



The Society for Safe & Caring Schools & Communities  
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## ***Supporting a Safe and Caring School— Assembly Script 7 for Secondary Schools***

### *Managing Anger In Ourselves*



#### **Note to Principals:**

These scripts are designed to be used in assemblies as introduction to the topics in the Safe and Caring Schools Program. The Principal takes a key role in delivering the message in the assembly.

Please read over each script before implementing. You are welcome to adapt the script to suit your school audience.

# ***Assembly Script 7—Topic 4A Managing Anger in Ourselves***

## **Objectives**

This assembly script has the following outcomes:

- to develop in students an understanding of anger
- to demonstrate to students one method of managing anger
- to develop students' understanding of anger

## **Materials Required**

- a sound system for CD of music (optional)
- an overhead projector and screen

## ***Introduction***

As students gather for the assembly an appropriate song may be played to introduce this month's topic. The Principal should welcome and greet the students as usual for assemblies.

The Principal should briefly review any activities that the school had last month to recognize the last topic—Preventing Prejudice

**Say: So far this year we have looked at a variety of topics to help us build a safe and caring school community. We began by examining violence and skills for living respectfully. Next, we looked at the topic of self-esteem and talked about how to build our own and others a better self-image. In the last two months we examined the issues of prejudice and the importance of appreciating diversity. For the next two months, we are going to work on two very important skills for building a safe and caring community—managing anger and dealing with bullying behaviour.**

Put up OH 1—Anger

**Say: Anger is a normal part of life, an emotion that arises from various circumstances we encounter. Controlling anger is a skill which we all must learn. It is important to find appropriate and effective ways to express anger.**

**Anger is an emotion. Like any emotion, it has good and bad aspects.**

Put up OH 2 and 3—positive and negative aspects of anger, and go over these.

Another approach might be to have volunteer staff members or student members read out the various points. This gives other voices to the information and may be more entertaining than having the Principal read all the information.

### **Positive Aspects of Anger:**

- **Anger gives us energy—it prepares us for action.**
- **Anger is a cue— it lets us know that a problem exists somewhere.**
- **Anger encourages us to express our feelings and to let off tension**
- **Anger can be a motivator—encouraging us to take action to change ourselves or society for the better.**

### **Negative Aspects of Anger:**

- **Anger is also disruptive—it can cause us not to think clearly and to act impulsively.**
- **Anger can be confusing—if the feelings are too strong we may not be able to figure out where the true problem lies.**
- **Anger can lead to aggression—causing us to behave inappropriately toward others or property.**
- **Anger can separate us from others—leading to avoidance, or intimidation**

### ***Demonstration***

**Say:** To give us an idea of how anger can lead to more problems, watch the following scene.

You will need to have two staff members role play the following situation.

**Parent:** So, how did you do on the exam? Did you get it back today?

**Child:** Yeah!

**Parent:** Yeah what? You got it back or you did OK?

**Child:** I got it back.

**Parent:** AND...what was your mark?

**Child:** 53 percent.

**Parent:** 53! What did I tell you last night? I knew you weren't doing enough homework. Everything else is too important—talking on the phone, hanging around with your friends...How do you ever expect to get into university or college?

**Child:** Oh, shut up! (*storms out throwing a book on the floor*)

**Say:** Obviously, this is a conversation that is not working and is simply resulting in more anger and frustration. For both the parent and the child in this scene, the anger is probably more a result of frustration, worry and feelings of helplessness.

One writer has suggested that, since anger tends to cause us to think less clearly, it helps if we have a process in mind that helps us think through an emotional situation. This is called “I Can Write My Own Script”. We’re going to watch that scene again—this time with two additional actors. One person will explain the steps to “Writing My Own Script” and the other person will explain what the student is thinking as he/she attempts to deal with the conflict.

As the scene is re-enacted with the additional people, it might be helpful if the steps to “I Can Write My Own Script” are displayed on a poster and shown to the audience.

