CALM

Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage It Program

Workbook

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CALM Program
Rules for Participants

1. The purpose of this group program is to help you learn about your anger and aggressive behavior and to help you control them. It is important that you try your best to take part in the learning and practice, even if it's not easy. Your efforts will guarantee that you will get the most out of the program.

2. Personal issues discussed in the sessions stay within the group. People's names and the problems they discuss are CONFIDENTIAL. This means private and that these things must not be shared with people outside the group. This rule is for YOUR protection and security.

3. Assault, whether it is physical or verbal, will not be tolerated. Group discussions will be orderly, with one person talking at a time.

4. Time spent in segregation for violence may result in your removal from the program. You may reapply for the next course if your group leader agrees.

5. Sessions will start on time. If you are more than 10 minutes late without a valid reason, you will not be allowed to join the group for that session.

6. If you miss more than two sessions in a row or more than four sessions in total without a valid reason, you will be taken out of the program. You may reapply for the next course if your group leader agrees.

7. Tasks assigned during group sessions and personal assignments are for your benefit. Refusal to take part in group discussions and role-playing activities or failure to complete personal assignments may result in your removal from the program.

8. Institutional rules: __________________________________________

I understand the information and rules on this page, and I agree to follow the rules in order to stay in the CALM Program.

Signed ______________________________________

Dated ______________________________________
Session 1 Summary
Anger and Aggression in Perspective

Anger Versus Aggression
- Anger is something we feel.
- Aggression is something we do.

It’s possible to FEEL angry without BEHAVING aggressively.

Three Keys to Anger
1. What we’ve learned.
2. How we think.
3. Level of arousal.

Anger Is Controllable
1. We can unlearn it.
2. We can change our thinking.
3. We can reduce arousal.

Anger and Aggression
Anger and aggression have benefits—they’re immediate, but temporary.

Anger and aggression have costs—they’re delayed, but lasting.
Session 2
Bull's Eye Exercise

Statements:
A. My anger makes me feel good.
B. My anger helps me get things done.
C. My anger doesn't hurt other people.
D. My anger doesn't cause me problems later on.
### Session 2
**Counterarguments Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief Statements</th>
<th>Counterarguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check off each statement that describes your belief about the problem when it happened.</td>
<td>Write a short counterargument for each statement you checked off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 1. My anger made me feel good.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 2. My anger helped me get things done.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 3. My anger didn’t hurt other people.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 4. My anger didn’t cause me any problems later on.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 2
Opening the Anger Door

ANGER and VIOLENCE

KEEP OUT

What We Learn

What We Think

Level of Arousal
Session 2 Summary
The Costs and Benefits of Anger and Aggression

- Anger sometimes brings us benefits, but usually the benefits are very short-lived. The costs of anger and violence usually last a long time, even forever.

- The costs of giving up anger and aggression are usually temporary, and they are worth it.

- Anger doesn’t happen by magic. It takes some (or all) of these three ingredients:
  1. Past learning,
  2. Thoughts, and
  3. Arousal.
**Session 3**
**Physical Cues Record**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Cues</th>
<th>Check ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapid heart beat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid breathing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle tension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryness in mouth and throat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grinding teeth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knot in stomach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clenched fists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing &quot;red&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trembling hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wringing hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking quickly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 3
Rating Level of Relaxation

On a scale of 1 to 10:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
very relaxed
neutral
very tense

Before relaxation, how tense were you on this scale?

After relaxation, how tense were you on this scale?

Rate the level of your tension before and after relaxation in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>1 before</th>
<th>1 after</th>
<th>2 before</th>
<th>2 after</th>
<th>3 before</th>
<th>3 after</th>
<th>4 before</th>
<th>4 after</th>
<th>5 before</th>
<th>5 after</th>
<th>6 before</th>
<th>6 after</th>
<th>7 before</th>
<th>7 after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Session 3
Participant Guide to Relaxation

Helpful Tips
1. Try to do the exercise when you’re not in a rush.
2. Try to do the exercise when it’s quiet.
3. Loosen tight clothing, and remove glasses.
4. Make sure your body is completely supported by a chair, bed, or the floor.
5. Close your eyes.

Muscle Relaxation—Tension Training Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muscle Group</th>
<th>How to Create Tension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation of Arms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Arms</td>
<td>Make fist and flex muscle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forearms</td>
<td>Make fist and bend hand upward at wrist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hands and fingers</td>
<td>Make fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation of Facial Area, Neck, Shoulders, and Upper Back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Forehead and scalp</td>
<td>Wrinkle forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Face</td>
<td>Grind teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lips</td>
<td>Purse lips (pucker lips hard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jaws</td>
<td>Clench jaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Neck</td>
<td>Raise shoulders and lower head slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Shoulders</td>
<td>Raise and press arms against body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation of Stomach and Lower Back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Chest</td>
<td>Take deep breath, hold it and tighten muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Stomach (midsection)</td>
<td>Lower diaphragm and contract muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation of Hip, Thighs, Calves, and Feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Thighs</td>
<td>Dig in soles of feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Calves of legs</td>
<td>Bend feet upward at ankle so that they point toward forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Feet and toes</td>
<td>Curl toes downward and tighten muscles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 3 Summary
Monitoring Arousal

Arousal is how our bodies react to what we
• See
• Hear
• Feel
• Smell, and
• Touch.

