

ADOLESCENT TRAINING - ILLNESS PHASE  
(HRA PROJECT)

SESSION 7: WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT FEELING ANGRY?

(Day 4, Morning. Two hours in length.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youths will increase their skills in managing anger.
2. Youths will understand the meaning of their anger.
3. Youths will accept their anger as a typical response.
4. Youths will identify other feelings which are also present in anger situations.

RATIONALE:

The first session on anger focused on identifying, accepting and expressing angry feelings. While some approaches for coping with anger were introduced - relaxation, the two-chair techniques, and distraction - there was not enough time to practice other ways of dealing with it.

This session provides a number of ways of handling angry feelings. Through role playing helping a friend there is an opportunity to consolidate what has been learned. Additionally it is assumed that are other feelings present in angry situations. These feelings are often masked by the angry ones, and being able to experience some of those other feelings may make it easier to cope with the anger and not be so overwhelmed by it.

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce the participants and the session. Give out Strokes, review goals and do a lottery. (15 minutes)
2. Review various approaches for dealing with anger and practice them. (30 minutes)
3. Use the two chair approach to locate other feelings which are aroused in an anger situation. (20 minutes)
4. Have the youths write a letter to their mothers about their feelings. (15 minutes)
5. Role play helping a friend deal with angry feelings. (20 minutes)
6. Do a relaxation sequence. (10 minutes)
7. End with exploring goal setting and group appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Strokes

Lottery tickets

Lottery prizes

Paper and pencils

Scripts: Complaining - Version 1 & 2, To the Store.

Exercise 1: What's Been Happening?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to increase self esteem, build group cohesion, and reinforce being present. It is assumed that the introductions, reporting on goals and achievements, and doing a lottery will assist in serving the session's purpose.]**

Welcome to the workshop.

I'm pleased to see you here and appreciate your being on time.

Let's begin with a lottery.

PASS OUT LOTTERY TICKETS.

Here is a lottery ticket.

Write your name on it and put in the bowl.

HAVE SOMEONE MIX THEM, DRAW ONE, AND GIVE OUT THE LOTTERY PRIZE.

Please start this afternoon's session with telling us your first name and complete this sentence, "I am a good person because...."

For example, someone might say, "I am Martina, and I am a good person because I care for other people."

To show you what I mean I'll start.

My first name is ..... and I am a good person because .....

HAVE EACH YOUTH GIVE HIS/HER FIRST NAME AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCE "I AM A GOOD PERSON BECAUSE\_\_\_\_\_."

Thank you.

That was great.

Here are some Strokes for everyone.

HAND OUT 20 STROKES TO EACH PERSON.

Remember to give out Strokes whenever you hear someone say something that you like or do something you like or just for being here.

Everyone had a goal he or she was going to accomplish by today.

Let's hear what happened.

GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH PERSON REPORT ON HIS/HER EXPERIENCE MEETING THE GOAL THAT HAD BEEN SET. COACH AND USE BRAINSTORMING ON OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED. GIVE OUT STROKES.

Today we are going to continue working on irritation and anger.

Last time we identified these kinds of feelings, learned that having them was OK, and practiced expressing them.

Today we will learn more about how to deal with angry feelings.

Exercise 2: What Can I Do With My Angry Feelings?  
(30 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to identify ways to handle angry feelings toward one's mother who is living with AIDS. Building a group list of techniques and practicing changing the meaning are all assumed to contribute to achieving the purpose.]**

There are going to be times when you and your mother are in conflict, and you might feel irritated with her.

In conflict situations you will need to work out a solution with her, and that means talking to her about how you feel.

We will practice that in a later session.

There are other times when your feelings of anger come from the fact that she has AIDS and that her having AIDS is changing your life.

In those situations you will need to find ways to handle how you feel without talking to her.

Let's make a list of some ways that have worked for many people in dealing with anger and irritation.

WRITE "TAKE YOUR MIND OFF IT" ON NEWSPRINT.

What are some ways you could take your mind off your angry feelings?

I would like each person to give me a personal example of how you would take your mind off feeling anger.

GO AROUND THE ROOM. ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. GIVE PROMPTS TO PULL IDEAS OUT.

