MODULE
Communication

LESSON
Anger is One Letter Short of Danger! Controlling Your Emotions
# Table of Contents

Overview ........................................................................................................................................ 3
Teacher Preparation ......................................................................................................................... 5
Exercise 1: Pre-Quiz Directions & Answer Key .............................................................................. 6
Exercise 1: Controlling Your Emotions Pre-Quiz ............................................................................ 7
Exercise 2: Quote and Anecdote of the Day .................................................................................... 8
Exercise 3: Video Vignette: “Anger is Just One Letter Short of Danger! Controlling Your Emotions” .......................................................................................................................... 10
Exercise 4: Managing Frustrations .................................................................................................. 11
Exercise 5: Three Ways You Should Never Behave at Work ....................................................... 14
Exercise 6: Emotional Management Self-Assessment ..................................................................... 19
Exercise 7: Controlling Your Emotions at Work Wrap-Up ............................................................ 23
Overview

Purpose

To teach students the importance of controlling emotions at work and how control of emotions in the workplace signifies emotional stability and emotional reliability.

National Career Development Standards

Standard 1: Understanding the influence of a positive self-concept.

Standard 2: Skills to interact positively with others.

Standard 3: Understanding the need for positive attitudes toward work and learning.

National Career Development Benchmarks

Students will be able to...

Benchmark 1.b. Demonstrate the ability to use peer feedback.
Benchmark 1.d. Demonstrate an understanding of environmental influences on one's behavior.
Benchmark 2.a. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills.
Benchmark 2.b. Demonstrate interpersonal skills required for working with and for others.
Benchmark 2.c. Describe appropriate employer and employee interactions in various situations.
Benchmark 5.e. Demonstrate positive work attitudes and behaviors

Think and Discuss

1. Why should we always control our emotions in the workplace?

2. List ways we can control our workplace emotions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCANS Fundamental Skills</th>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy</th>
<th>Multiple Intelligences</th>
<th>Equipped for the Future (EFF) Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☒ Basic Skills</td>
<td>☒ Knowledge</td>
<td>☒ Bodily/Kinesthetic</td>
<td>Resolve Conflict and Negotiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Thinking Skills</td>
<td>☒ Comprehension</td>
<td>☒ Visual/Spatial</td>
<td>Observe Critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Personal Qualities</td>
<td>☒ Application</td>
<td>☒ Logical/Mathematic</td>
<td>Listen Actively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Competencies</td>
<td>☒ Analysis</td>
<td>☒ Verbal/Linguistic</td>
<td>Cooperate with Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Resources</td>
<td>☒ Synthesis</td>
<td>☒ Musical/Rhythmical</td>
<td>Solve Problems and Make Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Interpersonal</td>
<td>☒ Evaluation</td>
<td>☒ Naturalist</td>
<td>Take Responsibility for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Interpersonal</td>
<td>Reflect and Evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Advocate and Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guide Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lesson uses 9 of the 16 EFF Standards:
- Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- Observe Critically
- Listen Actively
- Cooperate with Others
- Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- Take Responsibility for learning
- Reflect and Evaluate
- Advocate and Influence
- Guide Others
Teacher Preparation

Class Materials

Copy the following exercises for distribution to students

- Exercise 1: Controlling Your Emotions Pre-Quiz
- Exercise 4: Managing Frustration Scenarios
- Exercise 5: Emotional Control Scenarios
- Exercise 6: Emotional Management Self-Assessment

Overhead templates for teacher use

- Exercise 1: Controlling Your Emotions Pre-Quiz
- Exercise 2: Quote and Anecdote of the Day
- Exercise 6: Emotional Management Self-Assessment Overhead

Key Words

1. Emotional Management
2. Colloquialisms
3. Pettiness
4. Reassuring
5. Elicit
6. Temperance
Exercise 1: Pre-Quiz Directions & Answer Key

Teacher Directions

This exercise should take 5 minutes with some discussion after each question. A teacher copy is provided with the answers.

Step 1: Have the students take the 5-question “Controlling Emotions in the Workplace” quiz to check for understanding.

