



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.

Cooling Down Techniques

By: The 4Rs



Cooling Down Techniques

Note to the teacher:

This activity is an excerpt from The 4Rs™ [Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution] *Teaching Guide for Middle School*, Unit 2, Understanding and Dealing with Feelings, p.30.

Time: 15 or 30 minutes

Materials: chart paper and markers

Begin by saying that when anger goes up, thinking goes down. When we're angry, we don't think as well as we do when we're calm. In anger we may do things that make the situation worse – for ourselves and others.

Ask, can any of you recall a time when you did something in anger that you were sorry for later?

Encourage sharing by giving an example from your own life.

Explain that we all get angry sometimes. Anger can be a sign that something is wrong. It can point to a problem we need to address. But in order to think clearly about the best course of action, we need to cool ourselves down.

Lead the class in brainstorming ways to cool down when they're angry, using the following guidelines:

1. Think of as many ideas as you can – we're going for quantity.
2. Ideas don't have to be realistic. Sometimes even a silly idea has something useful in it.
3. No one is allowed to criticize someone else's idea.

Record their ideas on chart paper. Add your ideas to the list.



Cooling Down Techniques

Discuss: Do you use any of these techniques? Are there some on the list you haven't used but might want to try?

Continue with Self Talk or save this second activity for another time.

Self Talk: Explain that one of the best strategies for calming yourself down is talking to yourself. When something happens to trigger our anger, we can make ourselves angrier or calmer by what we say to ourselves. For example: a school safety agent yells at you. If you think to yourself, "No one treats me like that and gets away with it," you may make yourself angrier. If instead you think to yourself something like "S/he must be having a bad day, but s/he's not going to ruin mine by getting me in trouble," you're on the way to cooling down. We're not saying that it's okay for the person to treat you disrespectfully. But if you can calm yourself down, you may be able to think of a way to address the situation that stops the behavior you don't like and keeps you out of trouble

Lead the class in completing the following scenario, or create one that suits your students.

- Anger trigger: *getting blamed for something I didn't do.*
- Specific situation: *my mother yells at me for starting a fight with my younger sibling when s/he was the one who started it.*
- Self talk to calm myself down: _____

Close by reminding students that these strategies don't address the underlying problem that triggered the anger, but they do help you calm down so that you can think better about what to do.

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