

About *Seeing Red*

Anger is a natural human emotion, but if it isn't managed properly, its effects can be devastating. *Seeing Red* is a curriculum designed to help elementary and middle-school-aged students better understand their anger so they can make healthy and successful choices and build strong relationships. This completely revised and updated edition includes an anti-bullying component, specific to cyber-bullying and social media, as well as a strong focus on learning to self-regulate their behavior.

Designed especially for use with small groups, *Seeing Red* enables participants to learn from and empower one another. Its unique group process helps children and teens build important developmental objectives such as leadership skills (taking initiative, presenting in front of the group), social skills (taking turns, active listening), and building self-esteem (problem solving, interacting with peers).

Key concepts and activities include:

- Identifying anger triggers
- Taking responsibility for mistakes
- Finding healthy ways to deal with provocation and avoid losing control
- Stating feelings, learning steps to control anger, and exploring consequences
- Building their “tool box” with over a dozen strategies to self-regulate their feelings and behaviors

Facilitators will learn how to empower participants through role-playing; helping them to identify associated feelings and recognize negative behaviors.

Design and Framework of Lesson Plans

Key Principles of Seeing Red

Kids have the ability to...

1. Regulate and control their behavior

2. Problem solve together and make healthy choices
3. Be leaders and role models among their peers
4. Take responsibility for their behavior and choices

One of the key components throughout the *Seeing Red* sessions is helping kids learn to self-regulate their behavior. Self-regulation is not an isolated skill so kids must translate what they experience into information they can use to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Instead of impulsively pushing someone, for example, they can learn to say to themselves, “I’m not going to push her back,” and then fold their arms. These skills develop gradually as they learn to identify their anger triggers, and think through the situation and demonstrate self-control. Everyone learns to self-regulate at a different pace, and it comes more easily for some than others, but it’s a crucial life skill to learn. According to Ellen Galinsky, president and co-founder of the Families and Work Institute and author of *Mind in the Making*, regulating one’s thinking, emotions, and behavior is critical for success in school, work, and life (2010).

Framework

- This curriculum is specifically designed for a small group (six to eight participants) of elementary or middle-school-aged children who are willing to participate in such a group.
- The ideal group should convene weekly in a confidential space with the same group members and facilitators attending each session.
- The curriculum is meant to be used in generally the same order because as the lessons progress, group members will build upon skills learned from previous sessions.
- Depending on the age and “personality” of your group, you can add, substitute, or leave out certain activities or sessions. For example, if you have a group of eight- and nine-year-olds, it may not be appropriate to focus on cyber-bullying and social media (but general bullying, yes!).
- Because not all strategies work for all kids, there are a variety of activities described throughout the sessions. Customize specific needs and goals of your group.

In this order, each of the twelve sessions includes:

- Goals and objectives
- List of supplies needed for the various activities
- Description of tasks to be done prior to the start of the lesson
- Background notes to the leader about the general theme of the session

- Warm-up activity at the start of each meeting
- Thorough explanation of each learning activity
- Closing activity, and
- Tool box item to take home with them each week

Additions to the Newly Updated and Revised *Seeing Red*

The purpose of this updated and revised *Seeing Red* is to keep some of the “tried and true” themes and activities that have proven effective in helping kids manage their anger, but also offer new themes and new activities to use.

New themes included in the updated and revised *Seeing Red*:

- Building an internal tool box each session with a focus on a specific skill to either help them regulate their emotions strategies to making positive choices
- Explore the roles of the bully, victim, and bystander, with an emphasis on the powerful role the bystander plays in the dynamic
- Sessions focused on technology specific to cyberbullying and social media
- The importance of asking for forgiveness, as well as saying “I’m sorry”
- Teaching self-regulating calming techniques
- Weekly affirmations
- Supplemental ideas and learning activities to incorporate in your *Seeing Red* group
- Section on facilitating groups with kids and key elements of group process
- Additional list of books and resources

Important Notes

Tool Box

On the first week, participants will need a box that they bring home with them to serve as their “tool box.” Each week following, there will be a tool box item that they bring home with them and put in their box to serve as reminders of the skill they have focused on during that particular week.

