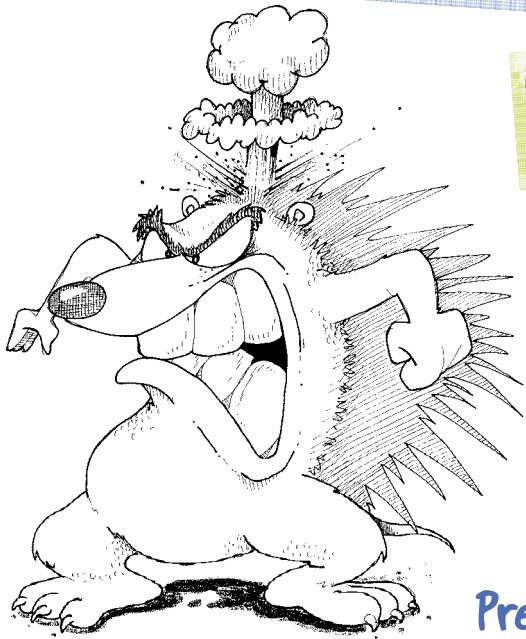


"Am i about to explode?"



Bye, bye anger

Aim

To become aware of anger, know how to handle it and direct it towards constructive and positive behavior.

Preparing for the meeting

POINTS OF REFLECTION
FOR THE ANIMATORS
by Fiorella Sestigiani
psychologist

Anger

Anger is our body's response to threatening situations. It is a physical response that does not immediately involve the more elaborate functions of thinking. When we feel that our physical health or social image is in danger, we respond either by escaping or by attacking. Anger is particularly a response of attack that allows us to "save ourselves" in risky situations. It is important to recognize this function. If a person does not experience a natural activation of anger, it means that

during his growth something has hindered this physiological response. During a person's development, he or she should be helped to control angry reactions thanks to the higher functions of the brain that integrates the physical response (sense of hurt activated) to other thoughts and information within the context: the other's unintentional act; understanding an external difficulty; unforeseen events.

A simple example is when inside the bus somebody happens to push us or steps on our foot. Our immediate response is to defend ourselves or react to the person who has disturbed us. A moment later, as soon as we realize that it was an older person who has difficulty keeping their balance, and that the driver had suddenly stepped on the brakes, we understand that there was no bad intention on the part of the other person and so we avoid reacting angrily. Underlying uncontrolled angry behavior, there is often the absence of good family relationships, negligence,

and sometimes teaching methods that impose respect for rules without explaining their importance, perhaps threatening and humiliating children, who finds themselves inferior to adults.

The ability to control our response to uneasiness and anger comes from a relationship with an educator who calms a child down and comforts them. If, on one hand, it is important not to blame and judge the angry behavior; on the other hand, it is fundamental to recognize these in one's self and in others in order to acquire effective ways of handling such physiological responses. The best way to do it is within significant relationships. For example, a pre-adolescent who gets angry with his or her peer who did not respect the rules of the game, can reach the point of interrupting the game suddenly. The educator's mediation can help the communication between the two, and help specially the first child to express the need for "keeping the rules" without interrupting or compromising the relationship with the other.

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY within you

GROUP LEADER GUIDE

References

Sunderland M., Armstrong, N. (2005), Helping children filled with anger or hatred. Erikson: Trent.



Who makes the most noise?

AIM: Not to be overcome by anger and to guess as many sentences as possible.

PLACE: outdoors or indoors (with enough space)

PLAYERS: 8 or more, divided into 2 teams

MATERIALS: a blindfold for the eyes

DURATION: about 15 minutes

PROCEDURE: The youth are divided into 2 teams that line up in 2 lines, one in front of the other, 2-3 meters apart. Taking turns, each player goes to the center, between the two lines, and is blindfolded. His team should choose a sentence (of at least 5 words) that a member of the team will tell him - as the animator gives the go signal - while staying on the line of his own team. Simultaneously, the opposite team will do everything to disturb the communication of the message, by making noise or shouting. After 15 seconds, everyone keeps quiet, and the boy at the center of the game will guess the sentence his team mate told him. Each sentence guessed correctly gives a point to his own team.

AFTER THE GAME: it is useful to make the youth reflect on the experience, the emotions felt during the game, and the strategies taken to guess the sentences of the companions.

- What did you feel when the opposing team disturbed you with the loud noise?
- What did you feel when you were able to get the sentence of your companions despite the disturbance?
- What helped you get the sentence? What strategies did you use? (concentration, ignoring the disturbance,...)



Inside the image

We suggest the following activity to discover, together with the youth, the message of the allegorical design of ANGER

MATERIALS NEEDED: a large copy of the allegorical design (attached is the PDF file for printing), photocopy of the working card for the youth (as many as the number of participants), colored pencils.

PROCEDURE: Distribute a card to each boy or girl with the design of the animal in black and white at the center. Ask the participants to color the animal with the colors that, according to them, express the emotions and the spiritual status of the allegorical animal.

Around the picture, there are several squares with many **key words**. Ask the participants to encircle or color the words that combine with the spiritual status

of the figure (furious, nice, calm, breathless, victorious, strong, fiery, weak, explosion, patient, flashing eyes, tranquil, shouting, losing, clenched teeth, reflective, rage, pensive, high tension...).