We get aroused in response to how we see things that are happening around us.

Arousal affects our behavior in several ways:
• At low levels of arousal we perform poorly
• At high levels of arousal (such as anger) we cannot think clearly or control our behavior, and
• We can perform at our best when our level of arousal is somewhere in the middle.

The costs of long-term arousal:
Your body starts to wear out (like a machine does) and exhibits:
• Heart disease
• Stress
• Fatigue
• High blood pressure, and
• Aggression.

Monitor your arousal level by learning to recognize the signals that you are getting aroused:
• These are your physical cues, including pounding heart, dry mouth, and muscle tension.

You can learn to replace high levels of arousal by learning to
• Relax your muscles.
### Session 4
### Triggers Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Triggers</th>
<th>Check ( )</th>
<th>Internal Triggers</th>
<th>Check ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone said something I disagreed with.</td>
<td>I’ll get him or her.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone teased me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>He or she pushed me too far.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did something wrong.</td>
<td></td>
<td>He or she is doing this on purpose.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone started a fight with me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can’t let him or her get away with this.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone took my things.</td>
<td></td>
<td>He or she is a jerk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone did something I didn’t like.</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s not fair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone ignored me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Session 4 Summary
Triggers of Arousal

External triggers are
- Things that people say or do that you make yourself angry about and
- Situations beyond your control.

Internal triggers are
- What you tell yourself about what’s happening
- How you view a situation and size it up, and
- How important you feel the event is.

Remember
- People don’t make you angry. They can do things that increase the chances that you will become angry, but how you react is your own choice.
- You can learn to cope with anger just by being aware of situations that usually make you angry and by monitoring what you tell yourself.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario #1

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario #1
You are trying to sleep, but you can’t help thinking about the letter you got from your girlfriend. She wrote to tell you that she is not going to visit you inside because she can’t afford the travel costs. You’re very angry because you give her all of the money that you make inside so that she can come to see you.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 2

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 2
You found out that a person who was transferred in at the same time as you has just been released. You are extremely angry because he had more serious charges than you did, and the parole board decided to turn you down.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 3

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout "STOP" loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., "I'm not going to think about this," "I've got control," "calm down") or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 3
You were asked to help out on a work crew. When you get back, you know that someone has been in your cell and has stolen a picture of your girlfriend. You are really angry.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 4

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout "STOP" loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., "I'm not going to think about this," "I've got control," "calm down") or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 4
You are really angry because a person who you helped out is telling everyone that you ratted on your old partner.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 5

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 5
You are really angry because a guard called you a “jerk” in front of the guys on your range.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 6

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 6
You are angry because you just found out that no one in your family would help your girlfriend out financially when she couldn’t pay the rent. Your brother and father both owe you money.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 7

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 7
You are angry because you were turned down for a transfer to minimum security. You’ve waited for a long time, and four people who applied after you are getting sent out this week.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 9

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 9
You just overheard two guards telling an inmate that all trailer visits are going to be suspended for the next month. You are furious because you just scheduled a visit with your girlfriend.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 8

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout "STOP" loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., "I'm not going to think about this," "I've got control," "calm down") or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 8
You gave your brother some money to fix his car. The next day he drives into a curb and blows a tire. You are angry because you're broke and because now he won't be able to bring your girlfriend up for a visit.
Session 5
Thought Stopping Scenario # 10

Skill Steps
1. Ask yourself if you are getting aroused. Is it time to turn off your thoughts?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself (e.g., “I’m not going to think about this,” “I’ve got control,” “calm down”) or count backward from 20 to 1.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 10
You are told by a guard that you have to clean up the visitor’s room, or your next visit will be canceled. You are extremely angry because another inmate was assigned this job and didn’t bother to do it.
Session 5 Summary
Thought Stopping

Thought Stopping Skill Steps
Thought Stopping is one way to help get rid of thoughts that are hard to turn off. It helps you clear your mind, and it gives you time to think about how to handle the problem.

1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you getting all revved up?
2. Shout STOP!!! loudly to yourself, and then say it again more quietly.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
5. Think of solutions to deal with the problem and choose the best one.
7. Assess the outcome.