Scream Boxes

The Scream Box project in Session 9 requires materials that likely need to be collected over a period of time. Keep that in mind and plan ahead to have enough cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, and newspaper for everyone.

Supplemental Activities Section

If you need additional activities, or would like to incorporate specific routines as a part of your *Seeing Red* group, there are additional activities and ideas described starting on page 121.

Say to the group

There are instances in each session where it reads, “Say to the group..” There is not an expectation that you read those specific words, but it is offered as a guide for you as to the general message you want to be giving. Just be yourself and use words that are comfortable and natural to you.

Group Process

Benefits of Working With Kids in Groups

- Groups enable kids to form bonds with peers in a structured environment that enables them to discuss feelings and ideas openly.
- A group setting enables kids to understand that their feelings are not unique to them and that there is not something wrong with them. They can better appreciate others' experiences and gain perspective on their own lives.
- Through activities and discussions, they are able to articulate personal feelings and give feedback to their peers that would be more difficult to verbalize with adults. Kids often accept feedback better from peers than other adults.
- Group settings allow a program to reach more kids at one time.
- Social environment fulfills need for autonomy and identity.

A well-conceived use of program, what the group does together, can add texture to the group experience, fueling its capacity to transform itself into a unique entity, something new and special that has never existed before. Program is the unbreakable, malleable stuff that real-life groups are made of, creating "something-ness from "nothing-ness.

Andrew Malekoff

Group Work with Adolescents: Principles and Practice.
Second Edition. The Guilford Press, Inc. 2004

Tuckman Theory: The 5 Stages of Group Development

Dr. Bruce Tuckman published his group model in 1965. He added a fifth stage, Adjourning, in the 1970s. The Forming Storming Norming Performing theory is a helpful explanation of the group process, from when a group begins to when it ends. Tuckman's model explains that as the group develops and as relationships and roles are established, the facilitator leadership style shifts as well.

Stage 1: Forming

- Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- Group members are looking for safe, patterned behavior.
- Group members are looking for guidance and direction so there is a high dependence on the facilitator.
- Group members are “checking everyone out,” including the leaders, and making lots of judgments. There is usually little or no investment in the group yet.

Stage 2: Storming

- Group members are trying to figure out “their place” or role in the group.
- Competition and conflict arise, either covertly or overtly, as they assess and test the role of each group member and the facilitator. There is often a fear of exposure and rejection. Distrust.
- During this stage, the group has a strong need for structure and clarification. Seeks safety in boundaries.
- In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a “testing and proving” mentality to a problem-solving mentality.
- The most important trait in helping groups move is the ability to listen—validate experiences, exhibit strong boundaries, and be loyal in all aspects of the group.

Stage 3: Norming

- Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted.
- Big decisions are made by group agreement.
- Smaller decisions may be delegated to individuals or small groups within the group.
- There is general respect for the leader and some of leadership is shared by the group.
- The group is cohesive and engaged.
- Group members are making contributions to the group. Group is “Productive”—working level and creativity are high.
- Level of trust is high.

Stage 4: Performing

(This stage is not reached by all groups. You can have a very healthy and productive group without moving into the Performing stage.)

- True interdependence.
- Can work independently, and there is complete equality between group members.
- Production level is very high.
- Loyalty is intense, and morale is high.
- Anxiety among group members can increase with the anticipation of the group ceasing.

Stage 5: Adjourning

- Adjourning is the breakup of the group, hopefully when the task has been completed successfully and its purpose achieved.
- Hopefully group members feel good about what's been accomplished, and therefore, recognition of their contribution should be acknowledged.
- Opportunity to say good-bye.

