

Adolescents & School Violence

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Agenda

- Intro - significance of violence in our society
- Is there more violence ?
- Predictors of violence
- Precursors of violence
- Building healthy, non-violent kids & environments
- Interventions, impulse control and expressing anger

**Violence
Concerns
In Our
Society Today**

Statistics...

- It seems as though we are surrounded by violence and aggression
- According to the National Crime Survey, almost 3 million crimes occur on or near school campuses every year; that's 16,000 per school day, or one every 6 seconds.

Statistics...

- A recent study on domestic violence found that many high school boys thought it was alright for a boy to strike his girlfriend if she angered him; meanwhile, during the early 1980's, nearly 17,000 people were killed by their domestic partners.

Statistics...

- Each year in the United States there are approximately 20,000 homicides.

Statistics...

- Homicide is now the second leading cause of death for elementary and middle schoolchildren
 - #1 accidents ; #3 is suicide

Statistics...

- Between 1979 and 1991, nearly 50,000 children were killed by firearms - a total equivalent to American battle casualties in the Vietnam War

Statistics...

- A gun takes a life every two hours
- Four shooting incidents occurred in a one week period at schools in 1998

Statistics...

- Between 1980 and 1990, there was a 79% increase in the number of 10 to 17 year-olds using guns to commit murder
- 100,000 young people carry guns to school each day

Incidence rates

- 270,000 guns at school estimate
- 50 homicides & suicides on school grounds or en route to school
- 61% increase in teen homicide last decade
- < 1% of violent deaths of children occur at school

Statistics...

- 1 out of 6 teenagers knows someone who died in a violent incident
- A typical U.S. child witnesses 8,000 murders on television by the time he or she leaves eighth grade

Statistics...

- In 1990, 1 in 5 high school students reported carrying a weapon somewhere, at least once, during the past month
- In a 1993 national survey, 11% of public schoolteachers and 23% of students reported being victims of violence in or around their school.

Statistics...Close to Home

- Kansas City - A Top Ten Murder City
- Last two years 6 teens seen in our office for carrying guns to school
- Zero Tolerance Policy enacted in Johnson County Schools

Statistics...Close to Home

- Community response - tolerance by society
 - Christmas tree story
- Arbitrary right - wrong philosophy
 - blurring of limits - less security for kids

Statistics... Close to Home

- Shooting incident involving two rival local high schools
- Destruction of a local home at party - jail time for teens
- Increased expulsions for weapons / violence at schools

Assessment & Predictors

Research Supports That ...

- average males in all cultures/societies more aggressive than average female
- difference present in infancy - before cultural influence
- not linked to testosterone

Available Assessments ...

- MMPI-2
- Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory
- Subset of BDHI
- Anger, Irritability Assault Questionnaire
- Overt Aggression Scale
- Rates verbal & physical aggression against self, others & objects based on degree of seriousness

Available Assessments ...

- Overt Aggression Scale
- Rates verbal & physical aggression against self, others & objects based on degree of seriousness
- Scale for Assessment of Aggressive & Agitated Behavior
 - Based on severity, initiator, target
- Anger Attacks Questionnaire
 - Self report

Available Assessments ...

- Conflict tactics Scale
 - violence within relationships
- Cooke-Medly Hostility Scale
- Stait Trait Anger Scale
- 90 Item Anger Inventory
- Rathus Assertiveness Scale
- Barratt Impulsiveness Scale
- Past Feelings & Acts of Violence Scale
- Violence Scale

Predictors of Violence ...

- Hx of bullying & aggression
- Fascination w guns bombs violence
- Cruelty to animals
- Firesetting
- Lack of remorse empathy
- Interpersonal deficits

Predictors of Violence ...

- Both parents together = less chance of violence
- Perception of parents attitudes toward fighting was strongest predictor of violence in their kids
- PARENT COMPONENT INTEGRAL

APA Task Force Predictors of Youth Violence ...

- child abuse
- ineffective parenting
- violence in the home
- media violence
- poverty

APA Task Force Predictors of Youth Violence ...

- prejudice
- substance abuse
- gun access

Markers - STRONGLY Related to Violence

- possession of a weapon
- plan to harm
- issuance of a threat
- access to victim

Short Term (≤ 7 days) Prediction

- worst case - “better than chance”
- overall acceptable validity
- risk assessments are considered important & necessary
- better predictive accuracy with males than females

Long Term (> 1 week) Prediction...

