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CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCE OF ANGER

WITHIN THEIR PEER GROUPS

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe how children understand, experience and express their anger with others in their peer group, from their perspectives. Semi-structured focus groups were conducted with third grade students in an elementary school. Children were asked three questions: 1) What did you learn about dealing with anger this week? 2) What are some good/positive things that happened between you and your classmates this week? 3) What are some not so good or negative things that happened between you and your classmates this week? Six themes emerged from analysis of the transcripts of the semi-structured focus groups: Managing Anger, Roots of Anger, Expression of Anger, Consequences of Anger, Avoidance Strategies, and Impact of Anger on Relationships. Children think that anger is bad, and they view anger and aggression as the same. Implications for counseling and research are offered.

Keywords: Anger, Aggression, Emotional Awareness, Children, Peer Interactions

Dedication

For the little people whose voices deserve to be heard.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge Danielle Aziz for her ongoing support and enthusiasm about this project. The Anger Blanket Program, created by Danielle, was the catalyst for this research. She recognized that children understand anger in a way that is different from grown-ups, and developed a creative program that teaches children a deeper understanding of anger in a way that they can relate to. Thanks Danielle, your enthusiasm is contagious!

The School District and Public School should be acknowledged for welcoming our research team. The administrative and support staff were accommodating and encouraging. I would also like to thank my fellow research assistant, Lisa Dadd, for her support, enthusiasm, and creativity during planning, organizing and long days of data collection.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Student aggression has become a significant problem in many schools. Anger is a natural emotion often that underlies aggression. Aggression in child interactions is often referred to as bullying, specifically since the label of "bullying" has become a trend in the media and school based interventions in the past few years. While there is some research on school-based anger management (Wilde, 2002) the content of these programs is typically based on observations and interpretations of children's emotional experiences made by others and not necessarily on what the children themselves would say about how they are feeling and acting. The purpose of this study is to describe how children understand, experience and express their anger with others, from their perspectives.

Bullying can be defined as a repeated negative action meant to inflict harm in a relationship where there is a power imbalance between the aggressor and the victim (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Bullying is aggression. It can be direct or indirect. Direct aggression entails an overt attack, such as a physical assault, threats or teasing. Indirect aggression entails harm to another's social position through exclusion and gossip. Indirect bullying is less visible than direct bullying.

The public receives most information about social issues from popular media. Attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of children and youth are influenced by media (Craig, Connolly & Pepler, 2003). Bullying and subsequent suicides of bullying victims have been a focus (Bennett, 2010). Across North America, victims are speaking out against traditional and cyber bullying and parents are stepping in as well. Daytime talk shows as well as adolescent and children's television networks have been raising awareness about bullying and speaking out against this aggression.

The documentary *Bully* (released in April 2012) follows the lives of five American students who face bullying on a daily basis and ends with two of the students taking their own lives (Lowen, & Hirsch, 2011). There was debate about the rating of the movie because of its important message and the age for which it was appropriate to be viewed. It was originally rated R, meaning no one under the age of 17 could attend this movie, but petitioned to lower the rating to PG-13 so that children could watch it (Perkins, 2012; Turan, 2012; Scott, 2012). After more than 500 000 signatures were collected, the Motion Picture Association of America (MMPA) decided to release the film as un-rated, leaving it up to individual theatres to decide the rating to assign. Ironically, the movie *Hunger Games,* a fictional story that depicts children killing each other for sport, was given a rating of PG-13. The issue of bullying, though present in most children's daily lives, is more controversial for a child audience than a fictional movie about killing children. *Bully* was released in Canada in March of 2012 with a PG rating (no age restrictions) and a warning of profane language. Two weeks later the MMPA in the United States came to an agreement with the producers of *Bully* to reduce the amount of profane language without editing the content of the movie, and therefore receive a rating of PG-13 (children of any age could watch this movie with an adult).

The story of Amanda Todd, a fifteen-year-old girl who took her life in October of 2012 after suffering years of bullying, threats and torment, remains prominent in the media months later (Shaw, 2012). Amanda Todd had moved to new cities and new schools in attempt to escape the bullying and start over. The YouTube video describing her struggle was posted on respected news sites and quickly became viral. Amanda's story received national and international attention with memorial vigils to remember this

young girl and express that more should be done to help victims of bullying (Alamenciak, 2012). B.C. Premier Christie Clark, who held a strong anti-bullying position, responded quickly to this devastating incident that occurred in her province with a YouTube video of her own.

In Ontario, the location of the present study, the Education Act was amended in 2011 to include a bullying awareness and education week, as well as anti-bullying regulations and guidelines regarding handling bullying in Ontario schools (MacLeod, 2012). More recently, in the city of London, eight high school girls were charged with criminal harassment after targeting and bullying another student through physical, verbal and emotional attacks (Hayward, 2012).

Bullying Frequency

From the media attention, bullying appears to be widespread and growing. However, research shows that bullying is no more prevalent than it was fifty years ago and some sources note that bullying incidents have actually decreased in recent years (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). Statistics about bullying and victimization are typically based on child and adolescent self-report which has its own limitations associated with accurate recall and social desirability. In addition, prevalence rates vary considerably depending on the survey definitions and methods employed. However, some conclusions can be drawn from data collected internationally, nationally and in nearby urban school districts.

Internationally, Canada ranks in in the low to moderate range for frequency of bullying and victimization. The World Health Organization conducted a survey which depicted consistently high rates of bullying among adolescents from Lithuania, Latvia

and Estonia and lower rates in northern European countries such as Sweden (Currie et al., 2008). Canada ranked between tenth and nineteenth highest out of a total of thirty-nine nations for bullying of others and between twentieth and twenty-fourth highest for rates of being bullied.

Nationally, data from the 1990's reflected a higher frequency of younger children experiencing bullying than older children in studies from the 2000's. Children ages four to eleven years old revealed that bullying in schools occurred at a rate of nine percent every week (Craig, Peters, & Konarski, 1998). Among high school students in 2005, nine percent reported being bullied four times or more a month, whereas in 2009, only five percent reported being bullied to the same extent (Statistics Canada, 2005 & 2009).

In southern Ontario school jurisdictions near the site of the present study, bullying data capturing a range including the highest and lowest frequencies of any jurisdiction were found. In a survey of students between the ages four to fourteen in a sample of sixteen Toronto elementary schools, fifteen percent of students reported bullying peers more than twice during a semester (Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995). Much higher frequencies were found among children between the ages six and thirteen years old (n=4743) in Kingston and Toronto over a six week period, where 30% of students bullied others once or twice a week and 6% of students bullied others more than twice a week (O'Connell et al., 1997). They also found that 38% of students were the victims of bullying once or twice a week and 15% of students were bullied more than twice a week.

Rates of bullying and victimization reflect that, despite a potential reduction in frequency, the practices continue and affect large numbers of children and youth. There

are also data on the effects of bullying on both those who engage in the practice as aggressors and suffer effects as recipients.

Bullying Effects

There is evidence about the developmental trajectories of children who engage in bullying behavior as well as those who are victimized by it. It should be noted that while there appear to be age-related increases and decreases in bullying behavior the effects do persist over time.

Many factors have an impact on bullying. Individual child characteristics have been identified, such as high anger and low empathy among children who bully (Beran & Shapiro, 2005). Children who bully others often also have higher rates of mental health and learning problems (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross & Isava, 2008). They are at an increased risk for becoming involved in criminal activity. Over the long term, children who bully are more likely to partake in other aggressive behaviours later in life such as dating violence (Pepler, Craig, Connolly, Yuile, McMaster & Jiang, 2006). They are 37% more likely than those who do not bully to commit offences as adults (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999).

Children who are the victims of bullying are at increased risk for impaired social development, mental and physical illnesses, suicide, and school absenteeism (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Often these children and adolescents will skip school due to fear of their peers and tormentors. They are five times more likely to experience depression (Olweus et al., 1999). Of students who eventually drop out of school 10% will do so because of repeated bullying (Weinhold & Weinhold, 1998).

Research indicates that bullying in school often increases through elementary school, peaks in middle school, and decreases or ceases near the end of high school (Banks, 2000). However, the effects of bullying do not disappear with time. In a large-scale study it was found that "individuals formerly bullied were found to have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem at the age of 23, despite the fact that, as adults, they were no more harassed or socially isolated than comparison adults" (Fox, Elliot, Kerlikowske, Newman & Christeson, 2003, pg. 8).

Rationale for the Present Study

Most research and media attention about bullying has focused on frequencies, causes and effects. However, it is also important to address prevention. This can be done through the study of emotion in young school-aged children. The emotional basis of aggression is anger. A deeper understanding of children's anger may contribute to researchers', teachers' and parents' foundations of knowledge about aggression and bullying prevention.

There is some research on anger management in schools (Wilde, 2002). However, what is known is based on what adults observe in children and what they interpret to be the child's emotional state. It is important to acquire an in depth understanding of how children themselves experience and understand anger and aggression. The purpose of this study is to describe how children understand, experience and express their anger with others, from their perspectives. This research will be helpful to both counsellors and researchers.

It is important for counsellors to know how children understand, experience and express their anger with others for a better understanding of long-term effects. High

levels of aggression during childhood are associated with an increased risk of mental illness in adulthood (Merrell et al., 2008). It is possible that frequent emotional experience of anger is a potential signal about longer-term problems. Understanding how children experience anger and aggression can teach counsellors how best to explore ways to work with emotions so they do not become problematic in adulthood.

It is important for researchers to know how children understand, experience and act on their anger with others, from their perspectives, because there has been much research about children and emotions, but very little from the perspectives of children themselves. Learning about a child's personal experience of anger may provide a deeper awareness of the topic depending on the extent to which it is consistent with or distinct from adults perceptions of children's anger that have already been reported in the literature.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter Two includes a review of the literature beginning with a discussion of aggressive behaviour in schools, anger management and the development of emotional awareness and emotional vocabulary as well as anger within their peer groups. Research methods used in this study are outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four provides a review of the results of the content analysis applied to the transcribed data. Chapter Five provides a comparison between the results of the study and literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Aggression includes a range of behaviours including verbal hostility, social exclusion, bullying and physical fighting. These can be considered learned behaviours that may follow children through adolescence and into adulthood if not addressed. Aggression may be experienced differently at different periods of development. Before school age, children are internalizing messages from their primary care givers about how they are meant to behave (Boland, 1995). During school years these messages may be reinforced through their peers. As adults they can experience aggression through relationships with colleagues and intimate partners. Schools are well placed to offer preventive programs with the hope that all students learning together about aggression at a young age with their peers will make a positive difference.

