

Lesson Plan: Don't Blow Your Top!

1. **Lesson Subject & Title:** Don't Blow Your Top: How to Control Your Anger (Anger Management Lesson)

2. **Grade(s):** 4th & 5th Grades

3. **Learning Objective(s):**

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- explain what it means to feel angry and how anger affects their bodies.
- identify at least two ways to calm down when they are angry.
- write a letter to someone in their family applying the information they learned about anger.

4. **ASCA Domain & Mindset/Behavior Standards:**

Domain: Social/Emotional

- **Mindset 1:** Believe in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
- **Behavior Self-Management Skill 2:** Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control
- **Behavior Social Skill 1:** Use effective oral and written communication skills and learning skills

5. **Materials:**

- *Don't Blow Your Top* PowerPoint
- Laptop & Projector
- 3x5 cards
- Pencils
- Balloon (not blown up)
- Lined paper

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6. Procedure:

Slide 1: Welcome students to the class and share the lesson title (Don't Blow Your Top).

Slide 2: Ask all students to read the school's behavior expectations out loud together (Be ready, be respectful, be responsible). Ask students to silently *think* what the school counselor will see and what s/he will hear when students are following these expectations in the class. After allowing 10-15 seconds of think time, ask students to *pair* with a neighbor and tell the partner what they thought about. After 2-3 minutes of discussion, call on students who are demonstrating the expectations to *share*, and also praise the students specifically for their on-task behavior (raising their hand, looking at the speaker, etc.).

Slide 3: Remind students about the members of the school counseling department including their counselor and the counseling interns. Tell students their job is to help students have fun at school by teaching them lessons about feelings (like today), planning events, talking to them if they have a problem, and helping everyone at school feel safe and happy.

Slide 4: Explain the objectives for the presentation and why they are important. Have one student read the first objective and another student read the second, or the counselor can ask the whole class read the objective collectively. Explain this is what the students will be learning today. Objectives: We can...

- explain what it means to feel angry and how anger affects their bodies.
- identify at least two ways to calm down when they are angry.
- can write a letter to someone in their family applying the information they learned about anger.

Tell the students the objectives are aligned to the school counseling standards at the bottom of the slide.

Slide 5: Ask the students to think quietly about things that have made them feel angry. While they are thinking, ask two students to pass out a 3x5 card to each student. Tell the students they are going to write their name on the card and two to three things that make them feel angry. Explain the example on the PowerPoint (make sure to *model* what you'd like students to write on the card by updating the PPT with your own name and developmentally appropriate examples of what makes you feel angry). Walk around and observe while students are writing, noticing any specific students you'd like to call on to share and any you'd want to avoid. After several minutes, regroup the class and ask for three to four students to share what makes them feel angry. After

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each student shares, ask the class if what the student said makes them angry too to raise their hand. Ask one or two students to quietly and quickly collect all the cards and bring them up to you in the front as you proceed with the next slide.

Slide 6: The school counselor may want to have different students read each bullet point, calling on the first student and asking the next student to *popcorn* to a new student. Expand upon the bullet points explaining that feeling angry is normal, just as the examples shared with the class. Explain that anger is a normal emotion that everyone feels. However, if we overreact when we are upset by saying or doing things we don't mean, that is when we can get ourselves into trouble.

Slide 7: Explain the different feelings that students may have to alert them they are feeling angry. An arrow accompanied by different body signs will appear on the screen with each click (Sweaty hands and body, sign muscles or clenched fists, heart racing, etc.). The school counselor may want to briefly act out some of descriptions such as clenching their own fists and then asking students to clench theirs. Explain that different people feel differently when they are angry, and it is important to understand how your body feels because it's like a warning sign to remind you to calm down. If there is time, school counselors can ask students to share what happens to their body when they are angry with a partner.

