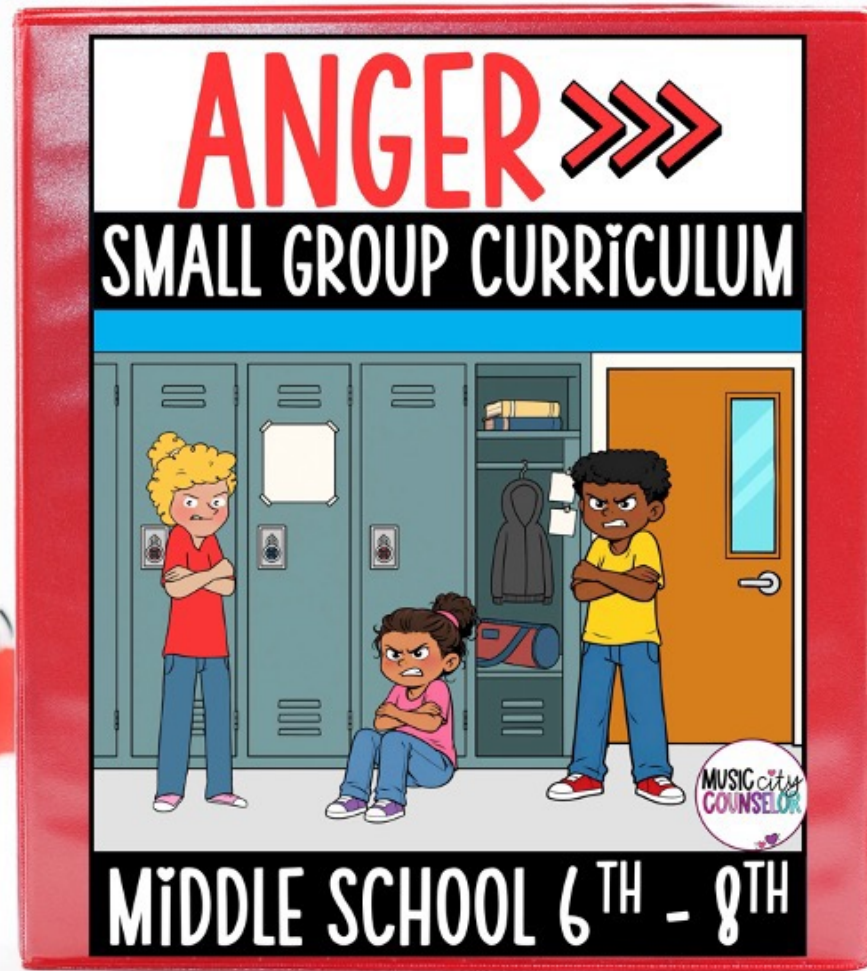




# IMPORTANT NOTES:

## THIS 10-SESSION CURRICULUM:

- teaches students to cope with anger
- was designed for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- can be used with small groups and individuals
- is aligned to ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
- is data-driven with a provided pretest/posttest

# ANGER SMALL GROUP FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

# IMPORTANT NOTES:

## THIS 10-SESSION CURRICULUM:

- is super-low prep and ready to go
- can be customized to fit the needs of your students and the amount of time you have
- is flexible! Implement all 10 sessions in the order presented. Or change the order, pick and choose certain sessions, or add in materials of your choice!

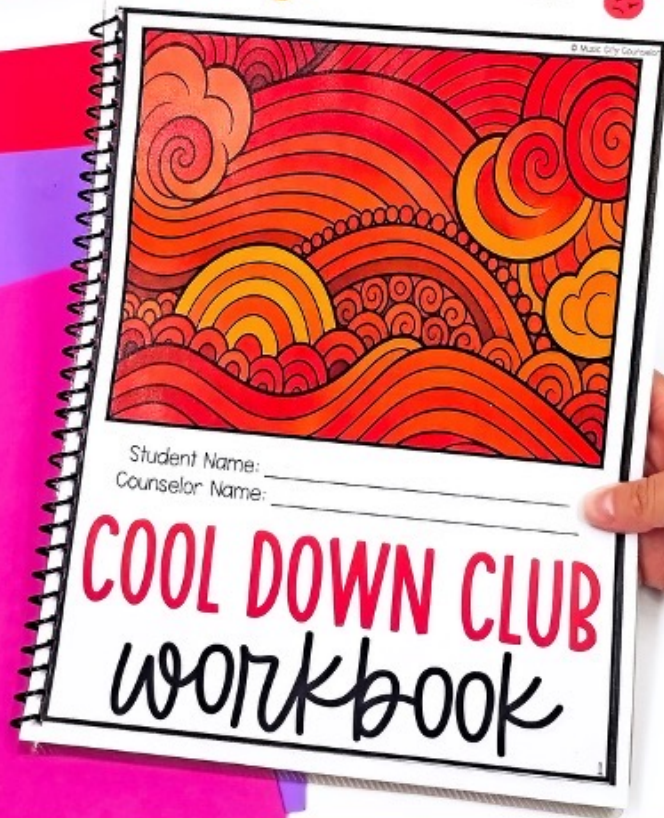


# THE COOL DOWN CLUB OUTLINE:

- Session 1: Introductions & Icebreakers
- Session 2: Anger & the Amygdala
- Session 3: Anger Feels Like...
- Session 4: Anger Triggers
- Session 5: The 5 Levels of Anger
- Session 6: Rating Anger Triggers
- Session 7: Under My Anger Mask
- Session 8: Calm Looks & Feels Like...
- Session 9: Using Coping Skills
- Session 10: Group Closure & Reflection



