Afraid of Your Anger?

TI 002 - Thematic

By

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INTRODUCTION

I. The Developmental Theme Group

The "structured theme group" model is based on two fairly general theoretical assumptions. First, it is believed that intervention and treatment of psychological difficulties before they become deeply entrenched and severely pathological is a more effective use of mental health resources than treatment at a later date. Structured theme groups such as the "Afraid of Your Anger?" group are considered developmental in nature in that they focus on the resolution of issues that are problematic for some individuals in the course of their growth and development and which may become greater behavioral or psychological problems if left unresolved.

Second, for lasting change to occur it is recognized that structured theme groups must do more than simply teach concepts or skills to participants. A successful group must overcome participants' resistances to change the ways they act, think, and feel in their daily lives. Because a structured theme group is focused on a specific issue or problem, work can progress more rapidly than in a more heterogeneous group working on multiple issues (i.e. a general psychotherapy group). Rather than dealing with participant "acting out" or resistance to change as it unfolds, resistance can be anticipated and addressed beforehand in the actual structure and format of the designed exercises.

II. Theory and Purpose of the Group

There are two general beliefs which underlie and shape the organization of our group. First, consistent with developmental theme group theory, we believe that to help participants change the way they deal with anger the group must do more than simply teach new skills. We believe that for substantive and meaningful change to occur the experience of anger must be understood and challenged within the context of an individual's entire emotional life. Members need to learn where their fears about anger come from, they need to understand the beliefs that perpetuate their actions, they need to see the role that anger plays within the context of their other emotions (especially feelings like guilt, hurt, sadness, shame, embarrassment, and of course, fear), and they need to develop the ability to realistically assess possible outcomes of expressing anger in different situations.
The second belief underlying our group is that people can and should decide for themselves how they want to be able to handle anger in their own lives. It is not the role of the group leaders to judge that one individual should "express" anger more, or that another is "venting" too much. Rather, it is the right and responsibility of each individual to decide how much anger he or she feels comfortable experiencing and expressing in his or her life. The choice then, of what to change and how much to change is up to each participant. The function of the group and the group leaders is to help members to act with greater self-awareness and to gain a more realistic understanding of the consequences (both negative and positive) of the ways they choose to express or experience anger in their lives.

Operationalized, the immediate group goals are for participants to leave the group with:
1) Specific knowledge and skills for new ways of handling anger in interpersonal situations
2) Greater insight into the nature of their own difficulties with anger
3) Increased confidence in their ability to effect positive outcomes when angry
4) Greater emotional awareness and understanding in general

We believe that these outcomes for members will lead in turn to reduced fear of their anger (because they will feel less threatened and more in control), improved interactions and relationships with others, and generally greater psychological health.

III. Treatment Population

The "Afraid of Your Anger?" theme group is intended for individuals who feel afraid of their anger, or feel that the way they deal with their anger is problematic for them. People who are afraid or unable to express (or even experience) anger, who when they do express anger feel that it comes out in negative or destructive ways, or who experience distress when they feel anger are good candidates for the group.

People who are not appropriate for the group are those who have a history of explosive anger or lack of impulse control to the point of repeated physical assault and/or problems with the law, active alcohol or drug abusers, and those who have not identified or admit that anger is problematic for them. Such individuals would be best served by referral to alternative treatment modalities.
IV. Pregroup Factors

Marketing
The group can be advertised to the general campus population for self-referral by interested students (via fliers and student newspaper ads) and within campus counseling agencies for referral by therapists, counselors, and intake specialists. In the initial "Afraid of Your Anger?" group, about half of the members were self-referrals who read an ad in the campus paper. The other half were referred to the group by therapists within the counseling center.

Screening Session
We recommend a 15-20 minute screening session with each prospective member for several reasons. First, since some individuals will be self-referred, it is important to verify their appropriateness for the group (given the criteria mentioned previously). An individual who is extremely angry and lacking in impulse control could frighten other group members and sabotage the group process. Second, screening gives leaders a chance to anticipate which parts of the group will be hardest for different members, and to plan for "group fit." Third, it gives members a chance to meet leaders, reduce their anxiety about the group (which may in some cases be high, given the nature of the focus), and ask questions about format. Finally, if group leaders have never worked together with a group it gives them a chance to see how they will "fit together" when co-leading the group.

V. Description of the Group

The "Afraid of Your Anger?" theme group consists of eight weekly 2-hour sessions. Participants meet each week in a closed group of 8-12 members and two group leaders. The eight total sessions are divided into two four-session segments. The first four sessions focus on teaching members specific skills, on exploring sources of beliefs and fears, and increasing their emotional awareness. Building group cohesiveness and trust is also an important goal during these four sessions, as it will be necessary for members to be able to freely engage with each other in the exercises during the second half of the group. In contrast to the more "intrapersonal" focus of the first four sessions, the last half of the group is more "interpersonal" in its focus. Participants perform role-plays where they explore the application of the specific skills and insights in interactions and relationships with others. These last four sessions are the most powerful intervention component of the
group, where members begin to truly understand and slowly challenge their deeply held fears about anger in interpersonal relationships.

VI. A Final Note to Leaders

Remember that as group leaders one of the most difficult tasks facing you may be to deal with moments when there is anger within the group itself. There may be a time when one member of the group expresses a great deal of anger at someone outside of the group. There may also be a time when you become aware of anger between group members, or between members and leaders. These moments of genuine anger may be difficult and frightening for the group to look at and deal with, but they are also important opportunities for substantive growth and change.

Because of this, it is important that group leaders be aware of how their own feelings and beliefs concerning anger may influence their ability to work with it in the group. Before beginning this group, leaders should spend some time reflecting upon how they themselves feel about anger, and what their fears about anger are. They should consider how they deal with anger in their own interpersonal relationships. Additionally, leaders should explore and discuss how they will (and how they do) deal with anger within the relationship between the two of them.

Above all, leaders must be honest with themselves. (If we aren't, how can we ask it of our clients?)

Finally, it is important to remain aware of the central role that resistance to change plays within this group. Keep in mind that the greatest source of resistance to change - the participants' fear of their anger - is the very reason they came to this group in the first place. In a sense, the entire work of the group may be thought of as an ongoing process of raising, exploring, understanding, and dispelling fears. Whenever resistance emerges in the group, leaders should ask themselves (and the group) "what are participants afraid of?" This means that leaders must be willing to be flexible and adaptive in their implementation of the group structure. Remember that manuals don't run groups, leaders do. If it is necessary at times to set aside or change planned structure, so be it. This manual is only a tool. You are the ultimate authority on the needs of your group members.
SESSION I
Getting Acquainted and Warming Up

I. Introduction and Groundrules

Purpose
To introduce the leaders and to familiarize participants with the leaders' expectations of them as group members. To begin norm-setting.