Slide 8: Tell students that when we get angry, we feel it in our bodies and if we don't calm down we can stay upset. Take out the balloon and explain it is like our body. Read one of the examples of being upset from the card (without reading the student's name), and then puff into the balloon. Continue to do this until the balloon gets very large. Ask the students what will happen if you keep blowing. (Answer – the balloon will pop!). Explain that yes, when we don't calm down we can end up saying or doing something we don't mean,

Slide 9: Randomly call on student names from the cards to read 1. Stop and Think, 2. Ask yourself: How does my body feel?, 3. Try to calm down by, and then each of the calm down strategies. At each one, stop and practice.

- Taking slow deep breaths – Demonstrate how to breath in and out deeply, without gasping or puffing loudly. Practice with the class three times.
- Thinking calming thoughts – Explain that thinking about a peaceful place or something that helps them feel happy can take their mind off what is making them upset. Give some

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examples (like being at the beach or laying on the couch). Ask students to close their eyes and picture a peaceful place.

- Counting backwards slowly – Ask students which is more calming – counting quickly or slowly, and then ask why. Students will likely respond that counting slowly helps them relax, and if not help guide them to the answer and then practice as a class.
- Talking to yourself positively – Explain that sometimes when we get upset the words in our head sound like this, “I’m so mad!”, “I can’t believe he did that to me!”, and “She’s such a jerk!” However, if we let those words go on and on in our head we will get more angry instead of less. Instead, we can think things like “I’m mad but I’m going to calm down”, “I’m just going to ignore him”, and “I will get through this”. Saying positive, calming words will help us feel less upset so we don’t say or do something we don’t mean.

Slide 10: Discuss the other “Anger Busters” listed on the slide, and talk about when students can or can’t use different ways to calm down. For instance, when they are in class they can’t listen to music but that is a strategy they can use for home. Ask students to list other ideas they have that help them calm down.

Slide 11: Explain that students are going to write a letter to their family explaining what they have learned. While reading each question, pause for the class to fill the underlined word (i.e. Counselor: What did you –pause– Students: learn?). As you are describing your example, ask two students to quietly pass out lined paper. If possible, turn on calm/classical music while students are writing. Walk around the class to answer questions and support students as they are writing. If some students are finishing earlier than others, ask them to add other calm down ideas to their letter and/or pass out Plickers for post-assessment.

Slide 12: As students are finishing up remind them it is okay to feel angry and to practice different calm down strategies until they find their favorites. Also ask students to read the letter with their family and ask them to have the adult sign to show they read the letter. When they bring it back they will get a surprise from the school counselor (such as a pencil, five extra minutes of recess, or their name entered in a raffle) and/or this can be part of their homework as coordinated with the teacher.

Slide 13: Finally, review the objectives with the students and call on students randomly using the cards to fill in the *sentence frames* (Anger is ____, Anger can affect our bodies by ____, etc.).

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Slide 14: Administer the post-test and thank the class and tell them you look forward to reading their signed letters.

7. Plan for Evaluation: How will each of the following be collected?

- **Process Data:**

- Who: All 4th and 5th graders (approximately 180 students)
- What: Students receive lesson regarding identifying feelings of anger and ways to calm down.
- When: Early Spring (February/March)
- Where: Taught in individual 4th and 5th grade classes

- **Perception Data:**

Pre/Post-Assessment (pre-assessment administered a week prior to the lesson and post-assessment given immediately following the lesson, using Plickers)

- Attitudes: % of students who believe *It is okay for kids to feel angry.*
- Knowledge: % of students who can define anger, identify ways anger can make someone feel (in their body), and identify ways to calm down
- Skills: % of students who can apply their learning to describe how anger makes them feel and how they can calm down (through writing a letter to their family)

- **Outcome Data:**

Tracking number of behavior referrals and number of out of school suspensions before and after lesson (looking for a decline).

8. Follow Up:

The school counselor will check in with each teacher 2-3 days later to collect signed letters. They will briefly review the letters to see what strategies were most common (perception data) and return them to students with a surprise. School counselors will also talk with teachers and campus supervisors to ask if students seem to be utilizing the calm down strategies. A follow up lesson may be implemented if additional support on the topic is needed, as evidenced by behavior referrals.