

## Description

Students identify a range of coping strategies that are useful to deal with anger and other stressful emotions, and practise using these strategies in a range of scenarios.

## Learning focus

Recognising physical signs of anger in self and others, and practising coping strategies to calm themselves in stressful situations.

## Key understandings

- It is important to find a safe way to express our anger so that it doesn't hurt others.
- There are things we can do when others are angry.
- There are people who can help us when we feel angry or stressed.
- Sometimes friends disagree and have different opinions, thoughts and ideas.
- People do not always get along.

## Materials

- Teaching Resource: *Coping responses cards* [one set per group]

## Before you get started

- Ensure [ground rules](#) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.
- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting technique](#), and what, why, when and how it is needed and used, before facilitating this activity.
- It is important for the teacher to consider the range of parenting styles, family contexts and cultural backgrounds students may be influenced by. Not all family structures encourage or model values such as respect.

## Learning activities

### Whole Class

Students identify scenarios that make them angry and consider useful and not useful coping strategies.

1. Discuss the internal and external signals in our bodies that let us know we are angry or 'out of control'.

# Coping strategies

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2. Use a [fist of five](#) strategy where five fingers is 'extremely angry' and a fist is 'not angry at all'. Students vote on how angry the following situations would make them feel. Allow time between each statement for students to observe that different students have different votes for the same situation.

How angry do you feel when:

- *other kids won't let you join in their game?*
- *someone breaks one of your special toys?*
- *something gets cancelled when you were really looking forward to it?*
- *you aren't allowed to watch TV or go on the computer?*
- *someone pushes or hits you?*
- *someone calls you a mean name?*
- *you get into trouble for something you haven't done?*
- *you want something at the shops but mum or dad says no?*

3. Discuss other feelings that may result from these situations: sad, lonely, frustrated. Emphasise that it helps to talk to an adult you trust when you have these feelings.
4. Explain that having ways to stay calm and in control when you are angry, stops you from doing and saying things that might hurt someone else and helps you think before you act.
5. Ask students to suggest some situations where they have been angry or stressed or 'out of control'.
- Have students form small groups and assign an appropriate situation to each group.
  - Distribute a set of cards from Teaching Resource: *Coping responses cards*.
  - Using a T chart titled 'useful' and 'not useful' have students place each strategy under the heading they think best describes it.
  - Have students share findings to understand that different situations require different coping strategies.
6. Ask:
- *What does feeling angry help us understand about what is happening to us? (that we might need to talk to someone about a problem; that we may be being treated unkindly or unfairly)*
  - *What are some coping skills that were 'useful' for every group? What does this tell us? (these would be useful skills to put in our backpack and practise lots)*
  - *What are some coping skills that were 'not useful' for every group? What does this tell us? (these would not be useful skills to put in our backpack and if we use them lots now we might need to think of using some new coping skills)*

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- *What are some good things to do if a friend is getting angry with you? (walk away, find something else to do, apologise if you really have done something to make them angry, don't hit them or call them mean names, ask someone for help, ask them 'Is there a problem?')*

### Independent or Small Group

Students practise using useful coping strategies in a range of scenarios where they may feel angry or 'out of control'.

1. Reinforce the idea that being in control of your anger helps you feel calmer and confident, and helps you think of what to do next. It also helps you stay friends with people around you. Revise the internal and external signals for feeling angry.
2. Ask:
  - *Why do you think some people hit and kick or say mean things when they are angry? (it's the first thing their brain tells them to do; they don't know what else to do)*
  - *What are some useful ways of staying calm and in control when you feel angry? (see previous activity)*
  - *What things do people say or do that tell us they are angry? (yell in a loud voice, hit or throw things, frown, walk away from us)*
  - *What can you do if someone around you is getting angry? (not yell in a loud voice back at them, not hit or throw things back at them, walk away, do something else, find a safe place to go, find an older person who can help you, apologise if something you have done has made them feel angry)*
3. Place the Teaching Resource: *Coping responses cards* on the floor. Model using some of the useful coping skills (e.g. ask an adult for help; count to ten slowly) by [role-playing](#) some of the following scenarios:
  - You want to play with some girls who are kicking a soccer ball. When you go to play with them, one of the girls shouts mean names at you and says you can't play. You feel angry.
  - You are carrying some paints back to the shelf where they are kept. You trip and tip the paints out on the floor. The teacher shouts at you and says you are very careless. You feel angry.
  - You brought a Lego model to school to present for news. You put it on your desk and your friend accidentally knocks it off and it broke. You feel angry.
  - You eat curries that your mum makes for you for lunch. Your friends say that your food smells and won't sit next to you at lunch. You feel angry and sad.
4. Repeat modelling the role-play using a coping response that is not useful (e.g. yell and scream, cry a lot). Discuss the effect that a useful coping skill has on the user and also on the people around the person who feels angry.

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5. In groups or as a whole class, use guided role-play. Have students pick what they think is a useful coping skill from cards (displayed on floor) for each scenario and practise using this skill in a role play.
  - Process the role-play by discussing the feelings students experienced while role-playing; how effective their chosen skill was; what skill students think they could personally use in real life situations.
  - Ensure students understand that the same skill may not work in each situation and that they need to have a collection of useful coping skills to use when they feel angry.

### Reflection

1. Students copy the useful coping skills they like best onto a sheet or computer program titled: 'Clever ways to be boss of my anger'.
2. Students take home and share with their family. Suggest they put the sheet on the fridge to remind them to practise the useful coping skills at home.

### Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

#### Teaching resources

[Coping responses cards](#)

### Date printed

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