This review of literature includes a description of aggressive behaviours in the school environment. Findings of aggression prevention and intervention programs are reviewed, including factors that optimize the effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes programs and the complementary role of the school. A review of children's experiences of anger and responses to it are provided and followed by a description of relevant literature on anger and peer relationships.

Aggressive Behaviour in Schools

Peer relationships are an important part of a child's daily life. Children learn how to build relationships, assert their needs and to compromise when necessary. During this time children are also learning how to identify emotions in themselves and others and what are considered appropriate and inappropriate behavioral reactions in different contexts. Research has focused on peer relations for the development of emotional awareness; however there is little research specifically about children's emotions within

the context of peer relations. In this section, common problems associated with aggression in schools as well as potential long term effects of aggression are presented. In addition, there is a description of how aggression can change over time and how aggression may be adaptive. Aggression as described in Bandura's Social Learning Theory is explored and followed by a distinction between reactive and proactive aggression (Bandura, 1978).

School problems. Aggressive behaviours may cause disruptions in learning for the individual as well as other students in the classroom and could escalate into more severe problems (Garofalo, Siegel & Laub, 1987). Behaviours seen in conjunction with aggressive behaviour include truancy, delinquency, substance use and school drop-out (Wilson, Gottfredson & Najaka, 2001). Truancy and drop-out may also be attributed to social isolation as a result of aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour itself may be a symptom of an underlying issue rather than the primary problem. Substance use may be a means of coping to manage problems that develop from the use of aggressive interpersonal behaviour.

Aggression development. Aggressive behaviour is dynamic, and typically, children have increases and decreases through development (Wilson, Lipsey & Derzon, 2003). Normally developing children will climb trees, hang upside down, spin in circles, or swing high on swings; they instinctively want to see how it feels to be in different bodily positions and move in different ways (Robinson, 2008). Their developing brains receive constant and dynamic feedback, reminding them that their body exists. Rough and tumble play is also included in this developmental active play. Robinson (2008) writes that rough and tumble play is associated with an emotional arousal, which is linked

with joy at an early stage of development. There is no evidence that this play aggression in childhood is associated with adult aggression; research suggests that it is more likely transformed into sports with a highly competitive component, eliciting the same emotional arousal experienced as a young child (Holland, 2003).

Some children start out on problematic trajectories in school at a young age and later experience significant consequences during adolescence. Indeed, one in five children who are identified as having behavioural problems in pre-school also have behavioural problems in adolescence (State Library of NSW, 2004). While the majority of aggressive pre-school children are not aggressive adolescents, chronic physical aggression in early elementary school is the best predictor of violent behaviour in adolescence (Nagin & Tremblay, 1999).

Aggressive play in kindergarten may be met with zero-tolerance (Robinson, 2008). However, the literature suggests that it is not the behaviour of acting out a game of "cops and robbers", but rather, the underlying themes of play and any type of play that deteriorates into aggression and bullying (Panksepp, 1998). There are benefits for children who participate in rough-housing play (Calrson, 2006). For example, children can develop self-control through learning how to settle down after a game. They also practice role playing based on different emotions, and learn to recognize and display emotion through facial cues and body language with their peers.

Aggression and social learning. According to Bandura's social learning theory, aggression is learned through observation of modeled behaviours (Bandura, 1978). Aggressive acts result in reinforcements for the aggressor such as reduction in tension, gaining praise or an increase in self-esteem. Bandura (1977) describes three essential

aspects of aggression: 1) how aggressive patterns are developed, 2) what provokes people to behave aggressively, and 3) what determines whether they are going to continue to act in an aggressive manner in the future. In his famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963), children imitated aggression they observed in adults towards the Bobo doll. Not only did Bandura find that 88% of the children imitated the aggressive behaviour, but eight months later 40% of the children retained this learned behaviour and again behaved aggressively toward the Bobo doll.

Reactive versus proactive aggression. Children who display reactive aggression toward others have an earlier age of onset of this aggressive behaviour than those who are proactively aggressive (Dodge, Lochman, Harnish, Bates & Pettit, 1997). Dodge and colleagues suggested that these children experienced significantly worse peer social performance than non-aggressive children, beginning in kindergarten and becoming worse each year. Reactively aggressive children are more likely to be rejected by their peers, resulting in social isolation, increased feelings of anger and escalation of aggressive reactivity. These children also report experiencing sadness in relation to this social rejection. In contrast, children who are proactively aggressive do not indicate a similar feeling of sadness; they tend to have a higher rating of self-esteem and self-efficacy than children display reactive aggression.

Prevention of problematic aggression. Emotional awareness and social skills programs have recently been introduced into school curricula as a Tier 1 intervention – to enhance protective factors against behavioural problems in school (January, Casey & Paulson, 2011). In the past, emotional and behavioural interventions have been aimed at treating youth with existing problems. This is referred to as a Tier 3 approach -

interventions that exclusively involve children with behavioural and emotional disorders. Finally, a Tier 2 approach is a selective prevention aimed at individuals who are identified as high risk for developing behavioural problems.

Many studies have been conducted to determine the most effective approach to intervention (Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Fox et al., 2003; Hammond, Westhues & Hanbidge, 2009; January et al., 2011; Joseph & Strain, 2003; Merrell et al., 2008; Olweus et al., 1999; Shipman, Zenman & Fitzgerald, 2003; Tutty, Bradshaw, Thurston, Barlow, Marshall, Tunstall, … Nixon, 2005; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). School seems to be the most easily accessible environment to facilitate intervention and prevention programs for aggression. There are several ways such programs can be presented. Programs can be directed solely to the children, can include teachers or parents or both. Programs can be progressive, continuing throughout school years, or a one-time offering.

Aggression Prevention and Intervention in Schools

This section describes the significant impact a school has for children's social and emotional learning as well as academics. Prevention and intervention programs, including emotional awareness programs and violence prevention programs, are explored. Ways to optimize the success of such programs are considered, including whether to involve teacher and parents in the intervention, whether to use internal or external instructors and the effectiveness of booster programs.

Role of school environment. Children spend many of their waking hours at school. The school environment has a significant impact on their social skill learning and is an ideal context for learning non-violent social skills. A child's behavioral success and

struggles in school are strong predictors for future conduct in adult life (Tutty et al., 2002). Emotional awareness programs can teach coping skills and warning signs so that children can manage their own reactions to feelings. Violence prevention programs that address the entire school community can create a sense of safety for students. If children learn how to resolve their own conflicts, teachers will spend less time doing so and more time teaching. However, teachers can become involved in the violence prevention programs and emotional awareness through integration in their curriculum. This could help to integrate these learned skills into the children's class culture and result in longer lasting effects of the programming (Merrell et al., 2008).

Internal and external programs. Tutty and colleagues (2002) suggested that the ideal form for prevention programming would be a combination of internal and external programs. They suggested having staff from an external agency present material in the school and lead discussions with the children first and then provide teachers with supplementary material for follow up discussion in the classroom. They emphasized that teacher education was an important component of their model. When teachers were trained in violence prevention or emotional awareness they were able to integrate concepts with other relevant topics such as self-esteem and conflict resolution (Tutty, 1992; Topping & Barron, 2009). They were also able to apply concepts in vivo as issues surfaced between students.

Including teachers and parents. In a study about emotional awareness with children aged 4-8 years diagnosed with behavior problems (Dina the Dinosaur Treatment Program), Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003) found that while there was a marked improvement in behaviour, additional factors helped to increase maintenance of these

changes over time. In a follow up study, they found that children showed significant effects from the program when only children were trained, but showed greater effects when parents and children were trained together. They found that the behavioural improvements were seen among peer interactions as well as in the child's home. However, they did not see any significant improvements in the child's classroom.

In the second part of their study, the same authors (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) compared a child only training program with a child and teacher training program (The Incredible Years Treatment Program). They found that children showed a significant improvement in behaviour noted in peer interactions, but also saw improvements at school and at home. It would seem that for children diagnosed with behavior problems, it would be important for the program to include teacher training and parent training (Mcconaughy, Kay, & Fitzgerald, 1999).

Booster programs. While emotional awareness and social skills training lead to an improvement in behaviours among youth who participate, retention and application of program concepts and skills can be a challenge for all parties – children, teachers and parents – to maintain (Hammond et al., 2009). Parents of youth who had participated in emotional awareness programs (STEAM – Supporting Temper, Emotions and Anger Management – and Temper Taming) were interviewed to determine whether they thought their children had forgotten what they learned and would benefit from a booster program. With parental support, a booster program (a combination of STEAM and Temper Taming) was delivered to the youth. Researchers found that according to pre and post-test measures youth significantly benefited from the booster program. This is consistent with

other researchers findings (e.g. January et al., 2011) about repeated exposure increasing maintenance of learned behaviours in emotional and social skill programs.

Emotions and social skills programs. Four major emotions– happiness, fear, sadness and anger – are most frequently seen within the literature about emotional awareness in children. These are broad categories that children use to classify their experiences with emotions in themselves and others (Widen & Russell, 2008). With time more specific labels are added such as contentment, frustration and excitement, and children develop understanding for others such as pride, embarrassment and guilt. As they grow older, their recognition accuracy improves (Herba, Landau, Russell, Ecker & Phillips, 2006) and they learn to receive more support from peers and adults when they use verbal and facial displays of emotion (Shipman et al., 2003).

In a meta-analysis, emotional awareness and social skills programs were most effective when implemented with younger grades (kindergarten) or older grades (high school) and a more interactive program was effective at engaging with participants (January et al., 2011). For example, role playing, videos, puppets and interactive activities were far more effective than a lecture. In addition, more exposure was associated with greater effectiveness. Increased exposure time allowed for more practice appropriate behaviours and repeated exposure helped with maintenance of learned behaviours.

Resources for children. Many books have been written for teachers and parents to manage children's anger and aggression. Some contain stories meant to be read to children to reduce stress and increase self-esteem. Others contain activities for children, such as art projects, to express anger and other feelings. Some are for children to

recognize the warning signs of anger and what they can do when they feel angry. In addition, anger management and emotional awareness programs for children have been developed to engage children in group learning through activities and visual aids. All were written by adults from an adult perspective and based on an adult interpretation of how children experience anger.

