

Foreword

The optimal intervention package is never final or complete . . . intervention approaches must perpetually evolve. – Arnold P. Goldstein

The legacy of Arnold P. Goldstein (1933–2002) spans a remarkable career, blending science with practice to address the most pressing problems of modern youth. The bookends of Arnie’s shelf of writings both concern the theme of lasting behavior change. A half century ago, he joined Kenneth Heller and Lee Sechrest as they mined experimental and cognitive research for secrets of how learning endures. In two final books, he set the challenge for the decades ahead: What methods yield lasting change? And how do we engage resistant youth as partners in the process of change?

There are 300 approaches to control student violence, Arnie mused, most based on hearsay, hope, and desperation. While such behavior is challenging to change, most real-world programs are punitive, permissive, or defeatist. For example, he questioned attempts in recent years to portray gangs as narrowly pathological, thereby justifying coercive policies. All adolescents seek out peers for satisfaction, and gang membership is seldom exclusively destructive, but offers camaraderie, pride, excitement, and identity.

The strengths perspective was central to Arnie’s philosophy. Seeing potential in all youth motivated his efforts to turn negative peer groups into “prosocial gangs.” He was intrigued by the idea that youth themselves may be credible experts on delinquency. This respect for the voices of youth was exemplified in his book *Delinquents on Delinquency* (Goldstein, 1990). Always open to multiple perspectives, he saw ordinary knowledge as a useful adjunct to professional scientific knowledge.

While some feared that aggregating troubled youth for treatment would lead to peer deviance training, Arnie welcomed the opportunity to work with delinquents as a group. It was his understanding of the power of the friendship group that enabled Aggression Replacement Training (ART) to penetrate the gang culture (Goldstein & Glick, 1987). He recognized the potential of building positive youth cultures through peer helping. In fact, he cited research showing that youth were more motivated to participate in skill instruction if they thought they could use this information to help their peers, a concept that served as the foundation of the EQUIP Program (Gibbs, Potter, & Goldstein, 1995).

From Arnie’s earliest writings, respectful relationships were recognized as the foundation of all successful helping encounters. This universal principle made his interventions relevant across diverse domains of education, prevention, treatment, and corrections. His research showed that it was just as important to enhance the

attractiveness of the helper as to try to change the helpee. While many traditional approaches for troubled youth saw them as “perpetrators,” Arnie embraced Kurt Lewin’s interactionist approach: Behavior is a function of a person interacting with an environment, which Arnie called the “person-environment duet.” If the person is to change, the ecology must be changed.

Finally, Arnie had little time for holy wars among behavioral, cognitive, and developmental perspectives. Instead, he sought to integrate wisdom from these diverse theories. With all of his behavioral expertise, he was among the first to recognize the modest potency of social skills training in isolation. Thus, in ART he added anger management and moral reasoning and designed interventions attuned to the ecology of children and youth. Employing many methods for many needs, he created powerful evidence-based interventions long before the notion was in style. ART evolved into the initial edition of *The Prepare Curriculum* in 1988, revised in 1999. Arnie realized that if we are to meet the needs of those we serve, strategies need to be prescriptive in nature. Thus Prepare provided additional resources to assist change agents. This Prepare Curriculum Implementation Guide provides practitioners with a practical outline for implementing these strategies, in a user friendly, evidence-based manner. In this spirit, those of us who follow in the footsteps of Arnold Goldstein continue the search for methods that create deep learning and enduring change.

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Preface

In September of 2001, at a meeting of practitioners from all over the world held in Malmo, Sweden, Arnold P. Goldstein made clear his charge: The strategies and techniques he described in *The Prepare Curriculum: Teaching Prosocial Competencies* (Goldstein, 1988, 1999) were just the beginning. He challenged all in attendance to continue to develop his ideas through their own work and to share best practices to continue to grow the Prepare Curriculum.

As described in the introduction to this book, contributed by Clive R. Hollin, the Prepare Curriculum includes coordinated psychoeducational courses designed to teach prosocial competencies to adolescents and younger children who struggle with various aspects of social and emotional behavior. The curriculum is still widely in use; however, Prepare methods have evolved over the years, resulting in many useful adaptations and expansions. Organizations and research groups have formed to share ideas. The United States Center for Aggression Replacement Training ultimately developed into a worldwide network of researchers and practitioners known as ICART (International Center for Aggression Replacement Training), appointed by Arnold Goldstein with the aim of promoting quality control, further development, and continued dissemination of his programs. ICART evolved into PREPSEC (Prepare for Evidence-based Practice in Social Emotional Competency) International, a special interest organization designed to promote and expand Arnold P. Goldstein's combinations of programs for training in social competencies based on the Prepare Curriculum and other programs of a similar nature.

Likewise, this and other Prepare Curriculum Implementation Guides are intended to further Arnold Goldstein's original work—specifically, by describing and giving direction to the continued expansion of Prepare methods. In conjunction with the original curriculum, the guides are designed to offer practitioners coherent, evidence-based approaches to enhancing the prosocial abilities of young people. We will be forever grateful to Dr. Goldstein and his contribution to the field of prevention and intervention and his humanistic approach to treating children and their families. We hope these guides will enhance the ability of motivated, skilled, and enthusiastic practitioners to put his effective methods to work.

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Introduction: About the Prepare Curriculum

– Clive R. Hollin

The Prepare Curriculum, developed and later revised by Arnold Goldstein (Goldstein, 1988, 1999), takes a psychoeducational approach to working with young people who experience difficulties with interpersonal relationships and prosocial behavior. Prepare is designed to provide practitioners, teachers, and therapists with a series of coordinated psychoeducational courses explicitly developed to teach an array of prosocial psychological competencies to adolescents and younger children who are deficient in such competencies. As Goldstein notes in the introduction to the 1999 edition:

It seeks to teach empathy, which is interwoven into many of the modules, cooperation to the uncooperative, problem solving to those with inadequate decision-making skills, negotiating skills to the stubborn, anger control to the impulsive, altruism to the egocentric, group process to the isolated, stress management to the anxious, and social perceptiveness to the socially confused. (p. 1)

Prepare has its practice roots firmly in the tradition of skills training (Hollin & Trower, 1986a, 1986b) and, allied to social learning theory, to the application of cognitive-behavioral therapy to adolescent problems (Goldstein, Nensén, Daleflod, & Kalt, 2004). The techniques used in Prepare—including modeling, cognitive skills training, emotional control training, and problem-solving training—are traditional components of cognitive-behavioral interventions used to bring about change in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills. As these behavior change techniques are used in unison to bring about a range of changes, Prepare is an example of a multimodal program. A multimodal approach is in sympathy with the view that to bring about change in people's lives it is necessary to attend to multiple factors (Nietzel, Hasemann, & Lynam, 1999; Tate, Reppucci, & Mulvey, 1995). The effectiveness of multimodal programs such as Prepare with young people is supported in the literature (Hatcher & Hollin, 2005; Hollin & Palmer, 2006b; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998).

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Prepare also has foundations in an earlier program, described in the book *Aggression Replacement Training* (ART; Glick & Gibbs, 2011; Goldstein & Glick, 1987; Goldstein, Glick, & Gibbs, 1998). ART encompasses a tripartite approach, employing the three behavior change techniques of Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning. Whereas ART was designed for use with highly aggressive young people, Prepare incorporates a considerably wider spectrum of techniques aimed at the larger numbers of young people who have difficulties with prosocial behavior. Thus, Prepare may be used with young people who are moderately aggressive or who are socially isolated and withdrawn.

PREPARE COURSES

The Prepare Curriculum consists of 10 courses that focus on the behaviors, cognitions, and emotions related to prosocial interaction. These courses target three areas: aggression, stress, and prejudice reduction. As shown in Table 1, the Prepare courses for aggression include the three original ART courses (Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training), with an additional course on Situational Perception Training. The courses that focus on stress are Recruiting Supportive Models, Stress Management Training, and Problem-Solving Training. Finally, the courses for prejudice reduction include Cooperation Training, Empathy Training, and Understanding and Using Groups.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Goldstein (1999) describes how several theoretical perspectives influenced both the original design and later refinement of the Prepare Curriculum. Acknowledging the importance of psychodynamic and client-centered theory approaches to helping people change, Goldstein is clear that social learning theory and skills training are the key influences of Prepare. Simply, social learning theory seeks to understand the complex interactions among an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions within a given social context (Bandura, 1977b, 1986). In terms of practice, social learning theory is perhaps most closely allied with cognitive-behavioral methods, including skills training, traditionally much used with antisocial young people (Hollin, 1990). Furthermore, Goldstein's view of interpersonal problems is very much in sympathy with a social learning approach. For example, Goldstein (1994) described three levels in the physical ecology of aggression, all incorporating various levels of a person-environment interaction: "Macrolevel" refers to the analysis of aggression at a national or regional level, "mesolevel" to violence at the neighborhood level, and "microlevel" to violence found in settings such as the home and on the street.

The application of social learning theory is axiomatic with an approach to practice that sees the possibilities for change in both the social environment and the individual. At the level of work with the individual young person, practice is concerned with multimodal change that encompasses the individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions. As is evident from the curriculum, Prepare adopts a multimodal approach to change, with a clear emphasis on skills development. Indeed, the approach to skills development within Prepare is in keeping with the original social skills model described by Argyle and Kendon (1967). Argyle and Kendon described socially skilled behavior as consisting of three related components – namely, social perception, social cognition, and social performance. Social perception skills are evident in the ability to perceive and

Table 1: Grouping of Prepare Curriculum Courses

	AGGRESSION	STRESS	PREJUDICE REDUCTION
Behavioral	Skillstreaming Situational Perception Training	Recruiting Supportive Models	Cooperation Training
Emotional	Anger Control Training	Stress Management Training	Empathy Training
Cognitive	Moral Reasoning Training	Problem-Solving Training	Understanding and Using Groups

understand verbal and nonverbal social cues. Social cognition, as used in this context, is broadly analogous to social information processing and social problem solving. Social performance refers to the individual's own mastery of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The socially able person will be able to use all three components of social skills in an integrated manner to function effectively with other people.

