

Exploring Anger

Identifying anger and other strong emotions helps students to understand their own reactions to conflict and other difficult situations. In this lesson, students will strengthen skills of self-control to understand and choose how they react to events.

SEL COMPETENCY

Self-Management

SKILLS self-management, impulse control, self-discipline

MATERIALS

- ✓ Discovering Projectable 2.3.1
- ✓ Connecting Projectable 2.3.2
- ✓ Reflecting Projectable 2.3.3
- ✓ Student Handout: Practicing
- ✓ Student Handout: Applying
- ✓ Family Connection Worksheet
- ✓ Index cards

CLASSROOM CONFIGURATION

- D** whole class **C** whole class
P small groups **A** individuals

OBJECTIVES

Students will

- ✓ Identify anger and the external and internal triggers that provoke anger and strong emotions;
- ✓ Investigate the connection between emotions, thoughts, and actions;
- ✓ Practice managing emotions and choosing appropriate actions in difficult situations.

SKILLS Progression

LAST YEAR, students gained clarity around their emotions and thoughts to build self-control.

THIS YEAR, students will learn to manage anger through understanding how emotions, thoughts, and actions go together.

NEXT YEAR, students will learn how to respond positively to negative situations.

DISCOVERING

8 MINUTES

Lesson Link

ACTIVITY 1

Welcome the students and ask them to talk about their experiences of emotions. Have them name several emotions and as they respond write the emotions they name on the board. Explain that this lesson will focus on a particularly strong emotion: anger.

SAY: *We can't control our emotions, but we can control how they affect us. We can do so by labeling our emotions, which helps us understand them. We can also control our thoughts and how we look at a situation. For example, if you do poorly on a test, you might feel anger. If you say to yourself, "I'm no good in this subject," that's a thought. You can choose to think differently. Instead of saying, "I'm no good in this subject," you can say, "I know that I need to study harder on the next test." By changing the way you think about a situation, you can manage your emotions and make positive choices.*

Give students the following example and then discuss it.

SAY: *Let's say that another student disrespects you. This person calls you a name, pushes your books out of your hands, or spreads a rumor about you.*

ASK: *How would you probably feel about this situation? (Encourage students to name emotions, such as anger and frustration.)*

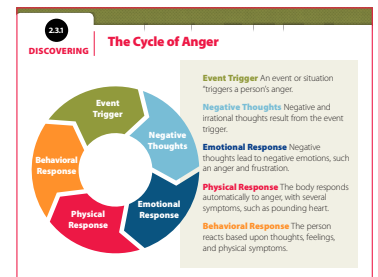
- How might you think about the situation? (Student might suggest thoughts like, "Wow, is there something wrong with me," "What a jerk," or "Wow, he (or she) is having a bad day.")
- How might your thoughts change how you feel about the situation?

Display **Discovering Projectable 2.3.1**. Ask students to examine the *Cycle of Anger* diagram, which shows how negative thoughts can feed the feeling of anger.

SAY: *Let's discuss the Cycle of Anger by looking at an example. Suppose you're riding your bike, and a driver cuts you off at an intersection. Or suppose you get some fast food take-out and when you get home you realize they forgot the fries.*

ASK: *What might be some negative thoughts that you have? (What an idiot. Now I have to go back and fix this guy's mistake!)*

- What might be your emotional response? (Feelings of shame, embarrassment, guilt, anger)
- What might be your physical response? (heart races, blood rushes to face, sweat, shaking)
- What might be your behavioral response? (Lashing out, verbal or physical attack)



KEEP IN MIND

Point out to students that sometimes anger can cover over other painful feelings, such as pain, fear, shame, embarrassment, or vulnerability. It's important to try to get to the core of what they're feeling.



CONNECTING

10 MINUTES

INSTRUCTION

Explain that now that they have looked at the thought-emotion-action connection, they're going to explore some strategies they can use to understand their emotions and manage them.

SAY: *To manage your emotions means to understand them and use them to benefit yourself and help you grow in positive ways. You can choose to think differently and to act differently. Thoughts and behavior are under your control. Though acting out of emotion feels natural in the moment, it can backfire and make you immediately regret it. You realize you have lost the possibility of acting in a more rational and effective way.*

Discuss the a strategy for managing emotions, thoughts, and actions

Display **Connecting Projectable 2.3.2**, Discuss the six steps to help students manage their emotions, thoughts, and actions. Then lead the class through a discussion of an example.

SAY: *Let's say that someone you know posts a nasty message about you on social media. She claims that you stole her boyfriend and calls you names. You are angry! First of all, you did no such thing! And second of all, it's none of her business! How can you use Managing Emotions, Thought, and Actions to help you deal with this tough situation?*

2.3.2
CONNECTING

Connecting Emotions, Thoughts, and Actions

When you face a tough situation, try this strategy for understanding your emotions and thinking them through.

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| <p>1 Feel the emotion. Emotional states are strong but fleeting. An emotion may last only about 90 seconds, and then passes naturally (unless it is triggered again through thinking).</p> <p>2 Notice your thoughts in relation to your emotions. I felt that and I thought this. Break thoughts and emotions apart into steps.</p> <p>3 Apply reason. Write a few thoughts down. For each thought, consider: Is this thought true? Is it helpful? Is it necessary to think about this now?</p> | <p>4 Expand your thinking. Imagine another way of viewing the situation, a different, more helpful thought.</p> <p>5 Notice the outcome. Be aware of your emotions might have changed.</p> <p>6 Act positively. Choose actions in a way that will make the situation better rather than making it worse.</p> |
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ASK:

- How would you label the emotion you're probably feeling?
- What are you probably thinking about this situation?
- How can you apply reason to the situation?
- How can you expand your thinking? What's another way of viewing the situation?
- What's the outcome? Have your emotions changed? How?
- What positive action can you take? Remember—non-action is always an option.



