



Self-Management

ABOUT MORNINGSIDE CENTER

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility's evidence-validated programs engage young people in learning essential social and emotional skills and help educators build productive and respectful schools. The 4Rs Program combines superior children's books with engaging SEL activities that explore community, feelings, relationships, conflict, and problem-solving, adding depth to literacy instruction.

Dealing with Anger and Fear

By: The 4Rs



Dealing with Anger and Fear: Plan 1-2-3

Note to the teacher:

Dealing with Anger and Fear: Plan 1-2-3 is an excerpt from The 4Rs™ [Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution] *Teaching Guide for Grade 4*, Unit 2, Understanding & Dealing with Feelings, pp. 29-31.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Chart of Plan 1-2-3

Explain that when we're angry or afraid, we often don't think very well. The feelings interfere with our thinking, and we do things we feel sorry for later. Give a couple of examples: We bump our heads on something. In a flash of anger, we smack the object with our hand, and now our hand is hurting as well as our head! Our younger brother or sister is annoying us. In anger we hit or say mean things, and pretty soon we're in big trouble with our parents. You might want to tell a brief story of a time you did something out of anger that you wish you hadn't done. Ask if anyone in the class wants to share a time when they did something while angry that they later regretted.

Say that in this 4Rs unit on feelings, we've talked about ways to cool down so that we can think more clearly about what to do. We have brainstormed a list of ways to cool down. Today students are going to learn a way to cool down that you hope will be helpful to them. It's called Plan 1-2-3 because it's as easy as 1-2-3. Ask the students, What is a plan? Elicit that it can be a list of things you're going to do. Why are plans useful? Elicit that they help us know what to do. Say that you hope Plan 1-2-3 will help them do the right thing when they feel angry or afraid.

Show them the chart of Plan 1-2-3 (below) and ask a volunteer to read Number One, a second volunteer to read Number Two, and a third to read Number Three.



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Plan 1-2-3

1. Stop
2. Breathe**
3. Think

Now say that you'll tell them more about each step of Plan 1-2-3. You want them to remember the three steps and what you say about them. They need to pay attention. After you've explained the three steps to them, you'll give them a snap oral quiz.

Walk them through the steps, referring to the chart, and provide the following explanations:

Step 1 is to STOP yourself before you react.

Notice how you're feeling. Pay attention to your body and your mind. What's happening? What do your body and your mind tell you about how you're feeling?

Step 2 is to BREATHE **

Of course, we breathe all the time without even thinking about it. But in Plan 1-2-3, we do a special kind of breathing called deep breathing. Let's practice it. You start by taking a big breath through your nose while you count silently to five, like this. Demonstrate it for them and then ask them to do it. Okay, now we're going to take in the deep breath while counting to five and then hold it while we count to two. Then we're going to let the breath out through our mouth while we count to five. Like this.

Demonstrate it. Then ask them to do it. Have them do several cycles of this deep breathing. Ask, how was that for you? How did it feel?



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Explain that our bodies need something called oxygen. We can't see it or feel it. But it's in the air around us. When we breathe, we take in oxygen. When we breathe deeply, we take in more oxygen.

Many people find deep breathing relaxing. How do they feel about it? Did they find it relaxing? In Plan 1-2-3, we stop and then take some deep breaths until we feel calm. When we're calm, we can think better about what to do. That may help us make better choices.

Step 3 is to THINK.

Ask yourself: What is the smartest thing for me to do right now? Maybe the smartest thing is to do nothing. Maybe the smartest thing is to tell the other person how you're feeling in a strong but not mean way. We can be pretty sure that hitting or saying mean things is NOT the smartest thing to do. Think of your choices. Think of the consequences.

Tell the students that as our year with The 4Rs goes on, they will be learning that they have choices when they're angry or scared or in conflict. They'll explore the consequences of various actions. That will increase their skill in using Plan 1-2-3.

Say, "Okay. We've gone over the three steps. Does anyone think they know them?" Make it into a game. Cover Number Two on the chart, and ask, "What is Number Two?" Do the same with Number 1 and then Number 3. Now cover the whole chart "Who can tell me all three steps?" Call on a couple of volunteers to say the three steps and the name of this plan (i.e. Plan 1-2-3). After a student names each step, ask the student to say more about what that step involves. Engage the class in elaborating on the explanation of each step, as necessary.

Now ask students to pair up and quiz each other on the steps.



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After students have had a few minutes to quiz each other in pairs, tell them now they'll have a chance to practice the steps. Still working in pairs, they will decide who will be Person A and who will be Person B.

Situation 1

Person A plays him- or herself. Person B is Person A's younger brother or sister. Person A is watching TV, and the younger sibling keeps turning off the TV, laughing, joking, trying to make a game of annoying Person A. Person A is getting angrier and angrier. S/he feels like yelling at her sibling or smacking him/her. BUT Person A uses Plan 1-2-3 instead.

Ask several volunteers to share what it was like to try Plan 1-2-3:

- Did they do the breathing?
- Did it relax them?
- What choice did they decide to make?
- Did any of them think of creative, nonviolent ways to solve the conflict?

Situation 2:

Person B plays him- or herself. Both of you are on the playground. Person B is playing tag with some friends. All of a sudden a kick ball comes out of nowhere and hits Person B in the head. The blow hurts and makes Person B angry. S/he finds out that Person A threw the ball. Person B feels like taking the ball and throwing it as hard as s/he can at Person A's head. BUT Person B uses Plan 1-2-3 instead.

Again, ask several volunteers to share their experience in using this approach. Then discuss with the class:

- How do you feel about Plan 1-2-3?
- Did you find it easy to carry out?



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- Are there steps that are easy? Steps that are hard?
- Can you see using it in real life situations?

Say that you'd like them to try it out when the need arises and share their experiences with you.

Evaluation

What's one thing you're taking away from today's lesson? Ask for a couple of volunteers to say their thoughts.

Closing: YES!

Understanding and managing feelings is hard work but well worth the effort. Acknowledge the importance of your students' work by joining with them to say YES, as follows:

Gather the students in a circle. Holding hands, all of you bend forward, lowering the upper part of your bodies, then slowly rise up moving your hands above your heads. All together say a strong YEEEEEEES!

** Adapted from *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting* by Maurice Elias, Steven Tobias, and Brian Friedlander

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