IF NO ONE COMES UP WITH AN IDEA, START THE SUGGESTIONS WITH "GO PLAY BASKETBALL." EXAMPLES OF OTHER IDEAS ARE TAKE A WALK, SEE A MOVIE, WATCH TV, PLAY A VIDEO GAME, GO TO A PARTY. PUT THE IDEAS ON NEWSPRINT. ENCOURAGE SHARING AND GIVE OUT STROKES.

What are some ways you could get release from the anger through support from other people?

WRITE "SUPPORT" ON NEWSPRINT.

ENCOURAGE RESPONSE. GIVE PROMPTS TO PULL IDEAS OUT.

IF NO ONE COMES UP WITH AN IDEA, START THE SUGGESTIONS FLOWING WITH "TELL A CLOSE FRIEND HOW YOU FEEL." EXAMPLES OF OTHER IDEAS ARE TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST LIKE A TEACHER, COACH, PRIEST, MINISTER, OLDER RELATIVE, OR COUNSELOR AT AN AIDS PROJECT. JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP FOR TEENAGERS WHOSE MOTHERS HAVE AIDS. PUT THE IDEAS ON NEWSPRINT. GIVE OUT STROKES.

What could you do to reduce your anger and tension through relaxation?

WRITE "RELAXATION" ON NEWSPRINT.

ENCOURAGE RESPONSE. GIVE PROMPTS TO PULL IDEAS OUT.

IF NO ONE HAS AN IDEA, START THE IDEAS FLOWING WITH "TAKE SOME DEEP BREATHS." EXAMPLES OF OTHER IDEAS ARE TENSE AND THEN RELEASE YOUR MUSCLES, IMAGINE YOURSELF AWAY AT A PLACE YOU LIKE - THE BEACH, WATCH THE SUNSET. WRITE THE IDEAS ON NEWSPRINT. ENCOURAGE IDEAS THAT ARE RELAXING AND GIVE OUT STROKES.

Who is brave enough to lead us through a relaxation sequence that he or she makes up as we go along?

You have been doing it for a number of sessions - now lead us through one of your own.

ENCOURAGE SOMEONE TO LEAD THE GROUP THROUGH THEIR OWN RELAXATION EXERCISE.

Thank you - that was great!

GIVE OUT A STROKE TO THE YOUTH.

Another way to deal with angry feelings that come up in a situation between two people is to put yourself in the other person's shoes.

WRITE "PUT SELF IN OTHER PERSON'S SHOES" ON NEWSPRINT.

If you see the situation from the other person's point of view, it can help you deal with your feelings.

Let's do two quick versions of the same scene.

Who will play the mother and who will play the teenager?

SELECT VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH PART. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPTS AND HAVE THEM READ VERSION #1 TO THE GROUP.

Listen carefully and see which teenager puts himself or herself more in the mother's shoes.

COMPLAINING: VERSION 1

MOTHER: Get me a pillow. My back is killing me.

TEENAGER: Oh, all right.

MOTHER: I'm sorry to be complaining all the time, but everything seems to bother me.

TEENAGER: Why can't you just ignore everything?

MOTHER: I wish I could, but being sick like this is really getting to me.

TEENAGER: Maybe you should make another appointment with the doctor.

MOTHER: What's she going to do for me? Those doctors don't know what they're doing.

TEENAGER: Complaining again.

END

Now, here we go with the second version.

Please read the parts again.

COMPLAINING: VERSION 2

MOTHER: Get me a pillow. My back is killing me.

TEENAGER: It really hurts.

MOTHER: It sure does, but it sounds like I am complaining all the time.

TEENAGER: You don't like complaining.

MOTHER: No! I'm sure you must get tired of it. Who wants to be around someone who's moaning and groaning all the time? But it makes me feel better to talk about what bothers me.

TEENAGER: Get it off your chest.

MOTHER: I complain to you because..... I don't know. You seem to get the idea. I wouldn't be doing it to everyone. Does it bother you?

TEENAGER: Sometimes it does. But I just try to listen.

THE END

OK. Which teenager was more able to put himself or herself in the mother's shoes and why?