# STUDENTS WORK THROUGH A 22-PAGE WORKBOOK.



### MY LEVELS OF ANGER>>>

**DIRECTIONS >>>**  
Draw and write about what each level feels like and looks like.

|                             | Feels like:                                                                                        | Looks like:                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>OUT OF CONTROL 5</b><br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I am overwhelmed</li><li>• I can't think clearly</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My muscles tense up</li><li>• My skin turns red</li></ul> |
| <b>ANGRY 4</b><br>          |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |
| <b>FRUSTRATED 3</b><br>     |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |
| <b>ANNOYED 2</b><br>        |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |
| <b>CALM 1</b><br>           |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |

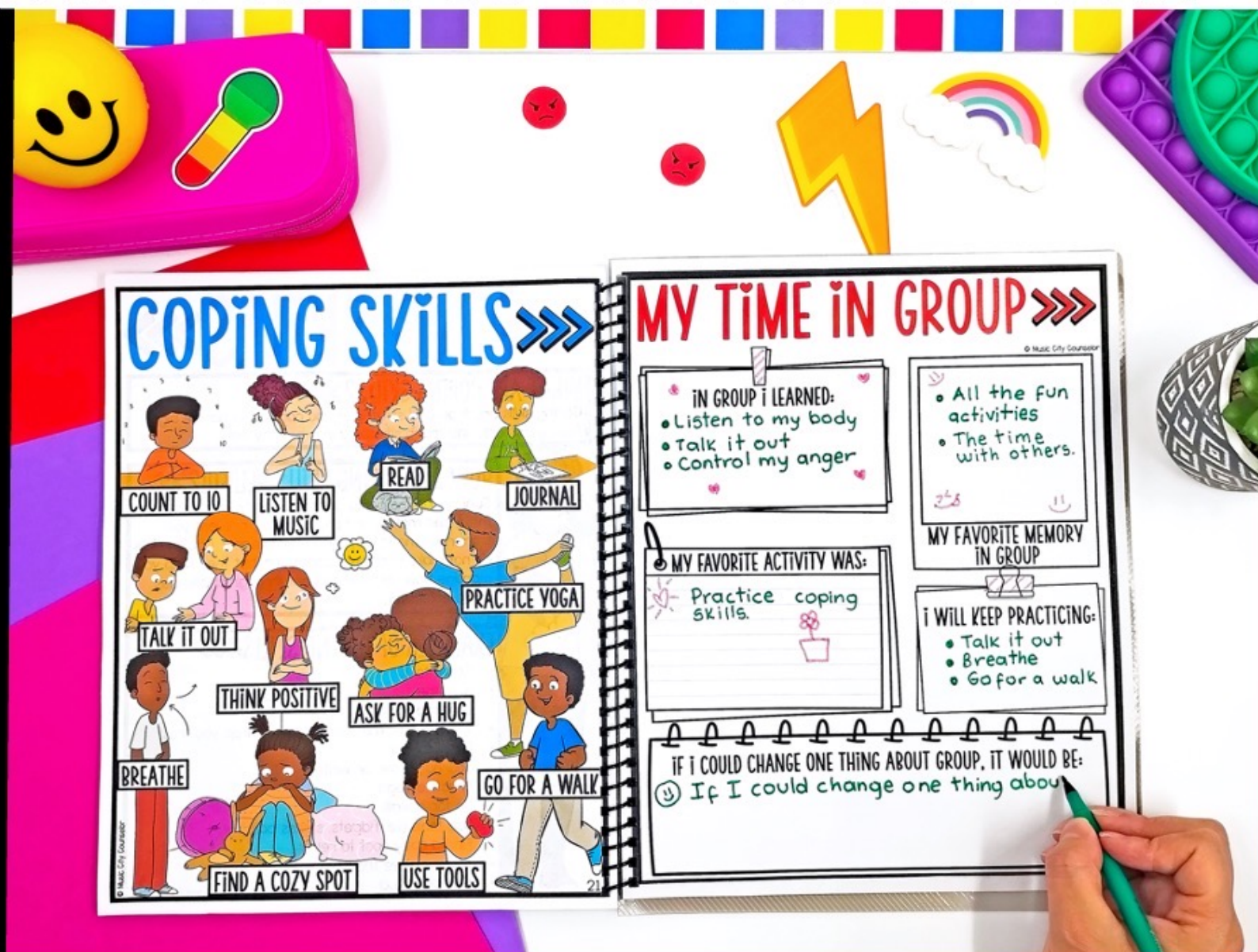
### MY LEVELS OF ANGER>>>

**DIRECTIONS >>>**  
Rate the anger triggers on the cards. Then, glue one onto each level.

I feel...when...

