

Anger Management Programs

The purpose of this resource is to provide a list of empirically-supported anger management programs. Before selecting a program, users should be aware of the different categories and terms associated with anger management, in order to select the program most appropriate for their environment. The following is a brief list of categories and terms associated with anger management:

Violence Prevention: Refers to efforts to decrease aggression, antisocial behavior, bullying, and critical episodes of school violence (i.e., assault, theft, vandalism, shootings, etc...). Anger management is often the main focus or a critical component of violence prevention programs.

Proactive Aggression: Refers to aggression that appears to be a way of obtaining a desired outcome. Examples include hitting a peer to get his/her toy, or harassing a student in order to gain the respect of a peer group. Proactive aggression is best addressed by efforts which teach new social skills, punish aggressive behaviors, reinforce non-aggressive responses, and to implement effective parent training.

Instrumental Aggression: Also known as proactive aggression. Aggression is used as a way to obtain a desired outcome.

Reactive Aggression: Aggression that occurs as a response to a stimulus or situation. Often, children with anger management deficits who display reactive aggression appear to be short-tempered, are likely to misinterpret neutral situations as being hostile, and tend to overreact to minor provocations. Students whose aggression is reactive in nature are less likely to be affected by attempts to punish aggressive behavior. Instead, students with reactive aggression tend to benefit more from programs that emphasize social role taking, empathy, self-control, anger education, social problem solving, negotiation, assertiveness training, and accepting criticism.

Bullying: A form of aggression in which one or more students physically, psychologically, and/or sexually harass another student repeatedly over a period of time. In order for aggression to qualify as bullying, the nature of the attacks must involve an imbalance of power between the aggressor(s) and the victim. Bullies may display both proactive *and* reactive aggression. Bullies may also be the victims of other bullies. Interventions for bullying should include components that address the behavior of the bullies, the behavior of the victims, and the behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of the peer group which surrounds the victim (which in many cases may include the entire school). Anger management programs will be helpful for some aspects of bullying, but additional interventions will be needed to address the needs of victims and peer groups.

The following is a list of empirically-supported programs that aim to reduce the aggressive behaviors associated with anger management deficits. This list includes general violence prevention programs, as well as bullying prevention programs and specific anger management programs. For further information regarding anger management training, and/or to learn about resources for the programs listed below, please contact the Florida Positive Behavior Support Project (813-974-6440 or <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>).