What did that teenager do differently?

ENCOURAGE OPINIONS AND DISCUSSION. LOOK FOR BETTER LISTENING AND FEEDING BACK WHAT THE MOTHER FELT AND THOUGHT IN THE SECOND VERSION. ACTIVE LISTENING TAKES THE DISTANCE OUT AND ALLOWS THE TEENAGER TO GET INSIDE THE MOTHER'S SKIN. ALSO NOT GIVING ADVICE.

That was very good.

Let's move to another approach to handling anger.

WRITE "LEAVE THE SCENE" ON NEWSPRINT.

Some times just getting out of there can be an effective way of handling angry feelings.

The next one is a little more complicated.

WRITE "CHANGE THE MEANING" ON NEWSPRINT.

How could you change the meaning of the situation?

Here's an example.

My mother starts telling me all her troubles.

I feel annoyed and say to myself, "Why is she dumping all this on me?"

If I think to myself, "Well, maybe she thinks I am old enough and strong enough to help her" then I have changed the meaning of the situation, and my feelings of anger might shift also.

Let's work on changing the meaning for a few minutes.

DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO TWO PERSON TEAMS.

I will describe some angry feelings and thoughts.

You tell me another way to look at the situation which might change its meaning for you.

ONE BY ONE GIVE THE TEAMS A SITUATION AND HAVE THEM RESPOND TO IT. COACH IF NECESSARY. GIVE OUT STROKES. THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. You are planning to go out. Your mother tells you she isn't feeling well and wants you stay home. You feel angry that you can't go out. What could you say to yourself to change how you see this situation?

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE: She took care of me many times when I was sick. I can go out another time. She's not trying to deprive me. She just feels scared.

2. You overhear someone pointing toward you and saying to another person, "His mother has AIDS." You feel annoyed at her because people are talking about you. What could you say to yourself to change how you see this situation?

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE: They are the ones who have a problem. She didn't choose to get AIDS. It's not a shame to get AIDS.

3. Your mother's sometime boy friend comes to the apartment. He is an IV drug user. You are pretty sure he gave your mother AIDS. You feel angry at her for letting herself get AIDS from a creep like him. What could you say to yourself to change how you see this situation?

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE: She didn't get AIDS on purpose. She probably feels terrible about it herself. He probably lied to her. She's vulnerable like everybody else. Blame him. He wouldn't have given it to her if he had know he had it. Maybe she didn't know enough about AIDS at the time.

4. Your mother tells you that she is going to find someone to take care of you after she is gone. You feel angry at her. You don't want to live with somebody else. What could you say to yourself to change how you see this situation?

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE: She thinks she is doing the right thing. I don't have to like it. What choice has she got? She has to do what she thinks best. It will make her feel good to know her kids are taken care of.

That was very good.

Exercise 3: What Other Feelings Did I Have?  
(20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is bring into awareness other feelings that were present in the anger situation. Integrating these feelings can change the experience of the anger and make it easier to deal with. Using a two-chair exercise is the approach taken.]**

Often the feelings of anger are so strong that the person doesn't recognize there were other feelings present besides the anger.

Once the person becomes aware of these other feelings, the angry experience can change.

Listen to this dialogue and see if you can detect other feelings in the daughter, Mary.

SELECT TWO VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL READ EACH PART. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT AND HAVE THEM READ IT ALOUD. IF NO ONE IN THE GROUP CAN READ ADEQUATELY TO DO THE SCRIPT, THE FACILITATORS WILL PLAY THE PARTS.

TO THE STORE

MOTHER: Go the store. There's a list of groceries on the kitchen table.

MARY: You're always telling me what to do. It pisses me off.

MOTHER: Well, what am I supposed to do - fly down there?

MARY: For once, why don't you ask me nicely instead of ordering me around.

MOTHER: OK, Miss Princess, I beg of you to get me some groceries.

MARY: Seeing as you can't walk down the stairs and back up, I'll get them for you.

MOTHER: God, I wish I had the energy to go down and get them myself.

MARY: Mom, where's the money?

THE END

Thank you for the acting.

GIVE THE PLAYERS STROKES.

