

Sample Compilation of Student Voice on Anger

The following data combines notes from focus groups and student-submitted Personal Reflection Notes on the topic of anger.

Personal Reflection

Students answered specific questions about their anger as follows.

1. I've been known to express anger negatively.

Strongly disagree (5%)	Disagree (10%)	Not sure (10%)	Agree (60%)	Strongly agree (15%)
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2. Anger has affected my day-to-day life in a negative way.

Strongly disagree (18%)	Disagree (19%)	Not sure (27%)	Agree (27%)	Strongly agree (9%)
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3. How likely is it that I would attend individual or small-group sessions focused on gaining anger-management and conflict-resolution skills?

Never (0%)	Not likely (11%)	Undecided (22%)	Likely (34%)	Always (33%)
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4. How likely is it that I would recommend or invite a friend to individual or small-group sessions focused on anger management?

Never (14%)	Not likely (14%)	Undecided (29%)	Likely (43%)	Always (0%)
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5. What impact has anger had on me, my friends, my family, and my schooling?

Note: The following results are a compilation of the focus group discussion flip chart shown in figure 3.7 (page 74) and responses to the Personal Reflection Notes. Numbers in parentheses indicate repeat responses.

<p>Me</p> <p>Headaches (6) Verbal outbursts (7) Fights (6) Blaming others (3) Harm to self (2) Harm to others (3) Depression (3) Blackouts (2) Self-isolation (2) Anxiety (2) Eating or digestion problems (2) It makes me want to react physically. Sometimes, it makes me want to shut down. My anger makes me mad at people. I'm bipolar. The way I express my anger is I say really harsh words but I don't really shout. I have strong emotions about a lot of things. Getting in trouble Youth development center or jail</p>	<p>My Family</p> <p>Heated family altercations (5) Hurting others Loss of family relationships Stress or health problems Substance use Violence at home and abuse I have gotten into fights with my siblings. The impact my anger has had on my family is bad.</p>
	<p>My Friends</p> <p>Anger from bipolar disorder has impacted my relationships. Loss of friends (4) Substance use Fighting Dating violence I have lost friends because I have gotten into fights with them.</p>

<p>Me</p> <p>Hitting things, hurting myself, and breaking my hand, ankle, and foot</p> <p>Substance use (marijuana, alcohol, or liquor), smoking, or vaping</p> <p>Past trauma has had an impact on me, so it has had an impact on all my friends, family, and schooling.</p> <p>Tingling</p> <p>Probation</p> <p>Insomnia</p>	<p>My Friends</p> <p>The impact my anger has had on my friends is they have left me.</p> <p>My friends worry about me and the reactions I will have toward people who make me angry.</p>
<p>My Schooling</p> <p>When I am angry, it's not a good time for learning because what I am angry about is in the front of my brain.</p> <p>Sometimes, you figure out that fighting is not worth it and you realize education and grades are more important, and then you realize it is better to fight outside school because you are missing days and have to double up on your work after having to repeat assignments, grades, and classes. And also as you get older, there can be bigger consequences, like you can get arrested or you can lose your life.</p> <p>Getting suspended (2)</p> <p>Being labeled</p> <p>Substance use at school (drugs and vaping)</p> <p>I have poor relationships with teachers, and that makes it harder to learn.</p> <p>I was kicked off athletic teams.</p> <p>I have gotten in trouble and missed classes, and now I am failing two classes.</p> <p>My grades have gone down.</p> <p>It's had the most impact on my schooling.</p> <p>The impact that my anger has had on me is bad. It has caused me to hit staff and break my hands.</p> <p>I don't like school anyway, but when I am angry, I don't do anything.</p>	

Getting to Know You

6. What change would I like to see for myself?

I want to stop fighting with people when I'm mad.

I want the chance to talk to people about my problems.

I want to change my attitude and my tone toward people.

I would like to see myself handle problems more safely.

I want my PTSD gone, my anger gone.

I would like to learn to stay calm.

I want to be able to take stuff that upsets me and just ignore it and move on.

I would like to be less angry.

7. Something else you might want to know about me is . . .

I don't like people.

I am inspirational.

I'm very understanding.

I like to work and I work fast.

I work good with my hands.

I would rather be at work and make money than be at school.

I work better with friends.

I have been abused all my life. That's why I have PTSD and I get flashbacks all the time.