Process
1. Leaders introduce themselves and share some of the sources of their interest in running an anger theme group.
2. Leaders review member rights & responsibilities (handout 1.1), emphasizing the following points:
   * Member confidentiality
   * Regular attendance and advance notice in the event of an absence
   * Importance of participation in each exercise and involvement in giving and receiving feedback and sharing reactions and feelings.
3. Leaders go over the logistics of the group, informing members of meeting dates, times, and locations. Leaders also inform members that brief assignments will be routinely given at the end of most sessions. Questions or problems with any of the logistics should be dealt with at this time.

II. Saying Hello

Purpose
Begin building group cohesion, trust, self-disclosure, and create an environment of safety.

Instructions to participants
We would like you to stand up and spend the next ten minutes introducing yourself to each person in the room. To each person you introduce yourself to you must say at least one thing about yourself that you have not yet disclosed to anyone else in the room.

Process
After the exercise has been completed, reform into a large group and invite participants to share reactions they had to the exercise. Ask them if they were aware of what kinds of things about themselves they chose to reveal to others.
and what kinds of things others revealed to them. Reinforce the importance
and value of their getting to know each other.

III. Anger Discussion

Purpose
Habituate participants to talking about anger and interacting with each other
in a relatively safe and nonthreatening fashion; establish a common definition
of anger that all members can understand; sensitize members to the different
ways they view and experience anger; introduce the key concept of distin-
guishing between feeling angry and acting on anger.

Instructions to Participants
Get into groups of three or four. Take a few minutes and discuss the following
questions:
1) For what reasons do people become angry?
2) What different consequences of becoming angry do people experience?

Process
Let the groups discuss these questions for 5-10 minutes. Begin processing by
asking each group to give one answer to the first question (reasons people
become angry). Go from group to group asking for a new or different answer
until all answers have been presented. Record all answers on newsprint (or
chalkboard) where all members can see.

Example REASONS PEOPLE BECOME ANGRY:
Hurt (physical or mental)
Injustice
Loss
Fear
Boredom or fatigue
Stress or overload
The anticipation of any of these things.
Etc.

Summarize question one: People usually become angry as a reaction to
something. People can become angry for many different reasons.

Ask for answers to question two (consequences of anger) in a similar fashion.
If members give only negative consequences, prompt them by asking if anyone can think of positive consequences of anger. If necessary, give examples of possible consequences.

Example

CONSEQUENCES OF ANGER:
(negative) Greater distance between ourselves and others
Avoidance in dealing with other feelings
Emotional or physical pain to ourselves or others
(positive) Greater intimacy with others
Increased self-awareness
Increased motivation to surmount an obstacle
Etc.

Summarize question two: We can use anger in ways that are positive and constructive or negative and destructive. Anger is neither helpful nor harmful. It is what we do with anger that helps or hurts ourselves or others.

Leaders' definition of anger
Drawing on the responses given to illustrate their point, the leaders define anger as a feeling which consists of:
1) An emotion
2) An energy
3) A connection to others

The leaders distinguish between the feeling of anger and the various ways we all act on that feeling. Examples from their own (or others') lives are used to clarify this distinction.

IV. Anger Recall Exercise

Purpose
Habituate members to getting in touch with angry feelings in the group setting; clarify on a personal level the difference between feeling angry and acting on anger; heighten members' awareness of actions and other feelings they associate with anger.

Instructions to participants
Get into a position that feels comfortable to you. You will probably find this exercise easier to do with your eyes closed. Feel your muscles begin to relax.
Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Feel your mind becoming calm and clear. I am going to ask you to visualize some past experiences you have had involving anger. I will guide you through three different scenes. Some of these scenes you will find quite easy to visualize. Some of them you may find difficult or impossible to visualize - if you find this to be the case, don't get upset or try too hard, just stay relaxed and keep your eyes closed.

1. First, remember a time when you were aware of feeling angry and you expressed that anger. Where were you? Who were you with? How did it feel to express your anger? What were the consequences of your actions? How did you feel about yourself?

2. Now, remember a time when you were aware of feeling angry, but did nothing to express or act on your anger at the time. Where were you? Who else was there? What did it feel like to not express your anger? Are you aware of why you not to express it? Did you express it later on at all? If not, how did you deal with it? How did your feel about yourself?

3. Finally, remember a time when you could have gotten angry, but didn't. Perhaps later you did become angry. Or maybe you later wondered why you didn't feel any anger. Try to remember what you were feeling at the time. Who were you with? If you weren't feeling angry, what were you feeling? Sad, frightened, guilty, or something else?

Process
Instruct members to open their eyes and reorient them to the present before discussing the experience. [Go around in a circle and ask each member:] Which was easiest to visualize? Which was hardest to visualize? Were you aware of a difference between feeling angry and acting on anger? Suggest to members that the scenes easiest to visualize may represent the situations which they experience most commonly.

V. Anger Graph

Purpose
Help participants to become aware of their patterns of dealing with anger; help them to clarify the changes they want to make in those patterns; further emphasize the difference between feeling and acting on anger; build group cohesion and norm-setting by asking for self-disclosures.
Instructions to participants
In the visualization exercise we just did, you started to look at your patterns of both feeling anger and acting on anger. Using what you learned and what you know about yourself, fill out the following graph (handout 1.2). Put an "X" where you think you now are on each of the two scales. Now place an "O" where you would like to be on each scale. You may wish you were above where you now rank on either scale, or below, or you may be happy right where you are.

Process
Let participants fill out the graph. Then go around in a circle and one by one have them show their graph to the group, explain what the graph means to them, and share how they want to deal with anger differently from the ways they do now. Discuss: what do the extremes of the scales mean to people? Summarize: different people have different values about how they want to be, and different people have different beliefs about what feeling angry and what acting on anger mean. At the end of this exercise ask group members to write their name on the back of their graph and turn it in.

V. Three key beliefs
Purpose
Present to the group the three central beliefs that the leaders hold about anger; provide a general overview of what the group will focus on; help members to feel that they will find new and more satisfying ways of dealing with their anger.

Process
Leaders deliver a short lecture to the group in which they introduce and explain the following key beliefs about anger:

1) It is O.K. to feel angry.
   Anger is a natural human emotion.
   Anger is an arouser.

2) No matter how angry we feel, we are responsible for choosing our actions.
   Anger is not aggression.
   Choosing to withhold and not express anger is also an action.
3) **We can act on our anger in ways that are affirming to ourselves, respectful of others, and constructive for our relationships.**

To act on anger effectively, we must become aware of the rights and desires of ourselves and of others.

We recognize that others are not always willing to work with us to resolve anger.

Leaders ask for feedback and/or responses to these key beliefs. They acknowledge that not all group members may agree with them, but encourage members to remain open to these beliefs and continue to share their reactions to them as the group progresses.