During a dialogue with everybody, ask the youth to give the reason for their choice of colors. On a big poster, note down the key words chosen by them, thus opening a dialogue with all:

- On which words do they all agree?
- On which words they do not all agree? Together, let us clarify the different points of view (for example: losing/ winning or strong/weak can open the dialogue).
- On which words do they have doubts? Does anybody want to answer?
- Would you like to add other words that connect with the picture?

ANGER in a movie

On the website <http://assistentigen3.focolare.org> you can download the short film “Donald Duck Self-control” (English-Italian-Spanish). A funny story about Donald Duck, the mythical angry figure of Walt Disney. It can be useful to start a dialogue on real effective strategies to control anger.

DURATION: 8'29"



We live this way

One day in school, somebody stole the bracelet of a classmate of mine. Logically, I tried every means to look for it. Just because I put my whole self into this, my classmates thought that I was the thief. They even convinced the teacher about this. Besides feeling displeased by it, I wanted to stop looking thinking within me: 'So, let them get on with it!'

However, at the same time, I understood that out of love

for my classmate, I could not give up and I must make an effort to find it. The news had already spread in school; they all knew about the theft and the possible culprit. After two and a half days, a boy from another class came to me and gave me the bracelet, saying he was sorry and asking forgiveness. Without hesitation, I forgave him and all the others who had offended me.

G. [Argentina]



I was in the fifth elementary class when one day a new student, called Paul, arrived in a class next to mine. He had a very strong character and immediately many classmates admired him and spent time with him. From his behavior, it seemed as if he thought he could tell everyone what to do. As I am quite sensitive to these things, I felt that his behavior was wrong and told him so. Obviously,

Paul was not happy about this.

We began to quarrel and as time passed it happened more often. Sometimes we hit each other. At a certain point, I had to admit that I hated him.

Towards end of the sixth year, before changing school, I learned that I would be in the same class with Paul. Initially I was angry and sad, but then I told myself that it could not go on like this. Helped also by the advice of other Gen 3, I decided to take the first step towards Paul. I looked for opportunities to speak with him, to

show him my best self, so that he could also review his attitude towards me.

Gradually, the prejudices disappeared, and in time, a real relationship of friendship began. We have been together now for six months in the new school and we have not fought at all. This experience made me realize that it is worth taking the first step to love.

S. F. [Germany]

In touch with Chiara

ANGER

Do you see that kind of porcupine with iron quills shooting out in rage against somebody? It's anger. On its head is the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb. Don't go too near, because an angry person could harm you, or even kill you. It often happens. Just read the newspapers.

Chiara

Chiara Lubich,
Gen 3 Congress, 1973, Rocca di Papa,
"NO TO VICES, YES TO VIRTUES"



The video in Italian-English-Spanish and the international version of the powerpoint is available at the website <http://assistentigen3.focolare.org>

For us, it is still difficult to live the Ideal. Does it happen to you too? We make mistakes at times or get angry. What do you do in order not to get angry?

This is what I do. If I feel a little bit of anger within me, for example, I immediately know that it is not good. So I embrace Jesus Forsaken always, and with joy.

Sometimes, I also show I am a bit angry. I realized that the most intelligent thing to do is to start again. This has become a fixed idea for me. Yes, yes, start again, start again, start again. I understood this is the point. So the anger becomes less and less, do you understand?

Chiara

Chiara Lubich,
To the gen 3, 1981-1995. Città Nuova,
Rome 2010, p. 16

The video is available at the website <http://assistentigen3.focolare.org>

Bye, bye anger

Points for the dialogue

After presenting the vice, you can start a dialogue with the youth to make them reflect on anger and patience in their daily life.

It is useful if also the animators/ assistants share their personal experiences on how they tried to overcome anger.

To enable the dialogue, write down some questions on a poster. Each boy or girl can answer the question they want on a post-it, and put it beside the question.

Here are some sample questions:

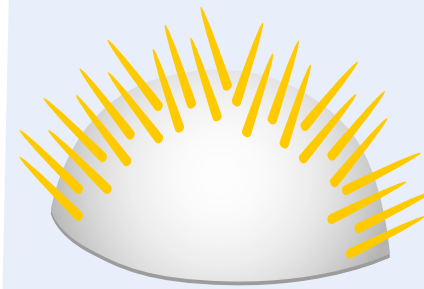
- What are the three things that make you angry most of all?
- What do you do when you get angry? What makes you feel better?
- Try to recall the last time that someone close to you got angry (a friend, a relative, a teacher). How did you feel? And how did you react?
- Have you ever experienced sometimes that an initial instinct of anger helped you solve a certain situation? Try to share what happened.



We will try

In the next session, we will practice
“No more spines”

Make a small “spiny ball” to bring home. It will help you to practice opposing the vice of anger. You need half a ball of polystyrene or other material (clay, cork, synthetic material, etc.) on which you can stick and remove the toothpicks. Insert many toothpicks into the half ball to form an armor of spines. This represents the imaginary character of the vice of anger.



MATERIALS

- pieces of polystyrene (preferably round) or plasticine or clay,
- toothpicks,
- a black indelible pen

Everyone then agrees to remove one spine every time he or she succeeds in not getting angry; or making peace after being angry; or when he or she try to help somebody else who is angry. Who will come to the next meeting with the fewest spines? Each spine taken out is a chance to share an experience.