|                              |                                                              |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5. OUT OF CONTROL</b><br> |                                                              |
| <b>4. ANGRY</b><br>          | Draymond's coach yelled at him in front of everyone.         |
| <b>3. FRUSTRATED</b><br>     | Asha's dad said she isn't allowed to go to the school dance. |
| <b>2. ANNOYED</b><br>        |                                                              |
| <b>1. CALM</b><br>           |                                                              |

# STUDENTS WORK THROUGH A 22-PAGE WORKBOOK.





# A DETAILED PLAN IS INCLUDED FOR EACH SESSION:

## SESSION 1: INTRODUCTIONS & ICEBREAKERS

### SESSION GOALS: >>>

- Students will introduce themselves and get to know their peers.
- Students will assess their knowledge of anger with a pre-survey.
- Students will learn the rules of group.
- Students will learn the definition and limits of confidentiality.
- Students will understand the purpose, goals, and content of group.

### ASCA ALIGNMENT: >>>

- M.1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being.
- M.2. Sense of acceptance, respect, support and inclusion for self and others in the school environment.
- M.3. Positive attitude toward work and learning.

### MATERIALS NEEDED: >>>

- 1 workbook per student
- Pencils
- Markers or crayons

### DIRECTIONS: >>>

- Before students come to group, print a workbook for each student. Choose either the full color or the black line version. Staple it in the top left-hand corner.
- Start by welcoming students to "The Cool Down Club" group and giving them a workbook. They can write their name and counselor's name on the blank lines on the cover page.
- Tell students that we are going to do a little icebreaker activity to help them get to know each other. Ask students to turn to page 3 in their workbook, "All About Me." This page is full of fun doodles that let students express their favorite things, hobbies, dreams, etc. Students can start by writing their name where it says, "My name is" and drawing a picture of themselves in the picture frame. Then, they can write words and draw little pictures for each category. Once they're done, ask students to share their page with the group.
- Ask students to turn to page 4 in their workbook, "Small Group Pre-Survey." Explain that this little form will help us understand how much progress they make in group. It's okay if they don't know the answers now – they'll learn as we go! Read each question aloud and ask students to circle or color the "yes" 😊, "maybe" 😐, or "not yet" 😞 faces.
- Ask students to turn to page 5 in their workbook, "Small Group: The Beets." This page explains the purpose, rules, and goals of group, as well as confidentiality and how group will make them feel. Read through each section and spark a discussion with students:
  - What do you hope to learn in group?
  - What goals do you have for group?
  - What rules would you add to this list?
  - Why is confidentiality important?
  - What does the group purpose mean to you?
- Close by saying that next week we will explore what anger means and what it looks like.

## SESSION 2: ANGER & THE AMYGDALA

### SESSION GOALS: >>>

- Students will learn the definition of anger.
- Students will learn the 3 manifestations of anger (thoughts, body, choices).
- Students will learn the brain science behind anger (the amygdala and fight-or-flight response).
- Students will learn about the physical signs of anger.
- Students will reflect on what anger looks like in their own body.

### ASCA ALIGNMENT: >>>

- M.1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being.
- B-SMS 2: Self-discipline and self-control.
- B-SMS 9: Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment.