**VI. Brief Assignment: practicing observation**

**Purpose**

Encourage members to think about their first group session over the week and begin to integrate the experience into their everyday life; begin to focus their attention on feelings and behaviors.

**Instructions to participants**

Before next week's session, begin to observe more closely your pattern for dealing with anger. Bring to the next session a description of a problematic incident during the week in which you felt anger or some other strong feeling (like guilt, fear, hurt, anxiety) and of what you did. Think about how that experience fits (or doesn't fit) with what you learned here today.
Session I Notes:

I. Introduction and Groundrules (15 min.)

II. Saying Hello (15 min.)

III. Anger Discussion (25 min.)

The most important of the two questions that participants discuss is the second. Be prepared for participants to not be able to come up with positive consequences of anger. If using a chalkboard, be sure to write down on paper all the possible consequences of anger that were generated during the discussion (for use in future sessions). This exercise is the first indication of members' beliefs and fears regarding anger.

The leaders' definition of anger is an important part of this activity - it is the first time in the group that leaders present their own stance toward anger. If possible, give examples of the three aspects of anger. The concepts of anger as an energy (which may be channeled into destructive or constructive thoughts and actions) and as a connection (we don't feel lasting anger toward people who aren't important to us) may be new to them and may require some explanation.

The distinction between feeling angry and acting on anger is also important. Much of the fear of anger that participants experience comes from the beliefs they have about the nature of and the relationship between these two aspects of anger. Participants probably tend to see feeling anger and acting on anger as the same thing. Because of past experiences, they may define anger as specific verbally or behaviorally destructive actions. Separating the feeling and action components of anger plays a vital role in reducing members' resistance to change and future group work.

IV. Anger Recall Exercise (25 min.)

Be sure to speak slowly with pauses between questions. It may take time for members to recall what they were feeling or thinking during each scenario.

V. Anger Graph (20 min.)

In discussing the anger graph results, group leaders may want to talk about the two different reasons members generally choose to be in the anger group - the over or under expression of anger. The goals for both are the same: to move toward a more balanced and useful expression of anger. Leaders should
collect and keep each member's graph - the graphs will be used for comparison during the final group session.

VI. Three Key Beliefs (10 min.)

It is recommended that leaders write the Key Beliefs on newsprint and tape them to the wall during each group session. Leaders should refer to these beliefs as often as possible and appropriate during each session.

VII. Brief Assignment (5 min.)
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PERSONS ENROLLED IN GROUP PROGRAMS AT THE COUNSELING CENTER

As a member of a group sponsored by the Counseling-Psychological Services Center you have certain rights and responsibilities. Among your rights are:

A. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

You should not participate in a group other than on a voluntary basis. The group facilitators will protect your right of honorable withdrawal from the group without being subjected to undue pressure from other group members.

1. The primary purposes, the basic guidelines, the potential benefits, and the potential risks involved in the group experience will be established and discussed candidly with you prior to the beginning of the group or at the first group session.

2. The facilitators will support your freedom of choice and see that you are not required or unduly urged to participate in any specific activity of the group against your better judgment.

B. PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELFARE

The group facilitators will protect the physical and emotional welfare of the individuals in the group.

1. The facilitators will take the responsibility to observe, attend, and intervene on your behalf should it become apparent that emotional stress has developed to a point that it threatens your well-being.

2. Competent referral sources will be arranged for you in the event you require help beyond that which is being received in the group.

C. RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

The group facilitators will strive to establish and maintain a climate of respect within the group for your values, principles, and beliefs.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The group facilitators will respect the confidentiality of information obtained about individual members of the group.

1. The facilitators will discuss a group or individuals within the group only with fellow professionals clearly concerned with the group, and then only for professional consultation.

2. Although guarantees cannot be provided by the group facilitators, group members have a mutual responsibility to refrain from revealing outside the group any information obtained from fellow group members.

3. On occasion, a video or audiotape of group sessions may be requested by the group leaders. However, this will not be done without your signed consent.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER TERMINATION OF THE GROUP

The group facilitators' responsibilities for the members do not automatically end with the termination of the group experience. The facilitators will make themselves available to deal with individual members' needs arising at the end of a group or refer the individual to more appropriate sources when deemed necessary.

- OVER -
FEELING ANGER

HIGH

LOW

ACTING ON ANGER

DIRECTING OUT

HOLDING IN
SESSION II
Increasing Emotional Awareness

I. Sharing Exercise

Purpose
Continue to build trust and acceptance among group members and encourage honest feedback and disclosure within the group.

Instructions to Participants
Reflect on something about each person in the group that you liked or found interesting last week. It could be something that they said or did or some interaction with them that occurred last week that you feel good about. It might be some mannerism or personal trait that appeals to you. It might even be some aspect of their personal appearance. [Let participants think for a minute, then say:] You will have ten minutes to get up and share with each other group member the thing about them that you liked.

Process
[After the exercise is complete reform as a large group and have participants share reactions they had to the exercise:] What kinds of things did you find yourselves sharing? What it was like for you to receive each others' compliments?

II. Fears Associated with Anger

Purpose
Habituate members to thinking and talking about more personal feelings in the group; build trust; begin exploration of beliefs and expectations that stop anger from being O.K.; reduce fears regarding the expression of anger in the group.

Instructions to Participants
Take a few minutes and complete the sentences on this form (handout 2.1). We will look at the various fears we have about anger anonymously so that everyone will feel free to express all their concerns. Don't write your name or other identifying remarks on the form and take care not to identify any particular answers as your own when we discuss them. Fill in the blanks as many ways as you can think of. When you are finished, fold it and put it in this container.
Process

Give participants six or seven minutes to complete the sentences. Have them deposit the folded responses into a open container (e.g. hat or shoe box). Once everyone has finished, pass the container around and have each group member pull out one completed form. Starting with the first question, go around the group and have each member read out loud to the group the sentence completions. List these on newsprint and briefly elaborate on each fear that is listed. (In case some of the extreme fears are excluded, be prepared to add such fears as: helplessness, loss, hurt, physical attack, running away, overwhelming rage, killing, exploding, getting depressed, retaliation, etc.) On the wall put up newsprint with a listing of the "consequences of anger" that were written down during the anger discussion the previous week. Relate these responses to the fears that have just been identified.

[Move to processing on a more general level. Keep discussion focused on how members are feeling in the present:] How do you feel now that you know you are in a group where some other people have these fears? What do you hope will change for you? For the group? [Concluding message:] Fear is closely associated with anger, whether we are conscious of feeling fearful at the time we are angry, or whether we once were fearful and have learned to be automatically angry instead of feeling fear. It is important for us to be aware of these fears if we are to become more aware of our anger and to develop the courage to change the ways we act on our anger. No matter how we are used to acting with our anger - whether we suppress it or let it take over - it is important to practice identifying the feelings that it arouses in us, rather than continuing to react to or act out our anger in habitual ways.

