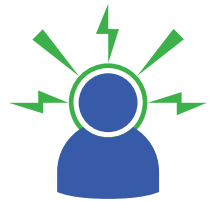


MODULE

8

“let’s talk”

ANGER, STRESS, AND TRAUMA MANAGEMENT



LEARNING GOALS

During this module, participants will:

- Define anger and understand the relationship between anger and trauma.
- Identify and recognize how their bodies and minds react to anger.
- Learn how to deal with anger in a healthy and positive way.
- Learn three relaxation techniques.

DEFINE THE ISSUE

Many people have a complicated relationship with emotion “anger”, and the way we each display the emotion will be different. Some people might avoid feeling angry or feel uncomfortable with even saying “I am angry”, others might feel angry a lot of time, and show it in outwardly expressive ways. Our life experiences and trauma often shape our relationship with anger, what makes us angry, how we communicate it, and how we address it.

Anger can make us act and react in a number of ways, including saying or doing something we may not mean. While getting angry is perfectly normal, feeling consistently angry can take a toll, both physically and emotionally. It is important to recognize that sometimes anger can mask another emotion that may be harder to manage, such as disappointment, jealousy, frustration, or rejection.



This module is included in the curriculum because our research indicates that managing anger is important to prevent runaway episodes. Module 8 asks participants to consider what triggers feelings and reactions of anger, and how they might choose to express this emotion.

ICONS

For further details, see the Introduction Module.



MODULE ACTIVITIES

	ACTIVITY	TIME	METHODOLOGY
	A. Defining and Dealing with Anger	15 minutes	Discussion/Activity
	B. Ways to Deal with Anger	15 minutes	Discussion/Exercise
	C. Relaxation Techniques	15 minutes	Discussion/Exercise



Total time required: **45 minutes**

MATERIALS

- Naming our Emotions handout
- “Ways to Deal with Anger” handout
- “What Flips Your Switch? Page 1” worksheet
- “What Flips Your Switch? Page 2” worksheet
- “Relaxation Techniques” handout



Stress Reduction + Families - Roles and Responsibilities



Consider showing the companion film, *American Street Kid*.



Contact the NRS Prevention & Youth Engagement Coordinator at **773-289-1723** or prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org for support and technical assistance.

ACTIVITY 8A

DEFINING AND DEALING WITH ANGER



15 minutes

INTRODUCE Defining and Dealing with Anger.

STATE Sometimes we feel our emotions so strongly, it can be difficult to understand what is causing us to feel the way we do. We might also misname the emotions we are feeling in a situation if we are unaware of why we are overcome by them.

HANDOUT “Naming Our Emotions” handout.

ASK Before I further introduce this handout, does anyone have ideas on how to read this chart?

ALLOW responses

STATE You’re right! This chart recognizes that there are root emotions, and then secondary and tertiary emotions. At times our feelings may be confusing, they might overwhelm us, or be hard to notice. It is also common to feel more than one emotion at once. Because of the complex range and interplay of emotions we might experience at any time, it can be difficult to find the words needed to express what we are really feeling. This chart is meant to help us identify words that can express how we feel.

ASK Are there any feelings on this chart that you would change their placement of? For example, do you think that feeling jealous is an emotion more rooted in anger, or in fear?

ALLOW responses

STATE Anger is an emotional state that can range from mild irritation to intense fury and rage. Feelings of anger actually produce physical changes in the body, such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, and adrenaline.

Think about the ways you deal with anger.

HAND OUT “Ways to Deal with Anger” worksheets.

STATE It is okay to be angry. Anger is an emotion every single person has felt before, and will likely feel again. However, sustaining a heavy emotion, like anger, for a long period of time can be unhealthy. Instead of trying to suppress our anger, or letting it lash out impulsively, there are ways that we can communicate and release how we are feeling. This worksheet can help us think of ways we can channel our anger into something positive and productive, instead of destructive.

ACTIVITY 8A CONTINUED

ASK Can you think of a time that someone hurt you or someone you care about by expressing their anger? What is something they could have done with that emotion instead?