  Emotional lives of children. While there is a great deal of research on social skills programs targeting aggression in children, there has been little attention paid to their emotional lives (Baumgarter & Strayer, 2008; Bauminger, Schorr Edelsztein & Morash, 2005; Brengden, Vitaro, Turgeon & Poulin, 2002; Hutchings & Bywater, 2012). Even emotional awareness programs teach children alternative behaviours to aggression instead of seeking to understand their emotional experience. In some cases children may be acting aggressively as a way to cope with experienced or witnessed trauma in their lives. This next section describes what has been learned about how and why children respond in particular ways to anger, as well as how maladaptive responses can be altered.

Children and Anger

  Anger is accompanied by biological changes such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, muscle tension, and a surge of adrenaline (American Psychological Association, 2012). Anger in itself is not a harmful emotion; in fact it is a natural and adaptive response to threat. To ensure survival, people respond to anger by acting aggressively. However, it goes against social norms and laws to attack those who frustrate us. Children learn social-emotional scripts that dictate how they respond in certain situations. Children can learn positive ways to manage their emotions through development of an emotional vocabulary, attending to physical symptoms of emotions

and practicing alternative behaviours. If emotions are suppressed, somatic symptoms may rise in prominence.

Responding to anger. There are three main ways that individuals can respond to anger, including: expressing, suppressing and calming (American Psychological Association, 2012). Expressing anger can be accomplished in a negative way, through aggression and violence, or in a positive way, by assertively communicating needs to others in a respectful manner. When an individual holds in anger and does not communicate it with others it is suppressing. Suppression can intensify physiological symptoms and over time lead to physical health problems. Calming is done mindfully and intentionally through relaxation exercises to slow the physiological responses and control outward behaviour as well as internal response.

The term "anger management" implies that the emotion itself should be contained. Perhaps a more accurate terminology would be "anger *expression* management". Anger management programs aim to reduce intense emotional responses to frustrating circumstances and control the physiological arousal that ensues (American Psychological Association, 2012). However, it is not possible to avoid or eliminate the things or people that evoke an emotional response of anger, nor is it possible to control others. It is possible to learn to control one's own behaviour.

Emotional scripts. The way young children display anger can be understood to follow emotional scripts developed through modeling from television, family, friends, and books (Marion, 2007). In anger management programs, these scripts are re-written to help children express angry feelings in a non-aggressive manner. This is accomplished by developing an emotional vocabulary, teaching children that there can be a range within

each feeling (e.g. the difference between being a little bit angry and being very angry). Next, teaching children to talk about situations in which they might become angry helps them prepare for challenging situations they may encounter. Children can then practice how they can chose to behave through role-playing or with puppets. Teaching children to recognize the physical symptoms associated with anger can help them recognize the warning signs (Clayton, Ballif-Spanvill & Hunsaker, 2001). Children can then be taught to implement relaxation techniques such as deep breathing to calm their bodies and re-focus their minds. It is not enough to avoid behaving in an aggressive manner, the behaviour itself needs to be replaced. Children should be taught an alternative behaviour that they can implement it when they are feeling angry.

Somatic complaints. When emotions are suppressed somatic complaints may appear (Jellesma, Rieffe, Terwogt, & Westernberg, 2009). These are real, physical manifestations or physiological reactions to emotion. Children may be unable to express their emotions adequately due to an under developed emotional vocabulary (Joseph & Strain, 2003). They may interpret actions of others as intentionally harmful if they do not have the ability to describe their feelings or those of others accurately. A strong emotional vocabulary is necessary to discriminate affective states (Rieffe, Terwogt, Petrides, Cowan, Miers, & Tolland, 2007).

Among children who experience significant somatic complaints those with more complaints do not necessarily have more difficulty differentiating emotions (Jellesma et al., 2009). However, they do report more negative emotional experiences than those with fewer somatic complaints, as well as lower competence for dealing with those situations.

It has been suggested that low confidence and susceptibility to negative experiences of emotion are associated with greater vulnerability to somatic complaints.

Some children have significant difficulty understanding, identifying or describing their emotions. This may be attributable to a personality trait called alexithymia (Rieffe et al., 2007) which is associated with difficulty distinguishing physiological symptoms from emotions. Alexithymia is not necessarily related to an increase in somatic complaints but rather an increased attention to bodily symptoms.

Children's expression of anger may not occur in isolation. Aggression has social ramifications and responses to it affect development (Martin-Storey, Serbin, Stack, Ledingham, Schwartzman, 2011). The relationship that children have with their peers has a significant impact on their self-concept in the present and future (Laursen, Bukowski, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2007).

Children's Anger with Peers

In this section, the impact of children's expression of anger through aggression among peers is explored. Their experience with social acceptance and help-seeking are presented. Children have choice to respond in different ways to peer aggression including aggressive, assertive or avoidant. The responses of teachers are also described.

Perceived social acceptance. Anger and aggression can lead to relationship difficulties with peers. Aggressive children may be less well-liked by their peers, but also potentially less aware of this dislike. For example, while aggressive children may perceive themselves as socially and behaviorally competent and as having many friends they receive lower ratings of social acceptance than their peers (Brendgen et al., 2002). In

addition, peers of aggressive children have fewer positive things to say about them than of their non-aggressive peers (Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993).

Help-seeking. Most of children's experiences with aggressive peers occur outside of the watch of adults. By the time support is sought from an adult the situation has often escalated to a point where the child cannot manage it on her or his own. Although other children frequently witness these actions, peers do not or cannot respond in ways that end the incident (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Some peers are fearful of retaliation if they intervene. Children's reactions to peer provocation have been shown to predict later victimization (Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2011). As children age, peer group norms also shift to more openly reject aggression and bullying.

Child responses. There are three main responses that children may take in response to peer aggression, including aggressive, avoidant and assertive (Dirks et al., 2011). When a child responds to peer provocation in an aggressive manner he or she will self-express in a way that is harmful to the peer. An assertive response is reflected in the child's ability to express thoughts and feelings in a non-hostile way without violating the rights of the peer. A child who does not express personal thoughts or feelings with a peer is using an avoidant response. Avoidant responses also include seeking help from an adult rather than confronting the peer directly. As children age, they are encouraged to manage conflict and aggression on their own, and only seek support if that has not been successful (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Teacher responses. The school environment exerts a significant influence on a child's social, cognitive, and behavioural development (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009). School staff are becoming increasingly concerned with preventing

bullying and creating a safe school environment. However there are many interactions

that teachers and school staff do not witness and therefore are not aware of. When

teachers and schoolyard supervisors are in close proximity to incidents of bullying, they

intervene over 1/3 of the time (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). It was found through observational

research in schools that teachers intervened in about 1/5 of bullying incidents. In

playground observations, peers intervened in significantly more incidents of aggression

than did the adults (Craig & Pepler, 1997).

A great deal of research on children's experiences of anger among peers is

focused on interpersonal aggression (Brengden et al., 2002; Martin-Storey et al., 2011).

A school context is where a great deal of this behavior is exhibited. In addition, many

experiences with anger and aggression occur outside of the watch of adults and often in

school. However, few of these studies provide experiential data about anger for children.

The present study explores children's experiences of anger with peers and in a school

context.

Rationale for the Present Study

There has been a great deal of attention to the negative effects of bullying and

discussion of sanctions for the behaviors (Charach et al., 1995; Craig & Pepler, 1997;

Craig et al., 1998). There has been relatively less attention to the underlying emotional

basis for it however. A great deal of research has been done on aggression prevention and

treatment for adolescents and young children, and less on middle school aged children

(Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Wilson et al., 2001; Wilson et al., 2003). What has been written

about aggression for children refers to the emotional and social realms. From a treatment

perspective, children who are aggressive receive more targeted, intensive and focused

interventions on the behavior (January et al., 2011). From a prevention standpoint, all children are seen to benefit from emotional awareness and relationship skills to help them fit in better socially with their peers in a school context (Bauminger et al., 2005; Hammond et al., 2009; Hutchings, & Bywater, 2012; Joseph & Strain, 2003).

Social isolation has been linked to negative consequences for individuals, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adulthood (Laursen et al., 2007). Social perspective taking and social skills are acquired through interactions with peers. The early elementary school years are important for the development of these skills. Children's self-concept is defined by how well the child is accepted by his or her peers and can successfully make and maintain close friendships. It is suggested that children who are shy or insecure and become isolated from their peers may develop negative self-worth and self-esteem, which may in turn manifest in depression and anxiety. Similarly, children who display anger and hostility also become isolated from their peers, which may lead to an increase in aggressive behavior. Social anxiety and aggression are often concurrent issues for many who experience both internalizing and externalizing problems.

It should be acknowledged that all children feel angry sometimes. The literature tells us what adult researchers understand about how children understand their experience of anger (Bandura, 1978; Brengden et al., 2002; Herba et al., 2006; Singer, Miller, Guo, Flannery, Frierson, & Slovak, 1999; Shipman et al., 2003), but it is not known if that matches their experiences with peers in school. Indeed, much of the research in this field quantitatively interprets how children experience anger through observations and psychometric testing and often conducted with children diagnosed with a learning

disability, attention or conduct disorders. These populations are studied because there is a problem behaviour identified or somatic complaint which can be tested for significant changes.

While existing research has been invaluable to our understanding of mechanisms of change, there is less known about how non-exceptional children experience anger in self, and relationships with peers in school and few qualitative studies in this area. The purpose of this study is to explore how children understand, experience and express their anger with others, from their perspectives. Results will be compared to what previous research has found.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe how children experience anger within the context of their peer group at school. This chapter includes a description of the program within which the data were collected, the research approach employed, description of participants, as well as data collection and analysis techniques employed in the study.

Anger Blanket Program

The Anger Blanket is a group-based Tier 1 program that teaches elementary aged children about emotional awareness and getting along with peers. The components and structure of the program were informed by literature about emotional literacy and social skills for young children. There was a basis in the literature (Vaish, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2009; Marion, 2007; Laursen et al., 2007; Joseph & Strain, 2003; Baumgarter & Strayer, 2008) for emotional awareness programs with young children who were developing a primary emotional vocabulary and starting to interact with peers (Baumgarter & Strayer, 2008) and before they acquired the ability for abstract reasoning, characteristic of adolescents (Kail & Zolner, 2009).

