Teaching me about the type of impression I make on others                        | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 11. Learning I'm not the only one with my type of problem                            | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 12. Being taught skills I don't know   | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 13. Revealing embarrassing things about myself and still being accepted by the group | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 14. Learning about some of the causes of my problems                                 | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 15. Recognising that life is at times unfair and unjust                              | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 16. Having group leaders there to help me  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 17. Giving part of myself to others  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 18. Feeling alone no longer  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 19. Being able to say what was bothering me instead of holding it in                 | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 20. Learning that there's hope for my problem  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 21. Giving me an opportunity to learn to approach others                             | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 22. Realising that there are other people out there like me                          | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 23. People in the group giving suggestions about problems                            | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 24. Learning how I come across to others   | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 25. Learning that at the end of the day it's really up to me to change               | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 26. Learning how to express my feelings  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 27. Belonging to a group of people who understand and accept me                      | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 28. Being able to respond to situations in better ways                               | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 29. Other members honestly telling me what they think of me                          | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 30. Helping others and being important in their lives                                | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 31. Other people in the group giving me ideas about what to do                       | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 32. Learning that I react to some people or situations unrealistically               | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 33. Seeing that others are experiencing similar things                               | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 34. Feeling understood by group leaders  | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 35. Feeling more trustful of groups and of other people                              | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |
| 36. Seeing others had solved problems similar to mine                                | 0                  | 1                | 2             | 3            | 4                 |



# **APPENDIX 2**

## **HANDOUTS: MASTER COPIES**

- ◆ **LETTING OFF STEAM (A4)**
- ◆ **DEEP BREATHING (A4)**
- ◆ **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (A5 SIZE)**
- ◆ **ASSERTIVENESS (2 X A4 PAGES, COPIED BACK-TO-BACK AND FOLDED TO A5 SIZE)**

# Letting off Steam

The steam release is the way you let go of physical tension when you're angry. This is the important first step in dealing with anger. The aim is to **COOL DOWN** enough so you can **CHOOSE** how to respond.

Everyone's different. What works for you?

*Some ideas...*

**DEEP BREATHING**

**MUSIC**

**Go for a walk**

**Count back from 10**

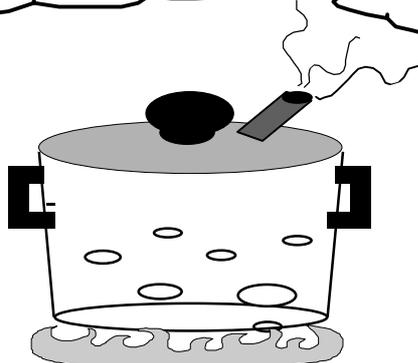
**Write it down**

**TIME OUT**

50 push ups

?.....?

?.....?



# **DEEP BREATHING**

## **PREPARE**

1. Settle the body - spend a few seconds getting comfortable, a deep breath or two, loosen up.  
Close or open your eyes.
2. Notice your breathing, feel each breath, notice the sensations.

## **THE EXERCISE**

Breathe in for 4 counts, breathe out for 6 counts.  
"Breathe in two, three, four, out two, three, four, five, six."

Do 10 of these relaxing breaths in a row, everyday.

## **REMEMBER**

Breathe in the nose and out the mouth, feel the breath ease out over your lip. Place your hand on your belly and notice this move in and out rather than the top of your chest. As you breathe out let your whole body relax.

If you begin to feel light headed, stop for 30 seconds then go back to it.

Be clear about your anger.  
Is it worth being angry?  
*It may help you to consider...*

### **SOME RIGHTS...**

The right to make mistakes.  
The right to privacy.  
The right to question anything you don't understand.  
The right to be treated with respect.  
The right to be listened to.

### **SOME RESPONSIBILITIES ...**

The responsibility of owning your feelings.  
The responsibility to explain yourself if you want to be understood.  
The responsibility to ask for something if you want it.  
The responsibility to respect that others have the same rights as you.



Be clear about your anger.  
Is it worth being angry?  
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The responsibility of owning your feelings.  
The responsibility to explain yourself if you want to be understood.  
The responsibility to ask for something if you want it.  
The responsibility to respect that others have the same rights as you.



## AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIVE STATEMENTS

“You’re an idiot!” I don’t agree with what you’re saying

“Don’t #\*@! shout at me!” “I don’t like it when you shout.”

“You don’t care about me!” “I would really like it if you could spend more time with me.”

“You never listen to me!” “Please listen to what I’m saying.”

# BEING ASSERTIVE

## WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?

**It’s a way of saying what you think and feel without being aggressive, using put-downs or becoming upset. It’s a way of**

**SAYING IT STRAIGHT  
...a handy skill in any situation!**

**When you’re assertive you...**

Respect yourself  
Respect others  
Stay cool

## How can you be assertive?

### □□ WITH YOUR BODY □□

Stay calm

Good eye contact

Speak clearly & confidently

Look serious

Stand straight

### □□ WITH WHAT YOU SAY □□

Make 'I' statements

Understand their view

State your view clearly

Be prepared to compromise

*Use the following as a guide:*

1. Describe the situation (eg "When you...").
2. State how you feel about it (eg "I feel...").
3. Say what you would like to change (eg "I would like you...").
4. Say what you will do in return (eg "Then I would...").

Eg "When you read my diary I feel you're invading my privacy and I get extremely angry. If you're worried about me, just tell me and we'll talk about it."

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASSERTION AND AGGRESSION?

| ASSERTION                        | AGGRESSION                |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Clear & direct                   | Loud & bossy              |
| Care for self & others           | Only care for self        |
| Confident about self             | Feel threatened           |
| Skilled communicator             | Lack communication skills |
| Thoughtful                       | React instantly           |
| Can say 'no' and can accept 'no' | Won't accept 'no'         |
| Does not hurt self or others     | Hurt others               |



# **APPENDIX 3**

## **BOOKLETS: MASTER COPIES**

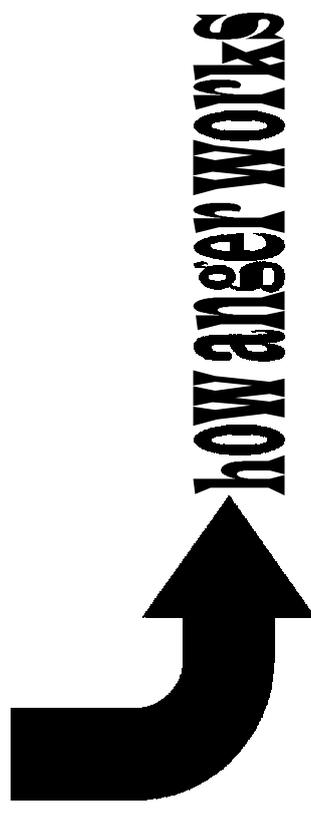
**A GUIDE TO HOW ANGER WORKS**

**HASSLE LOG**

**COPY PAGES BACK-TO-BACK, FOLD TO A5 SIZE &  
STAPLE. BOOKLET COVERS SHOULD BE COPIED  
SEPARATELY IN A DIFFERENT COLOUR.**

**a guide to**

**getting  
along &  
keeping  
cool**



**getting along & keeping cool**  
**a guide to how anger works**

*A guide to help you work out how your anger works...*

### HASSLE LOG

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened?

- Somebody put me down \_\_\_\_\_
- Somebody yelled at me \_\_\_\_\_
- Somebody told me to do something I didn't like \_\_\_\_\_
- Somebody started fighting with me \_\_\_\_\_
- I did something wrong \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Who was that somebody? \_\_\_\_\_

What were your feelings? angry \_\_\_\_\_ frustrated \_\_\_\_\_ scared \_\_\_\_\_  
shamed-out \_\_\_\_\_ put down \_\_\_\_\_ sad \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do?