What feelings besides anger do you think Mary might have felt and not recognized?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. LOOK FOR FEELING SORRY BECAUSE HER MOTHER WAS SO HELPLESS, FEELING GUILT, FEELING COMPASSION, FEELING FEAR OVER HER MOTHER'S CONDITION.

We are going to use two chairs again.

Pretend that your mother is sitting in the other chair.

Start off by telling her your feelings of irritation in a particular situation that really got to you, and then see if any other feelings toward her come to you.

Tell her about those other feelings as well.

Has everyone got the idea?

CLARIFY THE EXERCISE.

Who will go first?

GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH PERSON USE THE TWO CHAIRS AND TELL HER/HIS MOTHER NOT ONLY ABOUT FEELINGS OF ANGER BUT OTHER FEELINGS THAT CAME UP ALSO. THE POINT IS TO EXPERIENCE THE TOTAL SITUATION WITH ALL THE FEELINGS THAT WERE THERE - NOT JUST IRRITATION. BY DOING THIS THE ANGER MAY CHANGE TO SOME DEGREE AND MAY BE EASIER TO LET GO OF.

That was very good.

How did you feel doing that exercise?

ENCOURAGE SHARING.

Exercise 4: What Can I Say To My Mother?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to provide an opportunity for teenagers to express understanding and sympathy toward their mothers. Writing a letter to their mothers is the approach used to achieve this end.]**

We have been exploring feelings of irritation around your mothers' having AIDS.

Now we want to give you a chance to express your understanding of her situation - your concern, your affection.

I would like you to write a letter to your mother.

You won't mail the letter to her or show the letter to others; so, it doesn't matter how neat it is.

In what you write, try to show her that you understand something of what she must be going through.

Share with her those feelings that you want to reveal.

PASS OUT PAPER AND PENCILS TO EVERYONE. ALLOW 8 MINUTES FOR LETTER WRITING.

Using the comfort scale on the Feeling Thermometer, what did you feel when you wrote the letter to your mother?

ENCOURAGE SHARING OF TEMPERATURE READINGS.

If anyone wants to read her or his letter that is fine.

ENCOURAGE SHARING. IF SOMEONE SPONTANEOUSLY ASKS TO READ HER/HIS LETTER, LET THE YOUTHS READ AS MANY LETTERS AS TIME PERMITS.

Exercise 5: How Can I Put It All Together?  
(20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to consolidate and apply what has been learned about dealing with anger in this situation. Role playing is used.]**

Now let's do a role play which allows you to demonstrate what you have learned about dealing with anger in this situation.

Who will play the teenager whose mother has AIDS?

SELECT A VOLUNTEER.

Who will play the teenager's two friends?

SELECT TWO VOLUNTEERS TO PLAY THE FRIENDS.

Here are your instructions.

The teenager whose mother has AIDS is very annoyed with her for getting infected.

You don't like all these angry feelings toward her that you are carrying around.

Ask your friends what to do with these angry feelings.

You two friends are to help him/her handle the angry feelings.

The rest of us will watch the scene.

GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OBSERVERS.

Each observer has a special task.

You pay attention to their facial expressions  
eye contact  
gestures  
posture  
voice  
breathing  
words

Go ahead and play the scene.

ALLOW THE SCENE TO GO FOR NO MORE THAT 10 MINUTES BEFORE STOPPING IT. GIVE OUT STROKES TO THE PLAYERS.

Thanks. That was really good!

First I want to ask the teenager - How do you feel now?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Now for the helpers - How do you feel and what one thing that you did do you like and one what thing would you do differently?

OBTAIN RESPONSES.

Let's ask the observers.

What one did you see the helpers do that you liked and what one thing would you have done differently?

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION. IF THERE IS ENOUGH TIME, DO A SECOND ROLE PLAY WITH THE YOUTH ANGRY AT HIS FATHER. LET THE YOUTH DECIDE ON WHAT THE REASONS ARE FOR HIS/HER ANGER.

I hope that everyone has an idea of how to handle angry feelings.

Exercise 6: How Can I Relax After Strong Feelings?  
(10 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to help the youths feel calm and peaceful. Going through a relaxation sequence is the chosen technique.]**

We have been working on some difficult feelings.