Newer research on brain development and the neurosciences also has had an impact on our understanding of social cognition and perception. Goleman's (2005) work with social intelligence assists with the development of best practice for social skills training. His discussion of the brain's design to be sociable provides a neural bridge that impacts learning. The more strongly we are connected with someone emotionally, the greater the potential for lasting change. So, just as prosocial relationships affect neurological connectedness by impacting the size and shape of synapses, negative relationships can have a toxic effect. These newer developments have important implications for evidence-based programs.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

If the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the Prepare Curriculum are sound, what is the evidence to suggest that some young people have specific difficulties in the areas addressed within Prepare? A body of research suggests that the three major targets of aggression, stress, and prejudice reduction within Prepare are aimed at appropriate aspects of young people's functioning with respect to their prosocial behavior. An overview of this evidence in support of the behavioral, emotional, or cognitive change for these three major targets is next provided.

Behavior Focus

Situational Perception Training

Situational Perception Training is designed to develop the young person's social competence in applying the social skills learned in Skillstreaming. The purpose of Situational Perception Training is to show that in a social interaction, as well as in the other person's actions, situational, contextual factors are important to consider. The skill of accurately perceiving a person-situation interaction, rather than assuming, say, that

another person is deliberately hostile, is an important element in developing social competence.

The skills to recognize, understand, and interpret situational cues are an essential part of effective interpersonal behavior (Argyle, 1983). However, some young people with interpersonal difficulties, including aggression, may have difficulties in both the selection and interpretation of social cues (e.g., Akhtar & Bradley, 1991; Lipton, McDonel, & McFall, 1987; Lösel, Bliesener, & Bender, 2007; McCown, Johnson, & Austin, 1986). The misperception of social cues may lead to misattribution of the actions of other people as hostile or threatening (Crick & Dodge, 1996). Misperception of the other people's intent will, in turn, influence the way in which the young person deals with a given social encounter. Thus, Situational Perception Training is intended to develop the young person's skills in accurately detecting and understanding the verbal and nonverbal nuances that are present within a social interaction. Situational Perception Training therefore focuses on the setting in which the interaction takes place, the purpose of the interaction, and the social relationship between those involved (Brown & Fraser, 1979). The learning that takes place with perception training augments the skill development associated with Skillstreaming, enhancing the closeness of the match between Prepare and the original social skills model (Argyle & Kendon, 1967). The closeness of the match between theory and practice increases the likelihood of a successful outcome. The expansion of the Prepare course is called Social Perception Training to reflect its more comprehensive nature.

Skillstreaming

Skillstreaming is the development of skills, through the use of the techniques of modeling, instruction, practice, and feedback, to allow the young person to replace destructive behaviors with more constructive, prosocial alternative behaviors. Spence (1981a, 1981b) compared the social performance skills of young male offenders with those of matched nondelinquent controls. Spence reported differences in levels of nonverbal skills such that the delinquents were rated less favorably in terms of social skill, social anxiety, and employability. Ample evidence shows that skills training – incorporating modeling, role-play, and instructional feedback – can increase young people's social skills (Hollin & Palmer, 2001).

Recruiting Supportive Models

The Prepare course on recruiting supportive models aims to help young people to recognize, recruit, and maintain a prosocial support group. Goldstein's (2004a, 2004b) evaluation of the three original ART courses concludes that participation of the individual's significant other(s) in the courses is likely further to improve their success. The extension of the Prepare course Recruiting Supportive Models is *Family TIES* (Teaching in Essential Skills; Calame & Parker, 2013), which incorporates the family as the main support system.

Cooperation Training

The Prepare Curriculum originally involved two broad approaches designed to increase cooperative behavior: cooperative learning and cooperative gaming. The course offered numerous exercises, organized by age group, to enhance prosocial and achievement behaviors.

Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of 158 studies of cooperative learning strategies. They reported that the research clearly presents evidence that cooperative learning produces positive achievement results. Brown and Ciuffetelli (2009) highlight five basic and essential elements of cooperative learning: (a) positive interdependence; (b) face-to-face promotive interaction; (c) individual accountability; (d) social skills; and (e) group processing. Other positive outcomes of cooperative learning are increased self- and co-regulation leading to better problem solving (DiDonato, 2013).

Movement training utilizes cooperative activities and games to further enhance learning and retention of the skills taught to youth who participate in the Prepare series groups. Movement training incorporates physical movements that will stimulate and prepare the brain for learning. Raley (2008) describes movement and exercise as “Miracle-Gro” for the brain, greatly enhancing self-awareness, self-esteem, and social skills. The typical child’s attention span is reported to be three to five minutes per year of the child’s age (Schmitt, 1999). A decrease in attention is exacerbated by inactivity. Movement can be used before, during, and after group participation to increase attention and enhance learning.

Emotion Focus

Anger Control Training

Anger Control Training involves the application of anger management techniques to previously assessed triggers for the young person’s anger. Thus, this course aims to improve the young person’s control over anger by developing a self-awareness of internal anger cues, increasing self-instructional skills, facilitating the use of coping strategies and social problem-solving skills, and increasing social skills.

Anger, particularly dysfunctional anger, is the emotional state most frequently associated with aggressive behavior (Davey, Day, & Howells, 2005), although not all violent conduct is associated with anger. Anger is seen to be dysfunctional when it has a negative consequence either for the individual, as seen with poor physical and mental health, or for other people (Swaffer & Hollin, 2000, 2001). The most influential theory of anger was formulated by Novaco (1975, 2007), in which anger is understood to be a subjective emotional state involving both physiological and cognitive activity, but clearly related to environmental circumstances.

Following Novaco’s theory, the experience of anger is triggered by some environmental event, typically the individual’s perception of the words and actions of another person. Novaco and Welsh (1989) identify various styles of perception and information processing that are typical of individuals who are prone to anger. These styles include the tendency to see hostility and provocation in the words and actions of other people and to make attribution errors in perceiving one’s own behavior as situationally determined by the behavior of others, as explained by their negative personality.

The individual’s misperception of a situation may prompt distinct patterns of physiological and cognitive arousal. The physiological correlates of anger are typically a rise in body temperature, perspiration and muscular tension and increased cardiovascular activity. The cognitive processes begin with the individual’s labeling the emotional state as anger and then continue with the intensification of the information-processing

biases as the situation unfolds. Finally, the shift from anger to violent behavior is related to the disinhibition of internal control through, for example, high levels of physiological arousal or the effects of drugs.

Anger control training in various forms is now widely used across a range of populations, including young people, with a strong supporting research base (Hollin & Bloxson, 2007).

Stress Management Training

Stress Management Training recognizes that stressful life events may have negative effects on young people. The development of stress management skills is achieved through the application of such techniques as progressive relaxation training, meditation, controlled breathing, and physical exercise, as well as through reflective exercises looking at how to deal with personally stressful life events.

As is the case with anger, stress and anxiety can be both functional and dysfunctional. Childhood and adolescence present a myriad of changing life events that are naturally stressful for the developing young adult (Frydenberg, 1997). The Stress Management Training course in Prepare aims to help individuals regulate their stress so that it does not affect their ability to use their prosocial skills effectively. The tendency of adolescents to be peer-conscious can make some young people particularly susceptible to social stressors. The experience of stress, in turn, may interfere with the young person's ability to perform well in some social interactions.

Empathy Training

Empathy Training encourages young people to reflect upon other people's feelings and to increase awareness that the feelings of other people may be different from their own. The basis of this training lies in the view that if an individual has the capacity to empathize, then he or she is less likely to misperceive hostile intent in the actions of other people. Increasing empathy may reduce the likelihood of the young person's being aggressive toward others.

The ability to appreciate another person's emotional state is a key component of prosocial behavior. Goldstein (2004a) suggests that empathy and aggression cannot coexist, given that an empathic state will inhibit an aggressive one. It follows, therefore, that increasing a young person's capacity for empathy may reduce the likelihood of the young person's displaying hostility and aggression to other people.

A distinction is made in the literature between affective empathy and cognitive empathy. Affective empathy is seen in the emotions we experience in response to another person's situation. Cognitive empathy is our intellectual understanding of how another person feels. The research literature suggests a relationship between low empathy and offending (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) found a relationship between low cognitive and affective empathy and offending. However, Jolliffe and Farrington also reported that the relationship was more consistent in males than in females and was moderated by the level of the young person's intelligence and socioeconomic status. These studies provide support for the inclusion of empathy training as an integral part of Prepare.

Cognitive Focus

Moral Reasoning Training

Moral Reasoning Training is intended to resolve maturational delays with respect to moral reasoning and any associated egocentric bias. This aspect of Prepare includes enhancement of moral reasoning, alongside social perspective-taking skills, using the techniques of self-instruction training, social problem-solving skills training, and guided peer group social decision making.

The importance of moral development in socialization is made clear in several influential theories (Kohlberg, 1978; Piaget, 1932). In particular, Kohlberg's theory is concerned with the development of antisocial behavior. Kohlberg, like Piaget, argues that as the child grows older moral reasoning follows a developmental sequence in line with the child's age. Kohlberg describes three levels of moral development, with two stages at each level. At the lower stages, moral reasoning is concrete in orientation. Reasoning becomes more abstract at the higher stages, involving concepts such as justice and rights.

Kohlberg suggests that antisocial behavior is associated with a delay in the development of moral reasoning that results in weak internal control over behavior. The generally accepted position, reinforced by the major reviews, is that delinquents typically show immature, hedonistic, and self-centered moral functioning when compared with their nondelinquent peers (Nelson, Smith, & Dodd, 1990; Palmer, 2003; Stams et al., 2006).