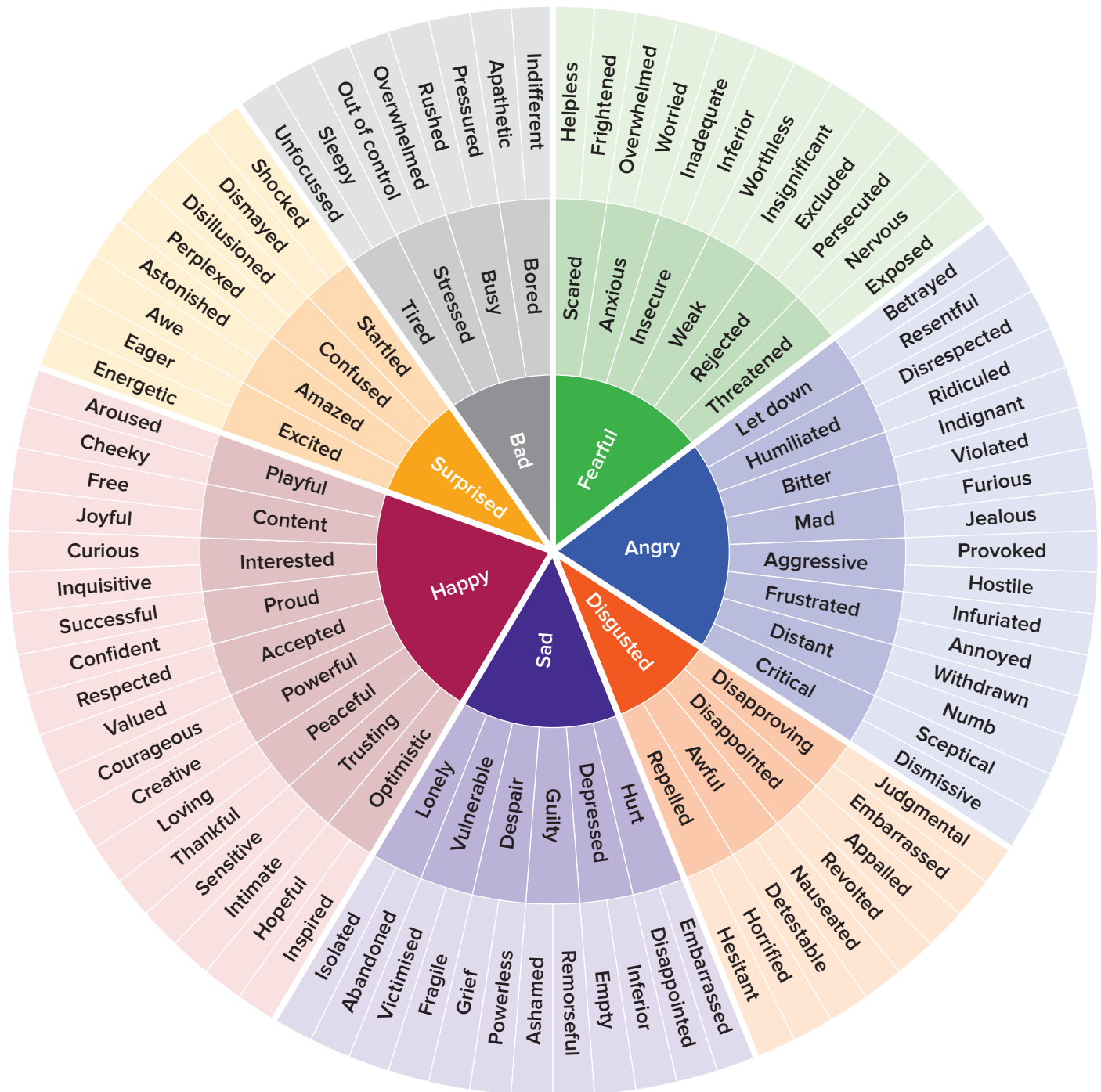
ALLOW responses

STATE As you can see, there are many good ways to deal with anger.

ASK I know this is a lot to think about! What questions do you have?

DISCUSS responses.

NAMING OUR EMOTIONS



WAYS TO DEAL WITH ANGER

Use this handout to consider options to channel your anger in a meaningful way.

RELAX.

Breathe deeply from your diaphragm (your belly, not your chest) and slowly repeat a calming word or phrase like “I am okay”, or “This will be okay”.