### MATERIALS NEEDED: >>>

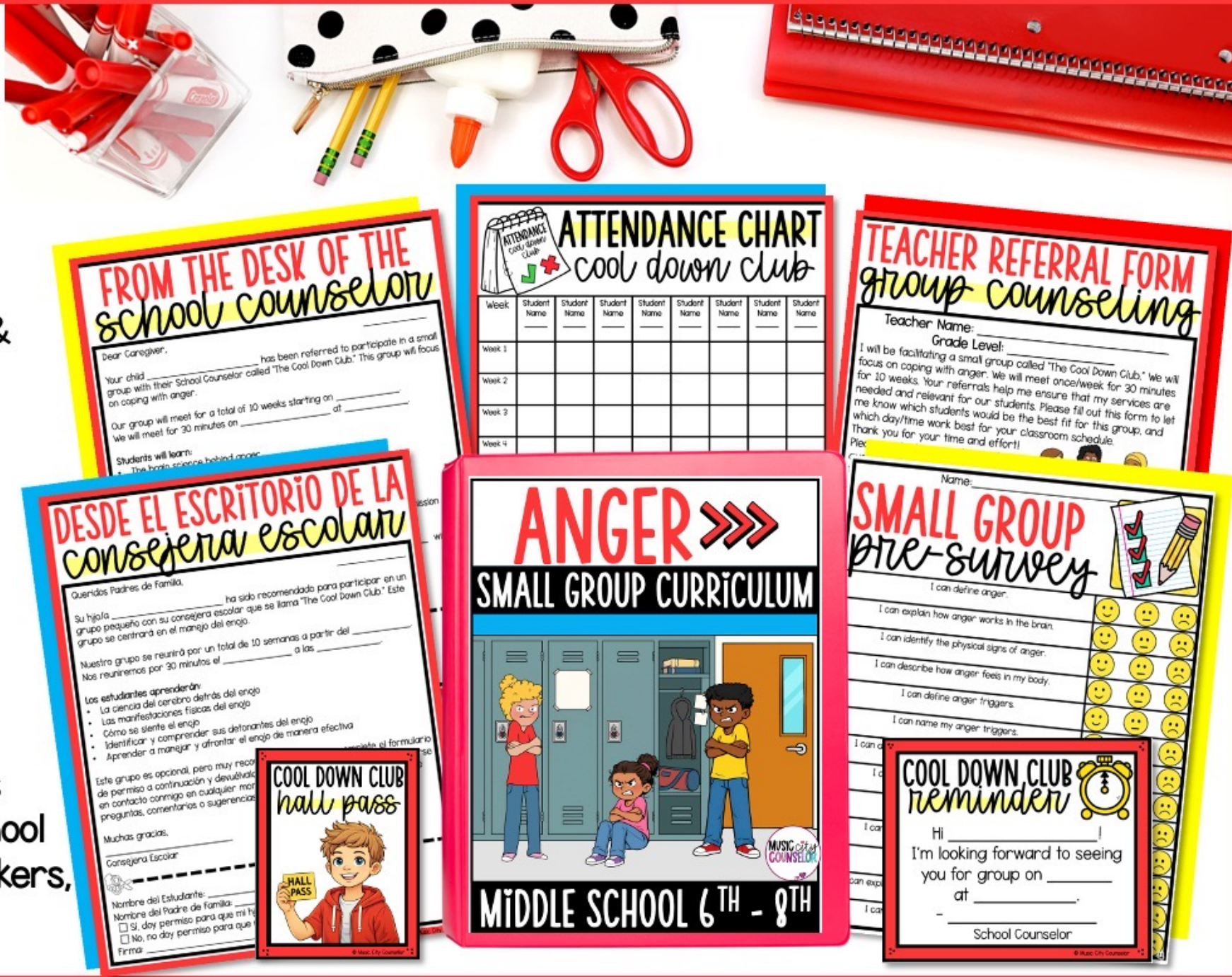
- 1 workbook per student
- 1 printed craft per student (4 versions included)
- Google Slides or PowerPoint
- Pencils
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

### DIRECTIONS: >>>

- Greet students and explain that today we will dive headfirst into learning about anger: Learning about where anger comes from and what it looks like (how to identify it) is the first step in coping with it! Feel free to start each session with a feelings check-in (page 2 in the workbook).
- Ask students to turn to page 6 in their workbook, "What is Anger?" Ask a different volunteer to read each of the 4 sections: the definition of anger and the 3 places that it manifests (our thoughts, bodies, and choices). Spark a discussion around:
  - How would you define anger? What does the provided definition mean to you?
  - How does anger manifest in your thoughts?
  - How does anger manifest in your body?
  - How does anger manifest in your choices?
- Pull up either the brief PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation. Go through the presentation and teach students the brain science behind anger (the amygdala, fight-or-flight response, danger alarm, and the thinking brain). Spark a discussion around:
  - What is the amygdala's job? How does it help us? How can it hurt us?
  - Explain what happens when the amygdala sends a "DANGER!" alarm to the body.
  - Explain the fight-or-flight response. How is it adaptive/helpful? How is it maladaptive/unhelpful?
  - How can you calm your amygdala? Which strategies work best for you?
- Ask students to turn to page 7 in their workbook, "Anger Physical Manifestations." Review the physical manifestations of anger. Relate these back to the fight-or-flight response and the amygdala preparing us for danger (real or not real). Spark a discussion around:
  - Where in your body do you notice the FIRST signs of anger?
  - Which of these physical signs of anger do you experience most?
  - Which of these physical manifestations of anger do you NOT experience?
  - Do any of these common physical signs surprise you?
- Give each student a printed flip book craft. 4 different versions are included in full color and black/white. Please let students choose the version that looks the most like them. This craft reviews the information about the brain learned in the presentation. Students can cut out the circle on the "Anger & the Amygdala" cover page and cut out the circle and shoulders on the second page. Then, students can place some glue where it says, "Glue Here" and glue the cover page onto the shoulders page. This creates a little flip book. If students are using the black/white version, they can color it. Please see the sample on the next page.
- Close by saying that next week we will learn what anger feels like.

# GROUP FORMS:

- Teacher Referral Form
- Bilingual Parent Letters
- Pretest
- Posttest
- Alignment to ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
- Binder cover
- Hall passes
- Student reminder cards
- Attendance chart
- Group rules
- Confidentiality agreement
- Feelings check-in
- Completion certificate
- EDITABLE versions of all forms
- Versions for all forms for school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists





## SMALL GROUP: the deets

### GROUP PURPOSE >>>

This is a safe, supportive place where you can share about anger and practice skills to grow your confidence and sense of calm. One of the hardest parts of anger is feeling like you're the only one struggling. Here in group, you'll see others have similar troubles, feelings, and experiences as you do! You'll learn practical tools you can use right away! The goal isn't to get rid of anger, but to learn to manage and control it.

### CONFIDENTIALITY >>>

What you say in here, stays in here! UNLESS:

- Someone is hurting you.
- You are hurting someone else.
- You are hurting yourself.
- You give me permission to share.