**Parent:** So how did you do on the exam? Did you get it back today?

**Commentator:** Step 1: Recognize your first reaction.

**Child’s Thoughts:** Oh, Oh. He’s not going to be happy with the mark I got. I’m feeling pretty nervous about this.

**Child:** Yeah.

**Parent:** Yeah what? You got it back or you did OK?

**Commentator:** Step 2: Recognize and name your feelings.

**Child’s Thought:** I hate it when he starts nagging like that.

**Child:** I got it back.

**Parent:** AND...what was your mark?

**Commentator:** Step 3: Cue yourself to stop and calm down. Take a deep breath

Step 4: Use positive self talk to calm yourself down.

**Child’s Thought’s:** Okay, he/she’s getting up-tight about this. I can handle this. It’s no big deal. I won’t lose my temper.

**Child:** I didn’t do as well as I hoped. I got a 53 per cent. Looks like you were right when you said I should study more last night.

**Parent:** 53!! Darn right you should have listened! Everything else is so important—friends, MSN, hanging out. How are you going to get into college or university with marks like that...

**Commentator:** Step 5—Take positive action.

**Child:** I'm disappointed too. But, it's only one test. I'm going to get some extra help after school for the next few days and bring up my mark on the next test.

**Commentator:** Step 6: Move on. Let it go. Don't keep revisiting the moment.

*(Parent exits).*

**Commentator:** Step 7: Get rid of leftover anger.

**Child:** Man, that was not fun! Think I'll go listen to some music until we both calm down.

*(Exit)*

**Say:** That's just one example of how managing anger can be done. It's a skill that takes practice—we need to be able to recognize our feelings, cope with them and look for a solution rather than letting impulse take over.

**Your teachers will be going over these steps with you in classes. For the next month, we hope to keep working on developing skills to manage anger.**

Thank the participants and close the assembly according to the usual procedure.

## ***Follow-Up Classroom Activities***

1. “The Apple Cries” activity (attached) is useful for helping students to understand the consequences of anger and hurtful words.
2. Teachers should review the steps to “I Can Write My Own Script”. Handouts and an optional overhead are provided in this package. Teachers may want to make posters of the steps to post in classrooms and guide students through scenarios with the steps on a regular basis.
3. Teachers may go over with students the additional information provided on “The Physiology of Anger” and “Reasons for Anger”. This information is helpful for students to understand why they cannot always think clearly when angry.
4. Teachers may have students examine their own responses to anger by completing the Reflection handout.
5. Teachers could go over with students the examples of positive and negative self-talk and remind students how to use positive self-talk to defuse an angry situation or conflict.

## ***Ideas for Student Leadership Groups***

1. One way of reminding students that anger is a natural emotion that can be managed, is to create a display showing staff members or adults in the school stating what makes them angry and how they manage their anger. Pictures of staff members could be displayed along with their comments. For example, a coach might state that he/she gets angry when he/she feels a ref has made an unfair call. He/she might handle this anger by taking a deep breath, walking away, or positive self-talk.

## ***Role Plays***

### **Role Play 1**

At the end of the day, a parent and child have been catching up on the day. The parent asks the child about an exam he/she had that day.

**Parent:** So, how did you do on that exam? Did you get a mark back?

**Child:** Yeah!

**Parent:** Yeah what? You got it back or you did OK?

**Child:** (sounding angry) I got it back.

**Parent:** AND...what was your mark?

**Child:** (looking down, flat voice) 53 per cent.

**Parent:** 53!! What did I tell you last night? I knew you weren't doing enough homework. Everything else is too important—talking on the phone, hanging around with your friends....How do you ever expect to get into university....?

**Child:** Oh, shut up! (storms out throwing a book on the floor.)

### **Role Play 2**

An adult in a shop is waiting to pay for her purchases. Two clerks are otherwise occupied.

**Customer:** (*Waiting, with less and less patience as clerks chat by a display. Tries to make some noise, sighing and clearing her throat to get attention.*)

**Clerk 1:** So we went to see that new movie last night. It was so cool.

**Clerk 2:** How long were you in line?

**Customer:** (*Tapping her fingernails on the counter, trying to get attention, anger mounting.*)

**Clerk 1:** Well, Jeff got into line right after school was out and I joined him after work.

**Clerk 2:** How could you stand waiting that long?

**Customer:** (*with great sarcasm*) Excuse me for interrupting. I wanted to pay for these towels. (mutters while leaving the store) That's the last time they see me in here!