The program is delivered to grade three students. By that age, many are capable of identifying emotions. After learning how to identify them and how anger is secondary to others like fear, sadness, loss and shame, students are more able to successfully understand and work with primary emotion before it emerges as anger and aggression. The Anger Blanket program begins by having children define anger, as they know it. Then, they identify a variety of other feeling words that they are familiar with. Next they

are taught that anger could be a cover, or a blanket, that hid other emotions. They learn to identify what underlying emotions might be covered up by their anger.

In addition, they learn to identify their body's warning signs for different emotions. They also learn the difference between feeling angry and acting angry. Finally, the children are taught a procedure – B.A.G. (Body's warning signs, Always count, Go do something else to stay calm) – explaining what they could do when they are feeling angry (e.g. notice their bodily warning signs, count to ten, and go do something else to distract self). The Anger Blanket program consists of interactive activities, visual aids, role-plays, homework activities and a hands-on activity where the children create their own mini Anger Blanket that they keep.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a rigorous and systematic approach to exploring and interpreting personal experience (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative data may be collected within the comfort of the participant's environment to help the researcher appreciate the world of the participant. The data is interpreted for meaning. A qualitative study adds depth to the understanding that we already know and, in the case of the present study, a more detailed understanding of what children know about anger in peer relationships.

Through open-ended questions participants informed the content of the study. The purpose as to explore different experiences and through the analysis, identify commonalities that transcended those different experiences. Researchers make efforts to do this based not only on the words or actions of participants, but based on the meanings participants attach to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). However, the researcher's perspective and context is embedded within her interpretations (Creswell, 2009).

Qualitative research was chosen for this study because it was useful for the exploration of new possibilities that may not have been identified within existing research (Creswell, 2009). In the study, children were invited to share their experiences with anger. The results may lend credibility to existing research on emotions in children as well as suggest ways that research can more fully represent the experiences they offer.

Recruitment

University researchers approached a school district in southern Ontario to implement the Anger Blanket program. Following institutional ethical approval and approval by the school board an urban elementary school principal was approached about the possibility of participating in the study. The principal invited the research team to speak with two Grade 3 teachers in the school about participating in the project with one classroom designated as control and the other as the intervention classroom.

Participants were recruited by written invitation provided by the researchers to students for their parents. This letter included information about the program, as well as what participation would involve. Only students with written consent from a parent or guardian participated in the research. All students in the classroom received the program.

Participants

Participants included male (n=4) and female (n=7) grade three students aged 8-9 years in a single classroom within an elementary school in an urban school in southern Ontario. Although students who were given the Anger Blanket program (intervention group) participated in the same larger study and with the same qualitative method employed in the present study, only the students in a classroom that did not receive the Anger Blanket program (control group) participated in the study reported on in this

thesis. Because the experiences of students who were learning about anger, how to communicate emotions that happened with anger as well as strategies for managing their reactions to anger through the Anger Blanket program were thought to be different than those of students not exposed to this program, the groups were kept separate for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

Instruments

As part of the program, group interviews were conducted for 9 weeks with the participating students. While semi-structured group interviews with adults typically have four to ten questions (Creswell, 2007), because children have a shorter attention span, it was decided to keep the focus groups shorter. For this study, three structured questions were used and the researchers used follow-up questions to gather more information about participants' disclosures. Focus groups ended by asking the participants if there was anything else they would like to disclose.

The purpose of conducting a focus group with the same children on more than one occasion was to create greater comfort and familiarity between the children and the researchers. It was expected that the weekly presence of the research assistants would lead to more honest and insightful disclosures from the children as the week's progress. Developmentally, third grade children typically live moment to moment, and focus groups should reflect the most recent events that have occurred (Robinson, 2008). Conducting multiple focus groups would provide a more complete picture of their experience of anger, including the good days, the bad days, and those in the middle.

The interviews were approximately 20 minutes long and consisted of three questions: 1) What did you learn about dealing with anger this week? 2) What are some

good/positive things that happened between you and your classmates this week? 3) What are some not so good / negative things that happened between you and your classmates this week? A script was developed by the research team and rehearsed by the research assistants to promote consistency.

Analysis

The recorded focus groups were transcribed word for word. The written transcriptions of the focus groups were the data for the study. A qualitative content analysis procedure outlined by Creswell (2007) was used to analyze the data. The result of the analysis was themes that represented commonalities across participants on the topic of interest.

First, the data was organized and prepared for analysis by transcribing the interviews. Second, all of the transcripts were read to get a general sense of what was there and its overall meaning. Third, phrases, sentences, and passages that reflected something important were highlighted as meaning units. Fourth, each meaning unit was given a one or two word code. Fifth, these codes were combined into themes. This procedure was accomplished by listing the codes that were generated (Appendix D) and organizing all meaning units by code. The codes and corresponding meanings were then reviewed for consistency of interpretation. Next, codes were combined into groups (Appendix E) representing the themes that are described in the results chapter. Finally, the results of the study were compared with the literature reviewed.

Trustworthiness

In this study trustworthiness was promoted through the use of several procedures including using prolonged engagement and the use of direct quotes. By having ten

different sessions of the focus group it was less likely that the simple presence of the researcher created potential distortions in the data. The use of direct quotes from the participants in the write-up of the study increased confidence in the findings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe how children experience anger within the context of their peer groups at school. Schools experience challenges associated with problematic aggression between peers and a prominent form of aggression is bullying. While attempts have been made to intervene in schools in order to reduce or prevent bullying and interpersonal aggression, the contents of programs have been based on observations and interpretations of children's emotional experiences made by others and not necessarily on what the children themselves would say about how they are feeling and acting. Semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with eleven third grade students over nine sessions. Qualitative data in the form of transcripts from these focus groups were analyzed using a content analysis procedure to identify emerging themes that described how children understood and experienced anger within their peer groups. The results of content analysis are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter a description of participants is followed by results of the content analysis of focus group interview transcripts. This chapter describes the resulting themes with quotes from different participants. The chapter concludes with personal reflections of the researcher, written in first person, about her experiences with the research process.

Six themes emerged from analysis of transcripts from semi-structured focus group interviews to describe how third grade children understood, experienced and acted their anger with others, from their perspectives. The themes included: Managing Anger, Roots of Anger, Expression of Anger, Consequences of Anger, Avoidance Strategies, and Impact of Anger on Relationships. Managing Anger referred to the coping strategies children used and strategies they employed to resolve conflicts with their peers. Roots of Anger referred to children's understanding of where anger came from and how it built in intensity. Expression of Anger referred to the physiology, cognitions, emotions, and behaviours associated with the reactions of anger. Costs of Anger referred to the consequences that children identified which were associated with anger, as well as how they saw anger affecting others. Avoidance Strategies referred to what children knew they should or should not do to minimize the intensity of an angry reaction. Impact on Relationships referred to how children understood the extent to which anger could impact social relationships with their peers.

Theme One: Managing Anger

Managing Anger referred to what children knew to do in situations that elicit anger or what to do when they started to feel angry. Children received messages about how they were supposed to manage their emotions, specifically anger, and how to

manage conflict. This theme described what children could do when they were feeling angry, where they could get help or advice if needed, how they could stop their anger from escalating, and how they could resolve conflicts with friends that arose out of anger.

The first step in managing anger with a peer was to tell the other how one was feeling and then to ask that person to stop what she or he was doing.

> *You tell them that you don't like when they ignore you and if they could please answer you back but and then if they say 'I don't want to' then you just say 'okay, you don't have to answer me' cuz you don't want to make a big fight about not saying hello*

Children said it was important to walk away from a situation that made them angry if possible.

> *Um I learned that if you have a problem that's too big for you to handle just walk away and put it behind you in the past*

> *You should just try to not look at them and ignore them and like if you see them just walk away and don't think about it*

They added that it was not always easy to walk away.

> *If you see somebody get into a fight then you have to try to stop it um before they get maybe physical so you tell them to just walk away and then leave that alone and that sometimes that's hard to do because you could make it bigger because the bully might not want to listen to you*

Although they often tried to resolve their conflicts on their own, they were knowledgeable about whom to ask for help if needed. They noted that talking to a teacher was the first choice, followed by talking to a friend, a parent, sibling, or an older student. But they were also afraid that the situation could get worse if they told an adult.

> *If you see a fight you shouldn't get in it and tell the teacher*

> *Um I someone I saw someone today getting beat up and it was really kind of bad for me and I felt bad so I went and told the teacher*

But this was at recess at my old school so I had to run and get a teacher

Uh I would just say stop following me if they kept on following me I would tell the teacher

I went to tell my mom and she got really upset

Children also suggested places where they could go when feeling angry such as the hallway at school, or into their bedrooms at home.

Like there's at my old school there's this boy in my class who had problems with anger and he used to get really upset and had to go out to the hallway to calm down

They also named strategies used to manage their anger such as relaxation and distraction. For example, they described squeezing fists or a soft object such as a stuffed animal. The also gave examples of how biting something was also calming. Another strategy was taking a soak in a tub to relax when feeling angry at home.

Like, I like I squeeze it for a long time and then my hands start to warm up and then it makes me feel like I don't want to do anything anymore.

I want to bite something when I'm angry if I had play-d'oh nearby I would open it and bite that

Um if it happens at school or at my house after school I would go into my hot tub but if it happens at my house I would just go into my hot tub.

Different types of distractions were shared, such as taking a nap, listening to music, reading, or playing a game.

When you get angry um when something distracts you and you forget about it.

I got kinda mad but then I went up to into my room and I kinda just sat on my bed and had a nap and I forgot all about it.

They did not always choose positive ways to manage their frustration. The children said that sometimes they felt like breaking something when they were angry, or hitting something like their bed.

I hit my bed and hurt my knuckles

In addition, they felt like taking risky behaviour or hurting self in response to angry feelings.

Um when you're angry you might want to jump off a cliff cuz I was angry and I wanted to um … I was pretending my bathtub was a cliff so um … I… I wanted to jump so I could break my leg cuz I was angry.

Another option was to choose to do nothing. Sometimes the children opted not to say anything, to hold in their feelings of anger, and keep the problem to themselves.

That sometimes when you're angry sit down and try to like think about what you're gonna do or if you can't handle yourself then just sit in your room

Um I didn't say anything or anything uh I just um I just ignored it and I just pretended like they didn't say anything cause I don't want to make anything worse

If they were unsure what to do when they were feeling angry or when a friend was angry with them, they could ask for advice. They said that asking a friend to mediate or tell them what to do could be helpful.