Step 2: Review the questions with the students to correct misconceptions they may have which relate to emotional management.

Step 3: Transition to Exercise 2: Quote and Anecdote of the Day.

Answer Key

1. C
2. False
3. F
4. C
5. True
Exercise 1: Controlling Your Emotions Pre-Quiz

1. Which emotion(s) is/are appropriate for the workplace?
   a. Anger
   b. Rage
   c. Happiness
   d. Hysterical crying
   e. All of the Above

2. If you want to be powerful at work, you should use anger to intimidate others.
   TRUE
   FALSE

3. Which items best identify appropriate means of controlling workplace anger?
   a. Swearing uncontrollably at your boss
   b. Smacking around the receptionist for 25 minutes
   c. Count to ten and walk away
   d. Vent your anger outside where no one can see or hear you
   e. All of the above
   f. Only C and D
   g. Only A

4. Fill in the blank. Crying at work is _________.
   a. Acceptable if you are trying to gain sympathy
   b. Acceptable if you have just been fired
   c. Unacceptable because it shows weakness
   d. Acceptable because it lets others know they hurt your feelings
   e. Acceptable because it shows you are human

5. If you feel hurt by someone’s negative comment at work, it is best to tell him/her how you feel.
   TRUE
   FALSE
Exercise 2: Quote and Anecdote of the Day

Teacher Directions

*You may want to write the quote on the board to focus your students’ thoughts on “Controlling Your Emotions in the Workplace.” Process the quote and anecdote with your students to check for understanding. This exercise should take 5 minutes with some discussion.*

**Step 1:** Have selected students read aloud the quote and anecdote. Ask students the following questions:

- Why is it important to control your emotions in the workplace?
- Why can a team only go as far as the leader’s vision?

**Step 2:** Proceed to Exercise 3: Video Vignette: “Anger is Just One Letter Short of Danger! Controlling Your Emotions.”
Quote

“Anger is just one letter short of Danger.”

- Anonymous

Anecdote

Keeping your cool. Not losing your head. These are colloquialisms used when people refer to Emotion Management. What happens when a basketball player, attempting to shoot the game-winning free throws, with no time left on the clock, actually loses his head and succumbs to the pressure? He misses both free throws. Game over. He loses. What happens when a customer gets in your face and screams at you for serving her a cold hot dog, and you lose your head and scream back? You get fired. Game over. You lose.

It doesn’t have to be this way. You are in command and you are in control. For some of us, venting our anger or showing our emotions is a natural part of our personalities. For some of us, controlling our emotions at work will be tough to do. But make no mistake: it is critically important that you learn how to master it. Believe me, nobody likes a rage-aholic at work. Nobody likes a crybaby, a whiner, a hissy-fit thrower, a tantrum artist, a screamer, a puncher, a door slammer, a mope, or a crab. There is no room for any of this at work. End of story. If you feel an urge to blow your top, go outside and do it in an empty field or run around the block a few times. Just get out where no one can see or hear you.

Why? Why can’t you show emotions at work? Most of what goes on at work revolves around petty political maneuvering and game-playing. If someone gets a reaction from you, especially one that makes you look bad, he/she will keep doing it until you are beaten. It’s a form of control that people can have over you. Sad but true. If you cry or swear or insult someone out of frustration, you lose tremendous credibility and respect.

The point is this: If you are mad, let them know by calmly talking it out. If you are frustrated, let them know by discussing it and by finding a solution. Never hide or run from conflict. Face up to it, but do it with class, dignity, respect and tact—even if “he started it first.”

-A corporate manager
Exercise 3: Video Vignette: “Anger is Just One Letter Short of Danger! Controlling Your Emotions”

Teacher Directions

*Play the video titled “Controlling Your Emotions at Work.” Discussion should follow after the video vignette. This exercise should take 5 minutes to discuss.*

**Step 1:** Review the video vignette before introducing the video to your class.

**Step 2:** Show the video and discuss with your class the message provided in the video.

**Step 3:** Transition to Exercise 4: “Managing Frustrations.”
Exercise 4: Managing Frustrations

Teacher Directions

*Please review the exercise before proceeding. This exercise should take 20 minutes to complete.*

**Step 1:** Ask students to take out a blank sheet of paper.

**Step 2:** Read each scenario one at a time. After each reading, ask the students to rate the scenario on a scale of 1 to 3.