However, as Gibbs (1993) points out, moral reasoning should be considered alongside other aspects of cognition, particularly social information processing, particularly with regard to cognitive distortions (Gibbs, 1993; Goldstein et al., 1998). Cognitive distortions directly support the attitudes consistent with sociomoral developmental delay and reduce cognitive dissonance. Thus, an example of self-centered moral reasoning would be "If I want it, I take it." Gibbs terms this type of reasoning a primary distortion. Primary distortions are sustained by secondary distortions: Secondary distortions supporting "I want it, I take it" might be blaming victims for the offense or biased interpretations of one's own behavior. The successful use of Moral Reasoning Training with aggressive populations has been reported in the literature (Gibbs, 1996; Gibbs, Potter, & Goldstein, 1995).

Problem-Solving Training

Problem-Solving Training is included because the young person's problem-solving ability affects how successfully he or she may learn and apply other Prepare skills in real life. Thus, Problem-Solving Training helps the young person develop skills and abilities in defining a problem, identifying potential solutions, selecting the optimal solution, and evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen strategy.

Following perception and understanding of other people's behavior, the young person must choose a suitable behavioral response. The process of decision making in the context of a social interaction requires the young person to problem-solve – that is, to think of potential courses of action, to consider the alternatives and their likely consequences, and to plan toward accomplishing the intended outcome (McGuire, 2005). Some young people may experience difficulties in social problem solving. For example, both female and male young offenders typically employ a more limited range

of alternatives to solve interpersonal problems and rely more on verbal and physical aggression than do nondelinquents (Hollin & Palmer, 2006a; Palmer & Hollin, 1999; Ward & McFall, 1986). A body of research that supports the effectiveness of problem-solving training with young people (Lösel & Beelmann, 2005).

Understanding and Using Groups

As Goldstein (1999) points out, “Group processes are an exceedingly important influence upon the daily lives of many adolescents and younger children” (p. 737). The Prepare course on groups encompasses discussion of the nature, dynamics, problems, and opportunities in groups. In addition to providing a conceptual context, the course describes numerous experiential opportunities to help youth understand and use groups to prosocial advantage.

Groups develop through four stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At the forming stage, even though members may not know each other very well, it is important to set boundaries and clear parameters for the operation of the group. Safety is clearly the priority, for if there is no safety, there is no growth. When groups are forming, the facilitators provide support and guidance to establish a climate of psychological and emotional safety. Facilitators also should be keenly aware of any negative influences in the group and any bullying behavior that may be unsafe and/or counterproductive to the goals of the group.

In the second stage, storming, members will test limits to determine whether the group is safe. Individuals may push boundaries and break commitments that they made in the initial session. It is the role and responsibility of facilitators to correct and/or address such behavior. If facilitators and members fail to enforce and comply with norms, the safety and growth of the group will be impaired.

During the third stage, norming, relationships develop, and, as trust increases, members become more willing to take risks (Amidon, Roth, & Greenberg, 1991). The group should begin to work together to problem-solve, resolve conflict, and share personal values. Because adolescents are constantly attempting to discover their identity and role in relation to others, their interaction with one another, if positive, will assist in crystallizing this identity and role. Also during this stage, we begin to see prosocial coaching occur from peer to peer. When this transpires, our experience has been that group members begin to internalize and learn skills at a deeper level.

In the more advanced performing stage, we begin to see the group functioning at its highest level. Facilitators’ roles are to ease transitions and provide support to the group. Trust is at its highest level, and we also see peers exhibit empathic responses to one another. During this time, higher risk engagement and activities are possible, with facilitators remaining intensely aware of any negative environmental influences.

When delivered with fidelity, psychoeducational groups can help increase self-awareness, build healthy relationships, and improve interpersonal connections. This therapeutic environment also assists with competency development and skill building, which encourage appropriate expression of emotion, minimizing the negative and maximizing the positive. Processing group experiences also increases self-awareness, self-disclosure, healthy boundaries, and improved relationships (Thompson & White, 2010).

We have found through our practical application of the Prepare Curriculum that the development of group process is impacted by the skill level of the facilitator and

engagement of the participants. When groups are functioning at their highest level, there is mutual benefit to a larger number of participants, and we see proficient levels of skill demonstrated in real-life situations.

CONCLUSION

Some young people experience difficulties as they grow older in developing and using prosocial skills. These difficulties are obviously not a characteristic of all young people, who form a heterogeneous population with an accordingly broad span of social ability (Veneziano & Veneziano, 1988). Nonetheless, for those young people who do experience such problems, attention to the development of prosocial competencies may help in reducing antisocial behavior and moving them toward a more rewarding social life.

PART 1
Theoretical Foundation and Program Overview

INTRODUCTION

Anger is a natural and recurring human emotion that we all experience, some more intensely than others. We employ a variety of responses: We may pout, withdraw, or mutter something to ourselves. Sometimes we use anger to spur constructive problem solving and coping, ranging from overt expression of our emotions to introspective evaluation. For the majority of people, anger does not commonly lead to aggression in the form of relational, verbal, or physical attempts to harm the persons with whom we are angry. Unfortunately, for chronically and overtly aggressive youth, the opposite is true. Seldom do they merely pout, withdraw, or constructively problem-solve. Instead, they often lash out with the intent to harm.

Anger Control Training is designed to serve two related purposes: (a) to help reduce the frequency of anger arousal in overtly aggressive youth and (b) to provide such youth with the means to learn self-control when their anger is aroused. In essence, just as Skillstreaming is designed to teach youth what they should do in problematic situations, Anger Control Training teaches them how to appropriately express their anger in an assertive, nonaggressive manner. We teach children and adolescents that anger is an emotion and that all emotions are okay; it is what you do with that emotion through your behavior that matters.

Origins of Anger Control Training

Early studies of anger included work by the Russian psychologist Luria (1961), who explored the manner in which children learned to regulate their external behavior by means of internalized speech. Little and Kendall (1979) describe this mechanism of verbal control:

The process of development of verbal control of [overt] behavior. . . . seems to follow a developmental sequence. First, the initiation of the motor behavior comes under control of adult verbal cues, and then the inhibition of responses is controlled by the speech of adults. Self-control emerges as the child learns to respond to his own verbal cues, first to initiate responses and then to inhibit them. (p. 101)

In addition to Luria's seminal research, a number of other investigators have examined and confirmed the verbal mediation of the self-control process. As Little and Kendall (1979) note, "There is considerable evidence to support the belief that self-control develops largely as a function of a child's development of [internal] language mechanisms." But, as with all normative developmental processes, in some children the expected sequence fails to occur, occurs only in part, or occurs in distorted form. It is precisely the youth who are deficient in the ability to regulate overt behavior by internal speech who also display the behaviors associated with hyperactivity, impulsivity, poor self-control, acting out, and the like. However, impulsive behavior in these youngsters may be reduced by externally imposed interventions that closely replicate the normal developmental sequence described by Luria. As in Skillstreaming, in Anger Control Training we want participants to understand how critical their self-talk (or "bubble talk") is to identifying early signs of anger and how central it is to using a multistep sequence to control impulsive behaviors.

Donald Meichenbaum and his research group have been active in this area of study for many years. Their initial investigations sought to establish the relationship between impulsivity and poor verbal control of overt behavior. Meichenbaum and Goodman (1969), using Kagan's (1966) Matching Familiar Figures Test, a standard measure for determining impulsivity/reflectivity, found that youth who respond on the test quickly and make many errors (impulsive youth) also exercise diminished verbal control over their overt behavior, as compared with youth who take their time and make fewer errors (reflective youth). What do reflective and impulsive youngsters say to themselves, and how does their self-directed speech differ? To answer such questions, Meichenbaum and Goodman (1971) observed and recorded the play behavior and private speech of 16 four-year-olds who were matched for age, intelligence, and socioeconomic status. Half of the children were reflective, and half of the children were impulsive, as indicated by the Kagan measure. Results indicated that the private speech of the cognitively impulsive preschoolers was largely composed of the most immature, self-stimulatory content. Reflective preschoolers, in comparison, manifested significantly more outer-directed and self-regulatory speech and significantly more inaudible mutterings. The investigators concluded from their observational studies that cognitively reflective preschoolers use their private speech in a more mature, instrumental, and self-guiding fashion than impulsive preschoolers do.

The nature of the normative developmental sequence described by Luria and found wanting in impulsive youngsters by Meichenbaum and others led Meichenbaum (1977) to duplicate the sequence as a remedial intervention for youngsters deficient in such self-regulatory skills. He comments:

Could we systematically train hyperactive, impulsive youngsters to alter their problem-solving styles, to think before they act, in short, to talk to themselves differently? Could we, in light of the specific mediational deficits observed, teach the children how to (a) comprehend the task, (b) spontaneously produce mediators and strategies, and (c) use such mediators to guide, monitor, and control their performances? This was the challenge that sparked the development of self-instructional training. (p. 31)

A review of other literature on anger management strategies echoes Meichenbaum's theory that systematic strategies are required to teach a sequence of managing emotional outbursts due to anger. Biaggio (1987) discussed the importance and difficulty of generalization. This author has suggested that a multi-pronged approach is required to deal with anger and its subsequent negative behaviors. This approach should include: (a) assertiveness training, (b) social skills training, and (c) cognitive-behavioral approaches (which are most effective when combined with relaxation training). Our clinical experience has been that relaxation training alone is not particularly effective in decreasing anger but that augmenting such training with the three techniques just described is very useful, especially if self-instructional reminders for use before, during, and after provocation are included.

When it comes to working with high-risk, highly aggressive youth, more recent discoveries from the field of neuroscience reinforce the power of learning. Learning impacts how the brain forms through developmental stages and how it changes over a lifetime. The concept of neuroplasticity, or the brain's ability to change its structure

and function in significantly different ways, is important in this regard. It is possible to reinvent our brains and reinvent ourselves through the process of neuroplasticity (Davidson & Begley, 2012; Wesson, 2010).