### GROUP GOALS >>>

1. To define and identify anger.
2. To understand how anger is processed in the brain.
3. To learn and practice coping skills.
4. To build self-confidence and self-awareness.

### GROUP RULES >>>

1. What's shared here, stays here. We respect privacy. Personal stories shared in group are not repeated outside this room.
2. Respect others. Be kind, accepting, and supportive. Do not judge.
3. One person talks at a time. Listen when someone is speaking. Do not interrupt.
4. Everyone belongs. Different feelings, identities, thoughts, and experiences are welcome here.

### IN GROUP, YOU'LL FEEL >>>

This group will make you feel:

- Understood
- Supported
- Equipped
- Confident
- Capable



## SMALL GROUP pre-survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I can define anger.



I can explain how anger works in the brain.



I can identify the physical signs of anger.



I can describe how anger feels in my body.



I can define anger triggers.



I can name my anger triggers.



I can describe and identify the 5 levels of anger.



I can explain how anger is like a mask.



I can define calm.



I can identify the physical signs of calm.



I can define coping skills.



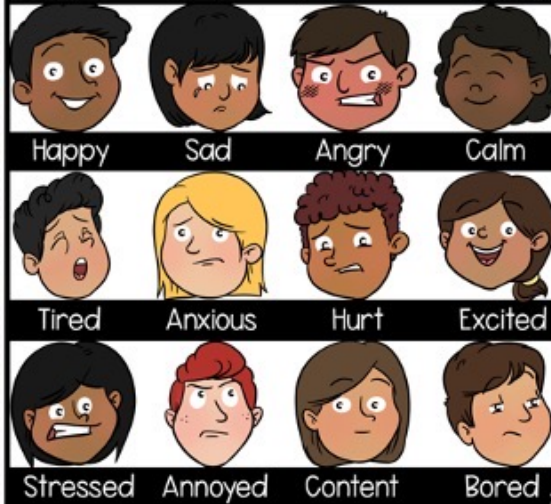
I can explain why coping strategies are helpful.



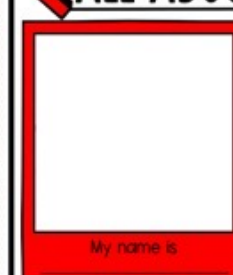
I can practice and use coping skills.