III. Feelings Awareness Lecture

Purpose

Introduce a model for helping members to increase their awareness of feelings in general and specifically explore how they over- or under-experience anger; introduce a sense of control and choicefulness in their experience of emotions.

Content

In any situation where a person is feeling a strong emotion, other emotions are also present which the person may or may not be aware of. A useful analogy is
that of a "spotlight of awareness". Everyone has a different way of handling their spotlight. Some people narrow their spotlight down to only pick up one emotion and keep focused on that emotion to the exclusion of other emotions which are more uncomfortable for them. Others tend to diffuse their spotlight so much that they are not even able to pick out separate emotions - and so are often unaware of what specific feelings they are experiencing. EXAMPLE: In a fight between yourself and someone you are close to, you will have numerous different feelings. Every person has a different awareness of his or her feelings, depending on what we choose to focus on and what we choose to "leave in the dark." One person, for example, may be aware of feeling angry, but not also hurt and possibly guilty and regretful. Another person may feel guilty and hurt, but not angry. Still a third person may only be aware of feeling "bad."

In all of these examples, by limiting their range of awareness of feelings, these people have also limited the ways that they can deal with their feelings. Feeling and acting on anger is not a very effective way of dealing with guilt; likewise feeling and acting on guilt or hurt is not a very effective way of dealing with anger.

Process
Use chalkboard to graphically demonstrate the concepts presented. Draw circles to represent different emotions on the "field of consciousness" and indicate how the "spotlight of awareness" focuses on or away from them, how it narrows down or defocuses, how it stays in one place or can move around to illuminate other feelings which are present (see illustration at end of this section). After these concepts are presented, ask the participants what they think stops them from focusing on or away from anger (or other feelings). Talk about this for 5-10 minutes. Tell participants that they will be asked to focus on and become more aware of their feelings for the remainder of the group sessions.

IV. Feelings Awareness Exercise

Purpose
To build trust and foster empathy & sharing; assess members' perceptual accuracy and patterns of emotional response; demonstrate the feelings awareness model and heighten emotional awareness.
Instructions to Participants

[Instruct the group to break into two subgroups. Each group leader sits down with one of the subgroups and gives the following instructions:] I want each of you to describe the one event that you chose to observe during the week. Tell the group what you and the other people involved said and did. As you do so, try to be as factual as possible. Just talk about actions - don't say how you or the other person(s) felt during the interaction - and try not to give any clues away by your word tone or body language. As each of you talks, I want the other people to imagine themselves in that situation. After you have described the situation, the group will be silent for a minute while everyone either imagines or recalls how they felt in that situation. Who wants to go first?

Process

After the first volunteer has described the event and the minute of silence is over, go around in a circle and ask each participant to state the emotions they would have felt in that situation, and the points at which they became aware of them. Finally, ask the speaker what his/her feelings were during the event, and if he/she has become aware of any new feelings while relating the event or listening to others. Continue until all participants have described their experience and the feelings associated with it.

[When both groups are done, leaders have members reform as a large group and process the exercise:] What was this exercise like for people? What did you learn? Anything about it surprise anyone?

V. Ending Work

Purpose

Assess status of group at end of second session & identify areas of future work; encourage members to apply new skills outside the group; prepare members for next week's session.

Process

[Leaders ask each member to share with the group how they are feeling about the first two sessions:] What do you feel has been most useful so far? What are you still unclear or confused about?
Leaders end the group encouraging members to continue to be aware of incidents during the week in which they feel anger or some other strong emotion and to increase their awareness of other feelings that they experience during the incident. Leaders also suggest that participants begin to think about what kinds of messages about anger they got from their families when they were growing up (which will be the focus of next week's session).
Notes for Session II:

I. Sharing Exercise (15 min.)

II. Fears Associated with Anger (40 min.)

This exercise is a means for exploring the fears that group members are sure to have about how anger will be handled in the group. Leaders' verbal and nonverbal messages about how they feel and will react to anger in the group is an important part of group norm and trust building.

III. Feelings Awareness Lecture (15 min.)

There are two major reasons for our introduction of the feelings awareness model. First, it is our solution to the theoretical question of whether anger is a primary or secondary emotion. Second (and more relevant to group members) it acknowledges that anger is an emotion that exists in the context of other emotions. We believe that people seldom have a problem with "just" anger - a problem handling anger indicates a problem handling other emotions as well. When one emotion is used to mask another emotion, both must be experienced and validated for change to occur. The "spotlight of awareness" technique is a powerful tool for increasing clients' emotional awareness, and it should be used as often as possible in future sessions whenever clients are at an impass or are "stuck" in their experience of anger or some other strong emotion.

IV. Feelings Awareness Exercise (40 min.)

V. Ending Work (10 min.)
Handout 2.1

Anger Fears

1. When I feel angry, the thing I am most afraid I will do is . . .

2. When I get angry with another person, the thing I am most afraid they will do is . . .

3. If someone gets angry in this group, the worst thing that could happen in the group is . . .
Anger Awareness Illustration

Field of Consciousness

1. Spotlight of awareness: on anger
2. Spotlight of awareness: away from anger
3. Spotlight of awareness: diffused
SESSION III
Exploring the Roots of Our Fears

I. The Human Knot

Purpose
Continue process of building of trust and acceptance among members; prepare members for expressive focus of this session.

Instructions to Participants
We are going to start this session by having everyone stand up and move to the center of the room. Now join hands with two different people who are not standing next to you. Everyone should be holding the hands of two other people. Now, we want you to start untangling yourselves without letting go of anyone's hand. Take as long as you need!

Process
[Lead a brief discussion of this experience by asking such questions as:] What is it like to be physically close? What is it like to be interdependent?

II. Family Sculpture: Part I

Purpose
To help participants explore and increase their understanding of the beliefs about anger that were communicated to them in their family of origin.

Instructions to Participants
Break up into two groups. If possible, try to be with people you have not yet in a group with. We are now going to do an exercise aimed at looking at the kinds of feelings and messages you have about anger from your experiences in your family. Use the other people in your group to create a family sculpture. The title of this sculpture is 'Anger in my Family when I was a Child.' There should be at least three people in your sculpture: your father (or step-father), your mother (or step-mother), and yourself. You can also include other family members (or primary parental figures) if you wish. Select those others from the group that you feel are the "best fit" for the different people in your sculpture. Arrange them in relation to each other in whatever positions and with whatever expressions you think best portrays anger in your family when you were young. After you have formed your sculpture stand back, look at it,
and try to become aware of the thoughts and feelings the sculpture evokes in you.