## ***Activity—The Apple Cries***

This activity is designed to give a strong visual message to students about the effects of anger.

**Materials:** paper bags containing an apple (or Styrofoam Ball) and 6—8 long nails. (Note: You can do this activity in small groups or as a demonstration.)

Hand out paper bags with apples (or Styrofoam Balls) and nails to each group. Tell the group you will read them some statements. When they hear an angry or hurtful statement, they should poke a nail into the apple (ball).

**Say: (use an angry tone). As long as I pay the bills in this house I'll decide how to spend money!**

**Go to your room until you can behave like a decent person!**

**Are you out of your mind! Where did you get such a stupid idea!**

**You can't do anything right!**

**You have let me down again! I can't trust you!**

Next, ask students to suggest positive statements that would heal a person. For every positive statement, they should take a nail out of the apple. If necessary, start with one of your own, such as, "I'm sorry".

## ***Debrief***

Ask students what this activity demonstrates about anger. Some responses that you might guide them to include the following:

- **the effects of anger, like the holes in the apple, cannot be totally erased**
- **the damage is not only on the surface, but deeper inside**
- **the nails, like anger, could be used for something useful, but here they are only used to damage**
- **we could repair the damage—cover the holes—but the apple will not be as strong**

Remind students that we often do not see the damage we cause when we say or do hurtful things. The old rhyme "Sticks and stones can break my bones/But names can never hurt me" is not really accurate. A better rhyme might be: "Sticks and stones may break my bones/But cruel words leave holes in souls."

## **Activity—I Can Write My Own Script**

The lines following each step are for your own reflection and application of the steps.

### **Step 1: Recognize your first response.**

Impulse: I feel like doing...(what?) What is your first reaction to the situation?

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### **Step 2: Recognize and name your feelings.**

Emotion: I feel

People may know how to recognize anger, but not the primary emotion that triggers the anger. Is it fright, frustration, humiliation, hurt, guilt, anxiety, embarrassment, sadness, disappointment, confusion, fear, helplessness?

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### **Step 3: Cue yourself to stop and calm down.**

Cue: Develop a verbal or visual signal to remind yourself to calm down.

Take deep breaths.

Relax your muscles.

Roll your neck.

Stretch.

Tense and relax body parts.

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**Step 4: Use positive self-talk.**

I can handle this. I can solve this. I know how to deal with this.

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**Step 5: Take action;**

*Defuse* the situation; *Confront* the situation assertively but not aggressively; *Disengage* (walk away)

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**Step 6: Move on.**

Be curious—Why would he behave that way?

Stay gentle—I guess we all have bad days.

He/She is not yelling at me, they are yelling for themselves.

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**Step 7: Get rid of leftover anger.**

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# About Anger

Take a moment to think about your answers to the following questions. Then, share your responses, first with a partner and then with the whole group.

(1) What makes you angry? Describe a recent situation in which you became angry. OR Describe a situation you witnessed in which a person reacted with anger.

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(2) What happened as a result of the anger? Were these results positive or negative?

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(3) What are your strengths when you are angry?

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(4) What are your weaknesses when you are angry?

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## ***Negative Self-Talk***

### **Over-reacting:**

He has no right....  
Who does she think she is?  
I'll show you.....

### **Frightened:**

I can't handle this!  
I'm going to get...  
What if I'm wrong?

### **Victim:**

Why do I always....?  
Nobody ever...  
Here I go again.  
No matter what I do...

### **Fix it:**

I have to do something...  
How can I make him happy?  
Hurry up, think of something!

### **Blaming:**

He's a fool/jerk/idiot!  
How immature!  
Don't blame me...

## ***Positive Self-Talk***

I can handle this...

I have the skills...

I know what to do...

Stop and think.

I am the adult here...

I need to listen...