## FEELINGS check-in



## ALL ABOUT me



# SESSION 1: Introductions & Icebreakers

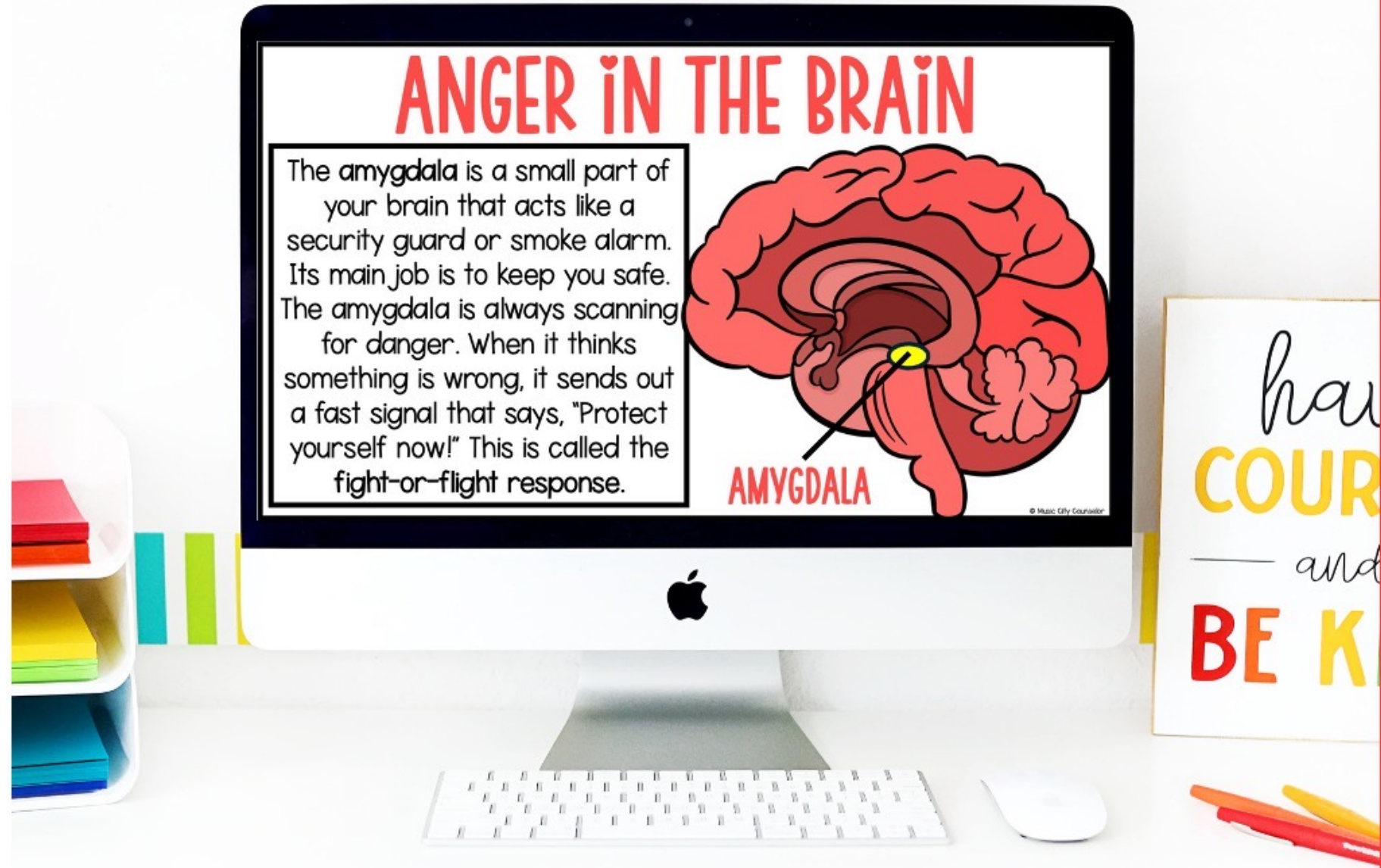


# SESSION 2:

## Anger & the Amygdala

# SESSION 2:

## Anger & the Amygdala





# WHAT IS ANGER? >>>

**DEFINITION >>>**  
Anger is a strong feeling when something feels unfair, frustrating, or out of your control. It's a signal that something is wrong. Anger is a normal feeling that is part of the human experience. What matters most is how you choose to handle it.

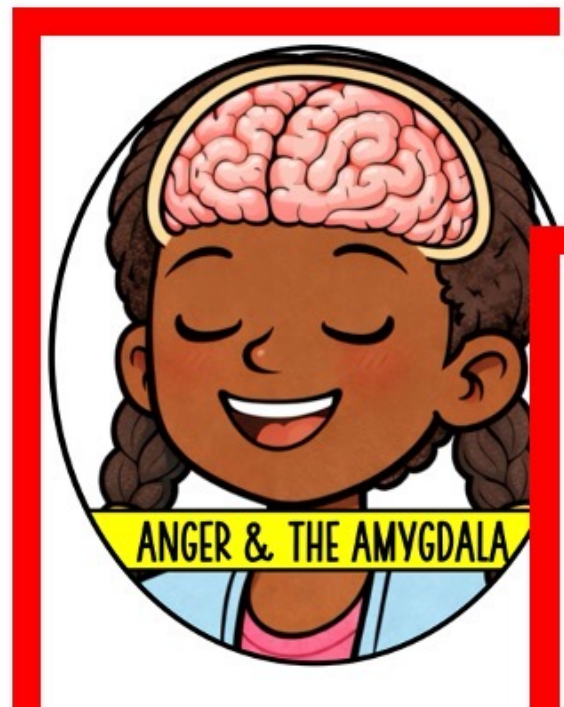
**MANIFESTS IN YOUR THOUGHTS >>>**  
Your mind may race or get stuck on one idea. You might think, "This is not fair," "They did that on purpose," or "I have to do something right now." It can feel hard to see other options and calm down.

**MANIFESTS IN YOUR BODY >>>**  
Your body often notices anger first. Common physical signs include a fast heartbeat, tight muscles, feeling hot or flushed, clenched teeth, heavy breathing, a tight stomach, shaky hands, sweaty palms, and restlessness.

**MANIFESTS IN YOUR CHOICES >>>**  
Anger can push you to act quickly. You might yell, slam things, walk away, or say something you later regret. You may also shut down and refuse to talk. These choices happen because anger wants a fast release.

# ANGER PHYSICAL manifestations

- A fast heartbeat
- Tight muscles in your jaw, shoulders, or fists
- Feeling hot and flushed in your face or chest
- Clenched teeth
- Grinding your jaw
- Heavy, shallow, quick breathing
- A tight stomach
- Nausea
- Shaky hands or legs
- Sweaty palms
- A feeling like you need to move or explode
- Restlessness



## THE BRAIN

**PREFRONTAL CORTEX**  
The amygdala is the brain's alarm system. When it senses danger, it turns on the **fight-or-flight** response.

**AMYGDALA**  
The amygdala is the brain's alarm system. When it senses danger, it turns on the **fight-or-flight** response.

## DANGER!

The alarm is SO fast that it turns on your body *before* your thinking brain has time to catch up. The amygdala doesn't know the difference between real danger and a situation that is just frustrating or uncomfortable. This can cause you to overreact and act out in anger.

## FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT

Preps your body to protect itself from danger:

- Speed up heartbeat
- Tighter muscles
- Faster breathing
- Take a break
- Think positive
- Breathe
- Energy to move
- Count

## FINDING CALM

You cannot "turn off" your amygdala, but you can calm it.