PRACTICING

20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY 2

Introduce the Positive Reactions Activity

Organize the class into groups of three or four students. Give each group one index card. Ask the groups to describe in writing on the card a situation young people find frustrating or disappointing. Urge groups to select situations that will not embarrass anyone. Collect the cards and read them over to make sure the situations are appropriate to read in class. Redistribute the cards so that each group has a card that another group wrote.

Distribute **Student Handout: Practicing**.

SAY: *Follow the strategy for Managing Emotions, Thoughts, and Actions on the handout and answer the questions which ask you to think through the emotions, thoughts, and actions in response to the situation on the index card.*



Community Connection

Ask students to watch the thought-emotion-action paradigm as it exists in the political realm by attending a school board or townhall meeting or watching a congressional meeting online. They should observe and record in writing the situations that are described. Then they should observe the emotions that are expressed.



Family Connection

Have students research and write one or two paragraphs about a member of their family who faced a tough situation that caused strong emotions and handled it in a great way. Send home the Family Connection Worksheet.



Applying Across the Curriculum

PHYSICAL EDUCATION Ask students to pay more attention to their family members' and friends' physical expressions as they are in moments of emotion, such as anxiety or stress. They could also suggest they read about bodily techniques like yoga and meditation to help understand their body's response to events.

ENGLISH Poetry is an excellent way for students to express emotions by using their creativity. Ask them to write a poem about a difficult situation that they faced. They should use language in an original way to express the emotion or emotions that they experienced during this situation.

Practicing Resource: Student Handout

2.3 **PRACTICING**

You will be given a difficult situation to work through—one that your fellow students have faced. Cooperate with your group to identify your emotions, thoughts, and actions in response to the situation. Then describe how you would deal with the situation.

- 1 What is the difficult situation that you must think about?
- 2 What are the emotions that the situation caused? How do you feel about the situation?
- 3 What are your thoughts in relation to the difficult situation?
- 4 How can you apply reason to think about the situation? Write a few thoughts down. For each thought, consider: Is this thought true? Is it helpful?
- 5 How can you expand your thinking? What other way is there to view the situation? What is a different, more helpful thought?
- 6 What is the outcome? How might your emotions have changed during the experience?
- 7 What positive action can you take? How can you choose actions in a way that will make the situation better rather than making it worse?

Applying Resource: Student Handout

2.3 **APPLYING**

Applying the thought-emotion-action connection as you go through the next several days. Describe several different difficult situations you face. For each situation, explain how you are able to manage your emotions, thoughts, and actions.

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| <p>1</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Emotion:</p> <p>Thoughts:</p> <p>Actions:</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Emotion:</p> <p>Thoughts:</p> <p>Actions:</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Emotion:</p> <p>Thoughts:</p> <p>Actions:</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Emotion:</p> <p>Thoughts:</p> <p>Actions:</p> |

Give the groups ten minutes to write out their responses. Then have them take turns describing to the class their situations and responses. Encourage the class to discuss their classmates' strategies for dealing with the difficult situation.

Reflecting

Display **Reflecting Projectable 2.3.3**. Students use their class notebooks to reflect individually on what they learned in this lesson.

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| What? | What is the connection among emotions, thoughts, and actions? What have you learned about your own cycles of emotions? |
| So What? | Why is it important to be able to manage anger? In a difficult situation, how can you change how you think about or view a situation? |
| Now What? | What positive actions can you take by using this new awareness of emotions and thoughts? |

A APPLYING 2 MINUTES

Ask students to apply the thought-emotion-action connection as they go through the next few days. Ask them to use **Student Handout: Applying** to describe several difficult situation they face and use the handout to explain how they manage their emotions, thoughts, and actions in each situation.

ASSESSING

PRACTICING (INFORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Use student responses to the Reflecting Projectable to assess students' understanding of the lesson. How thorough are their responses? How specifically have they explained their ideas?

APPLYING (FORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Review Student Handout: Applying to assess how well students apply their awareness to the emotion-thought-action connection for themselves and for others. How specific are their responses? Have they explained how they could change their behavior after understanding their emotions and thoughts?

BUILDING SKILLS BEYOND THE LESSON

Write a Script!

PRACTICING Reinforce the connection between emotion, thought, and action on situations and feelings by having pairs of students create a script about two characters whose feelings, thoughts, and behaviors keep getting them into fights. Have them create a fictional character and use real-life events as their inspiration.

Observe It!

APPLYING Help students enrich their understanding of how people in the public life manage emotions. Have them watch an interview of a famous person on television. The person could be a movie actor, a political leader, or any other famous person. During the interview, what emotions does the person communicate? What are the clues to the individual's emotions?

REINFORCEMENT

Research TV or Film Characters!

ENRICHMENT

PRACTICING Have students watch TV or a film in which a character shows a high degrees of skill in managing emotions and turning them into positive actions. Students should explain a difficult situation that the character faces, how he feels and thinks about the situation, and how he or she takes a positive action that results in success.

Learn from History!

APPLYING Have students learn about an important historical period in which emotions and tensions ran high in society, such as during the Civil War or the Great Depression. What were/are the emotional and rational aspects to these conflicts?