They can churn us up.

So, it is time to relax.

Sit back comfortably in your chair. PAUSE.

Take a deep breath and let it slowly. PAUSE.

Take another one, and only pay attention to breath coming out.

Let it out very slowly. PAUSE.

Breathe out slowly. PAUSE.

Again, breathe out slowly. PAUSE.

Now pay attention to your breath.

Don't try to change it - just watch it. LONG PAUSE.

Bring your shoulders up to your ears, squeeze them tightly, PAUSE.

And let them drop down.

Let your head and neck roll around on your shoulders. PAUSE.

Feel the tension spin from your head and neck and flow out of your finger tips. PAUSE.

Now let your imagination take over.

It is a comfortable summer night.

You are in a safe place, lying on your back looking up at the stars. PAUSE.

The night is quiet. PAUSE.

The soft breeze gently brushes your face. PAUSE.

Feel its gentleness. PAUSE.

The night sky is clear and dark. PAUSE.

The stars are so very bright. PAUSE.

See them stretching as far as you can see.

You look at the first star you saw tonight and say

"Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight."

Then you make a wish. LONG PAUSE.

All above you the stars shine brightly. PAUSE.

They seem so close that you could touch them. PAUSE.

Reach out your hand to touch them. PAUSE.

Suddenly you see a shooting star and your heart beats with excitement. PAUSE.

Now you feel calm again - so calm and at peace. PAUSE.

The sky and the stars seem to go on forever. PAUSE.

They seem to stretch beyond your imagination and into the unknown.

You lie quietly watching the heavens. LONG PAUSE.

You feel like you and the stars are one. PAUSE.

Your mind is clear. PAUSE.

You are at peace. LONG PAUSE.

It is time to come inside.

Yawn and stretch. PAUSE.

Yawn and stretch.

Exercise 7: How Do We End This Session?  
(10 minutes)

**[The purpose of the exercise to bring a sense of closure to the session and to build both individual self-esteem and group cohesion. Summarizing and showing appreciation to each other is the principal way of doing that.]**

This morning we worked on ways to handle constructively angry feelings toward your mothers because they have AIDS.

The main points were that these feelings are natural and expected.

And that something can be done about them.

At the end of the afternoon session you will be asked to set a goal to accomplish between meetings.

You choose a goal from this session on anger or this afternoon's session on setting up a positive atmosphere at home.

A couple of ideas of goals from this morning might be to practice relaxation twice during the week for five minutes each time, to have one conversation with the empty chair, or to write a letter when you feel angry and not mail it.

What are some of your ideas for goals that you might want to work on?

ENCOURAGE BRAINSTORMING OF IDEAS FOR GOALS.

Those were some good ideas.

As we are at the end of the morning's session it is time to show appreciation to each other.

You can appreciate what someone said or did, the clothes a person is wearing, their style or simply that he or she showed up this morning.

By the end of the session it is good not to have any Strokes left in your hand.

HAVE PARTICIPANTS SHOW APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER. MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS INCLUDED.

I really enjoyed working with you this morning.

Have a nice lunch, and I'll see you later.

THE END OF SESSION 3

COMPLAINING: VERSION 1

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TEENAGER: Oh, all right.

MOTHER: I'm sorry to be complaining all the time, but everything seems to bother me.

TEENAGER: Why can't you just ignore everything?

MOTHER: I wish I could, but being sick like this is really getting to me.

TEENAGER: Maybe you should make another appointment with the doctor.

MOTHER: What's she going to do for me? Those doctors don't know what they're doing.

TEENAGER: Complaining again.

END

COMPLAINING: VERSION 2

MOTHER: Get me a pillow. My back is killing me.

TEENAGER: It really hurts.

MOTHER: It sure does, but it sounds like I am complaining all the time.

TEENAGER: You don't like complaining.

MOTHER: No! I'm sure you must get tired of it. Who wants to be around someone who's moaning and groaning all the time? But it makes me feel better to talk about what bothers me.

TEENAGER: Get it off your chest.

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MARY: Mom, where's the money?

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