# SESSION 2: Anger & the Amygdala

# SESSION 3:

## Anger Feels Like...



# SESSION 3:

## Anger Feels Like...



# SESSION 4:

## Anger Triggers

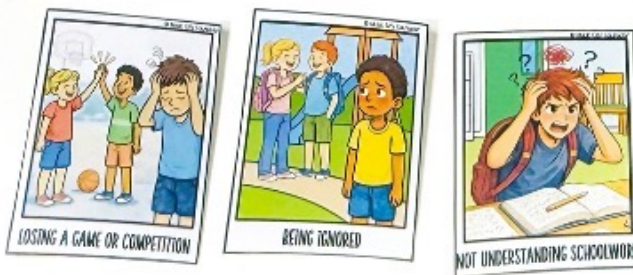
### SEVERE >>> ANGER TRIGGERS



### MODERATE >>> ANGER TRIGGERS



### MILD >>> ANGER TRIGGERS



### MY TRIGGERS >>>

**DIRECTIONS >>>**  
Glue your top 4 anger triggers onto the rectangles.

|                                                           |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MY #1 TRIGGER</b><br><br>HAVING PERSONAL SPACE INVADED | <b>MY #2 TRIGGER</b><br><br>FEELING RUSHED OR PRESSURED |
| <b>MY #3 TRIGGER</b><br><br>HAVING DEVICES TAKEN AWAY     | <b>MY #4 TRIGGER</b><br><br>FEELING MISUNDERSTOOD       |



# SESSION 4:

## Anger Triggers





**ANGER levels**

Share about a time when you felt calm.

**CALM**



**ANGER levels**

Share about a time when you felt annoyed.

**ANNOYED**



**ANGER levels**

Share about a time when you felt angry.

**ANGRY**



## LEVELS OF ANGER >>>

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|                       |   |                                                                                     |                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>OUT OF CONTROL</b> | 5 |    | I am exploding with BIG feelings I can't control. I may make bad choices or say things I regret.  |
| <b>ANGRY</b>          | 4 |    | My heart is beating fast and my hands are in fists. I'm overwhelmed and starting to lose control. |
| <b>FRUSTRATED</b>     | 3 |    | I feel bothered and upset. My breathing is getting faster. My body is starting to sweat.          |
| <b>ANNOYED</b>        | 2 |   | Something is bugging me. I feel irritated. My body is starting to feel tense.                     |
| <b>CALM</b>           | 1 |  | I am peaceful and relaxed. My body feels comfortable. Everything is okay.                         |

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## MY LEVELS OF ANGER >>>

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**DIRECTIONS >>>**  
Draw and write about what each level feels like and looks like.

|                       |   | Feels like:                                                                         | Looks like: |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>OUT OF CONTROL</b> | 5 |  |             |
| <b>ANGRY</b>          | 4 |                                                                                     |             |
| <b>FRUSTRATED</b>     | 3 |                                                                                     |             |
| <b>ANNOYED</b>        | 2 |                                                                                     |             |
| <b>CALM</b>           | 1 |                                                                                     |             |

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**ANGER levels**

Share about a time when you felt frustrated.

**FRUSTRATED**



**ANGER levels**

Share about a time when you felt out of control.

**OUT OF CONTROL**



# SESSION 5: The 5 Levels of Anger

# SESSION 6:

## Rating Anger Triggers



# SESSION 6:

## Rating Anger Triggers

5 **OUT OF CONTROL** >>> 

2 **ANNOYED** >>> 

4 **ANGRY** >>> 

1 **CALM** >>> 

3 **FRUSTRATED** >>> 

**MY LEVELS OF ANGER** >>>

**DIRECTIONS** >>>  
Rate the anger triggers on the cards. Then, glue one onto each level.

I feel...when...

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 5. OUT OF CONTROL |  |
| 4. ANGRY          |  |
| 3. FRUSTRATED     |  |
| 2. ANNOYED        |  |
| 1. CALM           |  |

Draymond's coach yelled at him in front of everyone.

Someone spread an embarrassing rumor about Carson and his family.

Jordan's teacher accused him of cheating on the test, when he didn't.

Jason's little brother played with his tablet without asking.

Moriah got the answer wrong and the whole class laughed at her.

Juan's mom yelled, "Why can't you just be as good as your brother?"

Harriet's parents took away her phone when she didn't finish her homework.

Ethan studied so hard and tried his best but still failed the math test.

Ben's team blamed him when they lost the game.

Taylor clenched his fists when a classmate skipped him in the lunch line.

De'Mario felt his face heat up when a classmate made fun of his presentation.

Callie shared a secret with a friend who then told everyone else.

Mr. Jones came in late to class.

# SESSION 7: Under My Anger Mask



**MY ANGER MASK >>>**

**ANGER MASK EXPLAINED >>>**  
Anger can be like a mask you wear to hide what you're really feeling inside. Sometimes it's easier to show anger than to show more vulnerable feelings like hurt, sadness, fear, or embarrassment. When you wear an anger mask, others only see the yelling, scowling, or attitude...not the *real* reason behind it. Your anger mask can protect you when you feel uncomfortable or unsure how to talk about your feelings. Under the mask, there is usually a feeling that needs understanding, support, and help. Learning to notice when you're wearing an anger mask can help you take it off and express what you truly need.

