

Lesson Overview

Students critically evaluate the emotion of anger. Using an iceberg analogy made notable by Dr. John Gottman, students are tasked with reflecting on the underlying feelings of anger.

Objectives

- Students can define anger and recognize what it looks and feels like within their bodies.
- Students learn the value and purpose of anger.
- Students can critically think about anger as a secondary emotion, identifying the layers of feelings underneath.
- Students practice and build emotional self-awareness.

Skills

- Self Reflection
- Critical Thinking
- Self Regulation
- Positive Coping and Stress Management
- Positive Motivation and Perseverance

Materials

- Worksheets (Provided)
- Listening device

Referenes

American Psychological Association. (2012, January 1). How to recognize and deal with anger. <https://www.apa.org/topics/anger/recognize>

Benson, K. (unknown). The Anger Iceberg. The Gottman Institute. <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-anger-iceberg/>

Chiwetelu, I., Dineen, T. (2021, September 9). "Super angry at myself": how Olympian Tyler Mislawchuk is moving on after missing a medal [interview]. CBC Listen Now or Never with Ify Chiwetelu, Trevor Dineen. <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-150-now-or-never/clip/15865191-super-angry-myself-olympian-tyler-mislawchuk-moving-missing>

Novaco, R. W. (1976). The functions and regulation of the arousal of anger. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 133(10), 1124-1128.
Chicago

Part 1. Discuss and Build a Foundation (10 minutes)

Divide your students into small groups and offer each a handout to explore the topic of anger. Prompt each group with the following questions.

- What is anger?
- What can anger look like and feel like? In your mind, your body, and your actions?
- Why do we experience anger? Is anger bad? Are there strengths to experiencing anger?

What the experts say:

- The American Psychological Association explains that anger is a negative emotional state that is usually partnered with aggressive or unkind thoughts, intense bodily energy, and sensations as well as hurtful and unhelpful behaviours. The emotion of anger usually comes up when something unwanted has happened, or someone has taken action that is felt as unwanted, unkind, disrespectful, threatening, neglectful, or demeaning. It is also often connected with a desire to release, retaliate or seek revenge on the thing or person that has caused the anger.
- Anger can look, sound, and feel different for each person. When someone experiences anger, they can feel it in many parts of their body. Increased heart rate, increased breathing, muscle tension, headaches, increased temperatures as well as blood pressure are common. These bodily responses can result in many different bodily sensations, including but not limited to sore muscles and tightness, clenched jaw, tight chest, hearing or feeling your heartbeat rapidly, difficulty breathing, sweating, trembling, pacing, or excessive movement.
- Anger is part of our evolutionary history and triggers our flight or fight response. It is a strong motivator and has a function in propelling us into action to deal with a threat or an injustice. It likely helped us survive dangerous situations in historical times, and is an important driver behind social movements like Black Lives Matter or women's rights. On a smaller scale, it motivates us to take action and intervene with bullying, wrongdoings, or unwanted things we see in our daily lives.
- Frequent feelings of anger or poor coping with anger can be troublesome for your mind and body. By consistently stimulating that flight or fight response system you can exhaust your body and see negative effects on your immune, cardiovascular, digestive, and nervous systems. Expressing your anger in inappropriate or unhealthy ways like physical or emotional violence, substance use, etc.. can also be harmful to your body, as well as your social relationships. All of this can lead to increased feelings of isolation, anxiety, low self-esteem, or depression.

Part 2: Diving Deeper, Thinking critically about Anger (25 minutes)

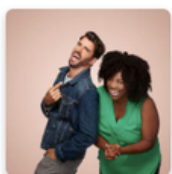
Share with your students that anger is a complicated emotion, and what many experts call a "secondary emotion". A secondary emotion is an emotion we feel in reaction to a bunch of other feelings we may be experiencing (primary emotions). Anger is usually an overarching emotion with many feelings hiding underneath. Dr. John Gottman calls this the anger iceberg. He explains that anger is often an emotion that protects people from more difficult feelings they are not able to acknowledge or share. On the outside, we show that we are angry, but what we may be feeling underneath is often more complicated, upsetting, and confusing.

Together, you will listen to an interview with Olympian, Tyler Mislawchuk called " Super Angry at Myself", where he shares his experience of competing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. As titled, Tyler shares that he was very angry with himself, however, if you listen closely you can hear many different emotions underneath the surface of his anger iceberg.

Encourage students to listen for the emotions that may be under the water of Tyler's Anger iceberg i.e his primary emotions.

Students can fill in the anger iceberg on the handout, or your class can create one large iceberg together as a group. If done independently, come together to share. On the top, fill in the actions or words that might occur when someone is angry. Under the water, write out the hidden primary emotions

Now or Never with Ify Chiwetelu, Trevor Dineen



'Super angry at myself': how Olympian Tyler Mislawchuk is moving on after missing a medal

Resume Playing 7:55 Share Segment

Tyler's Primary Emotions:

- disappointment
- disheartened
- let-down
- embarrassed
- humiliated
- sad
- frustrated
- disbelief
- injustice
- regret

- Now that your class has had some practice identifying some primary emotions of anger, it's time to expand and think critically about other emotions that could be under the surface. Put on some relaxing music and work together in groups to complete the iceberg. Try and create an exhaustive list of the feelings that may be under the surface of anger. Have each group share 3-5 new emotions they came up with.

Come together as a class to consider:

- What does the iceberg demonstrate about anger?
- How can going under the surface help us with our anger? What can we take away from thinking about our own anger icebergs?
- By reflecting on the iceberg, we may be able to get a better idea of what we are truly feeling and identify a deeper source of our intense emotions. When we have a better understanding of ourselves and our feelings we feel more in control, can get the support we need from others, and have improved coping. This level of self-awareness also helps us to address the source of our distress. Either by mitigating it or finding healthy ways to cope with it.

Part 3. Bringing the Lesson Inward. Making it Personal (15 minutes)

- Encourage students to think of a time or situation when they were angry and complete their own anger iceberg. A handout is available, however, students are welcome to create one themselves.

Extension Opportunity

- In the CBC radio show with Tyler Mislawchuck, Tyler also talked about how holding on to anger for a long time was an energy zapper and discussed how he chose to release his anger and channel that energy in a healthy way. As a class or in small groups, brainstorm some healthy ways to release, channel, or express built-up anger. Make posters, videos, or social media posts to share around your school that will help peers in times of distress.

Anger Iceberg

Angry Actions?

Angry Words?