Brief Relaxation Skill Steps
Brief relaxation with a pleasant scene is another useful skill to help you feel calm and to clear your mind. Remember to

1. Choose a quiet place.
2. Try to practice at the same time every day.
3. Get comfortable and close your eyes.
4. Use brief relaxation to get rid of all tension in your body.
5. Think of a pleasant scene and pretend that you are actually there.
Session 6
Time Out Scenario # 1

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 1
You are out in the yard shooting baskets when someone bumps into you, and you miss the shot. You are really angry because it was the final shot, and you lost the game.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 2

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 2
You approach a guy to bum a cigarette. He turns you down and starts to walk away. You are really angry because he is always bumming from you.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 3

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 3
Your case manager calls you in to talk about your application for parole. He picks up the application and drops it in the trash can. He then turns to you and tells you that your application is denied.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 4

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 4
You are walking down the hall, and two guards start talking about what a pansy you are.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 5

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout "STOP" loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, "I'm getting really angry now. It's important to step back and get my act together before I do something I'll regret.").
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call "time in").
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 5
You have just heard that your mother is very sick. You try to get an appointment with your case manager to arrange a pass, but he tells you that you have to wait your turn.
Session Six  
Time Out Scenario # 6

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout "STOP" loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, "I'm getting really angry now. It's important to step back and get my act together before I do something I'll regret.").
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call "time in").
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 6
You are on the phone with your girlfriend, and she tells you that she won't be able to visit this week because she promised a friend she would help her move. You were really looking forward to the visit.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 7

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 7
Your case manager tells you that you can’t apply for parole until you are tested by a psychologist. You get really angry because you know that the waiting list is about 2 months.
Session Six
Time Out Scenario # 8

Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.

Scenario # 8
You approach another inmate to talk about a personal problem. You start to tell him what’s wrong, and he tells you he doesn’t have the time or energy to listen. You get really angry because he is always coming to you when he has problems.
Session 6 Summary
Time Out

Time Out can be used whenever you are with one or more people and they are saying or doing things that you feel angry about. When you take a Time Out, you remove yourself from the situation so that you can calm down, clear your head, and plan what to do next.

Time Out does not mean that you are walking away from a fight or a problem. It means that you are leaving a bad situation until you cool off and clear your head.

Time Out Skill Steps
1. Evaluate your level of arousal. Are you starting to get pumped up?
2. Shout “STOP” loudly to yourself. Then say it again more quietly to yourself.
3. Take a deep breath and say something to calm yourself.
4. Tell yourself you need time away from the situation (for example, “I’m getting really angry now. It’s important to step back and get my act together before I do something I’ll regret.”).
5. Remove yourself from the situation. Say that you are leaving or just leave quietly.
7. Think about different solutions to solve the problem and choose the best one.
8. Act (call “time in”).
9. Assess the outcome.
Session 7
Interpreting the World Diary

1. Situation or Event

2. Interpretation
   (Hostile)

4. Interpretation #2
   (Neutral or Positive)

3. Bad Feeling or Action

5. O.K. Feeling or Action
Session 7 Summary
The Role of Thoughts in Anger and Aggression

The ABC's of Anger

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<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Reactions</td>
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Some ways hurt us | Some ways help us.
Session 8 Summary
Rethinking Our Perceptions

Cognitive (Thinking) Distortions
Each cognitive distortion is important because

1. When we distort (twist out of the true meaning or proportion) what people say or do to us, we are not perceiving (seeing) reality.

2. Distortions help get us angry.

3. If we are not aware that we distort reality, we’ll keep on doing it.

4. Distortions cause us to upset ourselves instead of solving our problems.

Blinding
“Blinding” means drawing a conclusion without evidence or against evidence to the contrary, that is, blinding yourself to reality.

Example: Deciding your buddy is a terrible friend because he won’t go for a beer with you after his 12-hour workshift.

Improved Thinking
Pay attention to and weigh the evidence for and against a conclusion. Take off the “blinders” and don’t be “blind.”

Solution Steps (“What to do”)
1. Figure out what you told yourself about the offensive act or event.

2. Decide if that’s the only possible view.

3. See if you ignored any evidence.

4. Decide if the evidence must lead to your conclusion.

5. Don’t be “blinded.” Use real evidence to reach a conclusion.

Overstretched
Overstretched means making up a rule for many situations based on just a few experiences or “overstretching” a rule (forcing a rule to apply) to situations where it doesn’t fit.

Example: Deciding that you are stupid with women and that you’ll never have a wife because your girlfriend broke up with you.

Improved Thinking
Do not treat all situations or people like they’re exactly the same.

Solution Steps (“What to Do”)
1. Ask yourself, “what rule am I following here?”

2. Decide if the rule always fits every situation.

3. If the rule doesn’t fit, don’t believe it. Treat the person or situation as “fresh.”
Black-or-White Thinking
Black-or-White Thinking means seeing things as “all black” or “all white”—never gray—and believing everything is either one extreme or the other.

Example: Deciding that because the letter you got from your girlfriend didn’t say that she would marry you, she must hate you, and you’re through as a couple.

Improved Thinking
See that most things or people exist between the extremes and not at the extremes.

Solution Steps (“What to do”)  
1. Ask yourself, “if something or someone is not at one extreme, does that person or situation have to be at the other?”
2. Decide if you’re seeing reality or just extreme categories.
3. Assume that things don’t have to be all-or-none. Act that way.

Magnifying/Shrinking
Magnifying/Shrinking means seeing things as either far too important or too unimportant.