REPRODUCIBLE

Even though I can get mad easy, I can calm down fast.

I have mental and emotional problems.

I normally don't get crazy unless someone does certain things that really tick me off.

8. What do you care about or what is important to you?

My life, my brothers, and my sisters

My education

Myself and my money

My family

My brother and sisters

My friends and going to college

My mom and dad and siblings

My family and friends

My family, my friends, and my girlfriend

My future, work, friends, and family

9. What gives you hope?

My grandma

I don't know.

My mother, my teachers, and my brain

People trusting me

Nothing

My family

Anything that has great accomplishments that are possible for me

Money

10. What helps you come back from something difficult?

Music

Listening to my music and being by myself

Music I like

Just sitting and thinking

Music or drawing

Music and games

Walking away from the problem

Just to relax and do things to forget the situation

Time alone

11. If you really knew me, you would know . . .

I'm good if you don't make me mad.

I love money, and certain things get to me.

I am a leap-year baby.

I am silly.

I hate school.

I like to fish and hunt. I like dogs.

I feel depressed all the time because of abusive parents who have a lack of care for me.

About my life and how I have been treated and you would know about my anxiety.

I get mad easy but I am talkative and a jokester.

I'm really easy to get along with, and usually I don't hate or get upset unless something happens that I don't like.

I hate this school.

Questions to Increase the Knowledge and Understanding of Others

12. What one thing would you want others to know about students who are dealing with anger in their lives?

Note: This question is also a group-discussion question. In this case, the facilitator asked the students to categorize "others" during the discussion.

i. I would want other students and my friends to know . . .

Give me my space and don't talk to me.

Don't ask me a lot of questions.

You don't always have to fight or have altercations.

Think positive.

You are not the only ones.

Just walk away and breathe and try to think of something positive.

It gets easier.

ii. **I would want my family to know . . .**

Give me alone time and space when I am angry.

We have real life issues too.

iii. **I would want school staff to know . . .**

It is not a good time for a lot of questions.

Music and headphones can be helpful.

When I am angry, don't touch me. Give me space. Give me some time to think.

Most of the time, it's not about you.

Teenagers go through stuff too.

Sometimes I am just having a terrible day.

iv. **I would want everyone to know . . .**

Give us some space or privacy.

Sometimes I cuss, smoke, eat, or exercise.

Sometimes it is not about you.

Let it go after it is done. Don't keep bringing it back up.

Sometimes we wear something on our head—a hood or a cap—so we don't have to make eye contact with people. Eye contact can make things more intense.

Don't ask me a lot of questions when I am mad. It makes me angrier when an adult keeps asking me the same questions.

I punch stuff when I get mad, so having a punching bag at school would help.

Understand that teens can have a lot of stuff or stress going on.

I have tried punching a wall and a tree. It wasn't a good choice, so try punching something that won't break your hand.

Music and headphones can be helpful.

Sometimes, I think all people's problems can't be solved, and other times I think maybe they can be.

Sometimes when I am angry, I shut down or try to go to sleep. I isolate. I listen to music and try to breathe.

13. **Do you have successful strategies for coping with anger? If so, what are they?**

Yes, I try to manage and slow my breathing.

Yes, once I get it all out, I can generally calm myself down.

No, I just see red and then I don't really hear anything.

Listening to music with my headphones on is really helpful.

I walk it out.

Yes, getting some exercise or shooting baskets.

No, but I would like some help in getting some.

Just try not to think about it. Get your mind distracted.

Yes, I have at least two successful strategies.

Not really

No, I feel out of control.

14. **When my anger peaks at school, others might see me . . . (List personal behaviors, such as fidgeting.)**

Yelling

Skipping class

Hitting things

Trying to go home

Fighting

Not making eye contact

Using profanity

Wanting to be in a place that is dark and quiet because I get headaches

Vaping or smoking

Wanting to be alone

Zoning out

Needing to get the negative energy out (I need to move—not just be told to sit down and listen or talk to somebody.)

Being disrespectful

Losing it

Shutting down

15. **How can the school or school staff assist you in positively addressing or handling your anger when it arises?**

Sometimes it's stuff that happens outside school but then it comes into school.

Just simply talk with me.

Give students choices and control.

Train staff in conflict resolution and calming techniques.

Have gym classes that teach physical-release skills—yoga, exercise, tai chi, and martial arts.

