

10-PART VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE

PeaceTalks™



PROGRAM #3

MANAGING YOUR ANGER

Distributed by:



Promoting Growth Through Knowledge

A Brand of The Guidance Group

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PeaceTalks: Series Overview

Violence is a choice, and each and every one of us can reduce violence and make our lives safer by choosing peace. Choosing peace means understanding that violence is not random, universal, or inevitable. We can prevent and reduce violence by choosing to avoid or deescalate conflicts and avoid risk factors for violence such as alcohol, drugs, guns, and gang membership. This is the underlying message of the 10-part *PeaceTalks* video series featuring humorist and youth counselor Michael Pritchard.

Filmed across America, in real schools with real students, each *PeaceTalks* video program turns its attention to one aspect of the spectrum of violence that young people face in their everyday lives: managing anger, resolving conflicts, dealing with bullies and troublemakers, the issue of respect, sexual harassment and dating pressures, racial conflicts, peer pressure, gangs, and triggers to violence such as drugs, alcohol and guns.

In these programs, Michael and the young people take a long and honest look at kids' lives today and how the violence in our society affects them. Michael uses his special talents of humor, warmth, empathy and understanding to help the teens discover for themselves the choices they have and the answers to living together peacefully. Together, they look at the basic changes teens need to make in their attitudes and beliefs, and the skills they must learn in order to step up to peace.

PeaceTalks offers a three step program for choosing peace which is the unifying theme for all ten programs. These steps are:

1. Predict Consequences
2. Cool Down
3. Walk Away

Throughout the videos, Michael encourages young people to have the maturity, confidence, and composure to walk away from insults and confrontations, and channel peer pressure into a positive force for peace in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities.

How To Use This Video

This video is designed for use in classrooms, community centers, youth organizations, camps, teen groups, libraries, or for children at home. Although teenagers are the target audience, parents, teachers, school administrators, school support staff, counselors, social workers, youth workers, peer counseling trainers, and anyone else who has regular contact with and a commitment to young people would benefit from the video as well. This Leader 's Guide is aimed at the classroom teacher, but it can be used by any group leader or parent who wants to get the most out of MANAGING YOUR ANGER.

As with the other videos in the *PeaceTalks* series, MANAGING YOUR ANGER is intended to be used as part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program, and ends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions, activities, projects and events suggested in the guide are intended to focus and enhance this learning experience.

Before showing MANAGING YOUR ANGER to your students, the following steps would be useful preparation:

- Screen the video at least once, and note areas where you might want to stop the tape to probe an issue more fully.
- Read this guide to get a sense of how the video might be used, what discussion questions would work best with your students, and what follow-up activities or projects would be most appropriate and beneficial.
- Ask the students questions to get them thinking about some of the key issues presented in this program. You might want to distribute copies of the discussion questions on pages 5 and 6 of this guide. Be sure to go over these questions in advance to make sure they are understood and that they are appropriate to your students. They can be used to spark discussion after the screening.

The teaching technique underlying the entire *PeaceTalks* series is peer education. Because we believe that teen viewers will more easily learn the skills and attitudinal changes proposed if they are taught by their peers, the programs are structured around discussions where real kids grapple with tough situations and model positive solutions and attitudes.

Managing Your Anger: Objectives

- To stimulate discussion about anger
- To make students aware of their triggers to anger
- To enable students to recognize the role of personal responsibility in issues of personal safety
- To help students understand that self-control is a part of growing up that will help keep them safe and increase their confidence
- To prevent violence by teaching young people how to handle their emotions and avoid dangerous situations

Managing Your Anger: Synopsis

Learning to manage our anger is a part of growing up, even though it is not an easy thing to do. We need to find positive ways to deal with anger, because it is something in life we cannot avoid.

“What are some little things that really annoy you?” Michael asks a group of teens. The students share a variety of annoyances with their brothers and sisters, with their parents, and with friends.

“Do you think it’s possible to get through life without being angry?” asks Michael. Everyone agrees that there will always be things that make you angry.

When asked if it’s harder or easier to make good choices when you’re angry, the students say that it’s harder. And most of the time, you don’t make the right decision when you are angry. Michael and the teens look at silly ways they’ve behaved and poor decisions they’ve made when they were angry.

The group discusses temper tantrums and where they come from. They agree that when you hold anger in and don’t talk about it, it builds up. Eventually, you explode over something small or something else entirely.

"If we all know that it's so bad for us to store anger, why do we do it?" Michael asks.

Several students say they're afraid of their anger and what they might do or say if they let it go. One student tells of a fight where she hurt another girl. Her response was really to years of stored anger, not to what was happening at the moment.

Whenever we are angry, we are faced with a choice. Do we act out of anger and possibly hurt ourselves or others, or do we use self-control and manage our anger in more positive ways? In any conflict, disagreement or argument, we experience some level of anger. In fact, in many situations, anger is a natural and even positive response. But there are other situations where we need to control our anger and simply walk away from a conflict. Part of keeping ourselves safe is knowing when that is necessary, and having the composure and confidence to step back and calm down a situation that is potentially dangerous.

Michael asks the group what they would do in this hypothetical situation: "You're in a convenience store. There are two people ahead of you and two people behind you. It's a small store with one clerk. Someone comes in who you've never seen before and walks right in front of you on line."

Most students say they would start off with a reasonable attitude, without fighting. But if the person pushing ahead didn't go to the back of the line when asked politely, they would physically push that person out of the way.