Example: Telling yourself it’s a catastrophe if you don’t get a good deal on the car you want—that you can’t stand not getting it.

Improved Thinking
Avoid exaggeration when you size up things or events. Be realistic. Don’t create disasters where none exist.

Solution Steps (“What to do”)  
1. Ask yourself if you’ve exaggerated some detail of a situation.
2. Think of the worst thing that might happen and how you can live with that outcome. Don’t treat a problem as a disaster.
3. Focus on solving the problem and not on reacting to how bad it is.

Taking Personally
Taking Personally means taking everything as a personal threat or insult against you, even when there’s no evidence that you were the target.

Example: Deciding you did something wrong and are a loser because your girlfriend was kind of cool with you after work.

Improved Thinking
Blame yourself or believe that things have to do with you only when the evidence supports this conclusion. Realize you’re not the center of the universe.

Solution Steps (“What to do”)  
1. Ask yourself if the comments or events have something to do with you or not.
2. Ask the other person if the comments or events were aimed at you. Try to believe the answer.
3. If yes, focus on what you can do to improve things (do not focus on being blamed or on getting revenge).
4. Remind yourself that “Taking Personally” can take you away from useful goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Awfulizing</th>
<th>2. Mustation</th>
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<tr>
<td>When this happens to me, it’s bloody <strong>awful!</strong></td>
<td>You absolutely <strong>must</strong> not behave that way toward me!</td>
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<th>3. Can’t-stand-it-itis</th>
<th>4. People Damning</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I can’t stand</strong> being treated this way!</td>
<td>Because you treat me badly, you’re a terrible person and deserve to be <strong>damned</strong>.</td>
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<td>Episode</td>
<td>Awfulizing</td>
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Session 9 Summary
Rethinking Autopilot Thoughts

Thoughts That Help to Create Anger

Awfulizing
When this happens to me, it’s bloody awful.

Mustation
You absolutely must not behave that way towards me.

Can’t-stand-it-itis
I can’t stand being treated this way!

People Damning
Because you treat me badly, you’re a terrible person and deserve to be damned!

Coping Self-Talk to Dispute the Thoughts That Help Cause Anger

Awfulizing
- Bad situations aren’t fun, but they don’t kill me.
- Nothing can be 100% bad.
- This is not fun, but I’ll live.
- I’ll learn from this situation.
- I’ll be O.K., even if I can’t fix this right now.
- This guy is acting stupidly, but I won’t make things worse.

Mustation
- There’s no reason why I must have what I want.
- Even though I really want something, I won’t die without it.
- I’m not God; I can’t decide what other people have to do.
- There are no real “musts” in the universe.
- My musts feel real, but they’re not really.
- Others don’t care about my musts, and they shouldn’t.

Can’t-stand-it-itis
- I can always stand what I don’t like.
- People’s dumb behaviors are not a catastrophe.
- Living through this has never killed me before.
- I can take this.
- What can I do to make this situation better?
- I’ve lived through worse than this.
People Damning

- People who don’t do what I want aren’t necessarily bad.
- Bad acts don’t make you bad.
- There’s no such thing as a purely bad person.
- There are no worthless people, only stupid, worthless acts.
- I’m not better than others.
- Everybody has the right to think and act their own way.
Session 10
Solving Problems Without Anger

The Skill Steps
1. Recognize that a problem exists.
2. Reduce arousal.
3. Rethink autopilot thinking.
5. Come up with alternatives.
6. Weigh the consequences and choose an alternative.
8. Assess the outcome.
Session 10
Step 1

Recognize That a Problem Exists
(or that one is beginning)

I feel:
  • tense
  • aroused
  • uptight
  • overexcited
  • wound-up

...so something is going wrong.

I better stop or slow down.

I'm not feeling calm or normal, so I better check out why.

I'm getting overly aroused.

It's up to me to do something.
Session 10
Step 2

Reduce Arousal

Use PMR (muscle relaxation).

Use “Thought Stopping.”

Use a “Time Out.”
Rethink Your "Autopilot" Thoughts

Did I see things incorrectly?
- Blinding
- Overstretching
- Black-or-White Thinking
- Magnifying/Shrinking
- Taking Personally

Did I interpret things incorrectly?
- Awfulizing
- Mustation
- Can't-stand-it-itis
- People Damning
Session 10
Step 4

Make a Problem Statement

Ask yourself: What are the facts that can help me solve the problem?
Ask yourself: What other information do I need to solve this problem?
Ask yourself: What should I do to find out this information?

State what the problem is that needs solving.
Session 10
Step 5

Come up with Alternatives (Other Solutions)

Refocus on the problem and not on the person.

Come up with as many solutions as you can (brainstorm).
Session 10
Step 6

Weigh the Consequences and Choose an Alternative

Which solution will give me the best outcome?

Which solution will give me the best gains and the fewest costs (now and in the longer term)?
Session 10
Step 7

Act

Do the thing that made most sense in Step 6.