I made good choices with somebody in [another] class. Um, one of their friends weren't being very nice … and one of them by accident hit them in the nose. So I got the other one that hit them in the nose and I told them to say sorry to his friend, and he said that he already did, and I … but the other one said 'but I didn't hear you' so I just made them say it again and then they were friends again.

It was also useful to ask the person directly why she or he was angry. They expressed the importance of getting the whole story, and that this could deflate anger. It was important for the children to note that they did not intend to do something to frustrate their peers.

Sometimes the person was not ready to talk and they suggested it was best to give some time and some space, but then to ask again later.

Um, well last week there was someone that was really angry at someone and I asked them what the problem was but they didn't want to tell me because they were still really angry. But then after a couple days later, I asked them again and they told me what the problem was, so, and I asked who did that to you but then they didn't want to talk to me really. So, then in the afternoon I asked then again and then they answered, and then I went and got the person and I told them to say sorry to each other and try to make and be friends again.

Um, so this girl and someone else in my class and another girl left this tiny girl and I was like 'Are you okay?' and we started talking.

When children wanted to resolve conflict with a peer the most popular strategy to employ was apologizing.

Um, me and my friend made up … Because I kept on saying sorry and sorry and then she got really annoyed and then finally she just said I forgive you.

Somebody got mad at me and then I brought my toys out and he was like can you play and I was like ya I can let him play and that's how I solved my problems

It usually ends that we say sorry to each other.

They noted that an apology did not necessarily mean that the feelings of anger associated with the conflict disappeared and the relationship was healed.

Um they told me they were sorry, but then the first time I didn't forgive them

Um one like me and my friend had a fight and it's still not ending so one of my fights are one of my fights I don't think will ever end.

Sometimes you guys have a big fight and sometimes it's really hard to make up like you try your best you try to do everything you try to apologize but they still don't say sorry for the mistakes that you do

I've tried apologizing, I've tried saying I won't do it again and I've tried saying I've tried being nice to her I've tried helping her and she always says you know I'm still not your friend

An apology could be followed by a request to be friends again.

Um me and we were like we had a big fight it was last year well it was when I was um in a different school and um she really got angry at me but then I said you can you please be my friend

The theme Managing Anger encompassed strategies that children employed when faced with situations that provoked anger. It also included coping mechanisms that children used to control their emotional reactions when they started to feel angry. Children internalized messages, or schemas, about how they should handle their emotions and manage conflict from the adults in their lives. The children had an awareness of what they should do – good or bad – when they were feeling angry, where they could get help or advice if needed, how they could stop their anger from escalating, and how they could resolve conflicts with friends that arose out of anger.

Theme Two: Roots of Anger

Roots of Anger referred to children's understanding of the types of situations that provoked an angry reaction and how anger built in intensity. This theme included what children identified as the source of anger, as well as other emotions associated with anger. There were three main situations identified by the children, including verbal and non-verbal, physical, and emotional. They also noted that anger could build when thoughts were kept inside and they ruminated on the provoking experience.

A verbal provocation could include being called a name, being teased, or laughed at. Verbal provocations also included saying kind words to others while intentionally leaving someone out.

> *He called me a whoopdidoo butt*
>
> *Um people keep on teasing me about who I have a secret crush on*
>
> *Um sometimes when I um get angry cuz yesterday my brother he was annoying me and calling me poopy pants*
>
> *Um they may get along by saying by getting like a group of different friends that they haven't met before and like they didn't want to be friends with someone else and like excluding them and not being nice to them and saying like your hair is pretty and then not saying that to the other person*
>
> *Um so this girl and someone else in my class and another girl left this tiny girl and I was like are you okay and we started talking*
>
> *He said that he would never play with me again if I didn't let it happen*
>
> *Um that [name] was feeling sad because somebody in our class was teasing her about the person that she likes and I went over and I asked her if she was okay and cuz I a saw her feeling sad. And I have another thing*

Non-verbal behaviours that provoked anger were based on body language. Examples included eye rolling, ignoring, and excluding others.

> *Um me and my friend had a fight like not fighting as in punching, like a verbal fight … then every time I would look at her she would roll her eyes at me. And then I would at the carpet, I would try to smile at her and then she would roll her eyes at me. And then she would be she would ask everybody and say like oh I like your shirt and I like your shoes but she said it to everybody in the class except for me.*

Other nonverbal behaviours included hitting, kicking, pushing, poking, breaking objects, and pranks.

Ya I made a fort and someone broked it.

One time um we were doing a play in front of the class and one of my friends um she came up and pushed me when that wasn't part of the play

No like my brother my brother was teasing me so then he kicked me and I'm like rrr I got my I got my toy donkey and started sma sma hitting him with that

Knocked him out

He started to kick walls and he started to punch people and started to push people and I was one of the person that got pushed.

Like this week I looked up like what anger and like what people can do about anger and sometimes people get like really angry and like push people and they start like attacking people and do really bad stuff

Um I learned that well someone someone in my family well it's one of my friends, they got really really really angry and they punched me and like broke something and that was really upsetting for me because it was one of my things

Um they start breaking stuff and they start hurting people

That people can get very angry and they can sometimes react physically

Like they can hit you they can punch you they can kick you that whats happened to me

Um when I got angry cause my brother was annoying me he was poking me in here and there and I told and I told them to stop and he wouldn't stop so I wanted to punch him but I couldn't because I knew I was going to get in trouble so all I did was try to punch my fist through the wall and in my but that was in my mom's room and there's still a hole in the wall and it hurt

Um when somebody's making a joke and then they kick you and then they kick you when they're making a joke you can get angry and react

An emotionally rooted situation that resulted in angry reactions was

disappointment. Disappointment stemmed from not being able to participate in an activity

they were looking forward to such as playing a video game or having a play date with a

friend, or from constantly being placed in the same role in a game.

> *When I was playing x-box um I was playing call of duty and my brother shut it off*
>
> *This week I was mad at someone and it was because I was always it for a game and they never picked me to be out and it made me feel really bad and also I was always it at my old school like everyone always picked me so I didn't like the feeling of doing that all over again*
>
> *Uh if someone told you that they had to go somewhere and you were supposed to play with them that would make you sad and that they wouldn't be a good friend*
>
> *If you're angry you can you want wanna like if you're angry then you wanna confess like you wan you wanna like to like I tried to tell my parents to take me to the park for my birthday but they said it was a rainy day so I tried to tried I tried to I was I I was angr I was angry at the weather so I argued with the weather*

Children noted that they could also become angry because of problematic

communication or miscommunication with a peer, or a misunderstanding of the other's

needs and intentions.

> *One time um when when I was … at program I was with um somebody they they were my buddy to go to the washroom and so so my buddy got angry at me for some reason, and she said that she she was angry at me because I left when she was doing something in the washroom*
>
> *They do nothing I hate them sometimes because I say hi and they don't say it back*
>
> *They said only only 10 and up can go in here and some and my cousin got to go in and she was 9 cause she was she wasn't bugging them and um and um she wasn't bugging them but I was just trying to say to them they kept shutting the door on me because um cause I was just trying to say something*
>
> *So once at school we were looking in the bushes and we found like a gigantic nest of silk worms and we put it in a container and then um everybody got mad at us because we wouldn't let them have*

one be and especially gage because he would probably ruin them
and but like I felt bad because they were getting all mad at me and
I still wanted my friends so I let um everybody hold one not keep
one and then they made up

An angry reaction could start small and build with increased provocation or rumination. For example, an interaction between children that began to annoy a child could grow quickly from a reaction of annoyance into anger if the action did not cease when requested.

Um I was angry at my brother cuz he kept putting his hand in my
face and he's like I'm not touching you I'm not touching you

It was also reported by the children that anger could build when they chose to keep it inside and not communicate to others. When children ruminated on the situation the anger increased.

Um I learned that normally people have problems when they're
angry when like someone's annoying you and you don't tell them
you're angry and it just keeps on happening and happening and
happening

Normally when that happened to me I would sit there quietly until I
get too annoyed and then I would either tell the teacher or just go
like that

The theme Roots of Anger described children's understanding of what made them angry. This included types of situations that evoked an angry reaction, as well as how, if not managed in a positive manner, anger built in intensity. There were three categories of causes including verbal and non-verbal, physical, and emotional. Anger was a reaction to name calling, intentional exclusion, or physical altercations such as hitting and pushing. Children also noted that anger increased when they kept their thoughts to themselves and ruminated on the negative experience.

Theme Three: Expression of Anger

Expression of Anger referred to the physiology, cognitions, emotions, and behaviours associated with anger. Children expressed anger in a variety of ways. Some ways they expressed anger were dangerous and destructive, while others were positive and constructive. The intention behind the chosen expression was an important influence on the acceptability of the expression. However, often the children did not feel like they were in control when angry.

While they did not have a complex understanding of the physiological effects of anger on the body, children did have a basic awareness.

> *Um I've seen people like my friend at my old school um he used to get really red in the face and he used to push me over.*
>
> *You feel like you want to squeeze something*
>
> *Sometimes I make fists*
>
> *Sometimes when you're angry like when I'm angry I want to bite something*
>
> *Um sometimes uh I just um hold my breathe and I pass out*

Along with these sensations, they described a sense of feeling like they had no control when they got angry.

> *Maybe you feel like you can't really control yourself like you feel like you want to stop inside but you don't want to outside*
>
> *Um sometimes I feel like I can't do anything about it but I want to do something about it like if I'm getting called names. I don't want to do something to hurt somebody but I want to do something about it.*
>
> *Like you feel like out of control because sometimes because I have this friend in program when somebody wouldn't let him make a sword and he was out of control*

*My brother has um anger problems and so when he gets angry he
can't control it*

Expressing anger through actions was the most accessible. They gave examples of

their own behaviours and observed behaviours in others that to them meant anger

including, hitting, kicking, punching, and biting, as well as stomping feet or rolling eyes.

*Sometimes you feel like you want to hit something or break
something or do something that you wouldn't usually do*

*Um my friend got really really angry at my old school and he tried
to punch me and then he tried to kick me*

*When you're angry and you can stamp your feet and you can hurt
yourself every time you're too mad*

He used to use me as a punching bag

*Um I learned well I didn't really learn it um like um my friend he
got really angry and he started like punching and hurting people*

They also gave examples of incidents when they expressed emotion on objects

including slamming doors, punching walls or breaking an object.

