

WEEK 5

TBI AND ANGER: IDENTIFICATION, OPTIONS, AND UNDERSTANDING

*Make sure you take time to acquaint yourself with this curriculum so you can be as engaged, energetic, and confident as possible when working with kids!

BRAIN INJURY AND ANGER

GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

This module contains information to help participants better understand how their TBI is related to their experiences with anger.

The primary goals of this week will be for participants to:

- Be able to identify anger and its triggers
- Be able to discuss what their anger looks like
- Understand how anger is related to TBI
- Learn anger management skills
- Find constructive ways to express anger

TIME:

Allow 1.5 hours for the session.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

A minimum of four participants is recommended.

WEEK 5

PREPARATION



VIDEO

Watch the following video:

<https://youtu.be/EOAFmzyv19M>



HANDOUTS AND MATERIALS

Handouts (Make copies for parents, guardians and/or probation officers):

- Three Corners Game Signs
 1. No Control Over My Anger
 2. Some Control Over My Anger
 3. Complete Control Over My Anger
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Handout
- Anger Management Plan
- Take-Home Impressions (Optional)

Additional Supplies needed:

- Candy/Food for the “Break” section

*At the start of group take time to greet the participants, thank them for coming, ask them their names and share yours as well. Overall, you want to establish a fun and engaging environment.

For further background on this topic, the facilitator is encouraged to visit the following links:

<https://www.brainline.org/article/anger-following-brain-injury>

<http://www.msctc.org/tbi/factsheets/Emotional-Problems-After-Traumatic-Brain-Injury>





WRITE

Write the following schedule on the whiteboard for participants' reference:

- Structure and Topic
- Applied Practice Review
- Identifying Anger
- Anger & Brain Injury History
- Trigger Identification
- Break/Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Working Through Your Anger
- Anger Management Planning
- Group Activity
- Applied Practice Assignment

WEEK 5

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

ESTABLISH GROUP RULES

2-5 MINUTES

WRITE the following group rules on the white board for reference for participants throughout the treatment group:

1. Confidentiality
2. Respect
3. Participation

I am going to go over the rules for this group. If you have any questions about any of the group rules, please ask, and I can help to explain what that rule means.

There are 3 main rules:

The first is:

- 1. Confidentiality:** This means that what we discuss today stays in this room and is not shared with others.

That brings us to our second rule:

- 2. Respect:** Please be kind to one another, by...
 - Listening when someone else is speaking,
 - Not talking over each other,
 - And encouraging one another

The last rule is:

- 3. Participation:** We ask that you take part in the discussion. Your ideas are important to the group. At times, I may need to cut discussion short. I will tell the group when discussion time is over.

Note: As a reminder, rules only need to be reviewed in depth if there are new members who have not participated in previous weeks. Rules are discussed at the start of each group and only a brief reminder should be utilized for groups with no new members.



ICE BREAKER

5 MINUTES

Play the **Three Corners Game**

- This activity is meant to facilitate awareness of each participant's feelings of control towards their own anger and get them thinking about how they respond to frustration.
- Choose three separate corners of the room and assign each with one of the following labels using the handout sheets that you printed when preparing for the group.
 1. No Control Over My Anger
 2. Some Control Over My Anger
 3. Complete Control Over My Anger*

Let's get to know each other a little better with a short game. Three corners of the room have a different label: "No Control Over My Anger", "Some Control Over My Anger", and "Complete Control Over My Anger." I will read different scenarios out loud. After each scenario is read, you must go to the corner of the room that best describes how you would feel in that situation. You can raise your hand and talk about why you chose your corner.

READ the following scenarios out loud (one at a time) and give participants time to move to their chosen corner. After each scenario is read, allow participants to explain why they chose the corner and to discuss their level of control over each frustrating situation.

1. You are at a store in the mall. One of the employees immediately starts following you around while you shop.
2. You arrived home past your curfew because you could not find a ride. Your parents start yelling and tell you that your excuse is unacceptable.

3. You are caught texting in class and your teacher takes your phone for the day.
4. You see your girlfriend/boyfriend flirting with someone else.
- 5) You find out someone has been spreading a rumor about you.