- hit someone \_\_\_\_\_ breathe deeply \_\_\_\_\_ visualise \_\_\_\_\_
- cried \_\_\_\_\_ count backwards \_\_\_\_\_ ignored \_\_\_\_\_
- yelled \_\_\_\_\_ walked away calmly \_\_\_\_\_ talked to friend \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_
- restrained \_\_\_\_\_ took time out \_\_\_\_\_ was assertive \_\_\_\_\_
- ran away \_\_\_\_\_ used chill-out phrase \_\_\_\_\_ changed thinking \_\_\_\_\_
- broke something \_\_\_\_\_ talked to adult \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What happened next? \_\_\_\_\_

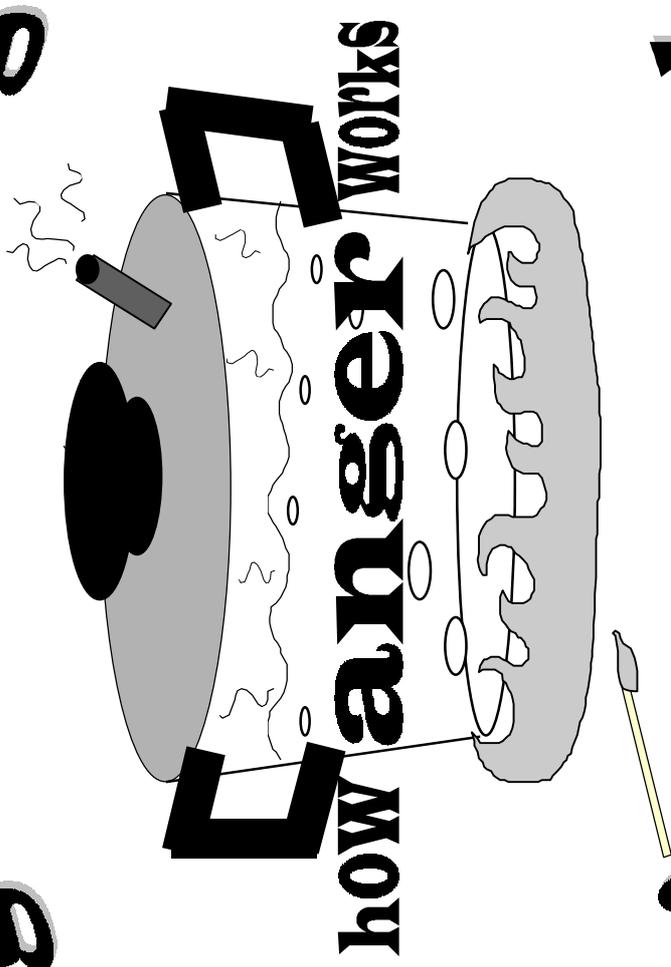
How full-on were your feelings?

- 1 not at all
- 2 slightly
- 3 quite a bit
- 4 very full-on
- 5 extremely

How did you handle yourself?

- 1 poorly
- 2 not so well
- 3 okay
- 4 good
- 5 great

# getting along



What's a pot got to do with it???

Read on!

Produced by  
Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI)  
& YouthLink

**Anger**

VS

**Aggression**

*Anger is a FEELING*

Anger is often OK.

Anger can tell you something is wrong.

When you're angry do you:

1. Keep it in?
2. Act without thinking? Become aggro?
3. Work out the best way of dealing with it?

*Aggression is a BEHAVIOUR*

Aggression is just one way of dealing with anger.

It usually leads to more problems.

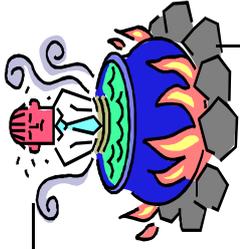


The pressure cooker model is just one way of understanding how anger works. It shows how there is more to it than just trigger → explosion.

Anger is a normal and important feeling, but whether it becomes a problem depends on

- what you do with anger triggers (match).
- what you think of the situation (the flame)
- whether you're able to get rid of some tension so you can choose how to respond (steam release)
- whether you can express your feelings effectively without being aggressive (lid)
- whether you can think of other ways of dealing with problems (lid)
- your negotiating skills (lid)
- how much anger has built up from previous situations (contents).

Thinking this over, you may realise that you're good at some things and not so good at others. For example, you may be good at 'talking straight', but keep thinking about things in a way that makes you 'full-on' angry. Having some understanding of how anger works for you and how you need to improve things, is a huge step in making changes.



## The Contents

Everyone has stuff inside their pressure cooker.