(Useful skills for this step will be practiced in later sessions on assertive communication.)
Session 10
Step 8

Assess the Outcome

Size-up how things worked out.
If the problem was solved, what did I do to cause it?
If the problem was not solved, what did I do wrong?
What should I do differently next time?
Session 10 Summary
The Problem-Solving Model

1. Recognize that a problem exists
Stopping habitual patterns of anger escalation is the first step in problem solving.
- Pay attention to arousal cues (physical signs such as increased heart rate or muscle tension).
- Be aware of your triggers (thoughts or events that you often respond to by getting angry).

2. Reduce arousal
Overarousal can lead to anger and aggression because it can interrupt the problem-solving sequence. Step 2 allows you to reduce arousal so that you can continue with the other steps.
- Use the methods already taught and practiced in the reducing arousal sessions: Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Time Out, and Thought Stopping.

3. Rethink autopilot thinking
Autopilot is okay and normal. People do a lot of things without being fully aware of them, but autopilot is not okay when anger is starting to happen.
- Stopping autopilot thinking means recognizing cognitive distortions and coping with them (from Sessions 8 and 9).

4. Make a problem statement
A problem statement says the problem in a solvable way. It sets a goal.
- Focus on what needs to be done and not on who caused the frustration or how bad it is.
- Size up the available information and decide what other information is needed.

5. Come up with alternatives
Coming up with alternatives allows you to focus on answers to the problem instead of thinking about the other person and his or her behavior.
- Consider as many solutions as possible.

6. Weigh the consequences and choose an alternative
Weighing the consequences means comparing benefits from a decision against the costs or disadvantages of the same decision. After looking at all the available choices, an alternative must be selected that has the most possible and likely benefits and the least possible and likely disadvantages.
- Look not only at immediate costs and gains, but also at longer term costs and gains.
- Recognize that costs and gains are not simply tallied as if all of them are equal. More important costs and gains carry more weight.

7. Act
The action carried out in this step is that chosen from the decision process in Step 6.
- The act may not always feel like the best answer right away.
- Sometimes, in the short term, discomfort is necessary to get happiness in the longer term.
- Explaining to others why you are doing what you are doing can sometimes help get you support.
- You must also be prepared to live with the consequences of your choice.
8. Assess the outcome

This step allows you to reflect on the decisions you made, what went right and what went wrong, and how you would act in a similar situation in the future.

- Look at cause and effect relations in your own life.
- Decide from outcomes whether or not you made a good choice.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Avoid self-blame and focus on trying to change poor thinking or poor behavior.
- Learn the value of a problem-solving strategy.
Session 11 Summary
Setting the Stage for Effective Communication

Communication Skills
Communicating what we feel to other people is an important part of managing our anger.

There are five basic skills to remember:

1. Active Listening. It is very important to let the other person know you are interested in what he or she has to say.
   
   You can do this by:
   
   - Using body language (facing the person, maintaining eye contact, having an attentive posture)
   - Not interrupting them, and
   - Using words such as “yes,” “go on,” and “uh huh.”

2. Using “I” Statements. Using “I” Statements helps you express our feelings without blaming others. “I” Statements are usually not threatening to others and can help reduce the level of anger.

3. Asking for Clarification: Asking for Clarification helps you avoid making incorrect assumptions that can lead to confusion and angry outbursts.

4. Reality Checks: It is very important that you check out the information that you get before we act on it, especially when the information makes you feel angry. Your interpretation of a situation may be wrong. Since no one is perfect, and we all make mistakes sometimes, checking things out can often help you avoid fights.

5. Being Assertive: Being Assertive does not mean to act aggressively. It also does not mean to hold anger inside without doing anything about it. Being Assertive means standing up for your rights without putting down the rights of others.
Session 12
Communication Rights

1. You have the right not to give reasons and excuses for your behavior and to accept responsibility and consequences for it.

2. You have the right to make mistakes and to accept responsibility for them.

3. You have the right to change your mind and to accept the consequences for doing so.

4. You have the right to say “I don’t know” or “I don’t understand.”

5. You have the right to judge your own behavior and to accept the responsibility and consequences for it.

6. You have the right to say “I don’t care” and to accept the consequences of doing so.
Session 12 Summary
Broken Record Skill

It is very important in assertive communication to stick to your goal by letting the other person know what you want. There are five steps you can follow in order to accomplish your goal:

1. Don't become frustrated or angry.
2. Don't yell or raise your voice.
3. Stick to your point by repeating and restating it.
4. Ignore all attempts to get you sidetracked.
5. Don't give any reasons or explanations unless it is in your interest to do so.

By following these steps, you learn to stick to the point until you get what you want or until a good compromise is reached.

NOTE: The Broken Record skill should not usually be used when you are talking to someone who has authority over you. In those situations it is better to use a different skill.
Session 13 Summary
Fogging Skill

Being put down by others is a very common experience. Some people will try to put others down on purpose, so they can get them going. This act gives them control over other people.

People who have trouble handling put-downs often follow a common pattern. They

- Become defensive
- Deny or reduce what the critic is saying, and
- Start to put down the critic.