APPLIED PRACTICE REVIEW

5 MINUTES

During the previous week, you were asked to practice emotional regulation

- What did your emotion log look like? What emotions did you experience the most? What was their intensity?
- Did you use any emotional regulation strategies? How did that go?
- Did you discuss emotional regulation with someone important to you? If so, what kind of feedback did you receive?

Note: *If participants have not completed the applied practice, please ask the following question:*

- *If you did not have the chance to practice the strategies can you think of a time in the last week where they might have been helpful?*

WEEK 5

CONTENT



INTRODUCE ANGER AND GOALS FOR THIS MODULE

5 MINUTES

Today, we will discuss anger and its connection to brain injury.

- Anger is a natural emotion we experience but is sometimes unwanted or irrational.
- People express anger in both verbal and non-verbal ways. For example:
 - A harsh tone of voice
 - Staring
 - Frowning
 - Fist and jaw clenching
 - Physical or verbal aggression
- Anger can be more easily triggered when experiencing personal problems such as changes in family structure (like a divorce or a death)
- Common triggers of anger include:
 - Grief and/or sadness
 - Tiredness and hunger
 - Feeling humiliated
 - Stress
 - A feeling of failure or disappointment
 - Being in physical pain
- Being angry is not "bad." The feeling can be helpful in alerting us that something needs to change.

- Anger and aggression are different.
 - Anger is a feeling / Aggression is a behavior
 - Aggression is not a good way to express anger
- The way we perceive situations can cause angry feelings. These thoughts can be intercepted. You have control over how you think.



DISCUSSION PROMPT

- How do you know when you are angry?
- What things seem to make you angry?
- How do you react when that feeling comes up?



INTRODUCE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TBI AND ANGER

3 MINUTES

Discuss how excessive anger is common after TBI.

A brain injury can cause someone to have a shorter fuse. Individuals with brain injuries often more easily jump to an anger response because the parts of the brain that help control emotions may be compromised. It may also be more difficult to recognize when those emotions, anger in particular, are getting out of control.

Managing your anger starts by identifying what anger feels like.



IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS AND PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES

3 MINUTES

Although these triggers may be personal, prompt an extended group discussion to define the experience of anger.



DISCUSSION PROMPT

Identifying anger is important so that you can intercept a poor behavioral response before it happens. What do you experience when you begin to get angry?

If the group has no answers, ask the following questions:

- Does your heart rate seem to increase?
- Does your face feel hot?
- Do you clench your fists? Jaw?

BREAK - PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

15 MINUTES

We will now take a short break and practice a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. As we just said, when people feel angry, muscles often tense up. Progressive muscle relaxation is a tool that can help relax your muscles and make you more aware of where tension is located in your body. It can also calm other body sensations when we get angry, such as a fast heart rate, rapid breathing, stomach problems, and headaches.

Close your eyes or find something in the room to focus your gaze on. Relax your whole body, allowing it to feel heavy. Take a deep breath in. Hold it for one second. Let it out slowly. Continue taking deep breaths in and out. Imagine the tension leaving your body each time you breathe out.

Step 1 Clench your right fist tightly. Clench for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose. Now, clench your left fist tightly. Clench for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose.

Step 2 Bring both shoulders towards your ears. Hold for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tightness. Slowly relax your shoulders. Feel the difference as your shoulders become loose.

Step 3 Clench your teeth together and press your tongue to the roof of your mouth. Hold for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tension. Now slowly relax your jaw and tongue. Feel the difference as your mouth begins to loosen.

Step 4 Point your right toes and stretch your foot. Hold for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness. Now, point your left toes and stretch your foot. Hold for five seconds. (Provide a pause for them to hold the muscle.)

Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness.

Step 5 Take a few deep breaths in and let them out slowly. Open your eyes when you are ready. You may get up, walk around, and/or stretch.

Hand out "Progressive Muscle Relaxation" sheet. This sheet contains an extended version of the exercise. Advise participants to practice outside of class.

Hand out a snack and allow the participants the remainder of the to eat the provided snack, to talk with peers, or relax by themselves.