- The 'stuff' is past events which haven't been sorted out. This could be anything from:
- *fighting with someone an hour ago*
  - *the bus being late in the morning*
  - *watching domestic violence as a kid.*

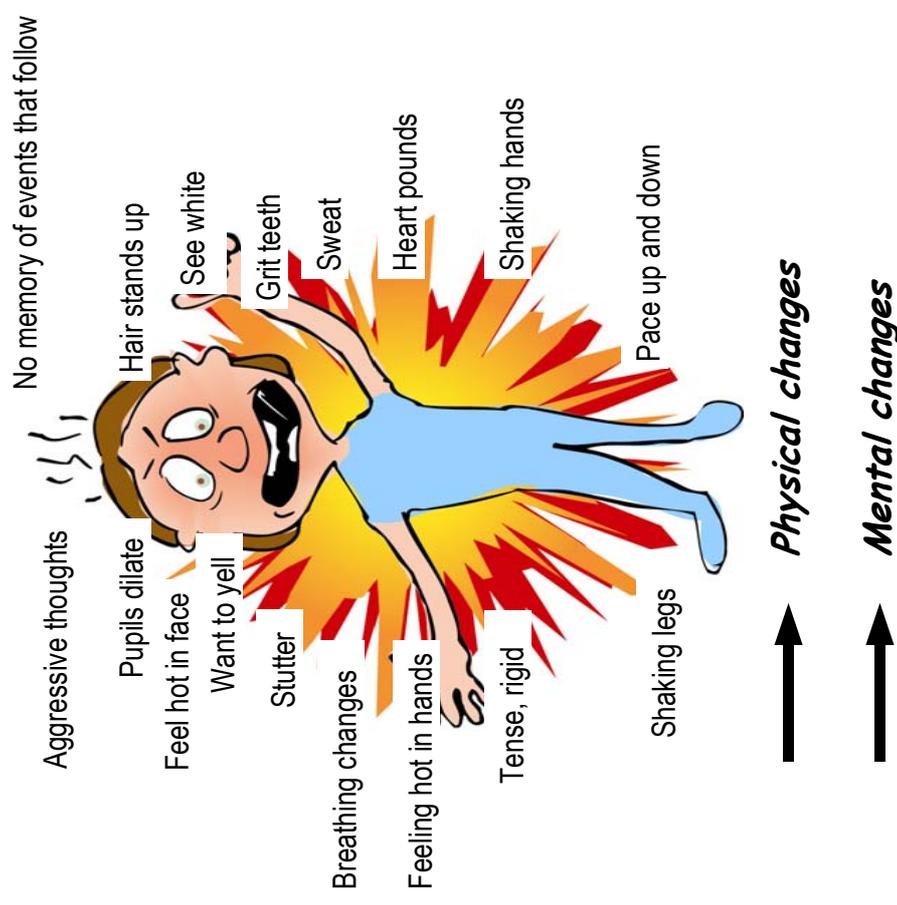
If it's not dealt with, stuff builds up until you're so 'full' you explode really easily.

Try to work out what needs sorting out then use one of the strategies already suggested:

- *let off steam*
- *use straight talk and express your feelings*
- *negotiate*
- *work out the best solution*
- *use cool self-talk.*