THINK POSITIVELY.

It is harder to find solutions to a problem when you are only focused on what went wrong. Remind yourself that this moment will pass, and so will this emotion. Is this something that will impact you for 5 minutes, 5 months, or 5 years?

PROBLEM SOLVE.

Identify the specific problem making you angry and consider healthy ways to approach it. Try to focus on what you can do now, and what you would like the outcome to be.

COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS.

When people are experiencing anger they might act impulsively or assume the worst. Try to think about what you need to communicate and the best way for the other party to understand what you are saying. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying.

MANAGE STRESS.

Set aside personal time to deal with stresses of life, school, activities, or family. Your time may include:

- Listening to music
- Writing in a journal
- Exercising
- Meditating
- Talking about your feelings with someone you trust

CHANGE THE SCENE.

Maybe a change of environment can help you control your anger before it controls you. Thinkback to the personal influences in your life. Who supports you? Who undermines you?

Some of the above content appears in the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center's Anger Management Fact Sheet for Teens

ACTIVITY 8B

WAYS TO DEAL WITH ANGER



15 minutes

INTRODUCE identifying types of anger.

TATE Anger is a normal, usually healthy, emotion we have all felt. There are several types of anger. Some can surface during our day-to-day activities. For example, we might get angry when we miss a bus or when we try to explain ourselves to someone and feel we're not being understood.

In addition, anger can linger. If you find yourself feeling angry often, particularly about past situations, work through those feelings to find forgiveness and acceptance.

ASK What makes people angry? Upset? Frustrated?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK With whom do people usually feel angry?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK How do you know when someone is angry?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK Do others ever take their anger out on you? For instance, do others yell at you for no apparent reason? How does that make you feel?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK Do you ever take your anger out on someone else? Who?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK Why might you take your anger out on someone else? Is it because the person will "take it"? They'll still love you? They happen to be there? They're "safe" to unload on?

DISCUSS responses.

ASK What are some ways to deal with anger that can be harmful?

DISCUSS responses.

ACTIVITY 8B →

ASK What are some ways people who are angry can deal with this emotion that are not harmful to themselves or others?

DISCUSS responses.

HAND OUT “What Flips Your Switch? Page 1” worksheets.

READ the directions aloud.

STATE Answer the questions to help you understand more about yourself when you’re angry.

ALLOW 5 minutes for participants to complete the worksheet.

ASK Did you learn something about yourself?

DISCUSS responses.

HAND OUT “What Flips Your Switch? Page 2” worksheets.

STATE Some people notice changes in their bodies when they feel angry. For instance, one person may feel tension in their muscles, while another may get a stomachache. This worksheet can help you identify how your body feels when you’re angry or upset.

GIVE participants a selection of crayons, markers, colored pencils, or other media to design their figure drawings.

ALLOW 3 minutes for participants to complete the worksheet

STATE As you can see, anger affects us all in different ways.

ASK Do you have any questions or comments?

DISCUSS responses.

WHAT FLIPS YOUR SWITCH? (PAGE 1)

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you understand more about yourself when you're angry.

- What makes you angry? Upset? Frustrated?

- How do you know when you're angry?

- How do you feel, emotionally and physically?

- How do you act?

- What do you say?

- What do you think about?

- In what ways do you take your anger out on others around you? Who do you take it out on?
(For example, slam doors, yell at your younger brother)