- Mixed findings with both individual and meta-analysis
- “Disappointing”
- “Just as accurate as short-term”
- Questions remain

Long Term (> 1 week) Prediction

- Best long-term predictor variable is past behavior
 - beats clinical judgement and cross validated actuarial measures

Anecdotal Evidence Suggests

- ...that the exceptionally violent is either antisocial & con like or unattached and reclusive

What do you watch for?

- “If you hear hoof beats, think horses, not zebras”

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- accounts of recent and past episodes
- antecedent factors including triggers
- feelings at time (jealous, helpless, frustrated)

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- signs of impending aggression
 - flushing, tensing, clench jaw, pacing
- assumptions regarding the situation
 - no other choice
 - trying to make me look like a fool

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- settings where occurred
 - school, mall, home
- intended & actual targets
- degree of planning, force & persistence

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- use of a weapon - how obtained
- roles of others
- intended & actual consequences including degree of injury
- degree to which incident was ego-dystonic
 - shame remorse empathy for victim

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- substance use/withdrawal
- non-compliance with psychiatric medication
- presence of other psychiatric disorder
 - mood, organic, mental retardation

Information Considered Useful & Helpful..

- relevant stressors
 - family, job, health, financial
- pattern of irresponsible or antisocial behaviors

Trivia Snapshot

- A YoYo can achieve speeds up to 11,000 rpm

Precursors of Violence

- What are warning signs?
- How does exposure to violence effect adolescents?

Defining exposure to violence

- Direct experience has more of an impact on children than indirect experience. Although watching TV violence influences values about violence and perceptions of how often it occurs, it is an indirect experience and "less meaningful in promoting violence than witnessing real life violence."

Research supports 3 major effects of seeing violence on
television:

- Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others
- Children may be more fearful of the world around them
- Children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others.

Childhood behaviors of victims or witnesses of violence...

- fear
- worried about being safe
- aggression toward others
- depression
- sleeplessness
- reluctance to explore their physical environment

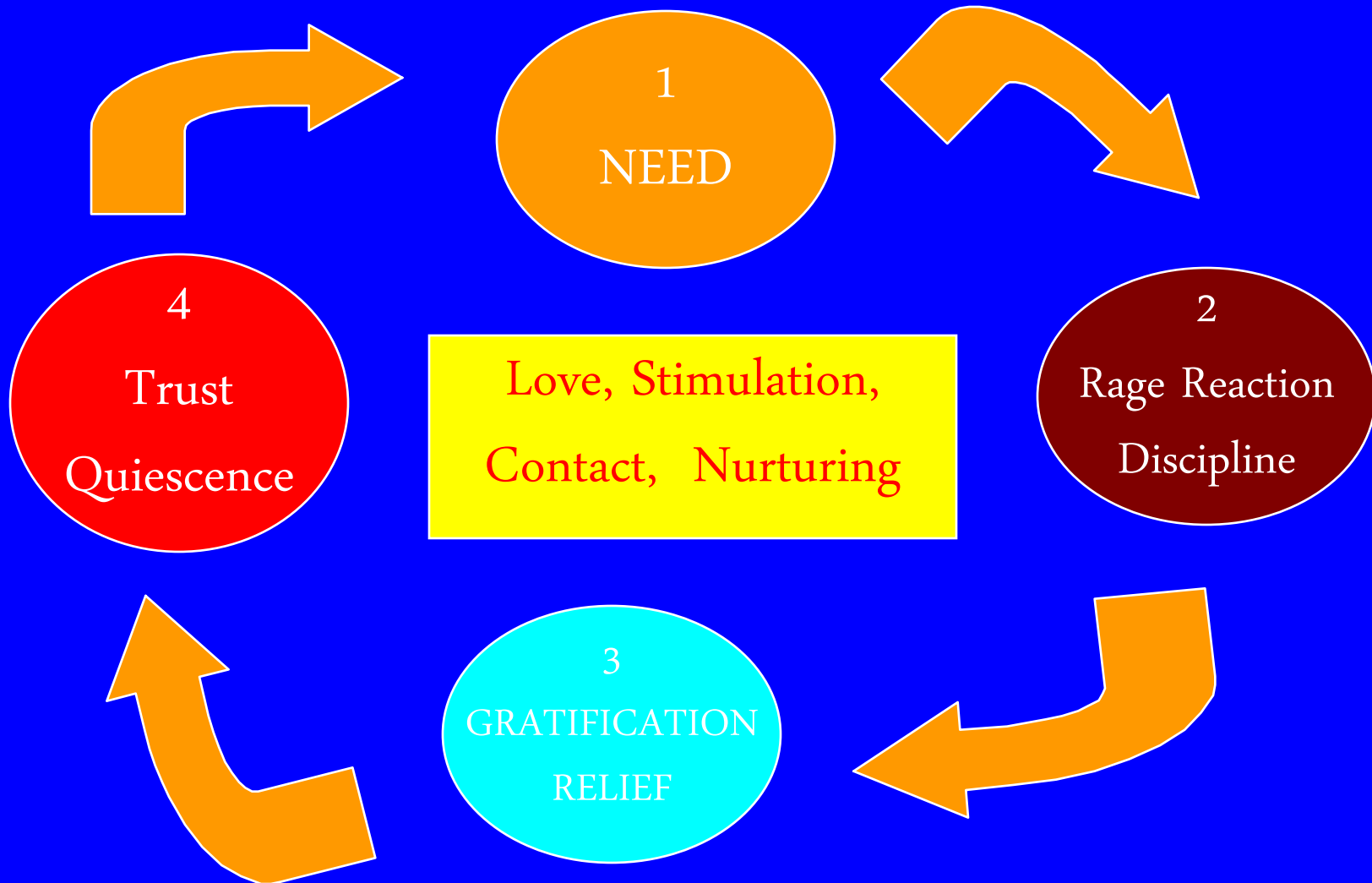
Childhood behaviors of victims or witnesses of violence...