This pattern often makes both people more and more angry and can lead to violence. It does not even matter if the put-down is obviously wrong. Once the cycle of criticism begins, it tends to take over.

Fogging helps you deal with this cycle.

It is important that you use the following steps:

1. Do not get defensive or give excuses for your behavior (unless it is in your interest to do so).
2. Agree with the critic (i.e., don't deny the put-down or make light of the criticism in any way).
3. Don't fight back by putting down the critic.

 Agreeing with the critic makes it hard for him or her to put you down more. It is very important that you come across as sincere and not sarcastic. If you don't appear sincere, the other person will get more angry and will not stop the put-downs.

If you do not put down the critic in return, the cycle of criticism is avoided and anger does not usually increase.

Fogging is a strong, powerful skill that lets you stay in control. No one will be able to push your buttons or control you as if you were a puppet on a string. This skill is definitely not wimpy!
Session 14 Summary
Negative Assertion Skill

Since we are not perfect, we will sometimes make mistakes and behave stupidly.

**Negative Assertion** helps you deal with a situation in which someone puts you down because you made a mistake.

Follow the same steps as you did in Fogging:

1. Don’t defend yourself or make excuses for your behavior (unless it is in your interest to do so).
2. Agree with the critic (i.e., don’t deny or make light of the criticism in any way).
3. Don’t fight back by putting down the other person.

Don’t sound sarcastic when you are using this skill, or it won’t work!

It is important to remember that the assertive communication skills are not meant to be used in a violent situation. You use them to help prevent getting involved in one.
Session 15 Summary
Negative Inquiry Skill

Negative Inquiry is an effective skill to use when we want the other person to tell us clearly and honestly what he or she wants or how he or she wants us to change.

As with the Fogging and Negative Assertion skills, we must follow these steps:

1. Don’t get defensive or give excuses or explanations for your behavior (unless it is in your interest to do so).
2. Agree with the critic (i.e., don’t deny or make light of the criticism in any way).
3. Don’t fight back by putting down the other person.

With the Negative Inquiry skill, we add one more important step:

4. Ask for more information or for more criticism about yourself or your behavior.

By using this skill in a calm, nonsarcastic manner, you reduce the chance that an angry outburst will lead to violence.
Session 16
Intensity Rating Scale for Other Emotions

How strong does the emotion feel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>List of Emotions</th>
<th>Pleasant (check)</th>
<th>Unpleasant (check)</th>
<th>Rating (1–10)</th>
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Session 16 Summary
Labeling Emotions

Key points to remember:
• All of us feel many different emotions. They are part of life.
• Like anger, other emotions can get very strong.
• When an emotion gets too strong, we have problems thinking, and we don’t perform well.
• To change what we feel, we need to change how we think and what we do.

It is important to look at other emotions because
• Other emotions are like anger: the stronger they get, the more they have a negative effect on how we think and behave.
• You can learn to see your feelings as a “cue” or signal that something is wrong.
• When you know how you feel, you can tell this to other people and start to change how you think and act.
Session 17 Summary
Coping with Depression and Jealousy

Key points to remember
1. Everybody feels depression and jealousy.
2. These emotions cause problems when they stay around for too long or when they get too strong.
3. We can control these unpleasant emotions by changing how we think about the situation and then doing something differently.

Depression
• It is normal to feel depressed at times. Some of the cues that signal we are feeling depressed include feeling sadness, being nasty or irritable, sleeping too much or too little, experiencing loss of appetite, and losing interest in the things that we used to enjoy.
• The long-term costs of feeling depressed can be the loss of a job, problems with your family and friends, and not being able to eat or sleep.
• Autopilot thoughts when you’re depressed may include “I’m no good,” “this is hopeless,” or “nothing ever works out.”

Jealousy
• We all feel jealous at times when we’re afraid that we’ll lose someone we care about. Some of the signals that you are feeling jealous include experiencing jealous fantasies, suspicions, tension, and increased heart rate and making unrealistic demands.
• Some of the long-term costs of feeling jealous include not being able to eat or sleep, having problems concentrating, losing trust, and feeling intense pain, anger, or rage.
• Autopilot thoughts when you’re jealous may include “I know she is going to leave me for someone else” and “I can’t live without her.”
Session 18 Summary
Coping with Anxiety

Anxiety

- Everyone feels anxious at some point in their lives. We often become anxious about things we think will happen in the future. Usually when we feel anxiety, we perceive a threat to ourselves or to our relationships with others.

- A mild or medium amount of anxiety is necessary to respond well when problems arise. However, when anxiety increases to a high level, it must be controlled.

- The long-term consequences of feeling anxious include creating more tension and health problems, bringing on the event you fear most, and making the situation worse than it is.

