

A Tempest In A Tea Pot



[Maternal Anger And Frustration]

Program Goals

To increase parental responsibility, parental investment, and devotion of time and energy by:

- ❑ Enhancing mothers' belief that their behavior is crucial to their children's health, safety, and development
- ❑ Increasing mothers' awareness of their health and their own psychological needs and helping them address those needs

Session Aims

1. Participants learn to identify triggers for their anger
2. Provide participants with ideas about how to manage anger directed towards their children
3. Help participants find ways to relieve stress

Concepts

1. Anger is a human emotion.
2. There are ways to help manage anger.
3. It is important to decrease anger towards the child.

Participants

Mothers only

Preparation

The Legacy room for the mothers is arranged with the chairs in a circle formation. A chair for the Intervention Specialist is included in the circle.

Prepare Flip Charts

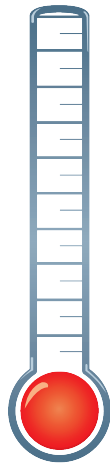


Flip Chart #1 ***I'm A Little Tea Pot***

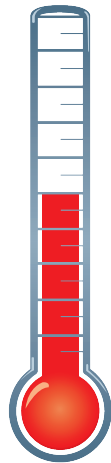
I'm a little tea pot short and stout
Here is my handle
Here is my spout
When I get all steamed up, hear me shout
Just tip me over and pour me out



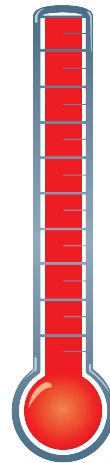
Flip Chart #2 (from Block 3, Session 10) ***Counting To Ten***



Not Bothered



Bothered



Very Angry

A thermometer is drawn on the Flip Chart and has three levels of frustration ranging from not bothered to bothered to very angry.



Flip Chart #3

Relieving Steam

- Talk to the person about what made you angry.
- Sometimes you may need to take yourself out of the situation.
- Count to ten and take a deep breath.
- Talk to a friend or loved one about the incident.
- Go for a walk.
- Do something that pleases you.

Hand-outs



Prepare and distribute to the mothers the three hand-outs entitled:

- "I'm A Little Teapot"
- "Counting To Ten"
- "Relieving Steam"

Greeting

Questions And Comments

The Intervention Specialist asks if there are:

- a. Any questions or concerns that they would like to discuss,
- b. Any announcements that they would like to share,
- c. Any questions or comments regarding last week's session?

The Tea Pot

"Today's session is called 'A Tempest In A Tea Pot'. Do you have any idea what we are going to talk about? (Pause.) Well, we are going to talk about the anger and frustration that most mothers feel at times. As we have said in the past, being a mother is a hard job with big responsibilities."

"So, why do you think we chose this title? (*Pause*). Has anyone heard of the children's rhyme 'I'm a Little Tea Pot?' Look at Flip Chart #1."

Display

Flip Chart



Flip Chart #1

I'm A Little Tea Pot

I'm a little tea pot short and stout

Here is my handle

Here is my spout

When I get all steamed up, hear me shout

Just tip me over and pour me out

Maternal Feelings

"When we look at a cool tea pot, it is pretty. It has a nice shape. It is not scary. You probably wouldn't drop it and you may even feel proud to have it." **Said in a fun, light manner.** "The same feeling that we have when we look a pretty, delicate teapot is how we feel when we are calm. It is a good feeling."

"Now, this really nice tea pot, the one that we just talked about, is getting steamed up. Let's talk about what it is like to be a hot tea pot. Have any of you felt steamed up with your child, your responsibilities, your job and anything else that you have in your life?"
Encourage sharing.

“Because I don’t want anyone to be left out, let me ask the next logical question. Have any of you never felt **angry** with your child, your responsibilities, your job and anything else that you have in your life?” **Say in a light, joking manner. The expected response is that there is no response.**

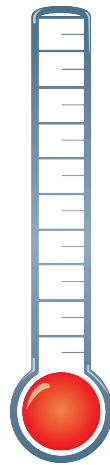
“As we have said many times in regards to your children, anger is a natural emotion. Some people are scared of it. They try to hide their anger but it can only hide for so long, and then it comes out. Some people don’t know how to control their anger and it explodes into a rage. Most people are somewhere in the middle. But, we all have to deal with this feeling in some form.”

“Do any of you remember the thermometer session way, way back during your first year at UCLA Legacy for Children™? We are going to try that exercise again. The Flip Chart, ‘Counting To Ten’, is a picture of a thermometer.”

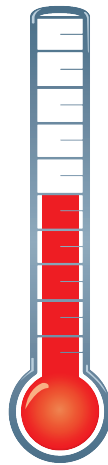
Display Flip Chart



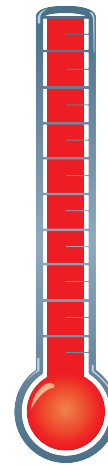
Flip Chart #2 (from Block 3, Session 10) **Counting To Ten**



Not Bothered



Bothered



Very Angry

A thermometer is drawn on the Flip Chart and has three levels of frustration ranging from not bothered to bothered to very angry.