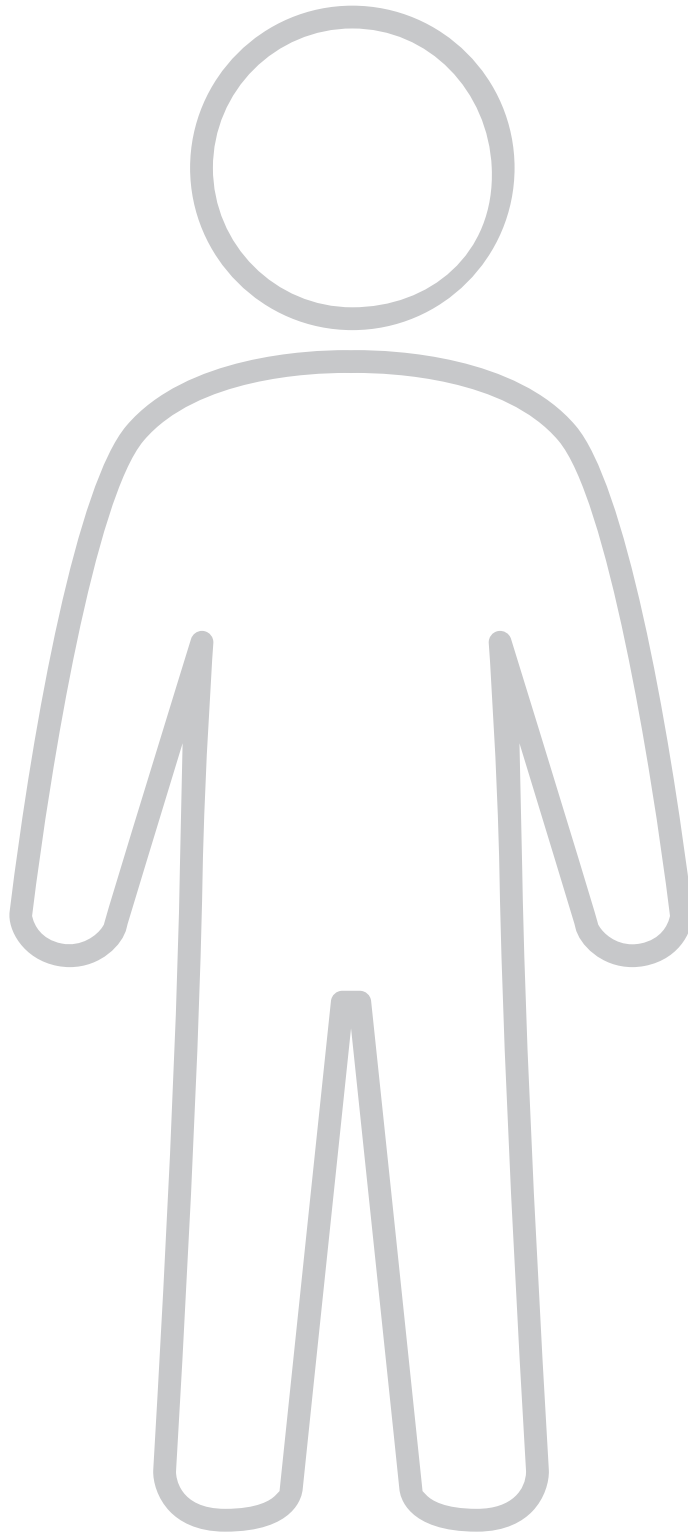
- How does your reaction make you feel?

- Why might you take your anger out on someone else?

- How do you deal with your anger?

WHAT FLIPS YOUR SWITCH? (PAGE 2)

Directions: Draw some specific examples of specific things that flip your switch.



ACTIVITY 8C

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES



15 minutes

INTRODUCE relaxation techniques.

STATE Each of us is unique in how we feel, express, and deal with anger. One great way to deal with anger is to relax. So, for the next few minutes we're going to learn some relaxation techniques you'll be able to use whenever you feel you are getting angry or agitated.

Let's get started!

HAND OUT "Relaxation Techniques" handouts.

STATE These relaxation techniques focus on breathing deeply to help reduce anxiety and tension. You can do these techniques with your eyes open or closed. You can also do them at any time, and no one will even know you are doing them.

One way to relax is to take deep breaths from your diaphragm—your belly, not your chest. We're going to use that type of breathing throughout these exercises. If you're having trouble, try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. If this is difficult, place your hand on the top of your stomach and when you breathe in through your nose your hand should fall and when breathe out through your mouth your hand should raise. Remember, it is impossible to breathe from your diaphragm if you are holding your stomach in, so relax your stomach muscles.

Now, let's review the breathing techniques.

READ the directions aloud.

HAVE each person do the exercise.

STATE Count very slowly to yourself from ten down to zero, one number for each breath. With the first breath from your diaphragm, say "ten" to yourself; with the next breath, say "nine"; and so on. If you start feeling light-headed or dizzy, slow down the counting. When you get to "zero," notice how you are feeling. If you feel better, great! If not, try it again.