It is widely believed that social-cognitive processing deficits have a causal role in aggressive behavior (Lim, Day, & Casey, 2011). Attributional biases play an important role in both anger arousal and aggression (Tiedens, 2001). Hostile attribution bias, or the assumption that others are acting maliciously, becomes an emotional style, and this bias becomes a consistent response to life experiences (Davidson & Begley, 2012). If a feeling characterizes a youth not for days but for years, it becomes an emotional trait. An emotional trait (chronic, just-about-to-boil-over anger) increases the likelihood that the youth will experience a particular emotional state (fury) because it lowers the threshold needed to feel such an emotional state.

Davidson and Begley (2012) outline six dimensions of emotional style that reflect the discoveries of modern neuroscientific research:

1. Resilience: How slowly or quickly you recover from adversity.
2. Outlook: How long you are able to sustain positive emotion.
3. Social intuition: How adept you are at picking up social signals from people around you.
4. Self-awareness: How well you perceive bodily feelings that reflect emotions.
5. Sensitivity to context: How good you are at regulating your emotional responses to take into account the context you find yourself in.
6. Attention: How sharp and clear your focus is.

As previously noted, habitually aggressive individuals frequently exhibit a hostile attribution bias (Tiedens, 2001). Further evidence exists that cognitive processing patterns become more rigid over time and are maintained by gross thinking errors that increase aggressive behaviors (Harvey, Fletcher, & French, 2001). Aggressive children's and adolescents' cognitive deficits and distortions are compounded by consistently high states of emotional and physiological arousal. Social functioning and psychological well-being require the adaptive management of emotions (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweitzer, 2010). Children and adolescents who are better at regulating their own emotions are more competent socially, attain higher peer status, have better quality relationships, and display more prosocial behavior than do those who have emotional dysregulation. Aggressive behavior, depression, and anxiety are symptomatic of emotional dysregulation (McLaughlin, Hatzenbuehler, Mennin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011).

Digiuseppe and Tafrate (2001) examined various treatment modalities, concluding that anger treatment generally works for all age groups, all types of populations, and both sexes. A meta-analysis by Beck and Fernandez (1998) reviewed 50 studies of 1,640 subjects involved in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for treatment of anger. Overall, clients who underwent CBT improved 76 percent over untreated clients in anger reduction. The study mostly included prison inmates, abusive parents, abusive spouses, juvenile delinquents, adolescents in juvenile settings, aggressive children, and children with developmental delays. The diverse client population showed that CBT was effective across a wide range of client types. Ambrose and Mayne (1999) evaluated which type of techniques work with specific populations. Throughout their

research, they determined that a combination of strategies that address physiological, cognitive, behavioral, and social components of anger are the most effective. They also reviewed specific strategies that best address the needs of various populations. For violent adults, 4 to 20 group sessions were an effective time frame, with studies yielding up to a 50 percent decrease in violent behaviors. Aggressive children were best served by a cognitive-behavioral group, with anger management also being effective and cost efficient. Programs that were the most successful included social skills training, anger monitoring/self-awareness, relaxation, and cognitive restructuring. Individuals in a posttraumatic stress disorder group experienced a 50 percent reduction in anger with cognitive-behavioral therapy, although studies were inconclusive as to whether reductions in aggression followed.

Self-Instructional Training for Impulsive Youth

In research on self-instructional training for impulsive youth, the typical sequence of instructional procedures is as follows:

1. The trainer models task performance and self-instructs aloud while the child observes.
2. The child performs the task, self-instructing aloud as he or she does so.
3. The trainer models task performance and whispers self-instructions while the child observes.
4. The child performs the tasks, self-instructing in a whisper while doing so.
5. The trainer performs the task using covert self-instructions, with pauses and behavioral signs of thinking such as raising the eyes toward the ceiling or stroking the chin.
6. The child performs the task using covert self-instructions.

Meichenbaum and Goodman's (1971) initial use of these procedures yielded decreased impulsivity and enhanced reflectiveness (i.e., increased response time and decreased error rate) in samples of hyperactive youngsters, in comparison with nonimpulsive controls. The children could indeed learn, as the investigators put it, to "stop, look, and listen." This early research also showed that observing a model using covert self-instructions was insufficient to obtain the desired outcome; the youth also had to covertly self-instruct.

Other investigators reported essentially confirming results with regard to impulsiveness and hyperactivity, and they extended self-instructional training to other, often related, types of problem behaviors. These included problematic classroom behaviors, low resistance to temptation, and both anger and aggression.

Self-Instructional Training for Aggressive Youth

In 1975, Novaco sought to apply the self-instructional training approach to the management of anger. By way of definition, he comments:

The arousal of anger is here viewed as an affective stress reaction. That is, anger arousal is a response to perceived environmental demands — most commonly, aversive psychosocial events. . . . Anger is thought to consist of a combination of physiological arousal and cognitive label-

ing of that arousal as anger. . . . Anger arousal results from particular appraisals of aversive events. External circumstances provoke anger only as mediated by their meaning to the individual. (pp. 252–253)

As Novaco also states: “A basic premise is that anger is fomented, maintained, and influenced by the self-statements that are made in provocation situations” (p. 17). In Novaco’s own research involving people with chronic anger problems, use of self-instructional training was shown to substantially decrease anger arousal levels.

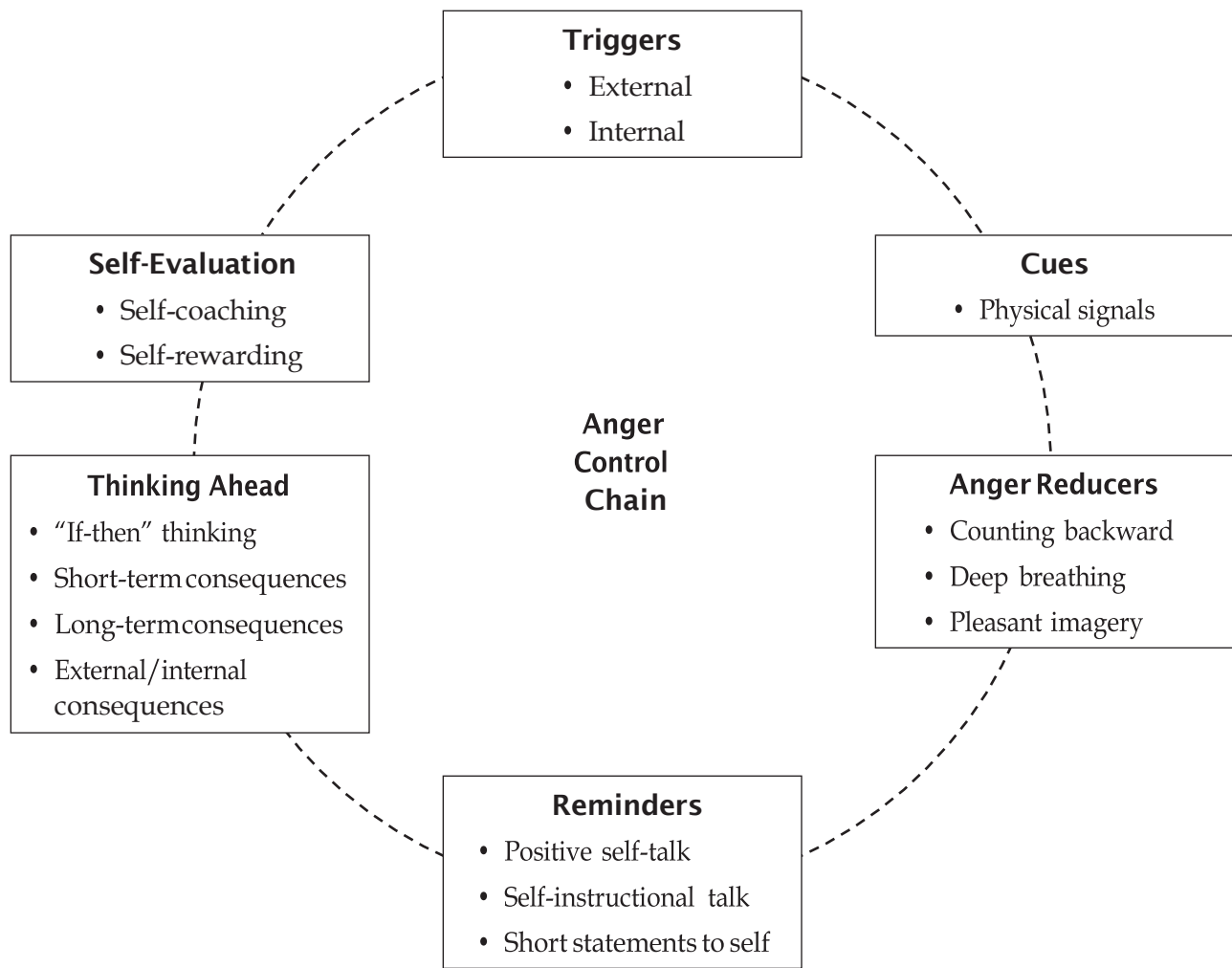
Meichenbaum viewed the remediation of impulsivity in the light of Luria’s insights about the normal development of self-regulation, and Novaco needed Meichenbaum’s impulsivity research to extend self-instructional training to chronically angry individuals. Similarly, the work of Eva Feindler built upon the substantial foundation provided by Novaco. Feindler and her research group have contributed greatly to the development of Anger Control Training, both with important research findings and with substantial refinements in technique (Feindler, 1979; Feindler & Fremouw, 1983; Feindler, Latini, Nape, Romano, & Doyle, 1980; Feindler, Marriott, & Iwata, 1984). This series of investigations provided elaboration of Novaco’s intervention sequence into the Anger Control Chain (illustrated in Figure 1), in which participants learn about the following:

1. Triggers: The external events and internal appraisals that serve as provocations to anger arousal
2. Cues: The physiological and kinesthetic sensations that signal to the individual the level of anger arousal.
3. Anger reducers: Techniques that in combination with reminders may reduce anger arousal (e.g., deep breathing, backward counting, peaceful imagery, and consideration of long-term consequences). We have found that, when possible, reinforcing breathing and imagery techniques outside of the scheduled sessions increases the frequency of group members’ use of reducers. As a result, we have developed a specific protocol for deep breathing, guided imagery, and self-instructional reminders (see Appendix A).
3. Reminders: The self-instructional statements that may function to reduce anger arousal
5. Thinking ahead: A metacognition strategy that teaches participants how to engage in “if-then” thinking and identify short-term consequences, long-term consequences, external consequences, and internal consequences.
6. Self-evaluation: The opportunity to self-coach and/or self-reward depending on how well or poorly the previous steps have been implemented

The Conflict Cycle

The Conflict Cycle (Long, Wood, & Fecser, 2001), shown in Figure 2, was developed to explain the circular interaction between staff and troubled students and to illuminate the reasons competent caregivers end up in self-defeating power struggles with these youth. One way of understanding the Conflict Cycle is to imagine a revolving door, like the one at a hotel. You and a troubled student enter this revolving door simultaneously but at opposite ends. The troubled student wants to get out of the hotel, and you want to get in. The troubled student begins the cycle by pushing the glass

Figure 1: Anger Control Chain

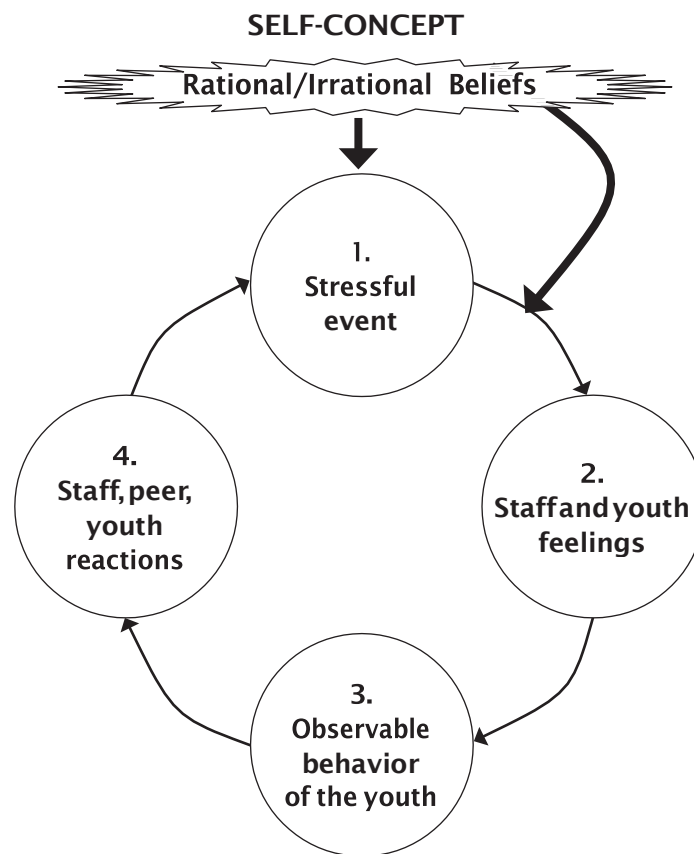


door. The door starts to move, and your automatic reaction is to push the door yourself so you will not be hit in the back. This is the natural and logical response. Your behavior, however, increases the speed of the door. The student now has to push the door again or be hit. This causes the door to spin even faster. You respond quickly and push even harder. Now you are caught in this cycle. You believe you cannot jump out of this revolving door without hurting yourself. The situation is out of control. The troubled student and you inadvertently have created a “no win” power struggle, which can only result in mutual injury. This is what can happen when a teacher tries to manage the behavior of an aggressive student.

Knowledge of the Conflict Cycle helps a student to understand why he or she may end up behaving emotionally and in turn fuel and escalate a conflict. We teach the Conflict Cycle in Session 7 to help participants better understand the Anger Control Chain, which is the sequence of skills to manage their anger.

As for the tendency to engage in the Conflict Cycle, Long et al. (2001) remark:

Figure 2: Conflict Cycle Diagram



From *Life Space Crisis Intervention: Talking with Students in Conflict*, by N.J. Long, M.M. Wood, & F.A. Fecser, 2001, Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. Adapted by permission.

What makes some students prone to engaging in conflict cycles? Why do some students repeatedly make choices whose outcomes make life more difficult? We propose that the pattern begins with a student's self-concept, irrational beliefs, and self-fulfilling prophecies. Early in life, infants gain a sense of security when their environments are safe and predictable. As the child grows older, the child learns that he or she has some control over the environment and can predict and understand certain cause-effect relationships: Baby cries, mother appears, comfort follows. Later, the toddler sings "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," and adults smile, praise, and cuddle. Still later, the preschooler throws a stuffed animal in the living room, knocking over a plant, and adults say, "That's bad!" and take away the stuffed animal. In the predictable setting, the child learns how to invite favorable reactions and how to avoid unfavorable reactions. But what if things are not stable at home? What if other responsibilities leave parents little time to teach these lessons to the child, or what if the child experiences abandonment, neglect, or abuse? Among the ill effects of such

experiences is an inner sense of unrest for the child, the sense of being unable to understand, and therefore to have some control of events in life. (p. 23)

Problem-Solving Deficits, Thinking Errors, and the Stress Response

Aggressive youth characteristically have problem-solving deficits. Often, those who have problem-solving deficits engage in irrational thinking involving rationalization, denial, and minimization to justify their behaviors. In order to properly problem-solve and move forward, they must first correct these cognitive distortions. Table 2 presents these cognitive distortions, as defined by Gibbs, Potter, and Goldstein (1995).

Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy identifies these distortions as *thinking mistakes* (Cohen, Deblinger, Mannarino, & Steer, 2004); often, they are simply called *thinking errors*. To recognize that a thinking error exists, individuals must learn that their thought processes are inaccurate and that, if continued, can be self-destructive.

Genuine self-criticism is absolutely essential to the change process. Without it, any effort at change will result in early failure. As we attempt to understand thinking errors, we might be offended or worried by finding that, to a degree, we all have some of the characteristics attributed to self-destructive behavior. We may think of times we have lied or misrepresented a situation. We may recall, with some embarrassment, an occasion when we have let our temper get the best of us or an isolated instance of taking something that did not belong to us. Such behavior doesn't automatically place us on the self-destructive and/or antisocial end of the continuum. However, to bring about change, youth must and realize that thinking errors can be self-destructive.

In addition to having thinking errors, aggressive children and adolescents often have living environments characterized by substantial and acute stressors. These dysfunctional environments often expose children to excessively harsh or abusive parental discipline. Aggression is modeled for them in the home, in their neighborhood, and in their school. This contributes greatly to a hostile attribution bias (Hudley & Novac, 2007), or the belief that others are acting maliciously when in fact they may have benign motives. This bias creates an emotional state that too easily triggers the "freeze, flight, fight, or fright" reaction that starts a chain of physiological changes in the body. Table 3 details the physiological stress response, as described by Wesson (2010).

Impulsive youth frequently confuse the bodily signs or cues that reflect specific emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger. Accurate interpretation of such signs in the anger control process can signal to youth that it is time to make use of one or more techniques to reduce their own levels of anger arousal. It is critical that Anger Control Training participants be able to identify external triggers and internal cognitions that initiate the anger experience. They also must be able to identify physiological cues that are a response to external triggers.

Threat response processes do not reverse themselves on command, a fact that makes it difficult to calm down after an event. Sometimes the only way to get back to a state of homeostatic balance is to separate from danger (Wesson, 2011). It is critical that participants be able to identify their specific anger cues so they can initiate specific anger reducers to interrupt the stress response.

Table 2: Cognitive Distortions

1. Self-Centered

According status to one's own views, expectations, needs, rights, immediate feelings, and desires to such an extent that the legitimate views, etc., of others (or even one's own best interest) are scarcely considered or are disregarded altogether).

2. Minimizing/Mislabeling

Depicting antisocial behavior as causing no real harm or as being acceptable or even admirable, or referring to others with belittling or dehumanizing labels.

3. Assuming the Worst

Gratuitously attributing hostile intentions to others, considering a worst-case scenario for a social situation as if it were inevitable, or assuming that improvement is impossible in one's own or others' behavior.

4. Blaming Others

Misattributing blame for one's harmful actions to outside sources, especially to another person, a group, or a momentary aberration (one was drunk, high, in a bad mood, etc.) or misattributing blame for one's victimization or other misfortune to innocent others.

From *The EQUIP Program: Teaching Youth to Think and Act Responsibly Through a Peer-Helping Approach*, by J.C. Gibbs, G.B. Potter, and A.P. Goldstein, 1995, Champaign, IL: Research Press. Reprinted by permission.

If, instead, they immediately use gross thinking errors (thoughts that rationalize, minimize, or justify their future behavior), the cycle quickly escalates. Anger reducers are skills that require repetition in order to enhance proficiency. Once successful in this regard, with the potential interference of their emotional states substantially reduced, youth can proceed to employ more accurate, more benign, and less anger-arousing cognitions and interpretations of the world around them. Learning to use the self-talk strategy of reminders is critical to the anger control outcome.

In Anger Control Training, role-plays go to the point of anger arousal (Kellner, 2001) and then stop before continuing on to employ specific anger control techniques. This "freeze frame" strategy provides a break in thinking that prompts participants that they need to do something different from what they have done in the past. Chronically aggressive youth are exceedingly well practiced in conjuring up anger-arousing perceptions and interpretations (i.e., internal triggers) but often have made meager use of anger-avoiding self-instructions (i.e., reminders).