Give students the ability to walk it out or get the energy or adrenaline out.

Have real talk, or straight talk, involving students in the solution.

Adults need to respond and learn what is really going on without punishing, reacting, and just giving out "policy."

Keep confidentiality, and don't tell my business.

Stop asking *what* questions and start asking *why* questions. Find out about me instead of just judging me for what I did.

Let me leave the room and walk.

Let me fight. Stop trying to stop the fight.

Yes, they could read about how to stay calm and not yell at students.

Try to understand the reasons behind or the cause of students' anger.

Yes, I need to be able to get away from who or what I am angry with.

16. **What school situations, experiences, or times escalate or trigger anger in a manner that negatively impacts your life?**

When the teachers talk badly about me

Middle school was negative for me.

Other students

Students who run their mouths

Teachers who compare me to my brothers and sisters

Students who pick on my brothers or sisters

Social bullies and drama queens

Gossip

Social media

Snitching

Suspensions

When teachers take action in class based on a suspension that had nothing to do with their class

Students or adults who hold grudges and keep bringing up something I've done wrong in the past or just keep talking about my past

When teachers yell, are disrespectful, have different rules for different students, have different rules from the rest of the school, stereotype, or hate their job; teachers who are moody and snap but expect students not to

Taking away all my choices, control, and my power in a situation

Teachers yelling and messing with kids

When someone messes with my little brothers and sisters

Getting yelled at all the time

Teachers who are rude and bipolar acting

When others start acting different around important people

When I am angry in class, it impacts my learning and my time in that class.

17. **What would you want teachers or school staff to know or understand about a teen's struggle to manage anger?**

It would help if they would leave me alone when I am angry.

Leave me alone when I am mad. Give me some privacy to calm myself down.

Anger does impact how I am doing in school, and teachers should know angry kids may get abused at home and at school.

They just need to find a good, calm way to resolve the situation besides punishment.

When it comes to me, I don't do my work when I am angry and I'm a smart-ass.

I want them to know there is always something behind anger and usually it is related to pain or being hurt.

Questions to Develop Programs

18. **What could we do or provide to make school a safe place for you to talk about or seek help related to anger management or conflict resolution?**

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|---|--|
| Have metal detectors. | Ensure I know I can get help. |
| Provide a good environment for students. | Offer me access to someone who listens. |
| Take the time to get to know your students and especially the ones with anger problems—find out what upsets them. | Have rules and procedures for keeping things confidential. |
| Give me someone I know I can talk to, not an administrator. | Offer accountability partners. |
| Offer assurance of no judgment. | Offer access to someone who can do a wellness check, and ensure knowledge there is someone we can find to check in with. |
| Have older students who could serve as mentors or mediators. | |

19. **Do you think it is important that we have an informational or support group for students struggling with anger who want to learn strategies to positively cope with it? Why or why not?**

- | | |
|--|--|
| Yes, to help me or us learn to control anger | I think so, because if you can help someone, I am sure that person would try to make it worth it and change. |
| Yes, because it may help those in need of help | |
| Yes, it is good to talk about it and get it out and figure out how to handle it. | Yes, some students definitely need it. |

20. **If we started a student informational or support group on anger management and conflict resolution, what would keep you coming back?**

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|---|--|
| Having help with anxiety and depression | Providing food (and changing it up with different foods)! |
| Offering food and candy | Continuing to be interactive |
| Knowing I can access it when I need help or when I have a question | Having someone who understands what goes on outside school |
| Getting along with the people in the group | Learning skills to do in the moment when you are mad |
| Having a leader share first, or someone else who has similar experiences share first | Offering physical activities that you can do when you are dealing with anger |
| Being in a group with people with common concerns or ideas | Feeling welcomed |
| Having a choice about gender-specific groups or mixed groups | Establishing relevant and different topics for conversation (conflict in family, conflict due to social media, and more) |
| Having groups divide by different grade levels since they are sometimes facing different concerns (I really think it would be good to have a group that is only ninth graders.) | Feeling safe and not judged |
| Getting to know the people in the group quickly | Receiving positive reactions from other people in the group when a person shares (no laughing or making disrespectful comments) because others' reactions can affect the choice to share in the future |
| Having one-on-one counseling available for times I want to talk to the group leader or therapist privately | Feeling like I'm making an improvement |
| Enforcing no-electronics rules for confidentiality and to keep people involved | Having encouraging and positive attitudes around me |
| Having trust among the group | Meeting in different areas |
| | Providing community-service activities |