ALLOW 2-3 minutes for participants to practice the breathing technique.

STATE Now let's try another breathing activity.

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; as you exhale, count slowly back down to one. As you inhale, say to yourself, "One, two, three, four." As you exhale, you say to yourself, "Four, three, two, one." Do this four times.

ALLOW 2-3 minutes for participants to practice the breathing technique.

STATE We're going to learn one more technique. Inhale, and then pause for a few seconds. After you exhale, pause again for a few seconds. Do this for four breaths.

ALLOW 2-3 minutes for participants to practice the breathing technique.

ASK Did you feel different after any of these exercises? Were any exercises particularly helpful?

DISCUSS participants' responses.

ASK What are good situations to practice these relaxation techniques?

DISCUSS participants' responses. Responses might include "before I see my parents," "before a big test," or "anytime."

STATE Some people relax best by talking to someone about their feelings. You can call or text someone confidentially at the National Runaway Safeline at 1-800-RUNAWAY or connect by live chat, email or forums at 1800RUNAWAY.org.

ASK Do you have any questions or comments?

DISCUSS responses.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

These relaxation techniques focus on breathing to help reduce anxiety and tension. You can do these techniques with your eyes open or closed. You can also do them at any time, and no one will even know you are doing them.

For all these exercises, make sure you are breathing from your diaphragm—that means **from your belly, not your chest**. If you're having trouble, try **breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth**. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. If this is still difficult, lie on your back or on your stomach; this will make you more aware of your breathing pattern. It is impossible to breathe from your diaphragm if you are holding in your stomach, so relax your stomach muscles.

TECHNIQUE

#1

Count very slowly to yourself from ten down to zero, one number for each breath. With the first breath from your diaphragm, say “ten” to yourself; with the next breath, say “nine”; and so on. If you start feeling light-headed or dizzy, count more slowly. When you get to “zero,” see how you are feeling. If you are better, great! If not, try it again.

TECHNIQUE

#2

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; as you exhale, count slowly back down to one.
As you inhale, say to yourself, “One, two, three, four.”
As you exhale, say “Four, three, two, one.”
Do this four times.

TECHNIQUE

#3

Inhale, then pause for a few seconds. Exhale, then pause again for a few seconds. Do this for four breaths.

ACTIVITY 8

SUMMARY

- STATE**
- Anger is a normal, usually healthy, emotion, but we need to learn ways to process and express anger.
 - Feeling consistently angry can take a toll, both physically and emotionally.
 - Relaxing can be a good way to deal with anger.
 - Deep breathing can be an effective way to relax – and we can practice breathing techniques at any time.

HANDOUTS AND WORKSHEETS

- A. Naming Our Emotions
- B. Ways to Deal with Anger
- C. What Flips Your Switch? Page 1
- D. What Flips Your Switch? Page 2
- E. Relaxation Techniques

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- Harper, G. W. (1999). A developmentally sensitive approach to clinical hypnosis for chronically and terminally ill adolescents. *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 42(1), 50-60. doi: 10.1080/00029157.1999.10404244
- National Runaway Switchboard. (2001). *Runaway prevention curriculum for classroom and community educators*. Chicago, IL: NRS.
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center. (2005). *Anger management fact sheets for teens*.

RESOURCES

- The American Psychological Association is the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology, and their website has numerous resources on various development, emotional, and behavioral issues (<http://www.apa.org>).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer research, data, and resources for numerous types of violence. This site also provides information about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), traumatic events in the lives of children under 18 that impact functioning in adulthood (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>).
- Futures Without Violence is a health and social justice nonprofit with a simple mission: to heal those among us who are traumatized by violence today and to create healthy families and communities free of violence tomorrow. (<http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>).
- National Runaway Safeline (NRS) works to keep America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets. NRS operates the 1-800-RUNAWAY hotline (call and text) and 1800RUNAWAY.org online services, including live chat, email and forums. NRS provides youth and families in crisis with support and access to resources 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (<http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org>).
- Youth.gov offers information about youth violence, including federal statistics, resources, and links to other government agencies' research (<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/violence-prevention>).