*That it makes you like want to squeeze something or makes you
want to hurt someone or sometimes you want to break something*

*I kinda get pushy and sometimes I slam doors and I yell and kinda
hit people sometimes*

I almost broke the TV

I ran into the wall

They also described more dangerous behaviours such as setting fires and car

accidents resulting from anger.

Um if you are angry you might want to set a fire - a place on fire

*I learned that if you get too angry you can like punch someone or
burn a building*

When you're driving angrily beep beep crash!

You might hurt somebody and you might like you might bring the
deaths to somebody and you might end somebody else's life

Shouting and speaking disrespectfully towards others were verbal examples of

anger expression offered by the participants.

We don't scream at each other we talk to each other rudely

At times they acted before considering consequences. This meant saying things

they did not mean or breaking something. They may have also hurt themselves in the

process.

Anger is when you're really mad at someone or something and you
and sometimes you feel like you want to hit something or break
something or do something that you wouldn't usually do

Sometimes it was possible to consider the consequences before acting, and to stop

the action.

Knowing I could get in trouble and just trying to do something else

Children noted that they wanted to act aggressively when they were feeling angry.

Negative thoughts accompanied these feelings. These negative thoughts sometimes

needed to be expressed.

Well when you think angry it's like you're always thinking bad
things about the person that you're angry at or you sometimes you
just have to let your thoughts out and you have to like see them

Some negative thoughts were quite detailed.

I thought um I'm gonna be like I'm all broken boned and I would
never see the sunshine again because when you're angry you feel
darkness in you and so and so I was never gonna see the sunshine
because I might die

Anger did not occur in isolation. There were other emotions related to anger that happened at the same time.

> *You feel sometimes like … you're not you're sad you're mad*
> *you're anything else but happy*

While anger did not occur at the same time as happiness, one could be happy as a result of acting out anger with aggression.

> *I kinda felt happy cuz she um she sometimes bullied me*

A more common example was feeling sad, or crying, while feeling angry.

> *And I felt kinda scared because he was yelling and um I kinda*
> *cried because it was it was really really scary for because I'm 8*
> *years old right now um and it's a big problem it was a big problem*

> *Keep on saying sorry but she still won't forgive me so that sorta*
> *makes me sad*

> *Sad because I made a bad choice and I'm trying to make it up but*
> *she's still won't let me*

> *That made me feel really sad because I it would just happen today*
> *and like we just made up and um um at lunch recess and then at*
> *the end of the day she doesn't want to be my friend which made me*
> *really sad*

They also felt afraid when others were angry at them or around them, and especially if that person seemed unpredictable.

> *[Name] called me and then she said my brother my brother got*
> *mad at her and he was gonna kill himself and crash into stuff in the*
> *car but he didn't. I said I said lock the door. She locked it the front*
> *door and she said but it doesn't lock and then and then my brother*
> *just came in and she's like all the doors are locked and I heared a*
> *door slammed and he was like oh I just came in.*

More emotions such as feeling insulted, betrayed, and hurt were noted by children while feeling angry.

When people were teasing me, it made me feel insulted.

You might feel betrayed

It makes me feel really bad and kinda breaks my heart too

The children also described feeling guilty about feeling angry as though they had done something wrong and needed to confess.

You could feel, you would feel mad and um you could feel like you're doing something wrong

You might feel guilty inside you might feel like guilty for doing something that made you feel angry

If you're angry then you wanna confess

I feel guilty

Sometimes they could not understand why they felt angry.

I felt really angry but I don't know why he was angry at me

The way that children expressed their own feelings of anger was the focus of Expression of Anger. Anger was expressed physiologically, through thoughts, emotions, or actions. Children expressed anger in a variety of ways, including examples of both negative and positive. The intention behind the chosen expression was an important influence on the social acceptability of the expression. However children did not feel a sense of control over or choice of their expressions when angry. They keenly identified that other feelings were commonly associated and expressed alongside anger such as disappointment, sadness, heartbreak, and feeling insulted.

Theme Four: Costs of Anger

Costs of Anger referred to the consequences that children saw associated with anger. In this theme children identified consequences that were handed down from

authority figures such as teachers, parents, or police officers. Children recognized that consequences could be behavioral sanctions from authorities as well as emotional such as hurt feelings, and physical such as hurting themselves, or social such as losing friends.

Children described penalties delivered by authority figures such as getting in trouble from parents or teachers. They also noted that people could get in trouble with the law and while it was a consequence reserved for adults, they feared it could happen to them in the future.

> *Um well she was being mean by like getting me in trouble when she did something but she just got me in trouble.*

> *Like well ya sometimes when I'm really really angry um or sometimes I just think about that I might get in trouble if I do something like that um so*

> *Sometimes you want to hit something but you know you don't want you know you can't because it can get put behind the law*

Children identified that when people were angry, they could physically harm someone – intentionally or accidentally – which could result in significant physical injury or may have incited retaliation from the injured person.

> *He thought it would be funny when you're when this guy that he doesn't really like when he pulls out the chair cuz he sits behind him he's gonna pull the chair even further and then he sat the other one tried to sit down he fell he hit this side and then he fell again hit this his throat and then his the other side and now he can't eat because his jaw's all messed up and then now he's in the hospital. And he got suspended*

> *He got really angry and he started like punching and hurting people and one had to go to the hospital*

> *Like if you feel angry sometimes um sometimes when you like if you get hurt and you're really really really angry you might even hurt yourself even more and then sometimes when you're angry angry you might even lead yourself to hospital*

Try not to be angry because you might hurt somebody and you might like you might bring the deaths to somebody and you might end somebody else's life

Um you can maybily get hurt by being yourself by being angry like me while I was riding my bike when I fell and got really angry because I was crazy. I was just wanted to go to see Boadie but I was crazy

Because if they punch they have a very bad attitude and they get beat back

So I punched him in the face; he punched me back.

That when you're mad you shouldn't punch somebody because let's say I let's say I hot somebody and then they punched me back but if I punched them then that's just giving them the right to punch me back

He got too mad and I couldn't keep it because he was annoying me

Um mad and then I I go and I march into her room and we start tackling each other

Something about everybody, it happens to people. So it you are very mad and you can't do anything and the person is laughing at you and you punch him if ya for real that happen everybody. The getting mad

Um it made me feel a little mad because I don't like getting pushed but I was a little bit okay with it because sometimes I I feel like I want to do something when I'm mad too

I was playing on my Wii and um my brother shut it off so he could watch his favorite episode of I really do not know what it is but he shut it off and I really didn't like it so um then I scared him then he bit me

Consequences of anger were emotional as well. Children described feeling afraid of others when those others were angry. This caused them to prepare themselves emotionally for those times.

Um um once my my brother got me angry and my friend because whenever he comes to my house he tried to attack us so we get so we get anything we can to protect ourselves

Another cost of anger was expectations of how they would be treated by others after the incident.

> *And um then um he felt really really guilty and he was afraid to come back to school because he thinks people are gonna tease him and tell him why did you do that*

They also described the potential cost of losing friends. When conflict went unresolved for a prolonged amount of time, it was less likely to be repaired.

> *Um so one time I was mad at my friend and it was for this really good reason it was because one time she pushed me and another time she kicked me and the other time once she hit me*

> *Um me and my friend I don't want to say this person's name we had a fight and then she went and told the teacher on me and she said that I said something about her but I didn't um and then because I asked her if I could use a book and she wouldn't let me and she wasn't using it it was in her desk, and then so I was sorta felt bad about that so I didn't want to be her friend anymore because she was sorta being rude to me and then now she is giving me dirty looks*

> *Um me and my classmate had a fight and I'm trying and trying to say sorry and stuff but she won't forgive me I don't know why but I'm trying my best to be nice to her and she's still being rude to be back and I'm trying to be like I'm trying to be nice to her I'm trying to like help her she's still not my friend so I keep on saying sorry but she still won't forgive me so that sorta makes me sad*

> *Um I learned that it could take you the wrong place to the wrong place um it might take it might also take you to drugs*

Children also observed consequences of anger specifically for adults.

> *Sometimes adults can get angry at other adults and they can get a divorce*

Costs of Anger described the children's awareness of consequences associated with anger and aggression. Consequences could come from authority figures such as teachers, parents, or police officers. Beyond formal consequences, children also recognized potential for emotional consequences such as hurt feelings, as well as physical

consequences such as hurting themselves or others. Another cost of anger was potential to damage social relationships and experience social isolation.

Theme Five: Avoidance Strategies

Avoidance Strategies referred to what could be done to prevent an escalation of their own anger into aggression, or provoking aggressive reactions in others. Participants reported that while it was best to avoid anger and aggression whenever possible, if conflict was to arise it should be resolved as quickly as possible and not escalated. This theme also referred to taking time to think in order to avoid displacing one's own anger, which would increase potential for conflict and aggression.

Children repeatedly noted that it was not ok to be angry and that they should always try not fight with others. They noted that one should not ruminate on small problems to make them into big ones.

> *When there's like little problems don't' like make it into a big fuss.*
>
> *You shouldn't make the smallest problem into the biggest problem.*
>
> *Try to not fight, not add onto fights*
>
> *You should never start a fight.*
>
> *If you're mad at somebody don't like start a fight*
>
> *That's not the way to solve problems (re: hit someone)*
>
> *Don't be angry.*
>
> *When you're angry don't physically try to do something to somebody or something*

It was also important to find a way to solve conflict before it escalated by apologizing to the person who has been wronged or finding a compromise that worked for those involved.

*Me and one of my friends … there is this little dollhouse in
program [we]were playing with the dollhouse cuz it has like a
bunch of people and I was playing with the dollhouse and one of
my friends came over and they said that we have to let them play
but there was no more things left because there's only three houses
(no, two) ya there's like a half of a house and a half of a house and
then if you put them together it only equals one and there's a little
van which is a truck, I mean a car and then she went and told the
teacher on us because we said that there wasn't anything left and
then we ended up solving it because we let her play and we just
shared the house*

Ya, we solved it. And now we are best friends again, bfffs

I was just calling her well she called me and said that she was sorry

They agreed that it was more effective when resolving conflict to use positive

verbal strategies to solve problems than negative verbal statements or physical

aggression.

*If you did something wrong or if it or if you did something and you
didn't mean to do it one of your friends shouldn't say oh [name]
oh it's all your fault or something*

It was seen as helpful to take a step back and take time to think about the problem

before deciding if it was big enough to work through or small enough to let go.