**Process**

Each group leader functions as a consultant for one of the subgroups, overcoming resistance to the exercise by demonstrating examples and offering encouragement. Push the participants to form the sculptures fairly rapidly (most can do it in a couple of minutes, once the groups have warmed up). Assist the group members in processing the experience by asking the sculptor and the "critics" (i.e., those members not part of the sculpture) their reactions to what they see. Ask the members who are part of the sculpture how it feels to be a part of the sculpture in the positions they are in.

After all participants have made a sculpture, reform as a large group and process the experience. Ask participants how they felt about the exercise, what memories or insights it provoked, etc. Restate that the purpose of the exercise is to start looking at what you learned about anger from your family when you were younger. [Ask members:] To what extent does what you learned about anger then effect how you deal with anger now? What beliefs about anger did you get from your family when you were young?

**III. Family Sculpture: Part 2**

**Purpose**

Continue exploration of anger beliefs; exploration of other feelings associated with anger; clarification of ways that participants continue to enact old behavior patterns when dealing with anger.

**Instructions to Participants**

Get back into your group. Now think about each person in your sculpture. What messages did each of them give you about anger? Think about the different feelings you have towards them (remember that we talked last session about the fact that at any one time you have more than one feeling, so try to be as aware of as many feelings as you can). [To each member give the following directions:] Say something that you have never said before to each person in your sculpture about how you feel towards them. Show the group once again the position you took in the sculpture of your family. Now show the group what position you want to take in dealing with anger in you relationships now. How does the new position feel different? What does it mean to you?
Process
Reform as a large group. Explore reactions to the exercise. Discuss how members carry the messages from their family about anger into their current relationships and how they tend to assume the positions they took as a child when there was anger in their family. (Alternatively, some members may deal with anger now in the exact opposite way to the position they took as a child.) If appropriate, compare messages that people got from their families to the fears about anger that were listed in the previous session.

IV. Brief Assignment

Purpose
Increase members’ emotional awareness in everyday interactions; prepare them for exercises during next week’s session.

Instructions to Participants
Again, be aware of incidents during the week in which you feel anger or some other strong emotion (guilt, fear, anxiety, etc.). Try to be aware of all the different feelings you have and (if possible) what words or actions (your own or someone else’s) prompted them. We will use this as the starting point next week.
Notes for Session III:

I. Human Knot (15 min.)

II. Family Sculpture: Part 1 (50 min.)
   Be ready for some initial resistance. Start the exercise off with someone who
   seems to have energy for it. Others seem to be able to get the hang of it fairly
   quickly. The "critics" and members who play different parts of the sculpture
   often have highly insightful and useful observations. This is a powerful
   exercise which seems to stir up a lot of strong feelings for members - be
   prepared!

   When exploring family messages and beliefs, it may be useful to refer to the
   first session's discussion of the difference between feeling and acting on anger.
   Explore what messages about the connection between the two are demonstrated
   in the family sculptures.

III. Family Sculpture: Part 2 (50 min.)
   Because the family sculpture exercises are so powerful, it is important to be
   sure that no-one leaves the group still suspended in their feelings. Check with
   everyone at the end to see how they are doing & be prepared to deal with
   unexpected feelings or reactions that may come up.

IV. Brief Assignment (5 min.)
SESSION IV
Trying on New Responses

I. Anger Memory Exercise

Purpose
Reinforce participants' use and understanding of the "spotlight of awareness" technique; demonstrate how emotional focusing can have an impact on interactions; increase participants' confidence and sense of control in relationships.

Instructions to Participants
Everyone get comfortable, close your eyes if you would like to. Take a deep breath and slowly let it out, feeling yourself relax as you do so. We asked you to bring to group today an incident or experience over the past week involving anger or some other strong negative emotion. Think back to that experience and recall it as vividly as you can. Who was there? What did you do and say? How did your body feel? What feelings did you have? We talked two weeks ago about the fact that at any one time you have more then one feeling, so try to be as aware of as many feelings as you can. Think about which feeling or feelings you chose to focus on the most. How did that determine what you chose to say and do? Now, pick an emotion that you did not focus on (or perhaps were not aware of much at the time, but later did become aware of). Focus on that feeling for a minute. How might you have chosen to express or act on this feeling in that situation? Would it have led you to say or do something different? Imagine how the other person or persons might have responded. Imagine how it would have felt to act differently.

Process
Reorient participants to the present and discuss their reactions to the exercise, focusing especially on how interactions can change when they choose to focus and act on different feelings. [Ask members:] What feeling did you choose to focus on the second time around? Did that lead you to act differently? Did others respond differently? What usually stops you from focusing and acting on other feelings? [Concluding message:] We are starting to look at the relationship between feelings and patterns of behavior. We are seeing that the feelings you decide to focus on have a direct impact on your actions and may influence the actions of others as well.
II. Anger Mask Exercise

Purpose
Desensitize members to displaying anger in the group; demonstrate how they can show their anger in different ways and what impact that has on others; increase their confidence and sense of control over their actions.

Instructions to Participants
In this exercise we are going to show each other what we look like when we get really angry or out of control with our anger. What do you do with your face when you are angry? This is your anger mask. (Leaders should demonstrate their own anger mask.) Take a few moments to find your own anger mask and try it on. Then we want everyone to show their masks to the group and receive feedback. When you show your mask, hold it for several seconds so that others can get a clear impression.

Process
For each mask, ask the group what they like or dislike about it, how they feel when they see it, and what they imagine might happen when someone looks that way. [After everyone's mask has been shown, ask each member:] Whose mask would you like to have as a spare or alternative to your own? Why? What feeling or message would that mask help you convey that you want to convey? [Get participants to help each other practice trying on the masks they want as a spare. Ask members:] How does it feel to wear the new mask? [Concluding message:] Creating a spare facial expression for anger is one way of choosing how you want to act differently on your anger.

III. Open Discussion of Three Key Beliefs

Purpose
Monitor members' responses to interventions thus far; reduce members' resistance and doubt through open discussion; review and summary of earlier work and preparation for future work.

Process
Leaders review three key beliefs introduced in the first session and lead a discussion about how group members are feeling about them now. Leaders may wish to use this time to deal with reactions or questions concerning experiences
from earlier sessions and/or summarize earlier concepts or ideas. Group members may also be encouraged to discuss continuing fears and concerns about anger and doubts that they may be feeling about their abilities to utilize what they have learned in "real life" situations. [Conclude discussion by reminding members:] The group isn't over yet - we have handed you some tools, and now for the next four sessions we will explore further how you can use them in your relationships with others.

IV. Brief Assignment

Purpose
Push members to choose a real-life relationship to practice on; prepare them for the next session.

Instructions to Participants

Between now and the next session choose a relationship in which anger is problematic for you and that you want to work on over the next three group sessions. Start thinking about what the problem is in the relationship. Specifically, select one interaction or scenario that is typical or representative of the problems you experience with anger in the relationship. Think about how you would like things to be different. Think about how you would like to act differently.
Notes for Session IV:

Starting in this session, begin to expect increasing resistance from group members. Last week's family sculpting work in the group was probably a powerful experience for many members, and a "backlash" to this should be expected. As the exercises get more interpersonally realistic, fear and anxiety will naturally increase.