- psychosomatic symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)
- anxiety
- eating disorders
- lowered self-esteem
- withdrawal
- poor school performance

Childhood behaviors of victims or witnesses of violence...

- difficulty paying attention
- suicidal tendencies
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Life Cycle



Potential Warning Signs

- Parents of children who show the signs listed below should discuss their concerns with a professional, who will help them understand the children and suggest ways to prevent violent behavior.

Warning Signs in the School-Aged Child...

- Has trouble paying attention and concentrating
- Often disrupts classroom activities
- Does poorly in school
- Frequently gets into fights with other children in school
- Reacts to disappointments, criticism, or teasing with extreme and intense anger, blame, or revenge

Warning Signs in the School-Aged Child...

- Watches many violent television shows and movies or plays a lot of violent video games
- Has few friends, and is often rejected by other children because of his or her behavior
- Makes friends with other children known to be unruly or aggressive

Warning Signs in the School-Aged Child...

- Consistently does not listen to adults
- Is not sensitive to the feelings of other
- Is cruel or violent toward pets or other animals
- Is easily frustrated

Warning Signs in the Preteen or Teenage Adolescent...

- Consistently does not listen to authority figures
- Pays no attention to the feelings or rights of others
- Mistreats people and seems to rely on physical violence or threats of violence to solve problems
- Often expresses the feeling that life has treated him or her unfairly

Warning Signs in the Preteen or Teenage Adolescent...

- Does poorly in school and often skips class
- Misses school frequently for no identifiable reason
- Gets suspended from or drops out of school
- Joins a gang, gets involved in fighting, stealing, or destroying property
- Drinks alcohol and/or uses inhalants or drugs

High Risk Characteristics in Adolescents...

- Lack of ability to give & receive affection
- Self-destructive behavior
- Cruelty to others or pets
- Phoniness
- Stealing

High Risk Characteristics in Adolescents

- Extreme control tendencies
- Parents often unreasonably angry
- Preoccupation with blood / fire
- Extreme lying - in face of reality

Relationship between *Anger* and *Violence*

- Is anger different than violence?

Trivia Snapshot

- It is actually the tomato sauce that burns your mouth when pizza is too hot - NOT the cheese

Aristotle

- “Anyone can become angry - that is easy. But to be angry at the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not easy.”

All American Families of the Past



All American Family of the '00s



Lisa & Marge Simpson



- Lisa: “Mom, I’m just so angry. Everyone at school is just so dumb, I hate it. I can’t stand this anger.”

• Marge: “Lisa, just take that anger and push it down to the tippy tippy tips of your toes and it will never, ever, ever come out again.”



Homer on Rage

- ◆ ...just squeeze your rage into a bitter little ball & release it at an appropriate time..like that day I hit the referee with a whiskey bottle





I will not create
I will not create
I will not create
I will not create
I will not create
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I will not create

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Anger is...

- A combination of discomfort, tenseness, resentment & frustration
- Not simple annoyance, irritation or disappointment
- A choice as well as a habit & like all emotions-- the result of thinking

Anger management skills..