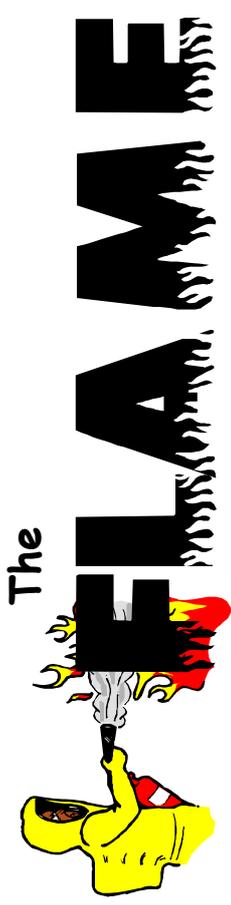
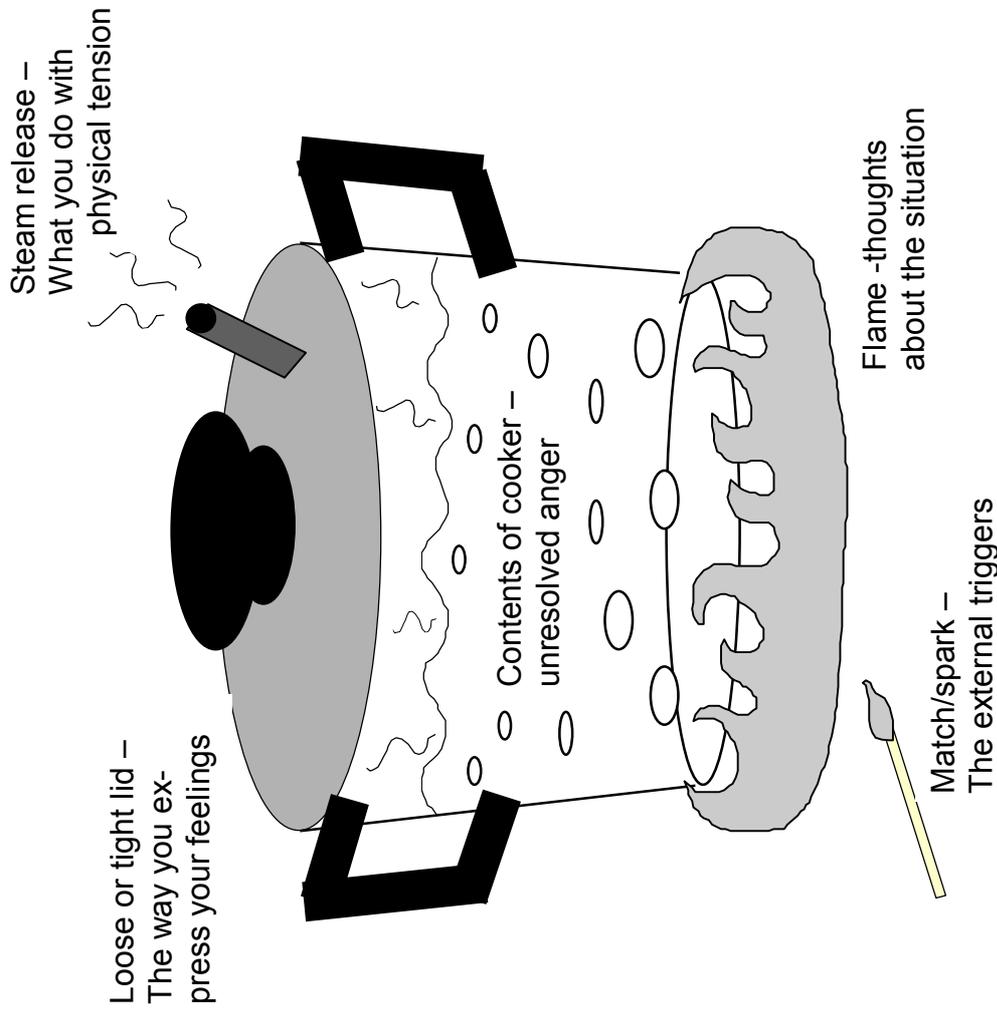
**It may be important to talk things over with a friend or your parents or a counsellor.**

## How do you know when you're angry?



# PRESSURE COOKER of ANGER

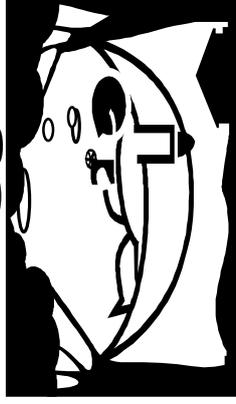
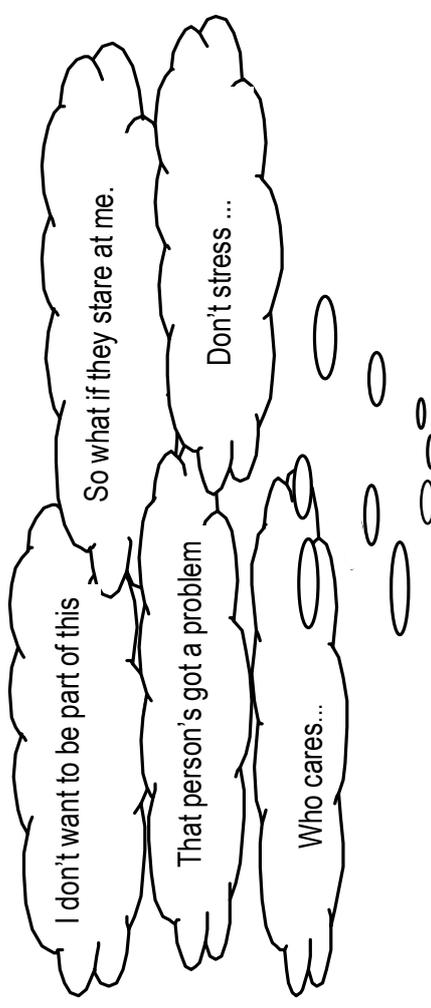
*Understanding the Anger/Aggression Response*



The flame is your angry or aggressive thoughts. Your thoughts (or 'self-talk') make all the difference to how angry you get.

