

Issue: Anger and Aggression

Strategies to Consider:

Along with strategies to consider, you will find some background information on anger and aggression as well as words hyperlinked to additional resources throughout the reading.

It is important to remember that not one specific intervention works for all students with anger and aggression issues. By knowing the student's background and carefully observing when, where, and what contributes to their aggressive behavior, a proper intervention can be implemented.

There are a few different reasons why students exhibit aggressive behaviors. Some do so because they have experienced anger, aggression, and violence in their lifetime. Students may react aggressively in a situation because they feel the need to do so as a result of what they have experienced outside of school.

In order to prevent the behavior, an A-B-C (Antecedent, behavior, consequence) analysis should occur. By observing what occurs before the aggressive behavior, it is possible to prevent future aggressive outbursts. Ask yourself, "What was the aggressive behavior?" and then recall what happened before and after the behavior occurred. For example, a student throws a book across the room after the teacher asks him to read aloud. The behavior was throwing the book, the antecedent was asking him to read aloud, and the consequence was the student being sent to the principal's office. Due to the A-B-C analysis, we can start to analyze where the student's aggression comes from and intervene accordingly.

Tips like lessening the amount of downtime a student has during the day can keep them out of situations triggering their anger, but only if a student tends to be aggressive when out of adult supervisions. Likewise, a [token economy](#) could help encourage a desired behavior and discourage aggressive behavior, but only for students who can control their behaviors to a certain degree and recognize when it happens.

Other students may exhibit anger and aggression because they are incapable of reading social cues and responding accordingly. These students may misinterpret situations in the classroom and react with anger because they are socially unable to react differently. In this case, social skills training is one type of intervention to use.

An example of social skills training is modeling appropriate behaviors. Act out a situation in front of the students and provide them with an alternative solution in order to successfully respond in that situation. Modeling appropriate behaviors can give students with anger and aggression issues a

reference of how to deal with certain situations with emotions other than anger and aggression. If you would like to read more on social skills training, click on this link: <http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Social-Skills/175/default.aspx>.

Techniques like self- reflection may also work for students with anger and aggression issues if they misread social situations. A student may interpret another student accidentally knocking their book off their desk as an intentional act and respond with anger. In this case, have the student reflect on the situation and their behavior. Ask the student to replay the situation in their head, asking themselves if they responded in the appropriate manner, and what they should do differently in future situations. If they are able to do this successfully, they may be able to self-regulate their aggressive emotions.

A final reason for anger and aggression in students could be due to a student's culture and how a teacher perceives that particular culture. In this case, the student may not have anger and aggression issues, but instead, their actions are interpreted by the teacher as so. For example, a culture that exhibits play fighting can often be misinterpreted by a teacher of another culture as authentic aggressive behavior.

For this situation, it is important to remember, as a teacher, to be culturally competent. By knowing your students and their cultural background, you will be able to differentiate actual anger and aggression problems from cultural misinterpretations.

When implementing any of these techniques in your classroom, it is important to remember none of them are a quick fix for behavioral issues. In all cases, there may be no improvement in behavior or an intervention can even warrant worse behavior in the beginning. Stick with one intervention at a time and remember to understand the root of the student's aggressive behaviors in order to obtain desired behavior.

If you believe your student has anger and aggression issues, the reminders checklist below will help remind you, as a teacher, what you can do to help the student through their school day:

Reminders Checklist for Anger and Aggression

Also consider:

Emotion regulation in children

Mindfulness and aggression in children and teens

Relaxation techniques for students power point

Understanding aggression newsletter

Dealing with anger and children

Token economy system power point

Reminders Checklist for Anger and Aggression

- _____ Encourage the student to try to have positive interactions with their peers.
- _____ Remind the student of the rules and the agreed-upon consequences.
- _____ Give the student only a few directions at a time.
- _____ Clarify the rules of the class and the school (ex: no fight, respect others, or no dangerous tools).
- _____ Remind the student of class expectations.
- _____ Let the student know the schedule/routine for the day and tell the student about any schedule changes.
- _____ Ask if there is anything the student needs and how the student is feeling that day.
- _____ Tell the student the expectations, rules, and consequences so they are prepared.
- _____ Give the student some time to adjust slowly.
- _____ If the student begins to get overwhelmed, allow the student to take a break.
- _____ Give the student a signal if they start to lose control.
- _____ Please remind student ahead of time when they need to start preparing for a transition.
- _____ Tell the student what is going to happen next.
- _____ Praise the student for appropriate behaviors throughout the day.
- _____ Offer praise when the student is doing a good job.
- _____ Remind the student to not argue with others.
- _____ Talk to the student while they have to wait.
- _____ Make sure the student has a space where they can stand without being touched, or touch others.
- _____ Put people at the student's table that will help the student stay calm when they have to work by themselves.
- _____ The student enjoys being told that they are doing a good job.
- _____ Please do not argue back when the student argues over small stuff. It only makes the student argue more.
- _____ Please have the same rules, consequences, and rewards for the student every day in all of their classes. Follow through immediately on them.