

Lesson Plan:
“The Calm Method” - Dealing with Anger
Approximate Time: 50 minutes

A. Describe elements of CALM Method. Write initials C. A. L. M. vertically on left side of white board or flip charts and describe tasks in each step:

1. CALM

- Calm one’s self – breathe, relax muscles, lower voice.
- Speak quietly and slowly. Say fewer words; avoid “inflammatory language.”
- Respond calmly to the other person or situation
- Do not try to intervene or problem solve until people are calmer

2. ASK

- Ask what events led to the upset, what others are feeling?
- Ask one’s self what led to the upset, what you are feeling, why it matters?
- Ask one’s self what might have led up to this – are children hungry, angry about something else, lonely, tired, getting ill. What’s the history of the upset or over-reaction?
- Ask what people want. What would solve the situation?

3. LISTEN

- Do active listening to the responses to these questions.
- Help others to say what they think, feel, fear, want, experience.
- Don’t argue, get clarification and information
- Listen to your own intuition about what’s going on
- Check out your understandings by asking more questions and continuing to listen.

4. MEND

- Begin to smooth hurt feelings and misunderstandings
- Repair relationships when necessary
- Reinforce rules if the anger resulted from a lack of respect or courtesy
- Make new agreements if the anger situation indicates that some family routine or relationship needs more structure.

B. Experiential Exercise:

- Prepare four 5 X 8 cards. Each card has one word written on it: CALM, ASK, LISTEN, and MEND.
 - Six volunteers are needed.
 - This is a “tag team exercise” where participants ‘tag each other out’ and share the problem solving process.
1. Ask the first participant to volunteer a situation where a parent is angry with a child. Ask the same volunteer to play the child in the situation.
 2. Ask a second volunteer to be the parent who reacts with anger.
 3. Distribute the four cards to four other volunteers.
 4. When the first parent and child pair have demonstrated the heated, angry part of the interaction, the person holding the CALM card tags the “parent” out and takes over the role play demonstrating how to CALM the situation.
 5. When the situation is calmed down, the person holding the ASK tags the ‘parent’ out and demonstrates the ASK portion of the intervention.
 6. Continue as above. When enough information has been elicited, the person holding the LISTEN card tags the ASK person. (The functions of “asking” and “listening” need not be entirely separate.)
 7. When the LISTEN phase is complete enough, the person with the MEND card tags the “parent” and facilitates a solution to the problem.
- Repeat with another team.
 - Debrief

Experiential exercise adapted from *Real Life Parenting Program*, Hazelden “Handling - Anger” video, parent booklet and curriculum guide.