If you want to be cool... **THINK COOL.**  
This is a simple but powerful way of controlling anger and aggression.

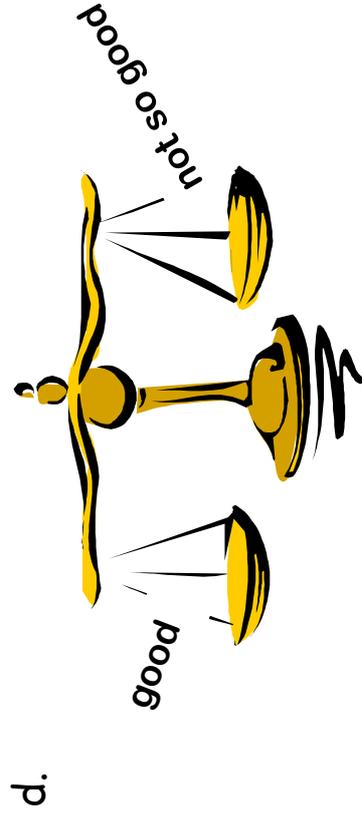
*Some examples:*



## Loosening the Lid

### 4. THINK OF OTHER WAYS OF DEALING WITH EACH PROBLEM

- Think of all your options for the problem.
- Weigh up each option - the good and the not so good things about each.
- Think of the consequences.



### ⇄ ⇄ How a **PRESSURE COOKER** works

The match lights the flame which boils the pot. If you have a very hot flame, lots of stuff in the pot, lid on tight and no steam release, the lid blows off quickly.

The alternative? Put out the match, lower the flame, empty the contents as much as possible, loosen the lid and open the steam release.

### ⇄ ⇄ How **ANGER** and **AGGRESSION** work

Blowing your top when you're angry is a bit like a pressure cooker blowing its lid. You have anger triggers (the matches) which set off angry or aggressive thinking (the flames). If you have left over stuff from the past which is simmering away in the pot, this begins boiling rapidly. If you have no outlet for reducing tension (steam release) and are unable to express your feelings in the right way (tight lid), you're likely to 'blow your top'.



# THE MATCH

The matches or sparks are your external triggers of anger. Everyone's triggers are different.

*Some examples:*

- *Someone puts you down*
- *Someone stares at you*
- *Someone yells at you.*

*Deal with it in two easy steps:*

**1. Get to know your own triggers.**

What, who, when, where?? A 'hassle log' can be useful for this (see back of this booklet).

**2. Put out the spark by**

- avoiding situations or
- preparing for them or
- not getting sucked in by them.



# Loosening the Lid

## 3. NEGOTIATE

If you disagree with someone about something, be assertive and negotiate:

- ASK** for what you want.
- LISTEN** to what they're saying.
- COMPROMISE** if at all possible.
- Make an **AGREEMENT**.





## Loosening the Lid

### 2. BE ASSERTIVE - SAY IT STRAIGHT

Work out whether it's worth saying anything.

Then, if you think it is...



#### The steps for talking straight:

- Describe the situation (eg "When you...").
- State how you feel about it (eg "I feel...").
- Say what you would like to change (eg "I would like you...").
- Say what you will do in return (eg "Then I would...").

#### Be as calm as possible.

Examples:

*"When you keep asking me about my day, I get really annoyed. If you don't ask me I'll try to make an effort to tell you some things."*

*"When you read my diary I feel you're invading my privacy and I get extremely angry. If you're worried about me, just tell me and we'll talk about it."*



The steam release is the way you let go of physical tension. This is the important first step in dealing with anger. The aim is to **COOL DOWN** enough so you can **CHOOSE** how to respond. Everyone's different... What works for you?