- Do not try to do away with feelings
- Facilitates learning to increase appropriate expressions of anger
- Help to keep expressions of anger at a manageable and non-destructive level

Is anger different from violence?...

- Anger is a normal human emotion
- Violence is an attempt to control, dominate or intimidate

Is anger different from violence?

- Violence may have many forms including:
 - Physical
 - Psychological
 - Sexual
 - Economic

Anger - violence info..

- Anger does not produce violence
- Change in mental status or situational factors one way or another
 - Not having a job is nothing
 - Losing a job is a problem

Anger - violence info..

- Treatment is effective in reducing lethality risks
- Amount of structure is a salient factor in decreasing lethality

Violence as a learned means of self-maintenance

- Understand what it is to be angry
- Recognize when it occurs
- Interrupt automatic behaviors
- Put new behaviors into place

Those likely to turn anger to violence...

- Minimize or deny anger
- Tend to blame others for their feelings
- Overly dependent on others
- Low self esteem
- Don't communicate well with words

Those likely to turn anger to violence...

- Externalize causality for events in their lives
- Isolated, loners
- Feel out of control in their lives
- Substance users
- Fixed / rigid ideas about how things ought to be

Where does the cycle start

- Genetic predisposition
 - Some support for inherited irritability
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Environment - Early Experience
- Personality issues
- Sociocultural factors

Anger provoking stimuli

- Physical, verbal or psychological threat
- Sense of injustice or unfairness
- Sudden loss of something valued
- Loss of relationship due to death, rejection or betrayal
- Sudden or chronic debilitating illness
- Lack of recognition or affirmation

Physical Responses

- Adrenaline released into bloodstream from adrenal glands
- Breathing rate increased
- Heart rate increased
- Blood pressure increased
- Fight or flight reaction

Knowing when others are being aggressive

- what happened before
- what happened after
- facts to determine accident or deliberate

Knowing feelings related to anger

- Angry feelings take the focus and decrease awareness of other feelings
- Monitor all feelings

Precursors of Violence - 6 characteristics (inpatient)

- confusion
- irritability
- boisterousness
- verbal & physical threats
- attack on objects
- if these occur then 92.1% chance of violence in
24 hours

Adolescent precursors

- exposure to or watching violence
- bonding breaks or problems with attachment

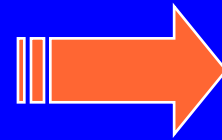
Continuity into adulthood

- 50% of kids with early violence problems continue into adulthood
- generational continuation

Attachment may be critical

- but...twins of antisocial parents separated from parents at birth still have higher risk
- concordance rates
 - if one twin is antisocial - high probability that the other has at least tendencies
- Bonding issues with difficult infants

**Bonding/attachment
problems**



**Non nurturing
environment**

TROUBLE

Pasta

- put salt in the water before cooking
- if you forget the salt you can't just sprinkle it on afterwards
- you never can get the pasta to taste right

Trivia Snapshot

When you watch a baseball game on TV
you actually hear the crack of the bat
sooner than the fans at the game because
of the placement of the microphone and
the speed of sound versus the speed of
the electrical transmissions used for
broadcasting the signal

Local Interventions

11 parents indicted in Jackson County

Use of truancy law

Local Interventions

- “We want to get these kids back in school.”

Local Interventions

- “The parents may be ordered into parenting, or family programs or drug treatment.”

“Fight Against Crime: Invest In Kids”

- “Provide adequate funding for services to prevent child abuse and neglect and to protect and aid in healing the victims”

“Fight Against Crime:Invest In Kids” - Continued

- “Make sure troubled kids get early , effective help. Assess the source of the child’s problem.”

“Fight Against Crime:Invest In Kids” - Continued

- “Assure that all families have access to educational child care for babies and young children.”

“Fight Against Crime:Invest In Kids” - Continued

- “Assure that older children and teens have access to after-school programs.”

Communication

- Parents - teachers
- Parents - kids
- Teachers - kids
- Lawyers - risk mgmt
- Civil liberties union
- Politics of the times
 - village versus parent

Modeling

- Role models
- Parent behaviors
- Media heroes
- Community
- Peer group
- Rebelling more difficult these days
 - wearing long hair doesn't do it anymore

Supervision

- Sense of connectedness
- Reaching out for recognition
- Feeling abandoned
- Limit - boundary setting
- Both parents working
- Kids & parents both over-committed
- Lack of family time
- Lack of family
 - extended - to less than nuclear

Have a plan

- Coordinate with parents, law enforcement, students
- Primary prevent crisis from occurring
- Secondary immediate aftermath to minimize effects
- Tertiary long term follow-up weeks, years
- Plan a crisis drill

Technology & people interventions

- Cameras, cell phones, intercoms

Higher Risk Schools

- Differences
- Interventions differ by setting
 - level of parent involvement

What makes difference

- Satisfactory relationship with parent
- Parent communicated clear behavioral expectations

What does not work

- awareness of danger or consequences of behaviors had no effect

Treatment Approaches

- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- Individual therapy
- Spiritual
- “Ropes Course” Programs

Trust..A Problem

- Traditional therapies focus on trust
- Hindered if you can't trust

Goals of Treatment..