*And then and then sometimes that you need to like before you do
something you sorta gotta think*

*I would ask them what the problem is about and then if it was a
problem about an arguing problem about that I know this and you
don't know that then I would like if it was an arguing problem
about a weird thing that you don't need to be arguing about then I
would just tell her or him to just leave it alone and leave it in the
past but if it was a problem like a big problem where you had to fix
it or something would happen then I would sometimes tell them to
maybe go and fix their problem and try to make friends again*

*Um a couple days ago, me and my friends had a snowball fight and
someone broke my fort on purpose and it wasn't part of the
snowball fight, like I went in to get a drink but then someone I think*

said lets go destroy a girl's fort and then they destroyed it and then they ran away and they hid

I said somebody pushed me down the slide and I hurt my knee and then that person said it might be me but I didn't mean to because I was sliding down the slide too and then maybe I might have slipped your foot and I said okay well that's okay and now I'm gonna be your friend

They were also aware that taking their anger out on someone not involved in the situation also escalated potential for aggression and conflict. They recommend being kind to friends and peers even if that person was angry and acting in an aggressive manner.

Um me and my classmate had a fight and I'm trying and trying to say sorry and stuff but she won't forgive me I don't know why but I'm trying my best to be nice to her and she's still being rude to be back and I'm trying to be like I'm trying to be nice to her I'm trying to like help her she's still not my friend so I keep on saying sorry but she still won't forgive me

Um that I have friends to make me feel better when that [one girl and another girl] they um they made me feel better when people were teasing me

I tried to make my sister um feel comfortable and I and then I made her feel comfortable again but but um but and then I helped her because she was I helped her because she was skipping classes and I was kinda helping her like doing her math and stuff.

Sometimes I get angry at my brother cuz he um he does like mean stuff and um but sometimes I'm not angry at him because like he's being nice but um sometimes I am angry at him because he did something and it gets me upset

Avoidance Strategies included what children knew what they should or should not do to prevent the problem from getting worse by escalating their own anger or provoking angry reactions in others. The children noted that it was best to avoid conflict, anger and aggression whenever possible; if conflict developed it should be resolved as quickly as possible and not exacerbated. Anger intensified or spread if it was displaced, and this

should be avoided. Avoidance strategies included taking the time to stop and think before reacting.

Theme Six: Impact on Relationships

Impact on Relationships referred to how participants understood their own anger and aggressive reaction could impact social relationships with their peers. Children defined friendship and what it meant to them. There was confidence that when friendships were damaged because of anger, they could also be repaired.

Friendship was important. The word 'friend' described those peers with whom they often interacted and shared common interests with.

What it means to me having a friend cause like if you didn't have a friend you'd be all lonely and sad, but when you have a friend it just cheers you up and sometimes you can be as happy as ever and once like um when I wasn't even here I didn't really have that much friends but um so I was kinda broken hearted and when I had a friend it just cheered me right up.

Because some people might think that boys like star wars and they they like to play star wars all the time when you play with them but you like girl stuff like jewelry and Barbie's and necklaces and hair stuff

A friend was someone who was reliable and trustworthy, who would follow through with the plans made. Peers who canceled plans and were not truthful about the reason the plans had been canceled were not good friends.

So me a friend means like being kind, sharing, um being nice to each other.

So what a friend is is someone who is really nice to you someone who cares for you and someone that always forgives you even if you're really mad at them or if they're really mad at you

It means like always being honest and um um never telling lies to your friend, so like um so you if uh if someone told you that they had to go somewhere and you were supposed to play with them

that would make you sad and that they wouldn't be a good friend,
so it means to be honest

It means to be honest because when I had a friend she said she um
she promised me she would have a play date and she pro and she
thought she told me a lie that she had a family thing but she
actually went to another person's house um and she um she went
to another person's house

It was possible to be angry with a friend, but they had to resolve conflict to

remain friends. They also moved between identifying peers as friends and those who

were not their friends depending on the outcome of the most recent interaction.

I have this friend um um she um she we made up today and then
she said were not friends because there was this we were playing
tag and she couldn't get anybody and I was trying to help her by
being happy and then um she um she told me she's not my friend

My friend wasn't my friend because well I didn't say anything
someone else told her a lie that I said something but I didn't and it
really upset me

The amount of time it took to repair a damaged relationship varied in each

situation. Persistence and repeated apologies were effective tools to repair a relationship.

Um I think it might take a week or maybe two because that girl and
[another girl] were really good friends

Five times – it was the I decided that we were really good friends
before that happened so I decided to forgive them

Um so a long time ago I was mad at my friend and I was really mad
at her and she was really mad at me and then finally after like I
don't know 6 weeks we became friends again.

Anger directed at a peer or an aggressive reaction could damage a friendship. The

friendship could be damaged through bullying, being bossy, or holding a grudge.

I let it go. I didn't hold a grudge.

Um I have this friend and um um um she threw her shoe and then
um the people that were playing grounders with her um kept

playing with it and playing catch and then uh when we came in I told them that person like that was holding it like this over the fence um that they shouldn't do that with um um that's they shouldn't do that with um that's they shouldn't do that with but if it's not their stuff and then she turned out to be not my friend and then the friend that I was standing up for her was not my friend and if happened just today

Ya um sometimes when sometimes me and my sister have problems and um I kinda get angry at her because cuz cuz she always always always says that I'm you're I always try to say that you're not the boss of me and she says oh yes I am because I'm technically stronger than you and bigger than you and I'm almost taller than her, and and she says that I cannot and she hits me sometimes

When damage occurred in a relationship there could also be an aggressive reaction to that damage. For example, the individual could be angry about damage caused by peers telling lies, or teasing each other.

I had a problem with one of my friends because um one of my friends were using me as a friend because I would teach like I would make up cheers and stuff and then she said oh I'm not your friend anymore and then she went and now she's using my cheer that I made up and I don't want her to use it because I made it up and now she's showing her whole class and saying that she made it

Um to be a friend means that you don't lie and stuff because I made a bad choice because I have a friend and she's in my class and we pretended that we were sisters and we told everybody but and then my friend that I said that I was sisters with told everybody the truth and now one one person is not my friend anymore

They described how being kind to a peer despite the fact that she or he was acting aggressively toward them could actually build a new friendship.

The other girl was not really her friend she was just like the bullier and she because she gets bullied from her she thought to be her friend and um then she told me why because she thought I won't let her but I actually would if she for her not to get bullied anymore and so um I let it go.

Um I think and I'm her friend because my friend likes her so I'm her friend now

Um it was gonna make me sad and cry but I kept it in and then and then um I'll just pretend to be her friend because my friend um she really likes her um I think and I'm her friend because my friend likes her so I'm her friend now

They described developmental differences in how children interacted with their peers and friends. They noted that children in kindergarten chose to shout rather than have conversations about what was making them feel angry.

Most of the kindergartens here they always fight and scream at each other

They also viewed younger children's relationships as being simpler. According to the participants, relationships became more complex as children grew older.

I think that it's different because the kindergartens don't really care who they're friends with I would say that because like they don't know yet

But I think that um the kindergarteners don't fight like we do because they don't know as much drama as we do like if you're an older girl then you have drama about like hmm like you have drama like well this is my friend and it can't be your friend but in kindergarten they fight about like you said that my hair doesn't look pretty but if [my friend] said that to me then I wouldn't really care

The participants also noted that older students in eighth grade were more likely to use their words to fight. However, they noticed that the older children made use of different words when angry than third grade children typically used.

Cause cause a big kid might like big kids in grade 8 think it's funny to swear at people like miss somebody in [teacher's name]'s class today um he was swearing at another kid and then they got into a fight but if you're in my grade then if you swore then you get in trouble but if a big kid swore they would still get in trouble but not as much as we do

Um they're older so like their friends would be different and they would like know more about each other if they've known each

other for a long time so they might know what they don't like and
like so if they're really good friends they wouldn't say something
that they don't like

Impact on Relationships described children's understanding of how and to what extent expressing anger in a negative way affected social relationships with their peers. Children defined the term "friendship" with a great deal of fluidity. Within minutes, one could go from being a friend to no longer a friend, and vice versa. The children noted that in most situations they were confident a damaged relationship could be repaired.

Summary of Themes

After analyzing the transcripts of the nine focus groups conducted with the third grade participants using qualitative content analysis procedure, six themes emerged. Managing Anger referred to the strategies that children learned they could utilize when they began to feel angry in order to manage their emotional reactions as well as to resolve potential conflicts with their peers. Roots of Anger described the participants' general understanding of where anger initiated and what contributed to anger building in intensity. Expression of Anger referred to the ways children conveyed anger through a physiological reaction, related thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as the sense that they could have either chosen their reaction or were not in control. Costs of Anger referred to the natural and imposed consequences associated with an angry reaction including emotional, physical, and social costs. Avoidance Strategies described tactics that children employed when faced with aggression or conflict so as not to exacerbate the problem. Impact on Relationships described the children's definition of friendship and how an aggressive reaction could have a negative impact on relationships.

Researcher Reflections

The following section describes experiences of the researcher during the study. These reflections are offered to promote transparency in decisions made throughout the study as well as the interpretation of findings. These reflections include my previous experiences working with children, where the idea for this research project originated, as well as my involvement as a research assistant in a larger project focused around the Anger Blanket Program. It also includes reflections about developing working relationships with the participants of the focus groups, as well as the impact the children's moods and social interactions may have had on the results. Finally, I reflect on the intricacies of conducting research within the school environment.

I was first drawn to research about how children experience anger within their peer groups because of my interest and previous experience working with children. I have had the opportunity to work with children of various abilities and struggles – mainstream, behavioural, mental health impairments, and developmental disabilities – and I have found that children all experience anger. I noticed that there appeared to be a developmental curve related to how children acquire an understanding of anger. I noticed how young children often had more reactive expressions of anger. I observed younger children would tantrum, but then quickly move on when distracted. I noticed older children appeared to moderate their reactions in front of their peers for the sake of protecting their social image. This being said, older children could become reactive when angry. However I witnessed tantrum outbursts having more negative impacts on social relationships with older children.