Keys to a Positive Group Process

- Establish group guidelines early on. Get input from everyone, and hold group members accountable for the guidelines they created.
- Believe the group can make good decisions on behalf of the group.
- Draw out quieter group members by asking them direct questions that are low risk, then thank them for their input.
- If a problem or issue arises in the group, turn the problem over to the group. (Example: “I’m noticing that the same people seem to be making most the decisions. How do you think we can be sure to get everyone’s ideas heard?”)
- Establish routines or rituals. Examples could include consistently begin with a check-in, an icebreaker, a sentence starter, or affirmation.
- Allow them to make decisions and have some say in what happens in the group so they feel ownership.
- Encourage the participants to communicate directly with one another instead of only through the facilitators. Whenever you have the opportunity, turn it over to the group: “What do you think about what Lisa said?”
- Empower the participants. Have different group members play some leadership roles each week, perhaps asking them if they have an activity/game to teach.
- Stay neutral and fair. Treat group members equally, allowing everyone the opportunity to lead, and to follow.
- Let them know that each person is valuable. Affirm and encourage the group. Take time to say, “Thanks for sharing that” or “What a neat idea!”
- Be aware of any confidentiality issues inside and outside the group. Although *Seeing Red* groups are not therapy groups, they may share some personal things that should not be shared outside of the group. It’s important group members understand that “what’s said in group, stays in group,” with the exception of if you learn they are being harmed or want to harm themselves.

Facilitator Skills That Can Enhance the Group Process

Flexibility

The ability to fulfill different group roles at various times, such as: leader, supporter, inquisitor, “enforcer.” This allows the group to fluidly move back and forth from “task” to “process.” However, consistency in approach is important.

Confidence

To instill confidence in the group by appearing purposeful and in control, therefore calming group insecurities.

Authenticity

Be honest and be yourself.

Leadership (Presence)

To guide and influence the group through accurately listening, observing, and remembering.

Integrity

To be an example to the group of how to conduct oneself.

Initiating

To start the group working on the task based on the group’s goals. However, if a problem or issue develops, use the group to find alternatives and strategies and still maintain the task objectives.

Respectable

To earn the admiration of the group as being a person whom they can trust.

Perceptive

To have the capability to recognize undertones in the group; using the positive ones to the group’s advantage and ignoring or sometimes even countering the negative ones to diminish them.

Task Versus Process

To have the ability to know when to move through curricula and when to remain where you are in order to deepen the group experience.

Helpful Hints to Enhance Your *Seeing Red* Group Experience

Recruiting Group Members: Be thoughtful about who you invite to a *Seeing Red* group. There should be a mixture of personalities and behavior variations in the group. For example, inviting only those who have a history of negative and chronic behavior problems would be a very challenging group to facilitate. Instead, include a member to serve as a role model, a member who tends to stuff their anger and needs to learn to better express their feelings and/or someone who would benefit from being in a group setting to enhance their self-esteem and leadership skills.

Emphasize the Positive: There is a strong thread throughout the curriculum stressing character building and positive leadership. Identify and point out the progress they are making and their healthy choices. This can really motivate the group to keep working on making positive choices.

Be Flexible: Even though *Seeing Red* provides you with a comprehensive plan for each session, allow your group members the opportunity to take the group where it needs to go. For example, if participants are really involved in a discussion related to the topic at hand, or focused on a particular activity, keep going and adjust the curriculum accordingly. Likewise, if an activity isn't effective or not working, move to a new activity.

Facilitator's Participation: Participating in the activities as a leader can be a great way to build rapport and trust. For example, if the facilitator draws a picture of what their anger feels like inside, just as they asked the group members to do, the kids likely will feel entrusted. Also, it can be a great way to role model the activity and what you expect your group members to do.

Be Prepared: Take careful time each week to read the session and gather supplies. As you get to know your group members better, you'll likely have a better idea of what you think will work well and what might not. Keep in mind that curriculum is fluid and should be tweaked where needed to better fit the needs of your particular group.

Give Choices: Allow group members to make choices, too. Group members will invest in the group more quickly, as well as build their group decision-making skills.

Groups Are Unpredictable: One of the exciting aspects of group work is that every group has its own “personality.” Some groups can be very challenging, and some seem to gel very quickly. Much of this is out of the facilitator’s control and is related to the composition of a group. If your group is difficult or challenging, don’t take it personally. Also, the “life” of a group can vary widely from week one to the final session. (See the “Group Process” section to learn more about group facilitation and working with kids in groups.)

Be Consistent: Be consistent with your meeting space, with who you invite to participate in the group, and how the group is facilitated.

Have Fun!