Playing music
 Having a help line that you can call or text when outside the group and feeling anger (like a crisis line)

Using GroupMe to communicate about group meetings and helpful information

21. **If we started a student informational or support group on anger management and conflict resolution, what could get in the way and keep it from being successful?**

People who have conflicts with each other and don't like each other
 If it is not helping people
 Certain kids, and especially those with no respect for others
 Lack of confidentiality or privacy
 People coming into the group who think it won't help
 Negativity, because negativity is contagious.
 The size of the group. If groups are bigger than eight to twelve members, it may be hard to share if there are too many people. Having at least six to eight will be helpful in sharing similar experiences.
 Judgment

Having groups during the day when there will be class conflicts or after school if there is no transportation provided
 Having someone there you have a current conflict with (Let the group leader know so that he or she can have a mediation and resolve it before the group begins.)
 Too many adults, because adults can be intimidating
 Not being good listeners and talking over others
 Just being mad and agitated during the group
 Saying stuff outside the group or on social media but not saying it to the group
 Language barriers (with English learners)
 Having to talk about my family

22. **What types of information, activities, events, staffing, support, and programming related to managing anger, coping with change, resolving conflict, or mediating do you think would benefit students?**

Having a place to chill out—sofas, low lighting, low stimulation, headphones allowed, music playing
 Somebody present in the “chill out” room who talks to us (real talk that is normal and straight-up), who gives us something to do with or about our anger, who keeps our confidence or confidentiality, and who listens but doesn't bring it back up over and over again
 Having someone trained in conflict resolution whose full-time job is to assist students in conflict and who can focus on us and what we need
 Having a place to calm down without judgment and without someone trying to control us; being able to listen to music; and having something to fidget with or do with our hands, like puzzles to do and paper to draw on or fold
 Having someone trained in conflict resolution, meditation, and emotional or mental health—someone who is trained in listening, calming down, and in not lecturing
 Therapists who can mediate, run support groups, and do individual counseling
 Art and music classes or therapy

Having fun activities to ease the mind and manage the pain (Most people who are angry are in pain.)
 Well, a cigarette break, but that probably isn't going to happen
 Assistance in dealing with conflict with parents and family group
 Knowing how to handle my own issues
 Help dealing with being bullied and harassment
 Help dealing with negative social media
 Help dealing with teachers (teacher and student mediation)
 Information on depression and how it relates to anger and the feeling of hopelessness
 Help dealing with self-anger
 Training for peer mediators
 A group for students who have had physical fights
 A group just for athletes
 Something physical to do at school (something to hit?) to get out aggression
 Stress balls
 Games

Bonding at the beginning in school, classes, and groups

Things to do with our hands while in class, counseling sessions, offices, and groups to help stop the adrenaline or to deal with fidgeting

Art, journaling, sculpture, music, movement, yoga, tai chi, and weight lifting for people who aren't athletes

Something fun to do that will bring people together—even people who have discipline issues

One-on-one mentors

Anger-release games and activities (yoga, meditation, coloring books, and the ability to ask for mediation)

23. How do you think we should go about inviting others to this group or getting the word out that we are going to have a group like this for our students?

Look up students' discipline or violence history, and invite those who need it to come.

Just invite the angry students and then start talking about it in a way that helps them.

Find the students who are struggling, and ask them.

Whatever you decide to do, do it in private.

24. What group name do you suggest for an informational or support group for students struggling with anger and in need of strategies related to conflict resolution and mediation?

The Wisdom Over Anger (WOA) group

Number the groups instead of giving them a name.

25. When you think about this struggle with anger management or conflict in your life, what gives you hope?

The fact that I can control the circle of people I'm around and then change the way I act

Learning how to bite my tongue and control it

Nothing gives me hope when I am angry.

I don't get hope much.

My good friends and family

People who care enough to help you solve your problems

The fact that I know people care

26. If you could meet with a young adult who struggled with anger or conflict as a teen but is now doing well, what would you ask him or her?

How do you control your anger?

What got your anger up and running, and how did you learn to handle it?

What was going on in your home and in your school?

What helped you get over it?

What did you do to get help?

27. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

No responses