MANAGING YOUR ANGER

5-10 MINUTES

Before the break, we were discussing how we respond when we get angry and how these responses differ from person to person. It is important to take a step back before responding. YOU are in control of your feelings.

Here are six tools to interrupt and de-escalate an anger response:

WRITE the following six tools on the white board:

1. Think

Slow things down. Take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take this time to collect your thoughts before responding so that you do so with intent.

2. Express

Once you have some clarity of thought, express your frustration without aggression. Explain what you are angry about and what your needs are.

3. Timeout

Remove yourself from the stressful situation. Take a few moments to be alone so that you feel better prepared to manage frustrating incidents without reacting aggressively.

4. Humor

Laughter is another great way to de-escalate anger. Laughter diffuses tension (do your best to avoid sarcasm).

5. 'I' Statements

When voicing how you feel to another person, use "I Statements" from the "Communications Skills" week. Remember that "I Statements" begin with phrases like "I am" or "I feel."

6. Problem Solving

Focus on how you can resolve the issue (recognizing that not all situations will have a solution). Remind yourself that getting angry won't change the situation but finding a solution to the angering problem sometimes can.

WEEK 5

GROUP ACTIVITY



ROLE PLAY: FRUSTRATING SCENARIO

5-10 MINUTES

We will now practice using these techniques in real life situations.

Refer to the situations described during the "Ice Breaker and Introduction" section. Reenact the situation with the participant playing themselves and a facilitator playing the other person.

Recall the scenarios from the Ice Breaker game.

Choose a volunteer from the group. Read the following scenario out loud.

You arrived home past your curfew because you could not find a ride. Your parents start yelling and tell you that your excuse is unacceptable.

Facilitator 1: Where have you been?! You were supposed to be home over an hour ago!
What's wrong with you, why didn't you answer your phone?! I'm cutting off your data for 2 weeks.

Facilitator 2: identify the moment you feel angry, what physical sensations emerge?
Participant answers

Facilitator 2: Which of the six de-escalation strategies would you implement first?
Participant answers (example: "Calm down and Express")

Facilitator 2: Act it out
Participant implements strategy

Facilitator 2: Which of the six de-escalation strategies would you implement next?
Participant answers (example: "Problem Solving")

Facilitator 2: Act it out

Refer back to the 3 corners game by asking the participant the following:

- Since we've enacted this scenario, how much control do you feel over your anger? Choose a corner of the room that best describes how you feel about the situation.

You can see how simple these strategies are in the "real world". The more you practice them, the more they will become second nature and you will be able to manage your anger responses in constructive ways.



ANGER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

5-10 MINUTES

Ask participants if they are familiar with an anger management plan. Hand out the "Anger Management" sheet.

Making an anger management plan is exactly what it sounds like: creating a plan in advance that you can use to keep yourself and others safe and calm in situations that provoke anger. For example, if you know that you tend to get into arguments with someone, what might you put in your anger management plan to help you avoid running into conflict with that person?

Here are some possible methods:

- Plan to avoid being in direct conversation with that person
- Think of ways to change the subject
- Prepare to walk away from the conversation if you feel yourself getting upset
- Tell someone else who will be there about your concerns
- Ask them to interrupt you and lead you away if they see you becoming agitated
- Use the tools described earlier – think, calm down and express, timeout, humor, "I" statements, and problem solving

Now, take a minute to write down your own anger management plan. Think of a situation that often triggers your anger. Identify possible people and solutions that could help you manage your emotion.

Encourage participants to talk more about their anger with their individual therapist or case manager.

WEEK 5

PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT



10-15 MINUTES

During the coming week, be aware of a situation that makes you angry. Think about the physical effects of this anger and what triggered it. Use one of the management techniques you learned today. If this was not a positive situation, what part of your reaction would you change for a better outcome? Be prepared to share this encounter with the group next week.



DISCUSSION

Provide "Take-Home Impressions" worksheet.

Do you have any questions?

What skills did you learn today?

Are any of them more applicable than others?

What would you improve about this module?