- **1 = low frustration** – meaning that it would almost NEVER elicit an emotional response from the student;
- **2 = medium frustration** – meaning that it would SOMETIMES elicit an emotional response from the student;
- **3 = high frustration** – meaning that it would ALWAYS elicit an emotional response from the student

**Step 3:** Process and discuss the results in class.

**Step 4:** Transition to Exercise 5: “Three Ways You Should Never Behave at Work.”
MANAGING FRUSTRATION SCENARIOS

1. A group of co-workers or a group of classmates are laughing at you because you said something “stupid.” (Frustration from EMBARRASSMENT.)

2. Your boss is in your face about being late, but you were only 45 seconds late. (Frustration from LACK OF POWER.)

3. You’ve explained how to solve a math problem to your classmate at least 15 times, and he still doesn’t get it. (Frustration from LACK OF PATIENCE.)

4. Because you are sick and confined to your bed, you gave instructions to your best friend to turn in your take-home test to your science teacher during her office hours at 4 PM sharp. He arrived at 4:15 PM and your teacher wasn’t there. Now you have to re-take the test. (Frustration from LACK OF CONTROL.)

5. You’ve told a co-worker to cover you on the fry station while you go outside to make a quick phone call. When you get back inside, the fry station is without a worker and there is a back-up in orders. Your boss looks really mad at you. (Frustration from LACK OF SUPPORT.)

6. You’ve just given a speech to your co-workers about how to solve a major problem in your department. It took you 3 weeks to prepare the speech, and you did a wonderful job presenting it. Everyone said they liked your ideas, but, when you returned to work the next day, nobody was following your suggestions. (Frustration from LACK OF AUTHORITY.)

7. You’ve asked your co-worker to help you with a task at work, and you have given her specific instructions on how to complete it. In fact, you told her how to do it at least 3 times. When you return, the job is all messed up. She told the boss that you hadn’t given her clear directions. (Frustration from LACK OF LOYALTY.)

8. You ask your boss for a raise, and she says she will work on it and get back to you. Two weeks go by, so you ask her if she has any news for you. She says she still needs to talk to the owner of the company for approval. Two more months go by, and your boss avoids you so you don’t ask her about the raise. You ask her one more time, nearly 6 months after your original inquiry. She says that she values you as an employee, and she will do all she can to help you. Four more weeks pass, and you have heard nothing from her at all. (Frustration from LACK OF RESPECT.)
QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

1. Which items did the students find most frustrating? Why?

2. Are there some students who seem not to be bothered by anything – with low scores across the board? What about students who are easily frustrated? How do both types explain their situations?

3. For the students who chose a rating of “3” on some of the scenarios, ask them how they might unknowingly and inappropriately demonstrate their frustrations to the person who is making them mad. (Yell, scream, threaten, cry, swear, punch, etc.)

4. Go through all 8 scenarios again, one at a time, and ask someone from the class to react to and find a resolution for each. For example, what would be the appropriate way to respond to the frustration of having your boss in your face?
Exercise 5: Three Ways You Should Never Behave at Work

Teacher Directions

Please review this exercise before presenting the topic to the class. This exercise should take 20 minutes to complete.

Teacher Note: In this exercise, you should help the students identify which EMOTIONAL CONTROL KILLERS they recognize so they can be certain to avoid them in the future. Ask the students to volunteer to read the scenarios out loud and then answer the questions with the entire class at the Intermissions:

Step 1: Please select students to role-play each scenario.

Step 2: During each Intermission, use the processing questions that follow to check for understanding.

Emotional Control Scenario A:

(Ask for 2 volunteers to read the following scene aloud to the rest of the class.)

CARMELLA: Julia, is this the report I asked you to help me write?

JULIA: Yep, so what?

CARMELLA: So what? I asked for your help three hours ago – (Raising her voice) – Why the heck is it still on your desk? Get to work!!