A primary internal trigger for aggressive youth is the attribution of hostile intent. For multiple developmental reasons, they believe that the whole world is against them and everyone intends to harm them in some personal or physical way. They tend to catastrophize even the most benign trigger. If they do well at controlling their anger, it is important that they feel the effort is worthwhile. The self-evaluation (self-rewarding and self-coaching) step in the Anger Control Training sequence teaches youth how to praise, reward, and coach themselves.

Table 3: Physiological Response to Stressful Situations

1. The cycle initiates with a stressful situation, and the hypothalamus triggers the pituitary gland.
 2. The nervous system prepares all major organs for quick action, assault, and/or shut down.
 3. The amygdala signals alert, triggering the autonomic nervous system to prepare the motor systems for adjustments.
 4. The heart muscle contracts, causing heart rate and blood pressure to rise quickly, sending fuel to the body.
 5. Blood vessels constrict, and this promotes sweating and diverts blood flow to large muscle groups.
 6. The spleen contracts, leading to fast production of white blood cells to prevent excessive bleeding.
 7. Recall and rational thinking are compromised, as the carotid artery reduces blood flow to increase flow to specific muscle groups.
 8. Pupils in the eyes dilate to sharpen visual acuity.
 9. Bronchii in the lungs dilate to increase oxygen intake.
 10. Glycogen is broken down in the liver to increase instant energy.
 11. The hippocampus stores the event and the response to it as a permanent memory to be used in the future.
-

Instructional Components of Anger Control Training

The main instructional components of Anger Control Training are modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and skill generalization, as next described.

Modeling

Modeling is defined as learning by imitation. Research has consistently suggested that imitation is effective and reliable for learning new behaviors and strengthening or weakening previously learned behaviors (Goleman, 2005). In planning and conducting modeling displays, leaders must attend to modeling enhancers – specifically, those characteristics of the model and the modeling that make learning more effective for the observer. For example, the leader should select situations relevant to the learner’s real-life circumstances, depict all the behavioral steps of the skill in the correct sequence, and display only one skill at a time, without extraneous or distracting content. The model (the person enacting the behavioral steps) should be someone who is reasonably similar to the group member in age, socioeconomic background, verbal ability, interest, or other aspects.

Perhaps the most important modeling enhancer is the provision of positive reinforcement to the model for displaying the skill in the presence of participants. In addition, modeling is more effective when a coping model, or one who struggles a little to achieve the goal of competent skill performance, is presented (Bandura, 1977a). It is especially important when demonstrating the anger control techniques to struggle a little when performing the behavioral steps. This struggle must be demonstrated in a

low-key and acceptable way so it does not detract from the modeling display. However, if students perceive that the skill is “easy” and can be performed without any effort, they may be less likely to try the skill when caught up in the emotion of a real-life event. Depicting coping models will further enhance students’ ability to identify with the model and will likely give them more courage to try the skill themselves.

In Anger Control Training, all modeling begins with the leader’s reviewing the particular anger control technique or chain of techniques that will be demonstrated and then describing a conflict situation in which the technique(s) may be used. Two leaders should participate in modeling, with one as the main actor, demonstrating the technique(s), and the other as the coactor, representing the person provoking the main actor. It is important that leaders rehearse briefly in order to provide a realistic portrayal of provocation in the conflict situation.

Once the conflict situation has been briefly described, the leader as main actor states each step in the sequence and uses audible self-talk so all participants can hear what he or she is thinking. Prior to modeling, leaders assign one or more group members a specific step in the sequence to watch for so they may provide feedback to the leader about whether the action portrayed is congruent with his or her self-talk. Self-talk can be delineated in any number of ways: pointing to one’s head with a finger, using a card to point to the head, holding a placard with a bubble that has the word *thinking* or a light bulb on it, and so forth. The leader, assuming the role of main actor, does this throughout the role-play whenever internal self-talk is a part of the sequence.

The protocol begins with the leader’s stating, “The external trigger is . . .” then pointing to his or her head to delineate self-talk. The leader repeats this “bubble talk” for each step in the sequence. Once the leader as main actor has gone through the entire sequence, then the two leaders act out the scene, with the leader/main actor carefully and clearly using the anger control technique(s). The role-play is only acted out to the point of arousal, where the action is frozen, and then the main actor returns to the top of the chain and uses self-talk to act out the remainder of the role-play with a prosocial outcome. The main actor should physically demonstrate the technique chosen and reflected in his or her bubble talk. Following completion of the scene, the leader summarizes the technique(s) used and briefly discusses them with the group.

The following general guidelines are helpful in modeling:

1. Ensure that the modeling demonstration is prosocial.
2. Select scenes that are relevant to participants.
3. Arrange for all scenes to result in positive outcomes, never in aggressive acts. In the early stages of the group, we encourage leaders to model a prosocial ending to the situation, even if it involves concepts that have not yet been taught (reminders, self-evaluation, etc.). This will help participants deal with daily problem solving and acquire coping skills.
4. Portray the main actor as a person reasonably similar in age, socioeconomic background, verbal ability, and other characteristics salient to group members.
5. Different from Skillstreaming, bubble talk during Anger Control Training is not optional in the role-play. In Anger Control Training, bubble talk is conducted in setting up the role-play and in the role-play itself.

Role-Playing

Following each modeling presentation, participants are asked to take part in role-plays, in which they practice the just-modeled anger control technique or chain of techniques in situations they have recently encountered or expect to encounter in the near future. Once a participant has described a conflict situation, he or she becomes the main actor in the role-play and chooses a second group member (the coactor) to play the part of the other person in the conflict. The leader then asks for enough information (time, place, etc.) from the main actor to set the stage for the role-play. The scene is then played out with the main actor's applying the anger control technique(s) as accurately as possible.

Following are some general role-playing guidelines:

1. Just before beginning the role-play, remind participants of their parts: The main actor must use the anger control technique(s), and the coactor should stay in the described role in the scene.
2. Instruct the observing group members to pay attention to whether the main actor is using the anger control technique(s) properly.
3. As the role-play unfolds, if either actor "breaks role," stop the scene and encourage that actor to get back into the role.
4. If the role-play is clearly departing from the anger control technique(s) to be practiced, stop the role-play, give whatever instructions are needed, and then restart the role-play.
5. Role-playing should continue until all participants have had the opportunity to be the main actor and practice using the technique(s) in a situation they have really encountered or are about to encounter.
6. As in modeling, participants should model a prosocial ending to the situation, even though certain concept (reminders, self-evaluation, etc.) have not yet been taught.

Performance Feedback

After each role-play, there is a brief feedback period, during which others point out to the main actor how well he or she used the anger control technique(s). Feedback provides the main actor with a chance to see how use of the technique(s) affected the coactor and provides encouragement to try the technique(s) outside the sessions. The feedback is sequenced in the following manner: (a) the coactor is asked to give his or her reactions for general critique of how well the main actor demonstrated proficiency; (b) the observers are asked to comment on how well the technique(s) were used, specific to their assigned part of the sequence; (c) the leaders comment on how well the technique(s) were used and provide reinforcement (praise, approval, encouragement); and (d) the main actor makes comments on both the role-play and the feedback he or she received.

There are several guidelines for providing reinforcement:

1. Provide positive reinforcement only after role-plays in which the technique(s) were used properly.
2. Provide reinforcement to the coactor for his or her help and cooperation.

3. Provide a degree of reinforcement that matches the quality of the role-play.
4. Provide no reinforcement when the role-play departs significantly from the specific technique(s). Provide information regarding correct demonstration as needed.
5. Provide reinforcement for a participant's improvement over previous role-plays.

When assigning steps for feedback, it is useful to use cards to assist with focus of group members on the specific step assigned. (A set of Feedback Cards is provided in Appendix B.) To also assist with group members' understanding of the steps in the Anger Control Chain, we suggest alternating assigned steps for each role-play.

Skill Generalization: Homework

The program requires group members' active participation, both during the training sessions and afterward, in the form of assigned homework between sessions. Homework assignments are recorded on the Hassle Logs, next described. Once participants have begun using the Hassle Logs, they become an ideal source for problem situations to role-play. Homework completion promotes skill generalization, or the ability to use the learned skill with a prosocial outcome in a real-life situation. At the end of each session, homework is assigned, and it is expected to be completed and brought back to the next session. If returning homework is an issue for the group, an acceptable alternative would be for group leaders to permit group members to complete Hassle Logs at the beginning of the session. (Blank Hassle Logs are included in Appendix B.)

IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS

Selecting Group Leaders

Since the inception of Anger Control Training, hundreds of persons with a wide variety of backgrounds have been effective group leaders. These personnel include teachers, counselors, and psychologists in the schools; youth care workers in treatment facilities and delinquent centers; and social workers in mental health and community agencies. The most effective group leaders possess two sets of skills. First, the leaders have a thorough knowledge of Anger Control Training and are committed to implementing these instructional procedures with program integrity. Second, they possess skill in working with and instructing the group. Rather than presenting a lecture, for example, leaders prompt group members to provide examples of skill need in their real lives, listen to what group members are saying, and give feedback to let group members know their viewpoints have been heard.

An important part of leading an Anger Control Training group is the ability to manage group instruction. The group leader must move the session smoothly from one teaching procedure to the next, seek to engage all group members, and relate the relevance of skills to the group members' real life. Effective group leaders believe in what they are teaching and demonstrate enthusiasm and excitement. In addition, leaders are able to respond in a helpful manner to group members who have difficulty role-playing, for example, while still maintaining the flow of instruction. Effective leaders use behavior management strategies that provide an encouraging environment for learning, believe in discipline with dignity, and are always firm, fair, and consistent.

Figure 3: Sample Hassle Log 1

Name John Doe Date 1/1/14

Morning , Afternoon , Evening

Where were you?

Classroom , Bathroom , Off grounds , Dorm , Team Office , Halls
 Gym , Dining room , On a job , Recreation room , Outside/on grounds
 Other _____

What happened?