I. Anger Memory Exercise (40 min.)

II. Anger Mask Exercise (40 min.)

This can be a powerful exercise, in that for the first time in the group it requires members to demonstrate some indication of anger. It is in part a desensitization for the anger skits which will follow. Leaders should focus on the reasons participants use the "masks" they do and what makes them resistant to using other masks (and the fantasies behind what makes other masks appealing), as well as the fears involved in displaying or observing anger in the group. The power in this exercise comes from exploring the resistance (beliefs and fears) which are generated in trying to do the exercise, and from watching others "get angry." Leaders may wish to draw on the "family sculpture" and "fears associated with anger" exercises from the previous two sessions.

III. Open Discussion of Three Key Beliefs (30 min.)

The three key beliefs should be printed on a sheet of posterboard which is taped to the wall. This is the "halfway" point for the group, and marks the transition to the more "applied" work of the second half of the group. Leaders should use this opportunity to assess the group's progress and attend to additional "resistances to change" which they feel may impede progress in future sessions.

IV. Brief Assignment (5 min.)
SESSION V
Focusing on One Relationship

I. Anger Skit

Purpose
Increase participants' understanding of how they handle anger in interactions with others; explicate how their underlying beliefs and fears manifest themselves in their behavior.

Instructions to Participants
At the end of last week we asked you to select one personal relationship in which anger is problematic to work on over the next several sessions. We want you to look at what is happening in your relationship with the person you chose, and for you to get very specific about the sequence of events in a typical experience of anger between yourself and the other person. To do this we want you to write a very short two-person skit that demonstrates anger in your relationship with the person you have chosen. Your script should contain a cast of characters, a scene, props, and a sequence of lines, stage directions (or actions), and feelings for the characters to show.

Process
Pass out playwrite forms (handout 5.1). Spend five to ten minutes talking about how to write the play, pointing out how the handout will help them to structure their writing, encouraging them to be specific, and dealing with any resistances that may come up. After participants are clear on what they are doing, give them up to 25 minutes to write their play. As they work, the leaders should circulate as consultants. When necessary, encourage them to be more specific. When they get stuck, have them shift to other components of the skit.

Once participants have finished writing their skits and are satisfied with what they have done, tell them to pair up with someone else who has also finished and to read each other's skit and offer feedback, suggestions, questions, etc. When everyone has finished writing their skit, inform participants that the person they are paired up with will be their co-actor in the performance of their skit. Give participants 5-10 minutes to practice their skits together so they can perform them for the entire group.
Convene together as a group and begin to perform skits. [After each skit to the audience:] What are your reactions? What questions or feedback do you have for the actors? Did the playwrite portray actions and feelings specifically enough? Remember that we have talked about anger as an emotion, an energy, and a connection - how do you see these three aspects of anger in this skit? [To the actors:] How did it feel to play your role in the script?

II. Relationship Goal Writing

Purpose
Begin exploration of realistic goals involving anger in relationships; explicate the beliefs underlying our goals in relationships; illuminate barriers to goal-setting which reinforce feelings of powerlessness in relationships

Process with each participant after her/his anger skit has been performed
[To the playwrite:] At the end of the last session we asked you to start thinking about what the problem is in the relationship and what you would like to change about it during these next three sessions. In terms of the lines, stage directions, and emotions you have in your script, what in particular would you want to change? In real life, is this something you could accomplish in this relationship in the next three weeks? What fears or other factors might get in the way of accomplishing this? [Then to the group:] Do other people have feedback for (the playwrite) on the problem, what to work on, what is realistic to try to change, or what might prevent change? Is the playwrite trying to make the other person act in a specific way? Is that possible?
[Pass out handout 5.2 and say to playwrite:] Based on your skit and this feedback, choose a way you want to act differently on your anger in this relationship and write out goals for yourself as clearly and specifically as you can.

III. Brief Assignment

Purpose
Begin to apply new understanding and goals for relationship to the relationship itself; increase participants' awareness of their own resistances to change in relationships.
Instructions to Participants

Over the next week observe the interactions you have with the person in your anger skit. Think about what would happen to your skit if you changed some of your lines. Think about the things that stop you from changing your lines. Think also about the three key beliefs we have discussed during the group - do you really believe them all? If not, what are your doubts and fears?
# ANGER IN OUR RELATIONSHIP

**SUBTITLE:**

**SETTING:**

**PROPS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINES</th>
<th>STAGE DIRECTIONS</th>
<th>FEELINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Anger Skit Relationship Goals

In three weeks, I want to be able to ___________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

and I want ____________________________________________ to happen in our relationship.

Revised Goals

For myself: ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

For relationship: ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Future Goals

1. ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Notes for Session V:

Session V is the first session in the second half of the group. From now until the final session the focus of work in the group will be the experience/expression of anger in relationships. The primary vehicle for this work will be roleplays in the group, and homework assignments between sessions. Although roleplays are a relatively "low risk" means for exploring anger (compared to the real thing), members may experience them initially as frightening and "over exposing." Be prepared to address and explore resistance to exercises during this session.

I. Anger Skit

Leaders may want to write their own anger skits as a "demonstration" for how they could be done. Encourage people to be creative. If the group is an especially large one, leaders may consider breaking the group in half and performing skits in front of a smaller audience, although this should be avoided if possible.

II. Relationship Goal Writing

This exercise differs in format from previous exercises in that it is done individually with each participant immediately after his/her anger skit has been presented and discussed. Some participants may have difficulties articulating specific, realistic goals in their relationship. Exploring barriers to goal-setting as they come up can help members see how such barriers stop them from beginning to make changes in their relationships and reinforce their sense of powerlessness.

III. Brief Assignment (5 min.)

At the end of this session leaders should either ask members to turn in their anger skits and relationship goals or agree to bring them back next week. Collecting them at the end of each session is the preferable method, since it is easy for members to forget to bring them back (especially if they feel anxious about performing them).
SESSION VI
Practicing New Moves

I. Continuation of Anger Skit and Anger Goals
Participants continue anger skits and goal writing from previous week until all
group members have performed their skit and written goals.

II. Anger Dance Lecture
Purpose
Introduce the concept of anger as a "dance" between two members; increase
participants' awareness of the range of change that they may realistically
expect in relationships; increase their own sense of power in relationships;
reduce anxiety and fear.