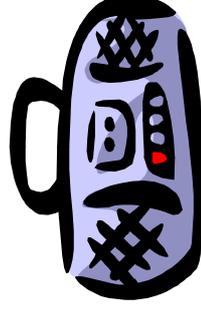
A walk or run?

Deep breathing?

Music?

Time out?

Relaxation?





# The Lid

The 'lid' is how tightly you keep in your feelings. If you hold things in really tight, pressure builds up. Having a 'loose lid' means that you have effective ways of expressing anger and other strong feelings.

## 4 ways to loosen the lid...

1. Be clear on what you're angry about.
  2. Be assertive - say it straight.
  3. Negotiate.
  4. Think of other ways of dealing with problems.
- ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
→ → → →
- These 4 things are explained on the next few pages.*



# Loosening the Lid

## 1. BE CLEAR ON WHAT YOU'RE ANGRY ABOUT

First, ask yourself - is it worth being angry?

It may help you to consider...

### **SOME RIGHTS...**

*The right to make mistakes.*

*The right to privacy.*

*The right to question anything you don't understand.*

*The right to be treated with respect.*

*The right to be listened to.*

### **SOME RESPONSIBILITIES ...**

*The responsibility of owning your feelings.*

*The responsibility to explain yourself if you want to be understood.*

*The responsibility to ask for something if you want it.*

*The responsibility to respect that others have the same rights as you.*



**getting  
along &  
keeping  
cool**

**↳ hassling**

**getting along & keeping cool  
hassle log**

## HASSLE LOG

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened?

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Somebody started fighting with me \_\_\_\_\_  
I did something wrong \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Who was that somebody? \_\_\_\_\_

What were your feelings? angry \_\_\_\_\_ frustrated \_\_\_\_\_ scared \_\_\_\_\_  
shamed-out \_\_\_\_\_ put down \_\_\_\_\_ sad \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do?

hit someone \_\_\_\_\_ breathe deeply \_\_\_\_\_ visualise \_\_\_\_\_  
cried \_\_\_\_\_ count backwards \_\_\_\_\_ ignored \_\_\_\_\_  
yelled \_\_\_\_\_ walked away calmly \_\_\_\_\_ talked to friend \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_  
restrained \_\_\_\_\_ took time out \_\_\_\_\_ was assertive \_\_\_\_\_  
ran away \_\_\_\_\_ used chill-out phrase \_\_\_\_\_ changed thinking \_\_\_\_\_  
broke something \_\_\_\_\_ talked to adult \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What happened next? \_\_\_\_\_

How full-on were your feelings?

1 not at all      2 slightly      3 quite a bit      4 very full-on      5 extremely

How did you handle yourself?

1 poorly      2 not so well      3 okay      4 good      5 great

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How did you handle yourself?

1 poorly      2 not so well      3 okay      4 good      5 great

## HASSLE LOG

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened?

Somebody put me down \_\_\_\_\_  
Somebody yelled at me \_\_\_\_\_  
Somebody told me to do something \_\_\_\_\_  
Somebody was doing something I didn't like \_\_\_\_\_  
Somebody started fighting with me \_\_\_\_\_  
I did something wrong \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Who was that somebody? \_\_\_\_\_

What were your feelings? angry \_\_\_\_\_ frustrated \_\_\_\_\_ scared \_\_\_\_\_  
shamed-out \_\_\_\_\_ put down \_\_\_\_\_ sad \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do?

hit someone \_\_\_\_\_ breathe deeply \_\_\_\_\_ visualise \_\_\_\_\_  
cried \_\_\_\_\_ count backwards \_\_\_\_\_ ignored \_\_\_\_\_  
yelled \_\_\_\_\_ walked away calmly \_\_\_\_\_ talked to friend \_\_\_\_\_ was  
restrained \_\_\_\_\_ took time out \_\_\_\_\_ was assertive \_\_\_\_\_  
ran away \_\_\_\_\_ used chill-out phrase \_\_\_\_\_ changed thinking \_\_\_\_\_  
broke something \_\_\_\_\_ talked to adult \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What happened next? \_\_\_\_\_

How full-on were your feelings?

1 not at all      2 slightly      3 quite a bit      4 very full-on      5 extremely

How did you handle yourself?

1 poorly      2 not so well      3 okay      4 good      5 great