WEEK 5

HANDOUTS

THREE CORNERS GAME SIGNS

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

ANGER MANAGEMENT & DE-ESCALATION

MY ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS (OPTIONAL)

**NO
CONTROL
OVER
MY ANGER**

SOME

CONTROL

OVER

MY ANGER

COMPLETE

CONTROL

OVER

MY ANGER

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Directions: Close your eyes or find something in the room to focus your gaze on. Relax your whole body, allowing it to feel heavy. Take a deep breath in. Hold it for one second. Let it out slowly. Continue taking deep breaths in and out. Imagine the tension leaving your body each time you breathe out. You may pick any of the following muscles to use during your progressive muscle relaxation. Begin when you are ready:

- 1. Clench your right fist tightly.** Clench for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose. Now, clench your left fist tightly. Clench for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose.
- 2. Press your right arm in towards your ribs.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your arm. Feel the difference as your arm becomes loose. Now, press your left arm in towards your ribs. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your arm. Feel the difference as your arm becomes loose.
- 3. Bring both shoulders towards your ears.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly relax your shoulders. Feel the difference as your shoulders become loose.
- 4. Clench your teeth together and press your tongue to the roof of your mouth.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Now slowly relax your jaw and tongue. Feel the difference as your mouth begins to loosen.
- 5. Lower your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead as much as you can.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension in your forehead. Now slowly relax the muscles. Feel the difference as your eyebrows and forehead loosen.
- 6. Pull your stomach inward.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness in your stomach. Now slowly relax the muscle. Feel the difference as your stomach.
- 7. Press your right leg downwards.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your leg. Feel the difference as your leg becomes loose. Now, press your left leg downwards. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your leg. Feel the difference as your leg becomes loose.
- 8. Point your right toes and stretch your foot.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness. Now, point your left toes and stretch your foot. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness.

As you finish, take a few deep breaths in and let them out slowly. Open your eyes when you are ready. Get up, walk around, and/or stretch to release any remaining feelings of tension.

Adapted from: http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/Documents/Progressive_Muscle_Relaxation_Script_EN.pdf

ANGER MANAGEMENT & DE-ESCALATION

THINK

Slow things down. Take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take this time to collect your thoughts before responding so that you do so with intent.

CALM DOWN AND EXPRESS

Once you've gotten some clarity of thought, express what you're frustrated with assertively but not aggressively. Say what you are concerned about and what your needs are.

TIMEOUT

Remove yourself from the stressful situation. Take a few moments to be alone so that you feel better prepared to manage frustrating incidents without reacting aggressively.

HUMOR

Laughter is another great way to de-escalate anger. After taking a timeout, take the initiative to lighten things up. Laughter diffuses tension brought on by anger so implementing humor is effective, however avoid sarcasm.

'I' STATEMENTS

When voicing how you feel to another person, use "I Statements" from the "Communications Skills" week. This is a great tool for expressing yourself. Remember that "I Statements" begin with phrases like "I am" or "I feel."

PROBLEM SOLVING

After vocalizing your concerns and needs, focus on how you can resolve the issue (although not all situations will have a solution). Remind yourself that getting angry won't change the situation but finding a solution to the angering problem might.

MY ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Here is a situation where I might get angry:

If I begin to get angry during this situation, **I will do** the following:

Make this list of options excessive. Have as many options as possible, and work with your individual counselor, other staff members, unit supervisor, or peers, to provide multiple alternatives. Alternatives will allow you to have options that work if something isn't available (e.g. talking to a positive peer if school is in session).

I SHOULDN'T do the following:

After I have calmed myself, I can speak to the following people about my anger:

WHO	WHY

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

You are encouraged to fill out this handout after attending each meeting of this group. Doing this is optional, but it is designed to help you retain as much of what you learned in today's session as possible. In your own words, please answer the following prompts:

1. SOMETHING I LEARNED ABOUT TBI TODAY THAT I DID NOT KNOW BEFORE IS:

2. SOMETHING I LEARNED TODAY THAT I WANT TO SHARE WITH SOMEONE IN MY LIFE IS:

I will share this with: _____

because: _____

3. I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT:

4. ONE STRATEGY I LEARNED TODAY THAT I BELIEVE WILL HELP ME IS:

5. THESE ARE THREE SITUATIONS WHERE I CAN SEE MYSELF USING THAT STRATEGY/SKILL:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____