JULIA: (Yelling in response) I’ll get to it when I get to it. You’re not my boss! I offered to help you because I was trying to be nice. Maybe I shouldn’t help you at all!

CARMELLA: (Yelling even louder) You better not pull that garbage with me. I’ve never seen anyone as lazy as you – I have to check up on you like you’re a little baby! To top it all off, you threaten me with this junk about not helping me, I should . . .

INTERMISSION

Questions for Review:

1. Which person is breaking the Emotional Management rules?
2. In which ways?
3. Who is making the situation worse, Carmella or Julia?
4. What can Carmella do to help the situation and demonstrate excellent Emotional Management?

BACK TO SCENARIO A:

JULIA: (Still yelling) Why don’t you just take your stinkin’ report and shove it!! I’m sick of you and your HIGH AND MIGHTY attitude . . .

CARMELLA: At least I’m not a lazy dirt-bag who doesn’t keep her promises!

JULIA: Up yours.

INTERMISSION
Questions for Review:

1. What did Carmella and Julia do (if anything) to help the situation?
2. How do you think their co-workers felt as they listened to this fight taking place? What does this behavior tell you about the importance of controlling your emotions at work?
3. In Carmella's situation, is there anything she can do to become stronger in emotional management?

PROCESSING SCENARIO A:

Emotional Control Killer #1: SCREAMING AND INSULTING.

Never, under any circumstances, should you scream or insult a co-worker. Do you respect Julia or Carmella after that display? How can you? What if customers overheard them treating each other with that lack of respect? What would they think?

AD LIB the ALTER-ENDING: Ask a student to ad lib (play it out off the top of his/her head) the rest of “SCENARIO A” with the questions below as a guideline for his/her acting:

What do you suppose would have happened to Carmella if she had decided to approach Julia with a softer attitude? What if Julia had responded to Carmella’s “attack” a little differently?

Feel free to ask more than one student to ad lib the alter-ending to “SCENARIO A” if they have more ideas.

Emotional Control SCENARIO B:

(Find 2 more volunteers to read aloud to the class.)

Julia and Carmella keep going at it!!

**CARMELLA:** (Quiet, says nothing – hides her face in her hands.)

**JULIA:** Hey, I’m talking to you. I said, UP YOURS!!

**CARMELLA:** (Takes her hands away from her face and cries loudly as she speaks.) All I wanted was some help! I have so much pressure to get everything done around here. (Cries louder.) Now if you won’t help me, I don’t know what I’m going to tell the boss!!!
**Module: Communication**  
**Lesson: Controlling Emotions in the Workplace**

**JULIA:** Well, tell the boss the truth. You just aren’t good at getting a lot of things done because you can’t handle the pressure. (Smiles at Carmella.)

**INTERMISSION**

Questions for Review:

1. Is Carmella using a different strategy this time?
2. What is her strategy to get her way with Julia?
3. Is this new strategy helping or making things worse?
4. Is it Julia’s responsibility to turn this discussion around? How can she do that? What should she do?

**PROCESSING SCENARIO B:**

*Emotional Control Killer #2: CRYING.*

Carmella thought that crying might help her get her way with Julia because fighting wasn’t working too well. Crying will never help you gain respect or support from anyone. In fact, the second Julia saw Carmella crying, Julia knew she had Carmella right where she wanted her.

AD LIB the ALTER-ENDING: Ask a student to ad lib the rest of “SCENARIO B” with the questions below as a guideline for his/her acting:

- What do you suppose would have happened if Carmella had not started to cry? What if she had taken control of the situation and had acted more professionally? Might Julia have responded to her differently?

Feel free to ask more than one student to ad lib the alter-ending to “SCENARIO B” if they have more ideas.

**Emotional Control SCENARIO C:**

(Find 2 more volunteers to read aloud to the class.)

Carmella and Julia – the Final Battle

**CARMELLA:** Take that back!

**JULIA:** No, it’s the truth. You’re nothing but a cry-baby.

**CARMELLA:** (Crying again.) Please help! I can’t take the pressure. I’m sorry for yelling at you!
JULIA: No way! (Julia throws the unfinished report at Carmella.)

