



# GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

## Family Guide: Session 3



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## SESSION 3.

# Managing Conflict: How to Deal With Your Anger in a Positive Way

## Objectives

Parents will learn why it's important to manage family conflict. You'll learn and practice two skills: Controlling anger and expressing anger in a positive way. You'll also learn how to hold a family meeting on managing conflict.

## Contents

### WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- ▶ Why it's important to manage family conflict.
- ▶ The steps for expressing anger.

### WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- ▶ Review the family meeting from Session 2 on setting family guidelines.
- ▶ Demonstrate how to control anger so it can be expressed in a positive way.
- ▶ Hold a family meeting on managing family conflict.

### WORKSHEETS & INFORMATION:

- ▶ STARR: Five Steps for Controlling Anger
- ▶ Anger Thermometer
- ▶ FEWW: Four Steps for Expressing Anger Constructively
- ▶ Anger: A Past Event and Future Plan
- ▶ Family Meeting Agenda: Managing Family Conflict

### NOTES PAGE

## Online Resources

### ▶ FAMILY ACTIVITY IDEAS

#### Risk Factors Addressed:

- ▶ Family management problems
- ▶ Family conflict
- ▶ Rebelliousness

#### Protective Factors Addressed:

- ▶ Social and emotional competence
- ▶ Self-efficacy
- ▶ Positive norms
- ▶ Opportunities for positive involvements
- ▶ Recognition for positive behavior
- ▶ Bonding to positive influences



## HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR ANGER IN A POSITIVE WAY

# STARR: FIVE STEPS FOR CONTROLLING ANGER

**Controlling anger, unlike other skills, is a “self-talk” skill. Self-talk is the way we communicate with ourselves—the directions we give ourselves in our minds.**

Controlling anger involves giving ourselves new directions. With practice, the new directions will become automatic.

### 1. **STOP**

*“I’m getting angry.”*

Be aware of your anger symptoms (signs). Does your voice rise? Do you feel hot? Do you breathe faster? Do your temples throb? Do you just want to be alone?

### 2. **THINK about what could happen if you lose control.**

*“If I lose control...”*

Have you felt bad for acting in an angry way? How did it make your child—or other family members—feel? Think about those times. It could help put the brakes on your anger.

### 3. **ASK yourself what you want to happen here.**

*“I really want...”*

Ask yourself, “What do I want my child to learn from this situation?” and, “What do I want--and expect--from myself as a parent?”

### 4. **REDUCE the anger.**

*“I need to cool down. I’m going to...”*

Ways to pressure down include taking deep breaths, counting to 10, lying down and visualizing something relaxing, exercising, calling a friend, and doing a chore.

### 5. **REWARD yourself.**

*“I did a good job. I’m going to...”*

Controlling your anger helps keep family bonds strong. Treat yourself to something fun!



# Anger Thermometer

Put a star next to the level of anger where you are too upset to express your feelings constructively. Learn to never confront your child at this point.

## Level of Anger

## Your Symptoms

Over the Edge

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Anger Sets In

---

Major Aggravation

---

Minor Aggravation

---

All is Well

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## Anger Thermometer

Use the Anger Thermometer above to take the temperature of your own anger signals. Fill in the physical signs of your rising anger, and the point where you risk losing control. See the previous page...



## FEWW: FOUR STEPS FOR EXPRESSING ANGER CONSTRUCTIVELY

Once we have ourselves under control, we can learn to express our anger constructively so that we can keep our bonds with our children strong. Then we will be in a position to solve disagreements with our children.

### 1. Tell the person how you FEEL.

"I'm..."

It's important to "name the feeling," whether it's frustration, disappointment, worry, anger, or another "upset" feeling.

### 2. Identify the specific EVENT that produced that feeling.

"I'm...because..."

Focus on the specific situation and behavior at hand, not on the past or on what you feel "always happens." For example, "I'm angry because you went to that movie." Or, "I'm frustrated because you didn't study for that test." If your comments are too general, your child may feel you're being unfair or can never be pleased.



### 3. Explain WHY that specific event produced that feeling.

"The reason I feel...is that..."

This can be brief. For example, "Because you took that can of beer from the refrigerator, I feel you did not respect the family rules." Or, "I'm angry you went to the movie because you had told me you wouldn't."

### 4. Explore WHAT the options are, and make a plan to solve the problem that led to anger.

"What are some ways we could solve this problem?"

Family members may have different ideas about how to solve the problem. Everyone may have to compromise a little to help reach a solution that all can accept.



## HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR ANGER IN A POSITIVE WAY

# ANGER: A PAST EVENT AND FUTURE PLAN

Use this space to remember an event in the past when you did not handle your anger well. You'll talk about this event at your next family meeting. (See examples at the bottom of the page.)

Please describe:

- ▶ what happened
- ▶ how you felt about it
- ▶ how you will handle your anger in the future

In your family meeting, show that you take responsibility for not handling your anger well. Do not blame or make excuses.

1. What happened:

2. How you felt about it:

3. How you will handle a similar situation in the future:

### SAMPLE "SCRIPTS" FOR DESCRIBING PAST ANGER:

"Remember last month when I got mad at you for the mess in your room? I yelled at you and grounded you for a week? I felt frustrated and that you weren't listening to me, but yelling didn't help. Going forward, I'd like to find ways for us to hear each other when we're frustrated and solve our problems without screaming."

"Remember a couple of weeks ago when I got mad at you for buying new shoes? I raised my voice and it scared you. I felt bad for losing my temper, and that was not an okay way for me to express my feelings. In the future, I'd like to find a way for us to talk when we are angry with each other and work our problems out more constructively."



HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR ANGER IN A POSITIVE WAY

## FAMILY MEETING AGENDA: MANAGING FAMILY CONFLICT



### Family Meeting Agenda

1. EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND REVIEW THE MEETING AGREEMENTS.
2. SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF WHEN YOU DID NOT HANDLE YOUR ANGER WELL.
3. MODEL AND EXPLAIN STEP-BY-STEP THE SKILL OF CONTROLLING ANGER (STARR).
4. SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF AN UPSETTING SITUATION.
5. MODEL AND EXPLAIN STEP-BY-STEP THE SKILL OF EXPRESSING ANGER CONSTRUCTIVELY (FEWW).
6. PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD.
7. REVIEW THE MEETING.