Lecture
Patterns of interaction in relationships with other people tend to become
habituated and stylized - almost like a dance between two people. In the anger
skits we just observed each one of you perform a "dance of anger" in your
relationship with the other person. There are several components that make up
our interpersonal dance with another person:
1) What you bring to the dance (your beliefs, fears, past experiences, etc.);
2) What the other person brings to the dance (their beliefs, fears, etc.);
3) What the two of you make together within the dance and which becomes
the way things are handled in the relationship (the ways each of you
becomes used to doing things in the relationship, which gain momentum
and strength the longer the relationship lasts.)

There are three steps involved in changing your dance with another person:
1) Become aware of what you bring to the dance.
2) Change your move in the dance.
3) Deal with the other person's countermoves.

Remember, when you change the dance it forces the other person to also
change - but they aren't necessarily forced to change in the way you want them
to. Rather, they will react in ways that depend on their own fears and beliefs,
and especially their past experiences telling them what works in their dance
with you. Chances are good (at least initially) that their countermove will be to pressure you to re-engage in the dance that you are both used to. So dealing with the other person's countermove often means responding to their attempts to keep the familiar dance going.

Process

[Engage the group in a discussion of the "anger dance" model:] Can people see how this fits for their own relationships? What kinds of countermoves do people imagine will happen if they change their moves? How do people feel about that? Leaders should use this discussion to point out that often our fear (rational or irrational) of countermoves is the primary thing that stops us from trying to change relationships. [Concluding message:] Successfully changing the dance involves both a new move on your part and preparation for the other's countermove. Most attempts to change the dance don't fail because we are unwilling to try a new move. Rather, they fail because we capitulate and go back to the old dance when our dance partner counters our new move in a way that pushes us back into the old familiar pattern.

III. Anger Skit Revision

Purpose

Implement the dance of anger concept within safe "role-play" context; increase members' confidence regarding handling anger in personal relationships.

Instructions to participants

Now we will perform our skits again. However, this time we want you to think about your goals and take a few minutes to rewrite your part in the skit. Your partner is to stick to his or her role and keep acting and expressing feelings in the way you originally depicted him or her. Because you may need help acting differently, you are to choose someone else in the group to be your "acting coach." Before you begin the play, tell your coach what you want their help on (for instance, making a certain kind of statement, taking a certain action, expressing certain feelings). Coaches should do everything they can to remind, support, and help the playwrite.

Process

Each member performs his/her skit before the group. [To playwrites and
coaches:] How did it feel to try your change? How are you feeling about your goals now? Are they reasonable or not? Do you want to change them? [To acting partner:] How did it feel to try to maintain your role? Were there other things that you found yourself wanting to do in response to their change? [To group:] Any feedback or reactions?

[Concluding message:] Whenever you try to make a new move or to change your dance step in an anger encounter, you can expect a countermove from the other person that seems designed to maintain the status quo in your relationship. We can only learn to anticipate and deal with these countermoves if we are courageous enough to try something different from our usual dance step. Otherwise, we won't get much experience or practice with what it's like to actually go through constructive change in a relationship. Many times countermoves reinforce our fears, and so they help shut us down from trying anything different. This is why it is so important to choose and focus on one small, specific move that you can carry out and maintain when the countermoves begin and when you get more anxious. It may help to anticipate the other person's countermoves and think about what you will do when your own anxiety mounts. How will you express your feelings, concerns, or intentions? Remember, you really can act on your anger in ways that are affirming to yourself, respectful of others, and constructive for your relationships.

IV. Brief Assignment

Purpose
Experience application of anger dance and roleplay methods to an actual relationship; explore continued resistances to change; increase confidence in ability to be assertive and respectful in relationships.

Instructions to Participants
Observe your "tango" or whatever way you and your partner dance with your anger during the next week. Pay attention to your own part of the dance - the moves you make, the steps you take. Next time you encounter anger with the other person, remember your goal and try something different, instead of your usual move or dance step, and see what happens. If it's too difficult or frightening to try something different, take note of what seems to get in your way or what it is you may fear happening.
Notes for Session VI:

I. Continuation of Anger Skit and Goal Writing

II. Anger Lecture (30 min.)

The metaphor of anger as a dance with moves and countermoves is not our own. It is introduced and explored in depth by Harriet Lerner in her book *The Dance of Anger* (see bibliography).

When discussing the three steps involved in changing one's anger dance, it is useful to point out to members how past group lectures and activities fit in to this framework. The 'Anger Discussion' exercise in session I, 'Fears Associated with Anger' in session II, and the entirety of session III all focus on increasing participants' awareness of what they bring to the dance (the first step in changing one's dance). The 'Feelings Awareness' lecture and exercise in session II and the 'Anger Memory' and 'Anger Mask' exercises in session IV provide bases for changing one's move in the dance (the second step). The 'Anger Dance' lecture itself and the 'Anger Play' and its revision are aimed at the third step - dealing with the countermoves made by one's "dance partner."

III. Anger Play Revision

The use of a coach in this exercise is important for the support and encouragement of the participant trying to change his/her dance and for the coach as well. Being a coach for another member can lead to an increased sense of self-control and competence in dealing with anger. ("I must have some good skills/insights if someone wants me to be her/his anger coach.") Leaders must continue to actively explore fears and resistances to change as they come up in the revisions of the plays.

IV. Brief Assignment (5 min.)

Again, leaders may want to collect anger skits and goals at the end of this session.
SESSION VII

I. Continuation of Anger Skit Revision
Continue anger skit revisions until all participants have revised and presented their skits.

II. Homework Discussion/Role-plays
Purpose
Provide a less structured format to discuss progress at translating work in group to external relationships; explore resistance to change; increase members' self-confidence.

Instructions to Participants
Last week we asked you to try out a new move in your anger dance with the other person. Did anyone get a chance to try it out? What happened? How did the other person respond? How did you feel? How are you feeling about your ability to effect change in the relationship?

Process
Leaders promote a general discussion regarding "real life" experiences in attempts to change anger dances, normalizing feelings of disappointment or frustration and giving strokes for victories. If there is time, give members the opportunity to act out additional revisions of the anger skits, based on their experiences over the week. Alternatively, members can be invited to role play specific interactions that took place over the week and explore with the group how they could have moved or countermoved differently. Some members may also wish to role-play a 'worst case scenario' and explore how they might handle a frightening or destructive countermove.

[Concluding message:]
Your relationship with the other person will continue to influence you, but no matter how angry you feel, it's O.K. to be angry and the choice about how you will respond to your anger is always yours to make. If you try to act on your anger in a way that is affirming to yourself and respectful of the other person, then you will begin to exert a constructive influence on your relationship. The rest is a matter of perseverance. You can make a difference for yourself by choosing your responses.
III. Brief Assignment

Purpose
Orient members toward ongoing nature of their work with their anger; begin to transfer responsibility for continued change onto their shoulders; prepare them for termination of the group.

Instructions to participants
Next week is our last session. Between now and then start to think about what further steps you need to take in the future to become less afraid of your anger. Beyond the new moves in your anger dance that we have explored, what other work is there to be done?