- Automatic thoughts when you’re anxious include “I have to have control at all times,” “I must do this well,” and “I must have the respect of people around me.”
Session 19 Summary
Superman Feelings and Self-Monitoring

- Pleasant emotions can also, like anger, jealousy, depression, and anxiety, lead to problematic behaviors.
- We naturally feel happy when good things happen to us, but an excessive "rush" dampens our abilities to think and behave properly.
- Automatic thoughts that accompany superman feelings include ideas like "they can't catch me," "I'm invincible," and "screw parole."
- It is normal to feel a range of emotions with varying intensities. However, if we ignore our emotions, they can become too strong, and our behavior is likely to become less effective.
Session 20
Cognitive–Behavioral Model of the Anger Relapse Process

Increased self-confidence and effectiveness

Decreased probability of relapse

Adaptive coping response

Effective coping—Being in control

High risk situation

Maladaptive coping response

Lapse

Relapse

Anger Violation Effect (AVE)

Maladaptive coping response

Increased probability of relapse
Session 20
Situational Risk Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Emotional States</th>
<th>Negative Physical States</th>
<th>Urges Temptations Fantasies</th>
<th>Interpersonal Conflict</th>
<th>Provocation</th>
<th>Desire to Control</th>
<th>Substance Use</th>
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High Risk Situation Category
Session 20
Personal Assignment

Instructions
From your Situational Risk Profile, pick the two areas that are the highest risk for you. For each one of these, describe in as much detail as you can two specific examples of high risk situations. There should be a total of four high risk situations.

These situations will be used to develop relapse prevention plans or role-plays. The more realistic the situations that you describe, the more you will benefit from the exercises.
Session 20 Summary
Relapse Prevention

Definitions

Lapse
1. Getting angry and thinking of being verbally or physically aggressive.
2. Fantasizing about becoming verbally or physically aggressive.

Relapse
1. Assault (verbal or physical) on an individual.
2. Getting angry and doing damage to property or injury to pets or other animals.
3. A total return to old patterns of anger and aggression. No longer trying to keep anger under control.

High Risk Situation (HRS)
An HRS is any situation where you are more likely than usual to get angry or aggressive.

The Relapse Process
You will have a lapse or relapse:
1. If you don’t monitor your thinking, actions, feelings, or arousal.
2. If you put yourself in a high risk situation.
3. If you don’t
   A. Use good coping skills to deal with the situation
   B. Challenge negative thoughts and distortions
   C. Lower your level of arousal, and
   D. Use your communication skills to express yourself.
4. If you start thinking that you can’t cope with this situation (and, of course, you don’t take a Time Out).
5. If you start thinking that getting really angry or aggressive will solve the problem or at least let you get your way.

Types of High Risk Situations

Internal Risk Situations
There are three types of internal risk factors.
1. Negative emotional states: guilt, depression, boredom, or worry.
2. Negative physical states: illness, injury, fatigue, back pain, or headaches.
3. Urges and temptations: violence fantasies or revenge fantasies.

External Risk Situations
1. Coping with hassles with other persons: situations that involve marriage, family, friends, employers, or police.
   - Interactions that lead to feelings of jealousy, frustration, and anger.
   - Locations where conflict is likely to occur.
2. Coping with put-downs and teasing from peers or people in authority positions.
   - Insults, name-calling, verbal or physical challenges, and pressure from others to act aggressively.
   - Locations where put-downs are likely to occur.

3. Wanting to control or manipulate: people not behaving as you want them to or not getting what you want.

4. Substance use or abuse: Drugs and alcohol affect judgment and decision making, lower self-control, and make it much less likely that you will use the skills necessary to cope effectively.
   - Locations where alcohol or drugs are present and available.
Session 21
Individual Relapse Prevention Plan

1. My high risk situation (describe in as much detail as needed):

2. Risk category that this situation belongs to:

3. What did I do in this situation before (my pattern of anger or aggression; describe in as much detail as needed):

4. My goals in this situation:

5. What skills can I now use to help me to meet my goals:

6. My strategy:
   A. What I’m going to tell myself in this situation (changing thoughts that may lead to anger):

   B. What I’m going to do in this situation (how can I reduce physical arousal):

   C. How I am going to use other skills. What I am going to do or say to get to my goals:

7. Who can I ask to help (before, during, or after):

8. My emergency plan:
Session 21
Individual Relapse Prevention Plan

1. My high risk situation (describe in as much detail as needed):

2. Risk category that this situation belongs to:

3. What did I do in this situation before (my pattern of anger or aggression; describe in as much detail as needed):

4. My goals in this situation:

5. What skills can I now use to help me to meet my goals:

6. My strategy:
   A. What I'm going to tell myself in this situation (changing thoughts that may lead to anger):

   B. What I'm going to do in this situation (how can I reduce physical arousal):

   C. How I am going to use other skills. What I am going to do or say to get to my goals:

7. Who can I ask to help (before, during, or after):

8. My emergency plan:
Session 21
Personal Assignment

Instructions
Make a relapse prevention plan for one of your high risk situations. Try to use one of the situations that you described in your personal assignment from last session (Session 20). Use the method of planning that was covered in today's session to help you (use the blank Individual Relapse Prevention Plan forms that are provided). Remember to follow all the steps.
Session 21 Summary
High Risk Situations

In today's session we learned the importance of having a relapse prevention plan. Having a relapse prevention plan means the following:

- You have practiced your plan and know what to do.
- You have alternatives and can choose between actions A, B, or C.
- You feel more confident and in control of the situation.
- You use a plan and are more likely to cope effectively with the situation.
- You feel good and are proud of yourself for handling the situation.