He is not yelling at me, he is yelling at the problem.

She is really upset. I better be the calm one.

This is not about me. It's about the situation.

## ***Personal Reflection***

Some of the negative self-talk I use is:

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I could use more positive self-talk when I am angry or frustrated by saying:

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## ***Anger is...***

- Anger is an ENERGIZER.
- Anger is INFORMATIVE.
- Anger releases FEELINGS and STRESS.
- Anger can MOTIVATE

## ***BUT...***

Anger is DISRUPTIVE.

Anger is CONFUSING.

Anger can lead to AGGRESSION.

Anger is ISOLATING.

Anger management, like all skills, requires practice.

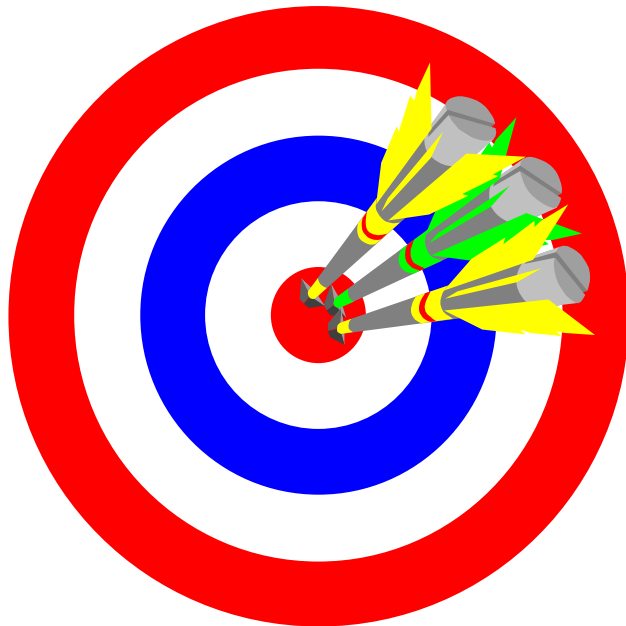
There may be gender differences in the way we manage anger. Girls tend to be given permission to express feelings. Boys are often encouraged to keep feelings inside.

Anger is influenced by our surroundings (at home, school or work), the circumstances and the other people involved.

## ***Positive Aspects of Anger***

### ***Anger is:***

- **an energizer (prepares us for action)**
- **an informer (cues us that a problem exists.)**
- **a helper (encourages us to express tension and feelings)**
- **a motivator (encourages us to take action or to take charge of ourselves or a situation)**
- **Anger can lead to positive personal and social change.**



## ***Negative Aspects of Anger***

### ***Anger***

- **disrupts our thoughts and actions (too much adrenaline results in confusion or impulsive action)**
- **prevents us from recognizing our true feelings and dealing with the problem that caused those feelings**
- **leads to aggression. We may take out our anger inappropriately on people or things.**
- **separates us from other people. We may be feared or avoided.**

## ***I Can Write My Own Script***

- 1. Recognize your first reaction**
- 2. Recognize and Name your feelings.**
- 3. Cue yourself to stop and calm down.**
- 4. Use positive self-talk.**
- 5. Take positive action**
  - **Defuse the situation**
  - **Confront (act assertively, not aggressively, to handle the situation)**
  - **Disengage**
- 6. Move on**
- 7. Get rid of leftover anger.**

## ***Reasons for Anger***

**Anger is a secondary emotion which flows out of feelings of:**

- **fear**
- **frustration**
- **humiliation**
- **guilt**
- **anxiety**
- **embarrassment**
- **sadness**
- **disappointment**
- **confusion**
- **weakness/helplessness**

**Anger results in less ability to reason and solve problems.**

## ***The Physiology of Anger***

- **Blood leaves the brain and rushes to the large muscles to prepare for “fight or flight”.**
- **Heart rate doubles.**
- **Peripheral vision becomes less.**
- **Hearing may be blocked by pounding in the ears.**
- **Voice changes**
- **It takes 90 minutes to “cool down”—to get rid of the hormones released into the body.**
- **Rate of metabolism increases in preparation for action.**