CARMELLA: (Stands up, runs away from Julia crying, yelling and screaming something unintelligible. She slams doors and throws books in a tirade that continues all the way back to her office.)

INTERMISSION

Questions for Review:

1. What is Carmella’s last attempt at getting Julia to do the report?
2. Was Julia’s reaction justified? Doesn’t she simply antagonize Carmella?
3. What does this scenario show you about how your attitude can impact the behaviors of other people?

PROCESSING SCENARIO C:

Emotional Control Killer #3: TEMPER TANTRUMS.

Just like swearing, yelling, and crying, temper tantrums are for 2-year-olds, not working professionals.

AD LIB the ALTER-ENDING: Ask a student to ad lib the rest of “SCENARIO C” with the questions below as a guideline for his/her acting:

What do you suppose would have happened to Carmella if she hadn’t thrown the temper tantrum? Same results? Was it too late for Carmella to save the argument with Julia at that point? What do you think casual observers thought of Carmella when they saw her throwing her fit?

Feel free to ask more than one student to ad lib the alter-ending to “SCENARIO C” if they have more ideas.
Exercise 6: Emotional Management Self-Assessment

Teacher Directions

Please review this exercise before introducing the subject to your class. This exercise should take 15 minutes.

Step 1: Make copies of this Self-Assessment and ask the students to rate themselves in each category & discuss.

Step 2: Have the students answer the follow-up questions in class.

Step 3: Transition to Exercise 7: “Controlling Your Emotions at Work Wrap-Up.”
Emotional Management Self-Assessment

• When I get angry, I never take a deep breath and count to ten.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

1  2  3  4
Not at all  Just a little  Very close  Right on!

• I find it difficult to control my feelings, especially when someone frustrates me.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

1  2  3  4
Not at all  Just a little  Very close  Right on!

• I always raise my voice in anger.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

1  2  3  4
Not at all  Just a little  Very close  Right on!

• When I get mad, I find that swearing helps me intimidate the other person.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

1  2  3  4
Not at all  Just a little  Very close  Right on!

• I usually cry after I get mad or frustrated.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

1  2  3  4
Not at all  Just a little  Very close  Right on!
• I believe that one of the best ways of settling a problem is via physical altercation.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Just a little</td>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>Right on!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• I don’t redirect my anger because it is best to take it out on the person who is making you mad.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Just a little</td>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>Right on!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• I don’t think deep breathing exercises can really help calm a person down.

HOW CLOSELY DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Just a little</td>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>Right on!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tabulate the Score to the Emotional Management Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL SCORE</th>
<th>WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN</th>
<th>WHAT YOU SHOULD DO FOR FOLLOW-UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>You have the Lowest level of EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT!</td>
<td>You should talk to your teacher or counselor right away!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 24</td>
<td>Your EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT skills are very poor!!</td>
<td>Sharpen your weaker points and you will see improvements!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 to 16</td>
<td>You are on the right track!</td>
<td>Take some time to practice developing your weak areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 8</td>
<td>You have no problems with EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT skills.</td>
<td>Spend some time with your teacher so you can develop a strategy on building your strengths even further!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDENTS:

1. In which areas of the Emotional Management Self-Assessment are you strongest? Weakest?

2. How do you explain this?
Exercise 7: Controlling Your Emotions at Work Wrap-Up

Teacher Directions

*Please review this exercise before introducing the subject to your class. This exercise should take 5 minutes.*

**Step 1:** Have students answer the following questions in their journal:

1. Why should we always control our emotions in the workplace?
2. List ways we can control our workplace emotions.

**Final Thoughts:** Never let your co-workers see you get angry. Control your negative emotions. Never take your emotions out on people just because you are having a bad day. Remember to use methods such as counting to 10, taking an emotional timeout or break, or trying to understand the other person’s point of view before reacting. In some cases, especially with your boss, you really have to control your emotions, even if the boss is asking for it! When you show temperance in your emotional management, you demonstrate control and calmness. These are two workplace characteristics that are highly sought-after for entry-level employees. These skills can set you apart for future managerial and leadership positions.