“Let’s go around the room and tell us where you think you are, at this moment, on the thermometer.” **Go around the room.** “Most of you are somewhere in the middle. Things are alright at the moment. You don’t feel a lot of anger. Now, take a minute and close you eyes if you want to, and think of something that happened recently that made you angry. Take your time. Get a good sense of your feelings at that time. Now open your eyes and let’s go around the room again and say where you anger would have been on the thermometer. If you would like, you could also say what happened.” **Be very sensitive to the mothers’ responses. This may be very private material that they are sharing. Indicate the placement on the thermometer.**

"A lot of you had some very strong feelings. What did you do when you had those feelings? What did you do with your anger?"

Prompts for the Intervention Specialist:

- "Did you did you remove yourself from the situation and get yourself back under control?"
- "Did you take it out on someone?"
- "Did you scream?"
- "Did you cry?"

"After you calmed down, did any of you wish that you had handled things differently?"

Allow for responses.

"Self-control of strong emotions is difficult. When you were angry, was your child in the room? How do you think he or she felt? Did you notice a reaction?" **Allow for responses.**

Managing Anger

"There are many ways to express anger and some ways work out better than others."

"Do any of you feel that you have found a way to manage your anger? What do you do?"

Allow for responses.

"The little tea pot relieves her feelings by tipping and pouring out her anger. She doesn't burn anyone because the stream of hot tea is well-controlled. She has found a way to control herself."

"We have come up with some ways that may help. Let's take a look and see if you have tried any of these."

Display Flip Chart



Flip Chart #3 **Relieving Steam**

- Talk to the person about what made you angry.
- Sometimes you may need to take yourself out of the situation.
- Count to ten and take a deep breath.
- Talk to a friend or loved one about the incident.
- Go for a walk.
- Do something that pleases you.

“Have you tried any of these? Have you found them useful? Does anyone have other ways that helps you deal with anger?” **Encourage discussion.**

“Think of a way to release anger in a safe way.”

Pushing Your Buttons

“As we have said many times, raising a child is difficult. At this age, your toddlers are trying to express their independence and individuality. They challenge you with their new found abilities of expression! But, if they weren’t challenging us, we would worry. So, even though we know it is important for them to demonstrate their opinions, it doesn’t take away from the fact that our children can push our buttons and sometimes they push them hard.”

“Do you think this is true? Do you ever find yourself getting angry with your child? How do you help yourself calm down?” **Allow for sharing. The Intervention Specialist may bring up information from the thermometer exercise.**

Promoting Maternal Self-Care

“In the past, we have talked about doing things that make you feel good, something you do for your self. Why do you think it is important to talk about this?” **Allow responses.**

Prompt for Intervention Specialist:

- “Do you think that when you take care of yourself, you can be a better parent?”

“So, now we know that taking care of yourself is important. Is it easy to do? Do any of you find this really difficult to do? Why?” **Encourage discussion.**

Prompt for Intervention Specialist:

(Possible directions for responses)

- “No help, nobody to leave their child with”
- “No time with all the responsibilities”
- “No money”

“Have any of you found ways to do some things for your self? Do you feel better when you do these things?” **Encourage sharing.**

“All of you have your own unique challenges, but let’s use today to try to be constructive and give each other some suggestions that may help you discover fun things you can do for yourself. Sometimes other people think of things that you may not have thought of yet.” **Encourage sharing.**

“Some of you have difficulty with child care. Some of you don’t have a partner or family to leave your child/children with. Does anyone have any suggestions?” **Encourage the mothers to think about solutions.**

Prompts for the Intervention Specialist:

- “Trading baby-sitting with a friend”
- “Paying a responsible student”
- “Doing things together with another mother and child – It may not be time without their child but it could be positive time for the mother as well as the child”
- “Find things that you like to do that your child likes as well –
 - ❖ Bicycling with your child in a bicycle child seat,
 - ❖ Walking/running with your child in the stroller
 - ❖ Going to the beach
 - ❖ Cooking with your child”
 - ❖ “Can anyone add any others?”

“Some of you have difficulty with time. Many of you have a lot of responsibilities and it is hard to find time. Does anyone feel guilty when you do something for yourself?” **Allow for responses.**

Closing

“Those feelings of guilt come with being a parent. You are trying to do the best for your child. It is important to remember that balance is the key. You wouldn’t be a good parent if you only thought of yourself. You will burn out if you never take time to do something that you enjoy. Everyone needs to find the balance that works for your individual situation.”

“Next week will be with your toddlers and we will talk about the ways your children make friends. The title of the session is ‘Making Friends Can Be Tricky.’”

The Intervention Specialist assists the mothers’ transition to the FUN Club.

References

1. Briggs, D.C. (1970). **Your child’s self-esteem.** NY: Doubleday.
2. Eisenberg, A., Murkoff, H.E., & Hathaway, S.E. (2009). *What to expect the toddler years.* NY: Workman Publishing.
3. Brazelton, T.B. (1992). **Touchpoints.** Reading, MA: Perseus Books.