Notes for Session VII:
This session is left relatively unstructured to provide members with the opportunity to explore issues or areas that are still of concern for them. Leaders may wish to point out to members that the final session will be more structured and that this is their last opportunity to try out something new or address a specific concern within the group.
SESSION VIII
Looking Back and Planning Ahead

I. Anger Graph

**Purpose**
Help members assess the progress they have made in the group on their goals; provide feedback to the group leaders; promote ongoing confidence in the possibility of change.

**Instructions to participants**
You will recognize this handout from the first day we met. It shows the two dimensions of anger which we have emphasized throughout the group: feeling and action (handout 8.1). We want you to fill out the two scales to show how you see yourself now. As you did on the first day, put an "X" where you think you currently are on each scale, and place an "O" where you would like to be.

**Process**
Let participants fill out the graph. Then hand back to each participant the graph that he/she filled out on the first day. Have participants compare where they now place themselves on the graphs (both currently and 'ideally') to where they placed themselves on the first day. Go around in a circle and have each participant show the group how they have changed. Explore how participants' perceptions of what the scales mean has changed over seven weeks (leaders may wish to review the process directions for the anger graph exercise on the first day). Discuss how participants feel about those changes.

II. Outline of Sessions

**Purpose**
Review and summarize the concepts introduced in the group; provide an integrating framework for different skills and insights; give participants a tangible representation of the work they have done over the weeks in the group.

**Process**
Leaders pass out and go over handout 8.2 , reviewing briefly the focus of each session. Leaders may also wish to share any previously unstated reflections and
observations about the group's work during different sessions that they feel appropriate. Leaders promote a general discussion of participants' understandings of the various concepts and exercises. Leaders may also take this opportunity to ask for feedback regarding the structure of the group and members' ratings of the relative usefulness of the various group activities.

III. Future Goals

Purpose
Continue process of planning into the future and reinforce message that change is not finished; instill optimism for continuation of change after the group is over; create a forum for anticipating and discussing future obstacles to change, thus reducing their potency.

Instructions to Participants
At the end of last week we asked you to start to consider future goals for yourselves. We now want you to take a few minutes and write down two goals for yourself. Make the first a specific goal for yourself for the next three weeks in the relationship with the person you presented your anger play about. Make your second goal a more general (but still realistic) goal for reducing your fear of your anger. Don't worry if you have trouble coming up with either one of these goals - you'll have the chance to ask the group for help if you need it.

Process
Give members a few minutes to formulate and write down their goals (on handout 5.2). Then go around in a circle and have each member read his/her goals to the group. If a participant is unable to come up with a goal on his/her own, ask other members to suggest possible goals. [To the group:] Do the goals sound reasonable and appropriate for this person? Why or why not? Given what you've learned about this person, what would be the major obstacles to the achievement of these goals? [To the goalwriter:] How do you think you'll deal with these obstacles? With this feedback from the group do you want to revise your goals?

IV. Saying Good-bye

Purpose
To provide the opportunity for each member to get closure on the group
experience; deal with any unresolved issues or feelings that members may feel suspended in; provide a smooth sense of termination of the group experience.

**Instructions to participants**
As we come to the end of our last session together, it's time to say good-bye to each other. Is there any final feedback you'd like to give to each other or to the group leaders? Any feelings you'd like to share with the group?

**Process**
Encourage members to talk about how it feels to have the group ending and to say good-bye to each other. Leaders may want to ask members how they have seen themselves and others change in the group and how that has felt.

**V. Evaluations**

**Purpose**
Provide feedback to the group leaders about their own performance; provide feedback regarding the overall effectiveness and impactfulness of the anger theme group itself.

**Instructions to Participants**
Now we are going to leave the room to give you the opportunity to fill out these evaluation forms. Please place them in the envelope when you are finished.
Notes for Session VIII:

Since this is the final session of the group, it is important that members leave not feeling suspended or stuck in any of the work they have been doing in the anger plays over the previous weeks. Leaders should be alert to this issue and may wish to check out with specific members (especially during the 'Future Goals' and 'Saying Good-bye' exercises) if they need anything from the leaders or others in the group before it ends.

I. Anger Graph (30 min.)

This is a powerful exercise for showing members how they have grown and benefited from the group. It tends to increase optimism about the future possibility (and past reality) of change.

II. Outline of Sessions (15 min.)

III. Future Goals (40 min.)

Group leaders may want to use this exercise to give specific feedback and/or share their observations/perceptions with each participant. This is also a useful forum for discussing further treatment which may be indicated for some group members (if leaders feel this is appropriate).

IV. Saying Good-bye (20 min.)

In practice, the Saying Good-bye and Future Goals exercises may tend to merge somewhat into each other. That's fine as long as it is clear that the group is addressing its termination issues and members are saying good-bye appropriately.

V. Group Evaluations (15 min.)

Leaders may want to inform members at the beginning of the session that they will be asked to complete evaluation forms at the end and that time will be set aside for them to do so. Leaders may also ask for specific feedback regarding themselves or most helpful/least helpful components of the group's exercises and activities.
FEELING ANGER

ACTING ON ANGER

HIGH

DIRECTING OUT

LOW

HOLDING IN
ANGER THEME GROUP

In this group we have defined anger as an emotion, an energy, and a connection to others. We have drawn a distinction between feeling angry and acting on anger. Most of the group exercises and discussions have focused on these two aspects of anger and how they interact to determine how we deal with anger in our lives.

Feeling Anger

We have talked about how emotions come in groups or clusters, and how people often tend to focus on some feelings to the exclusion of others, or tend to defocus and become unaware of how they feel. Through imagery and group discussions we have invited group members to get more in touch with different feelings and to look at why they choose to focus on some feelings and away from others.

Acting on Anger

We have invited group members to explore how they act on anger in a variety of different ways. We have looked at how our families tended to act on anger (family sculpture exercise) and have tried out different ways of acting on anger ourselves (anger mask, anger skit). In the last three group sessions we have looked at anger between ourselves and others. We have talked about anger in a relationship as a dance between two people and have seen how we can change our steps and respond to the other person's countersteps to change our dance of anger.

While preparing for this group, the group leaders articulated three key beliefs about anger which they shared, and which they hoped that group members would come to believe as well:

1) It is O.K. to feel angry.
2) No matter how angry we feel, we are responsible for choosing our actions.
3) We can act on our anger in ways that are affirming to ourselves, respectful of others, and constructive for our relationships.

Still afraid of your anger? That's O.K. - everyone is afraid of their anger at one time or another. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't feel angry, and it doesn't mean you can't put your anger to good use if you are willing to try. We've given you some tools to work with your anger, but the rest is up to you. This is only a start. Good luck!
Afraid of Your Anger Bibliography


*Particularly relevant to the “Afraid of Your Anger” group.*