- Evaluate motivation and reason for treatment
- Facilitate verbal expression of problems/conflicts
- Foster development of self control

Goals of Treatment

- Develop affective awareness
- Foster development of insight
- Increase ability to predict and appreciate consequences of actions
- Restructure life/environment to prevent violence

Success

- Good documentation for cognitive behavioral therapy in addressing impulse control, aggression and facilitating remorse and empathy
- Long-term effectiveness remains somewhat questionable

Stress Inoculation - Novaco

- Regulation of anger involves cognitive mediation
- Maladaptive anger aroused by faulty, automatic
 - appraisals (attribution of hostile intent)
 - expectations about external events (frustrations)
- Anger diary
- cognitive-behavioral approach

A-B-C

- Antecedent
- Behaviors
- Consequences

Social Skills Training

- Focused instruction for a particular behavior
- Demonstrating or modeling that response
- Rehearsal or role playing
- Reinforcement with corrective feedback
- homework or practice in real life situations

Parent Training - What Can Parents Do

- Keep your focus on the act, not on the child personally
- Be frank with your kids about what kind of behavior you do and don't like.
- Role Model
- Kindness to others
- Kindness to the child

To counteract negative influences

- Books
- TV
- Movies
- Proactive Influences
 - heroes

The Indestructible Link

- None of this works in the absence of an indestructible link of caring between parent and child

Raising Children to Resist Violence: What You Can Do...

- Give your children consistent love and attention
- Make sure your children are supervised
- Show your children appropriate behaviors by the way you act
- Don't hit your children
- Be consistent about rules and discipline

Attachment Issues

- When basic needs remain unmet
- When life is chaotic & unpredictable
- When early bonding does not occur
- When mixed signals are received from primary caregivers

Therapy Techniques

- Helping kids GET better NOT just FEEL better
- Active
- Intrusive
- Persistent

Reciprocity

- Responding appropriately to another person
- Give and Take
- NOT just Take

Unattached kids DO NOT show reciprocity

- There is no base of bonding
- An egocentric position is taken
- Selfishness has been necessary & serves to protect

Treatment Plan includes:

- Safe expression of rage & safe way of working through it
- Relinquishing control
- Developing trust
- Working through loss and separation
- Building attachment and bonding

Therapeutic stages

- Provocation
- Rage
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Bonding

4 types of anger

- Historical
- Loss / grief
- Transitory
- Temperamental

Historical

- Childhood love, affection, needs issues
- Self confidence - self esteem
- People pleasing behaviors which result in suppressed anger

Loss / Grief

- Kubler-Ross stages
- Giving up substances is a loss
- Dealing with reality without numbing chemicals

Transitory

- Normal everyday life stuff
- Daily events over which we have no control
- Focus on the normalcy aspect

Temperamental

- Holding on to transitory or stuffed anger
- Judgmental person's anger
- Justified anger
- Reject insight because it deprives them of the excitement and drama of fighting

How to manage the 4 types

- Direct expression
- Indirect expression
 - passive aggressive
- Acting out
- Suppressing
 - stuffing

Hearing others' anger...

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the person has to say
- Ask person to explain if you don't understand

Hearing others' anger

- Ask person what they want you to do
- Tell the person you understand and either ..
 - apologize ...or
 - agree to do it ...or
 - tell your side of story

Telling others' your anger

- Ask person if you can talk to them
- Say something positive if you can
- Stay as calm as possible
- Tell person what is on your mind
- Ask person if they understand
- Thank the person for listening

Working it out together..

- Stay calm
- Tell the other person what you want
- Listen to the response

Working it out together

- Ask if the person has another way to solve the problem
- If you don't agree...
- Propose a compromise until you come to agreement

Defensiveness...