Tips for Planning

Tip 1
Set goals and make them
- Clear and specific
- Realistic, and
- Easy to measure.

Tip 2
Avoid HRSs. Although this is not always possible, it is a good place to start until you can prepare a better plan. You can
- Physically avoid people
- Physically avoid events or places
- Avoid talking about certain subjects or issues, and
- Avoid talking about past, present, or future events that lead to anger.

Tip 3
Rehearse your plan. The more you practice it, the easier it gets.

Tip 4
Get help from others. They can help you to be more effective in controlling your anger.

Tip 5
Prepare for emergencies. A backup plan can help you get out of a high risk situation.
Session 22
Personal Assignment

Instructions
Develop a relapse prevention plan for another one of your high risk situations. Choose a high risk situation that is from a different category than the one you used last time. Use the Individual Relapse Prevention Forms that you used in Session 21. Ask the group leader if you need more blank copies.
Sessions 22 and 23 Summary
Rehearsal and More Rehearsal

Remember that planning for high risk situations is one of the best ways to maintain the positive changes you've made toward managing anger and aggression.

By role-playing, you can practice your plan so that you will be prepared when you have to deal with that high risk situation.

Think Ahead

Plan

Practice

Deal with High Risk Situations
Session 23
Personal Assignment

Instructions:
Use the feedback you got on the two relapse prevention plans you've already made to go back and make some changes and improvements to them.
Session 24
Healthy Coping

The Recovery Plan
What does "healthy coping" mean?

1. To think about the personal safety of yourself and others
2. To accept unpleasant feelings as normal after a lapse or relapse
3. To challenge thinking errors and replace them with more realistic ways of thinking
4. To accept responsibility
5. To try to learn from the mistake, and
6. To make plans not to repeat it.
Session 24 Summary
Relapse Inoculation and CALM Review

Successfully Handling a High Risk Situation
1. Reward yourself for handling the situation. Share your success with someone close to you.
2. Ask yourself what it was you thought, said, or did that worked in this situation.
3. Decide if you could use this strategy again in similar situations.

Anger Violation Effect (AVE)
AVE is the name used to describe how people sometimes react to a lapse or relapse. It means that the person has broken his or her rule or goal of managing and controlling anger or aggression.

Understanding the AVE is important because it may lead the person to give up on his or her goal of managing anger and aggression.

AVE Chain of Events
1. Initial Lapse or Relapse
2. Unpleasant Emotions
   - Guilt, shame
   - Disappointment
   - Anger directed at self
3. Thinking Errors about Relapse
   - Overshooting
   - Blinding
   - Excessive Self-Downing
4. Coping: Unhealthy or Healthy
   Unhealthy Coping
   1. Denial of the victim or injury—denying that anybody was really hurt.
      - I only pushed her.
      - I didn’t really hit him hard.
      - I only yelled at her.
      - Nothing was broken.
   2. Blaming the victim—shifting the responsibility to the victim.
      - He was asking for it.
      - She provoked me.
      - She deserved it.
      - He just pushed me too far; I had no choice.
3. Denial of seriousness—not looking at one’s behavior openly and honestly.
   • It wasn’t that bad.
   • I could have done a lot worse.
   • I’m not as bad as I used to be.
   • I know people who would’ve done worse.

4. Using alcohol or drugs to make yourself feel better.
   • Very dangerous and may lead to further relapse.

Healthy Coping

1. Ensuring personal safety.
   • Consider personal safety of yourself and others.
   • Keep calm or get calm so that you can use your recovery plan.

2. Accepting unpleasant emotions.
   • Accept the disappointment and other unpleasant emotions as common aftereffects of the lapse or relapse.

3. Challenging thinking errors.
   • Challenge the thinking errors of Overstretching, Blinding, and Self Downning (People Damning directed toward oneself). For example:
     A. “I’m a total failure because of one mistake.”
     B. “I’ve never been able to control my anger.”
     C. “I’m bad, evil, mean, and can never change.”
   • The lapse or relapse was a mistake. It means more skills need to be learned and/or practiced.
   • The lapse or relapse was a one-time event. It does not mean it’s going to happen again, especially if useful action is taken.
   • The lapse or relapse was due to controllable factors. It was not due to personal, unchangeable traits.
   • It is an opportunity for learning. It does not mean total failure, nor does it undo past success.

4. Accepting responsibility for your actions.
   • Admit the mistake to yourself and others.

5. Learn from your mistake.
   • Did I recognize the high risk situation?
   • Did I follow my relapse prevention plan?
   • What part worked? What part didn’t? Why?

6. Make plans not to repeat your mistake.
   • Make a new plan if necessary.
   • Practice the plan until you can do it well.
   • Review skills needed to avoid the mistake.
   • Ask for help.