**WHAT'S UNDER THE MASK? >>>**

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Hurt             | • Stress             |
| • Sadness          | • Shame              |
| • Embarrassment    | • Guilt              |
| • Fear             | • Lack of control    |
| • Disappointment   | • Feeling judged     |
| • Misunderstanding | • Need for attention |
| • Isolation        | • Need for comfort   |
| • Unfairness       | • Need for help      |
| • Overwhelm        | • Need to be heard   |



15

# SESSION 7: Under My Anger Mask



# SESSION 7: Under My Anger Mask





## WHAT IS CALM?>>>

### DEFINITION>>>

Calm is when your body and mind feel steady and relaxed, your breathing is slower, and you're able to think clearly and handle what is happening around you without getting overwhelmed.



### MANIFESTS IN YOUR THOUGHTS>>>

Your thoughts are slower, clearer, and more balanced. You're able to focus, think through problems, and remind yourself that you can handle what is happening. Instead of jumping to worst-case scenarios, your mind stays grounded in the present.

### MANIFESTS IN YOUR BODY>>>

Calm shows up as a feeling of ease and balance. Your breathing is slower and deeper, your muscles feel loose, and your heart rate is steady. Your shoulders drop, your jaw unclenches, and your hands relax. You feel comfortable and ready for anything!

### MANIFESTS IN YOUR CHOICES>>>

You pause and think before acting. You can make thoughtful decisions, listen to others, and solve problems instead of reacting quickly or emotionally. Calm helps you choose kind words, ask for help, and handle challenges appropriately and effectively.

## CALM PHYSICAL manifestations

- Breathing is slow and steady
- Heartbeat feels normal and even
- Shoulders are relaxed
- Jaw and face muscles are loose
- Hands feel steady
- Muscles are relaxed
- Stomach feels settled
- Body feels comfortable and safe
- Less fidgeting or restlessness
- Head feels clear
- Posture feels natural and upright
- Energy feels balanced



# SESSION 8: Calm Looks & Feels Like...

# SESSION 8: Calm Looks & Feels Like...





## WRITE, JOURNAL

Put your feelings on paper to let them out and help you understand them better. Writing can help you feel more in control and relaxed.

## ASK FOR A HUG

A safe hug from someone you trust can help your body feel calm and supported. Hugs can reduce stress and remind you that you're not alone.

## USE TOOLS

Tools and stress balls can help you release nervous energy. Use your hands to squeeze, stretch, and fidget.

## BREATHE

Slow, deep breaths calm your body and slow your heart rate. Focusing on your breathing can quiet racing thoughts. Breathing sends the message to your brain that you are safe. It helps you feel more in control and relaxed.

## TALK IT OUT

Share your thoughts with someone you trust to help you feel heard and supported. Talking can help you understand your feelings and find solutions.

## LISTEN TO MUSIC

Music can calm your body, change your mood, and help you feel understood. Choose music that matches how you feel and makes you feel calm. Music is a great way to relax and reset.

# COPING SKILLS>>>

## WHAT ARE COPING SKILLS?>>>

Coping skills are tools and strategies you can use to handle big feelings, stress, and tough situations in a healthy way.

## HOW ARE COPING SKILLS HELPFUL?>>>

Coping skills help you calm your body, clear your mind, and make good choices. They prevent you from reacting in ways you might regret. Coping skills do not make problems disappear, but they help you manage how you feel and get through challenges more effectively.

## EXAMPLES OF COPING SKILLS:>>>

- Count to 10
- Breathe
- Listen to music
- Talk it out with a friend or grown-up you trust
- Read a book
- Journal, draw, or write
- Practice yoga
- Go for a walk
- Use tools (i.e. fidgets, stress balls)
- Find a cozy spot to relax
- Think positive thoughts
- Ask for a hug

# COPING SKILLS>>>



## PLAY SPORTS

Move your body and release your energy. Playing sports can help you feel more in control and relaxed.

## EXERCISE

Remind yourself of something you are proud of. Instead of focusing on what you feel, think about what you can do. It can help you feel more in control.

## COUNT TO 10

Counting to 10 gives your brain time to pause before reacting. It calms your body and slows your breathing. This can help you make better choices.

## READ A BOOK

Reading is a nice break that distracts your mind and gives you time to think. Stories help you feel understood and escape from your feelings.

## DRAW

Drawing lets you express your feelings through pictures, lines, and shapes. There is no right or wrong way to draw. Just let your feelings out!

# SESSION 9: Using Coping Skills



# SESSION 9: Using Coping Skills



**MY TIME IN GROUP >>>**

IN GROUP I LEARNED:

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY WAS:

IF I COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT GROUP, IT WOULD BE:

MY FAVORITE MEMORY IN GROUP

I WILL KEEP PRACTICING:

**SMALL GROUP post-survey**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

|                                                    |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| I can define anger.                                | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can explain how anger works in the brain.        | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can identify the physical signs of anger.        | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can describe how anger feels in my body.         | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can define anger triggers.                       | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can name my anger triggers.                      | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can describe and identify the 5 levels of anger. | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can explain how anger is like a mask.            | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can define calm.                                 | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can identify the physical signs of calm.         | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can define coping skills.                        | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can explain why coping strategies are helpful.   | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |
| I can practice and use coping skills.              | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 |

**CONGRATULATIONS >>>**

on your completion of The Cool Down Club!

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Counselor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# SESSION 10: Group Closure & Reflection