- Hear anger as a statement of feeling
- Do not personalize it as a statement about you
- Do not personalize it as a statement about a relationship
- View it as directed toward a behavior

Defensiveness

- Do not view it as a right / wrong situation
- Do not view it as a win / lose situation
- Recognize ties to past events which may play a role
 - Parent-child flashbacks
 - Past abusive experiences

Feelings

- Self monitoring
- Permission to verbalize
- Vocabulary based on feelings
 - This is learned!
 - If not learned early on then it can be learned now
- Word lists - make connection to experience

Stress reduction

- Identification
- Progressive relaxation
- Visual imagery
- Role playing

Time Out..

- “I” statement with communicated feeling
 - “I’m beginning to feel angry”
- State that you need to take a time out
 - “I need to take a time out”
- Leave for a predetermined amount of time
(hour)

Time Out

- Don't drive, drink or use drugs
- Do something physical (walk, run, exercise)
- Return at predetermined time ... no sooner - no later
- Check in - talk about what made you angry
 - If still unable to talk about it repeat time out

Recognizing feelings

- Beck, Burns techniques
- Describe the incident
- Record and rate feelings
- Three column technique
 - Event, Negative feelings/perception,
Reality/alternative explanation
- Mood Log

COPING...

- C = Calm down, count to 10
- O = Overcome the negative, opt for control. If I lose control now, then ...
- P = Prepare, problem solve, plan

COPING

- I = Identify & invite alternatives; instead of insults, imagine success
- N = Name your feelings, negotiate
- G = Go! Get on with the plan, give praise to yourself & others

RETHINK

- Recognize
- Empathize
- Think
- Hear
- Integrate
- Notice
- Keep

Recognize

- Self monitoring
- Is anger covering other emotions
 - shame
 - fear
 - stress
 - embarrassment

Empathize

- See things from the other person's view
- Focus on their feelings

Think

- No one “makes” us angry
- How we think and interpret determines our emotion
- Friends can say same thing as someone else & our response is different

Hear

- Check out your understanding
- Active listening and reflecting back
- When people are hurt they want to be heard
- Give feedback you are hearing them

Integrate

- Keep respect and caring in your response
- Sometimes people need to vent their anger at you
- They can learn more respectful ways of doing this in the future dependent upon your response
- Keep in mind the big picture

Notice

- Pay attention to what works for you
- Keep a mental list of options to use in the future

Keep

- Focus on the present event
- Don't teach history with old grudges
- Attend to alternative solutions for the matter at hand
- Keep personalities out of it

**Building
Healthy,
Non-Violent
Relationships**

Helping normalize anger...

- Build an anger vocabulary
- Role play and rehearse
 - best / worst scenarios to allay fears
- Encourage an anger journal
 - safe outlet
 - record of success

Helping normalize anger...

- Channel energy
 - energy releasing events
 - working, running, physical activity
- Anger training workbook
 - Provides structure and specific techniques / suggestions

Helping normalize anger..

- Stress management techniques
 - breathing
 - progressive muscle relaxation
 - desensitization
- Assertiveness training

Helping normalize anger

- Humor
- Change your environment
- Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

Stop / Minimize Substance use

- Serves as fuel
- Reduces inhibitions
- Serves as an excuse

Work through / Minimize Jealousy

- Low self esteem
- Specific losses earlier in life
- Recapture self worth by being seen as worthy through someone else
 - increased dependence
- Learn limits of control
 - Control self not environment

Be aware of external moderators of anger

- Life events
- Family environment
- Peer environment
- Work environment
- Other situational

Expectations

- Difference between reality and expectations
- Feelings are a result and determine beliefs
- Beliefs can result in irrational thoughts
- System then becomes restructured around irrational belief

Self-esteem

- Living authentically
- Consistency in our beliefs, statements and actions
- Provides a base and security

Cognitive changes

- Epictetus: “Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them.”
- Shakespeare (Hamlet): “There’s nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.”
- Albert Ellis - Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)

11 Ideas, values, myths ... (Ellis) ...

- I must be loved by everyone
- I must be perfectly competent & achieve to be worthwhile
- Some people are bad and must be blamed and punished

11 Ideas, values, myths ... (Ellis) ...

- It is catastrophic when things do not go as planned
- Unhappiness is caused by factors outside of my control
- Danger is a cause for great concern and must continually be dwelt upon

11 Ideas, values, myths ... (Ellis) ...

- I can more easily avoid certain responsibilities than face them
- I must have someone strong on whom to rely
- My past always determines my present and cannot be changed

11 Ideas, values, myths ... (Ellis)

- I should be upset over the problems of others
- There is always a right solution which must be found or the results will be catastrophic

Thank You

- Time For Your Questions