- Somebody teased me.
- Somebody took something of mine.
- Somebody told me to do something.
- Somebody was doing something I didn't like.

I did something wrong.

- Somebody started fighting with me.
- Other _____

Who was that somebody:

- Another resident Aide , Teacher , Another adult , Counselor
- Other _____

What did you do?

- Hit back , Told peer
- Ran away , Ignored it
- Yelled , Used Anger Control
- Cried , Broke something
- Was restrained , Told aide or counselor
- Used Skillstreaming skill _____ Walked away calmly
- Talked it out , Other _____

How did you handle yourself?

① 2 3 4 5
Poorly Not so well Okay Good Great

How angry were you?

Really angry , Moderately angry , Mildly angry , Not angry at all , Burning but still okay

Figure 4: Sample Hassle Log 2

Name James Doe Date 1/1/14

1. Where were you? Cafeteria
2. What was your External Trigger (something that happened outside of your body that might make you mad – for example, name-calling, being pushed, etc.)?

Called a name

3. What was your Internal Trigger (negative thoughts that might make you mad – for example, “Everybody is also picking on me,” etc.)?

Trying to embarrass me in front of everyone

4. What were your Cues (things that happen inside your body to let you know that you are angry--for example, fast heart rate, clenched fists, etc.)?

Face warm, heart racing, palms sweating

5. How angry were you?

Not at all				Somewhat				Burning Mad			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

6. What Anger Reducer did you use?

Counting Backward Deep Breathing , If-Then Thinking , Pleasant Imagery

7. Which Reminder did you use (positive thinking/ instructions that help calm you down – for example, “Relax, roll with the punches,” “It’s their problem, not mine,” etc.)?

Not worth getting into a fight; I have a game tonight

8. What were the positive and/or negative Consequences of your behavior?

Positive - was going to a different table without arguing

Negative - none

9. Which Skillstreaming skill were you able to use during this situation?

Using Self-control; Keeping Out of Fights

10. Self-Evaluation

Self-Rewarding: Which steps did you do well? Check all that apply.

Identifying Triggers , Identifying Cues

Using an Anger Reducer Using a Reminder

Coaching yourself , Rewarding yourself for a good job

Looking at the positive and negative consequences of your behavior

Self-Coaching: What could you improve upon? Use reminders sooner

Leaders are also able to recognize and correct thinking errors, or those thoughts that rationalize, justify, or minimize the participants behavior. Whether they are overt or subtle, the leader needs to challenge these thinking errors through clarifying and open-ended questioning (see Table 2).

Anger Control Training will be most effective when it is delivered in a manner appreciative of the cultural differences of the group members. Therefore, it is helpful if the group leader has an understanding of the group members' culture, where *culture* is defined by geography, ethnicity, nationality, social class, sexual orientation, and/or some combination thereof. For Anger Control Training to be meaningful to those it is intended to help, it must be viewed and practiced within a context that is respectful to the group members and their class, environment, and needs.

The Anger Control training group should be co-facilitated. Participants who are candidates for training are quite often proficient in generating the behavior management problems that make successful instruction difficult. We anticipate that early in the sessions group members may present behavior management issues.

Selecting Group Members

Training efforts are most often targeted toward youth who are frequently aggressive. In practice, Anger Control Training also has been successful with youth displaying other types of skill deficits, including those who are shy or withdrawn, immature, have developmental delays, or possess harder to categorize inadequacies in interpersonal skills. Direct observations and skill checklists are helpful in identifying prospective participants.

Once youth are selected for program participation, we have relied heavily on two grouping criteria. The first is shared skill deficiency. In other words, it is useful to group members who share similar skill deficiencies or patterns of deficits. Doing so provides intense skill remediation in the areas of need. The second group of criteria is responsive to the generalization-enhancing principle of identical elements. The heart of this notion is that the greater the similarity between qualities of the teaching session and real-world setting in which the youth can profitably use the skills, the greater the likelihood that they will in fact use the skills outside the instructional group. One way to maximize cross-setting skill transfer is to involve the same people in training and real-world settings. In other words, if at all possible, Anger Control Training groups are drawn from the same class, living unit, neighborhood, and the like.

Session Frequency and Length

Most often, sessions are one hour per week for 10 weeks. Sessions may be lengthened or shortened based on group member behavior, interest, and attention span. The upper time limit of the group is clear when several group members become restless and inattentive. It is important to maintain interest for subsequent sessions; therefore, sessions should be planned in the future to end slightly before group members become restless. As with any teaching activity, group leaders will need to adjust the session's length to respond to a variety of factors, some of which include group member behavioral need.

Role of the Transfer Coach

Initial instruction in anger control techniques occurs at the time set for the group, with additional learning and transfer-enhancing procedures taking place throughout the course of the day. Outside the group, “transfer coaches” may prompt, encourage, reassure and reward group members’ use of anger control skills and concepts. A transfer coach is any adult who interacts with participants who can catch the youth practicing the skills being taught and provide feedback and reinforcement. When a situation suggesting instruction in Anger Control Training arises, a leader may choose to provide additional group or individual sessions. From this viewpoint, training is an ongoing effort.

Program Evaluation and Integrity

Prior to the first session, the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) should be administered. This tool is used as a pre- and posttest measure of proximal outcomes in the program. When possible, all metrics should be delivered by a master’s level therapist who can assure the participant understands the words on the metric. The posttest should be delivered by the same person who administered the pretest. The Aggression Questionnaire should also be utilized as assessment measure for evaluation and treatment planning.

A fidelity form, included in Appendix B, helps ensure that leaders accurately follow the steps in program delivery. The form should be completed by leaders after each session; session observers may also use the form on an ongoing basis.

SESSION CONTENT AND PROCEDURES

Session Content

The original Anger Control Training program, described in the Prepare Curriculum, included 10 sessions devoted exclusively to teaching the concepts in the Anger Control Chain. Anger Control Training teaches youths what not to do (be aggressive) and how not to do it (the anger control techniques). Although these are important accomplishments, participants also need to know how to meet the demands of life situations without resorting to aggression – in other words, how to use appropriate social skills in provocative situations. As a result, we have included the opportunity to practice relevant Skillstreaming skills to the procedures of the last three Anger Control Training sessions (see Table 4).

Session Procedures

Anger Control Training is an active process for the group leader. The leader is required to model (demonstrate) the proper use of the anger reduction techniques that are the core of the program, guide participants’ practice of the program’s anger management steps (i.e., lead role-playing), provide feedback about how successful this practice is in matching the leader’s modeling, and supervise participants’ practice outside the group (i.e., homework). It is critical throughout the process to focus on the youths’ self-talk and to guide identification of negative self-talk and its replacement with positive pro-social internalized speech.

Table 4: Anger Control Training Sessions

Session 1: Introduction

Session 2: Triggers (External/Internal), Cues, and Anger Reducers

Session 3: Triggers (External/Internal), Cues, and Anger Reducers

Session 4: Reminders

Session 5: Thinking Ahead

Session 6: Self-Evaluation

Session 7: The Conflict Cycle

Session 8: Rehearsal of Full Sequence and Addition of Skillstreaming Skills

Session 9: Rehearsal of Full Sequence and Skillstreaming Skills

Session 10: Rehearsal of Full Sequence and Skillstreaming Skills/Overall Review

Sessions follow these four teaching procedures, with some adaptations and refinements from the original Prepare format. The procedure is summarized in Table 5 and described in the following pages.

1. Review Group Rules and Summarize the Anger Control Chain

In the first session, the leader introduces the purpose of the training and establishes group rules and expectations. In subsequent sessions, the leader briefly reviews group rules and summarizes the Anger Control Chain up through the point of instruction, referring to the sequence as written on a whole-class display of the chain (easel pad or whiteboard). This summary serves as a review of concepts learned and helps reorient participants to the learning process.

2. Define the Concept/Skill for Instruction

In this brief but thorough activity, the facilitator leads discussion of the concept to be taught in the context of the full Anger Control Chain. As previously described, Anger Control Training is a multistep sequence, so it is critical that the participants understand the steps in sequence. For example, in defining cues, it is important for the facilitator to ask participants if they understand their physiological response to anger, and if not, to have them identify the cues that begin the sequence.

3. Model the Concept/Skill

Participants cannot learn from modeling unless they pay attention to the modeling display and, in particular, to the specific steps being modeled. Group members are better able to attend to modeling by eliminating irrelevant detail in the display, minimizing the complexity of the modeling material, making the display vivid, and implementing the modeling enhancers previously described. Leaders should assure that they know exactly what scenario they are going to model for each individual session of the curriculum.