"What could happen then?" Michael asks. The students agree that the person could have a knife or a gun and someone could get hurt. But they say that when it's happening, you're angry, and you're going to do whatever you feel you need to do.

Other students say that at a certain point you have to just let it go.

Michael role plays with a young man, trying to provoke him into an angry response. The boy is able to control himself, stay cool, and use humor to diffuse the situation.

"Don't give the other person control over you just because you're angry," Michael concludes.

One of the tragedies of today's violence is that many teenagers don't stop to think about what can happen, even in simple situations, when we let our anger get out of control. For our own safety and well-being, we need to be able to control ourselves in tense situations. A good place to start is to know the sorts of things that make us lose our temper and recognize what happens to us just at the point when we are starting to get angry. Michael invites the students to share how they feel, physically and emotionally, when they start to get angry.

"What are the benefits of learning these signs?" Michael asks.

"You know you have to get control of yourself because there may be drastic consequences to what you do. Someone may get hurt or something like that," offers a student.

"After the situation is over, what are some good things you can do to calm down your anger?" Michael asks. Ideas include:

- Talking to someone about your feelings

- Doing something creative
- Listening to music
- Doing something to take your mind away from the anger, such as reading a book
- Participating in a physical activity
- Using your imagination to take you mentally to a place that calms you down

The students also offer these benefits to learning how to control anger:

- Feeling better about yourself
- Being glad you didn't make the wrong decision
- Attracting the kinds of friends who respect you for walking away
- Having more confidence because you know you have self-control

Michael confirms that if you can learn how to deal with your anger in an appropriate way now, you'll be grateful your entire life.

We can't change the fact that there will always be conflicts and disagreements, but we can change how we deal with them by learning ways to manage our anger. We can recognize the things that make us angry. We can identify the early warning signals that tell us we are about to lose our temper. In a conflict situation we can take a step back and cool out. And we can find good ways to release anger and positive ways to express it.

Growing up is the process of taking more control over our life and part of that is learning to control our anger. When we can face life's hassles with composure and confidence and not lose our temper, we not only keep ourselves safer, we show that we are well on the way to becoming an adult.

Managing Your Anger: Discussion Questions

1. In the video, students share situations which trigger their anger. What are some little things that cause you to lose your temper?
2. Anger can result in making poor decisions. Have you ever acted on angry emotions and later regretted your behavior? What happened? If you could go back and change your reaction, what would you have done instead?
3. Michael Pritchard says that anger can be a positive response. How can you use negative emotions to produce positive results? Have you ever done this? What happened?
4. In the video, students are faced with a hypothetical situation where someone cuts in front of them on line in a deli. What would you do in this situation? Why? What do you think would be the outcome based on your response?
5. One of the boys in the video says that you should think about how you might react in a certain kind of situation before it ever happens. Do you think this "advance preparation" is a good idea? Have you ever done that?
6. The students in the video share how they feel physically and emotionally when

they start to lose their cool. What happens when you get angry? Are there signs that let you know you are starting to lose control? How can you use these signals to keep cool when facing conflict?

7. Michael Pritchard asks the students how they cope with anger. How do you cope with anger? Have any of these methods ever kept you from becoming involved in a confrontation? How?

8. Growing up means taking control over our life, and part of that is learning to control our anger. Why is self-control a sign of maturity?

Managing Your Anger: Classroom Activities, Projects, and Events

1. On the board, work with students to create an anger management flow chart. Begin by listing common causes of conflict and typical reactions your students experience. Follow through showing how their choice of response affects the resolution of the conflict.

2. Assist students in developing workshops designed to teach positive methods of anger management. Divide students into groups of five and have each group put together a presentation for the rest of the class on a specific anger management technique such as meditation or breathing exercises. You may also want to open up the workshops to other students in the school.

3. In a private journal, ask students to write a self-evaluation of their anger management skills. Encourage them to examine their relationships with family, friends, co-workers, teachers and others. Since the journal is to remain private, encourage students to be as honest as possible. After completing the evaluations, ask students to try to improve their skills; then have them write new evaluations two months later to see what has or has not improved. Collect a final self-analysis about the experience from each student to be read anonymously to the class.

4. Anger is not always negative. A great deal of social change has been fueled by positively-directed anger. Assign students to write a report describing an instance in history where positively-directed anger proved constructive.

5. Self-control is a sign of maturity. Ask students to brainstorm a list of personal qualities that reflect adult behavior. Lead a discussion addressing the benefits of mature behavior.

A Few Words About Michael Pritchard

Michael is a humorist, actor, youth activist, former probation officer and PBS host who is known to audiences across the United States for his ability to help young people gain insight into themselves and the choices they make. He gained national attention when *The Power of Choice*, his popular PBS series for teens on values and choices, first aired in 1987. His fans have grown with the release of his two subsequent series, *You Can Choose!* and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. Mr. Pritchard serves on the boards of directors for Special Olympics, The California Association of Peer Programs, and the Chinese-American Educational Institute. He also acts as a consultant to the California Consortium on Child Abuse and the Department of Pediatrics at San Francisco General Hospital.



***PeaceTalks* Program Titles**

- Program #1 Preventing Violence
- Program #2 Resolving Conflicts
- Program #3 Managing Your Anger
- Program #4 Dealing with Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations
- Program #5 Respecting Yourself and Others
- Program #6 Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment
- Program #7 Bridging Racial Divisions
- Program #8 Handling Peer Pressure and Gangs
- Program #9 Drugs, Alcohol and Guns: Triggers to Violence
- Program #10 Stepping Up to Peace

Each program is approximately 30 minutes long.