To encourage group members to attend to modeling display, prior to the leaders' modeling display, each group member is assigned a step in the sequence to watch for and provide feedback on. The modeling display should depict all of the behavioral steps in the sequence correctly, and particular care should be given to helping group

Table 5: Anger Control Training Steps

1. Review group rules and summarize the Anger Control Chain up to the point of instruction.
2. Define the concept for instruction from the Anger Control Chain (e.g., "Today, we'll be looking at anger reducers. Anger reducers are things you can quickly do to help calm your mind and body down"). Then solicit definitions of each concept from group members (e.g., "Who can tell me what a reminder is?"). Assist group members with definitions as needed.
3. Model the concept.
 - a. Assign each participant a concept on which to provide feedback.
 - b. Describe the scenario that you will model for the group (e.g., "Somebody bumped into me in the hall at school").
 - c. Bubble-talk 1: Bubble-talk the Anger Control Chain up to the concept taught in the current session. Point to your head or otherwise designate self-talk when you are engaged in thinking aloud. For example:

"My external trigger is [point to head] somebody bumped into me in the hall."
"My internal trigger is [point to head] I'm feeling extremely angry and embarrassed."
"My cues are [point to head] I'm feeling warm and my heart is beating fast."
"My reducers are [point to head] taking a deep breath and counting backward."
 - d. With your co-leader, role-play the scene up to the point of arousal. At that point, say or have the co-leader say "Freeze."
 - e. Bubble-talk 2: Bubble-talk the steps in the Anger Control Chain again from the beginning of the sequence to the point of the point of arousal. Then bubble-talk and demonstrate use of anger control concepts as an alternative to the angry response (e.g., "My anger reducers are deep breathing [take a deep breath] and counting backward [10,9,8, etc.']").
 - f. Individually, ask observers to state their assigned concept and give feedback on how well you used it in the modeling display.
4. Reinforce the need for the anger control concept(s)
 - a. Ask participants to describe an incident or situation from their Hassle Logs. For example, ask, "Who has a situation in which you have been triggered in the past week and perhaps didn't handle it too well?"
 - b. Record participants' names and a brief description of their situations on flip chart or easel pad.
5. Set up the first role-play.
 - a. Assign specific concept to observers for feedback. The feedback will be provided after the role-play.
 - b. Solicit a volunteer (main actor) to role-play his or her triggering situation. Ask the main actor to describe the details of the situation (who was involved, when and where, attitudes displayed, etc.) and choose co-actor(s) to help enact it.
6. Conduct the first role-play.
 - a. Bubble-talk 1: Bubble-talk the Anger Control Chain up to the concept taught in the current session. Point to your head or otherwise designate self-talk when you are engaged in thinking aloud. For example:

"My external trigger is [point to head] somebody bumped into me in the hall."
"My internal trigger is [point to head] I'm feeling extremely angry and embarrassed."
"My cues are [point to head] I'm feeling warm and my heart is beating fast."
"My reducers are [point to head] taking a deep breath and counting backward."
 - b. Have the main actor and co-actor(s) enact the incident.
 - c. Say or have the co-leader say "Freeze" immediately before the angry response.
 - d. Bubble-talk 2: Have the main actor bubble-talk the steps in the Anger Control Chain again from the beginning, then describe and demonstrate use of subsequent anger control concepts as an alternative to the angry response.
7. Provide performance feedback.
 - a. First ask coactor(s) what things they thought the main actor did well or could have done better.
 - b. Solicit feedback from participants with regard to the concepts they were assigned to observe. Have each group member identify the concept aloud prior to giving feedback (e.g., "The external trigger was...").
 - c. Provide and have the co-leader provide feedback to the main actor on how well the main actor followed the steps in the sequence. Provide social reinforcement for role-plays that follow the steps correctly and appropriately.
 - d. Ask the main actor to comment on the role-play and the feedback of others.
8. Conduct the remaining role-plays.
 - a. Ask participants who have not yet role-played, "All right, who would like to role-play next?"
 - b. Encourage reluctant participants if necessary. Explain that everyone will need to role-play the sequence.
 - c. Follow the previously described procedures for setting up the role-plays and role-playing.
9. Assign homework.
 - a. After everyone has role-played a situation, distribute Hassle Logs and instruct participants to complete at least one log before the next Anger Control Training session.
 - b. Describe any special homework in addition to the Hassle Logs (e.g., writing down anger triggers or reducers).

members identify the steps as they are being modeled. Group leaders may point to the whole-group display of the steps, or they may have the model state aloud the behavioral steps in the course of the modeling. Group members should be reminded that models will often think aloud, or “bubble-talk,” what normally would be thoughts to oneself to illustrate some of these behavioral steps and thus facilitate learning.

Modeling in Anger Control Training is somewhat different from that in Skillstreaming. In Skillstreaming, the leader models by reading each step aloud and then uses self-talk after each step. In Anger Control Training, the leader uses self-talk twice, once going through the entire sequence verbally. The leader then goes through the sequence a second time, freezing the action at the point of arousal, then talking through and demonstrating the anger control techniques.

Experts in the area of learning have distinguished between learning (acquiring or gaining knowledge) and performance. If a person has paid attention to the modeling display and has remembered the behaviors shown, it may be said that the person has learned. However, the main interest is not so much that the person can produce these behaviors but whether he or she does produce them. The likelihood that the person will actually perform a learned behavior depends greatly on the expectation of success or reward for doing so. Therefore, the outcome of the modeling should be positive; that is, the modeling should show that even though it can be challenging to perform the skill within the context of a situation depicted, the skill will “work” to resolve the problem. The model also should always be rewarded for performing the behavioral steps.

At the conclusion of each modeling display, the leader assures that the feedback sequence is conducted in the identified order and probes to obtain more than just yes or no answers from participants (e.g., “How did you know I did the step?”).

Learning is more enduring when what is learned is relevant. Therefore, situations selected for the modeling displays should be relevant to the group members’ real-life circumstances.

4. Reinforce the Need for Anger Control Concept(s)

Before group members begin role-playing, it is important to reinforce the importance of using the anger control sequence by identifying situations in which participants have current and future need to employ the procedures. Reenactment of a past problem or event is possible if the group member predicts that the circumstances are likely to occur again in the future; however, a past situation is less desirable than a current one. A brief discussion within the group is needed to establish relevant and realistic role-plays. Participants’ Hassle Logs are extremely helpful in determining realistic and meaningful scenarios for role-plays. The leader may collect and maintain a folder of logs.

Each participant in turn is asked to briefly describe where, when, and with whom he or she would find it useful to use the anger control sequence just modeled. To make the most effective use of the examples, it is often valuable to list the names of group members on an easel pad or whiteboard and to record next to each name the circumstances of the role-play.

5. Set Up the First Role-Play

Once all group members have described a situation, one group member is designated as the main actor. The main actor chooses a coactor (or coactors) to play the role of the other person in the situation. The main actor is encouraged to select as a

coactor someone who resembles the other person in as many ways as possible – in other words, someone who reminds the main actor of the actual person. The group leader then asks the main actor for additional information necessary to set the stage for the role-play, such as the setting, events immediately preceding the situation, and the manner the coactor should portray. The goal is to make the role-play as realistic as possible.

6. Conduct the First Role-Play

All members of the group are expected to role-play each sequence taught. Therefore, it is not of great concern who goes first. Most group leaders typically ask for volunteers. If some group members appear to be reluctant to role-play, it may be helpful not to ask them to participate early on as main actor but to have them take the role of observer or coactor first, then ease into the role of main actor. In any case, group members should be encouraged, reassured, and reminded that learning the skills will help them meet their own needs rather than be penalized, threatened, or otherwise coerced into participation.

The group leader reminds participants of their roles and responsibilities. The main actor is told to follow the behavioral steps and talk aloud what normally would be thought silently (i.e., “bubble talk”). Participants to point to their head or otherwise indicate self-talk. The coactor and other group participants watch carefully for the enactment of the behavioral steps. Leaders should change the assignment of steps so participants may give feedback on different parts of the process.

During the role-play, it is the group leader’s responsibility to provide the main actor with any help or coaching necessary in order to keep the role-playing according to the steps in the sequence. As in modeling, the participant walks through the entire sequence, stating the sequence step, followed by self-talk. After the participant has gone through the sequence through the point of instruction, the role-play is conducted to the point of arousal and then “frozen.” The participant starts at the beginning of the Anger Control Chain and then follows the steps to finish the role-play. At any point, if the role-play is clearly straying from the behavioral steps, the scene can be stopped, the necessary instruction provided, and role-play resumed.

It is critically important in role-playing that the leader never allow participants to go past the point of arousal to enact an inappropriate angry response because doing so could reinforce their previous negative or aggressive behavior. The goal is to replace such behavior with prosocial responses. By the third session, devoted to teaching anger reducers, participants can proceed to determine a prosocial resolution to the conflict situation. For example, if there is an argument in school at lunch and a participant role-plays sitting down at a table where he or she is being taunted, then he or she may not only use a reducer such as counting backward or deep breathing but also enact the prosocial resolution of getting up and sitting at a different table. Participants often feel they already possess the necessary skills to manage their anger, when in actuality they do not. It is therefore necessary for the leader to provide coaching toward prosocial solutions.

It may be helpful for one group leader to point to the steps in the skill sequence, written on the easel pad or whiteboard, as they are enacted. This may prompt the main actor, as well as the observers and coactor, to follow each step in order.

7. Provide Performance Feedback

After each role-play, a brief period of feedback follows. As in Skillstreaming, the goal of feedback is to determine whether the steps in the sequence were conducted proficiently.

Feedback allows the main actor find out how well he or she followed the steps and gives the main actor encouragement to try out the behavior in real life. The coactor is asked to react first. Next the observers comment on whether and how well the main actor accomplished the part of the sequence they were assigned to watch for, as well as on any other relevant aspects of the role-play. Observers should be reminded to comment on whether the main actor's performance was congruent with his or her bubble talk. Then the group leaders comment in particular on how well the behavioral steps were followed and provide social reinforcement for close following.

8. Conduct the Remaining Role-Plays

Role-plays continue until all group members have had an opportunity to participate as a main actor. Sometimes two sessions may be required to give everyone a chance to role-play the sequence.

9. Assign Homework

Homework consists of completion of at least one Hassle Log before the next session. If additional homework is required (e.g., writing down anger triggers or reducers), the leader explains it.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In brief, Anger Control Training is a multistep sequence in which participants are first helped to understand how they typically perceive and interpret (or, better, misperceive and misinterpret) the behavior of others in ways that arouse anger. Therefore, attention is given to identifying the outside occurrences (external triggers) and inner interpretations (internal triggers) that initiate the anger experience. Though anger is indeed elicited by one's cognitions and self-statements, its main emotional feature is a high level of arousal. Before participants can be taught more productive, less provocative, and less arousing ways of interpreting the world, and in fact reduce their distortions, their arousal levels must be reduced. Attention to cues and reducers accomplishes this task.

In our use of Anger Control Training as one of the courses in the Prepare Curriculum Implementation Guide series, we stand on the foundation built by Luria, Meichenbaum, Novaco, Feindler, and others. We hope our own efforts to refine the technology of anger control have proven worthy additions to the ongoing progress of research and development.