Along with this concept of anger affecting peer relationships, another trend I noticed when working with children was how friendship appeared to be a fluid relationship. I observed that school aged-children were often quick to announce that a peer was not their friend anymore when they were in conflict. Conflict in this age group was often over sharing toys or deciding what or where to play. Despite the announcement of the termination of friendship, I noticed that these children would be found playing together again within a few hours or by the next day. This made me wonder whether children have a different definition of friendship than adults, or even if they understand and experience anger in a different way than we as adults do.

I first learned about the Anger Blanket Program through the program coordinator, it really interested me and I wanted to learn more. The concept of anger as a cover for other emotions really resonated with me. Because young children tend to have three main emotions they identify and that are most easily accessible, it follows that anger and tears are often associated with any negative emotion. The Anger Blanket Program teaches children to look under the "anger blanket" which is covering them, to find out what the underlying emotion really is.

The data collected for this study came from a larger research project looking at the effectiveness of the Anger Blanket program. I participated as a research assistant in collecting data to this end. For six weeks myself and another research assistant accompanied the coordinator into a third grade classroom and assisted with behaviour management while she delivered the Anger Blanket program to the entire class of students. Each of these weeks, we returned two days later and conducted focus groups with a portion of students from this class, as well as students from an equivalent third

grade class who were not learning the Anger Blanket program. These six consecutive weeks were followed by three additional focus groups over the next three months. Throughout this time we developed relationships with the children. For me, the opportunity to work directly with the children was part of the appeal of becoming involved with this project. It was a unique opportunity to see first-hand the application of the research, which is where my interests lie.

As mentioned in the methods section, there were benefits to conducting nine focus groups over the course of six months with the same eleven children. Over time, we, the researchers, developed a relationship with the children. Initially it took us more time to get the children organized, get them focused and on task, and even to find the room that we were using and navigating through the halls of the school. In the first focus group we conducted the children were quiet and shy, not many of them spoke up, and they seemed unsure about what they were "supposed" to respond, hoping to get the "right" answer. In focus groups that followed, more children took the opportunity to speak up and share their stories. Their responses gradually became more relaxed and casual, more of a story telling response than seeking approval for a correct answer. The children stated that looked forward to us coming in to work with them, and greeted us excitedly in the hallway. Even though we asked the same three structured questions, and received some repeated answers, on many occasions the children gave new responses which allowed us to ask follow up questions and get a deeper and fuller understanding of the children's experiences. Had we only conducted a single focus group this development would not have occurred, and this study would not be as rich.

Children can be unpredictable in their moods and in their ability to focus on a task. Conducting the focus groups on multiple occasions over several weeks compensated for the inevitable days when the children struggled to participate effectively. There were some focus group sessions that grew into intellectual conversations about emotions and experiences; conversations that we did not expect from a population this age. There were other focus group sessions in which the children were distracted, unfocused, and energetic; they struggled to sit still and we did not get very many answers to the three questions. Often we would conduct the focus groups immediately after recess. At times this led to rich information sharing about incidents that had occurred with their peers during recess, while at other times the children were still wound up and energetic from being outside. Recess was the least closely supervised time in a child's day. Typically there were three adults supervising all the children on the school grounds during recess. This resulted in time for peer interaction with limited adult supervision, and possibly some of the most revealing responses of how children understood anger within their peer groups.

Conducting research in a school added additional levels of complexities to organizing data collection. First, it was important to develop a good working relationship with the school faculty – the principal, the vice-principal, the teachers whose students we were working with, and with the school secretary. The school principal and vice-principal were the ones to approve the school as a location for the research, and were eager to discuss the research opportunity. They saw a need in their school to increase the students' emotional awareness and understanding. The teachers were enthusiastic to become involved, and reported that their students would benefit from participating in the research.

However, despite the positive attitudes about participation, it proved to be a challenge to coordinate schedules without being disruptive to the students' education and the teachers' and school board's curriculum. Initially we had a set day and time to come in each week; however we quickly learned that flexibility would be vital to organizing this project. A set day and time did not fit with the rotating six day class schedule that the students followed.

Another hurdle we faced was when the students and teachers began preparation for the Education Quality Assurance office (EQAO) assessment which all grade three students in the province wrote in the spring. This exam assessed the student's abilities in reading, writing, and math. Around this time it became even more challenging to find a time to come into the school that would not be disruptive to the students' education. Constant and open communication with the teachers helped with this – through emails as well as face-to-face each time we were in the school – and we were able to work collaboratively to complete data collection. Once a day and time were chosen, the next challenge was to find a quiet space in the school to conduct the focus groups. The school secretary always managed to find a room available to accommodate our needs. Coordinating the many people involved in this research project was a central part in the success of this project, and would not have been possible without a good working relationship with all involved.

Chapter Summary

Six themes emerged from transcripts of participant responses. These six themes included Managing Anger, Roods of Anger, Expression of Anger, Costs of Anger, Avoidance Strategies, and Impact on Relationships. Managing Anger referred to the

strategies that children used when they began to feel angry. Roots of Anger described the children's understanding of where anger came from, and how it could grow. Expression of Anger referred to how children showed their anger through thoughts, feelings, behaviours and physiology. Costs of Anger referred to the consequences associated with anger. Avoidance Strategies described approaches that participants used to prevent conflict when dealing with anger. Impact on Relationships described how anger and aggression could negatively impact their peer relationships.

I was interested in research about how children experience anger within their peer groups because of observations obtained from previous experiences of working with children including mediating conflicts between peers. I have worked with children of various abilities and I have noticed that children all experience anger. Social acceptability of tantrums and reactively aggressive anger appears to shift as children age, and therefore anger reactions can impact social relationships for children. I noticed this particularly in relation to the fluidity of child friendships. The success of this research relied on the ability to work with the participants over time, and develop relationships with the children. Conducting multiple focus groups allowed time to build trust with the children, and for timid children to warm up and participate more fully in later focus groups than in early ones.

Given the results of the present study, it is important to compare these findings to the existing literature that was discussed in Chapter Two. A comparison to existing literature can serve to support of existing ideas as well as highlight new possibilities to be considered by counselors and researchers in their work.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Six themes emerged from analysis of transcripts from semi-structured focus groups to describe how third grade children understand, experience and act their anger with others, from their perspectives. These themes included Managing Anger, Roots of Anger, Expression of Anger, Costs of Anger, Avoidance Strategies, and Impact on Relationships. The first theme, Managing Anger, included strategies that children employed when faced with situations that provoked anger. The second theme, Roots of Anger, described children's understandings of what made them angry. The way that children expressed their own feelings of anger was the focus of the next theme, Expression of Anger. The fourth theme, Costs of Anger, described the awareness of consequences associated with anger and aggression. The theme of Avoidance Strategies included what the children knew what they should or should not do to prevent the problem from getting worse. The final theme, Impact on Relationships, described children's understanding of how and to what extent expressing anger in a negative way affected social relationships with their peers.

There has been a great deal of literature written by adults about how children understand their experience of anger (Bandura, 1978; Brengden et al., 2002; Herba et al., 2006; Singer et al., 1999; Shipman et al., 2003). Bullying has become a prominent topic as well as a significant example of how children express aggression within peer groups (Banks, 2000). While some aggression is normal, severe and repeated aggression can have serious negative effects (Panksepp, 1998). Developing an emotional vocabulary, learning somatic warning signs of anger, and learning relaxation as well as other coping strategies can help children to manage the expression of their anger in a prosocial way

(Tutty et al., 2002; Joseph & Strain, 2003). We can observe children's interactions with their peers, but to gain a deeper understanding an important source of information is the children themselves.

Similarities to the Literature

There were several consistencies between the literature and experiences of the participants in the present study. These similarities included an understanding of both direct and indirect aggression, as well as awareness that indirect and direct aggression was more and less prominent with younger and older children. In addition, children were sensitive to emotional and behavioral reactivity in their peers and the unpredictability of those children made them less desirable as friends. Children also seemed to prefer to solve interpersonal conflicts in their own, if possible.

Children in the present study, similarly to the existing literature, were familiar with basic emotions as well as more subtle differences between them. They were also able, as evidenced in the literature, to begin to appreciate the underlying causes of behavior including emotions and intentions. They were able to distinguish between emotion and behavior, and between anger and aggression, as well as at times, deliberately choose an adaptive response when angry. In addition, they could recognize somatic signs of anger and use calming or displacement strategies to manage the heightened energy when angry.

Direct and indirect aggression. Participants provided examples of direct as well as indirect aggression in the focus groups (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Examples of direct aggression were shown through physical assault such as pushing, kicking and hitting and through teasing such as name calling and about previous behaviours or budding

relationships. Examples of indirect aggression were shown through peer exclusion and ignoring. Surprisingly the children did not often use the term "bullying" in the focus groups. It appeared as though the participants were learning about this term, but had not internalized the word. When one child used the word bullying, other children would repeat it in their responses. However, the participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept of bullying through their responses and examples or experiences regarding aggression.

Aggression development. Banks (2000) noted that bullying in schools often increased through elementary school. Participants in the focus groups reported that they noticed peers experience conflict differently in different age groups; however they did not note an observed increase in severity and this may be a difficult model to measure. They reported that younger children used direct bullying, and employed more reactive aggression demonstrated by shouting and fighting, but their conflicts were quickly resolved and they could be seen playing and interacting in a positive way again soon after the conflict (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). They reported that older children typically did not shout or fight, but were more likely use words in a hurtful way. The third grade children did speak disrespectfully towards one another when they were in conflict, and their examples demonstrated that they did also become physically aggressive as well. This age group also employed indirect bullying through intentional ignoring and exclusion from games. The participants observed that the older children in eighth grade seemed to prefer indirect bullying as well, and tended to exclude others to be hurtful. They also noted witnessing direct bullying through the use of curse words. Another difference that was noted in older children is that they seemed to be proactively aggressive with their words;

they knew their peer's vulnerabilities and they preyed on the weakness. Therefore while an observed difference was apparent between age groups as reported by participants, severity cannot be compared.

Reactive aggression. Children who display reactive as opposed to proactive aggression tend to experience poorer social performance (Dodge et al., 1997). Children who are reactively aggressive are more likely to be rejected by peers and experience social isolation, which may result in increased feelings of anger and an escalation of aggressive reactivity. Participants in the present study knew children who were difficult to interact with because of impulsive and unpredictable reactions. They also reported being afraid that such a person would injure them. They also noted that aggression precipitated aggression, and when they did not want to get into trouble for reacting aggressively, they stayed away from peers who were aggressive.

Conflict management. There was support in the literature for the concept of children's ability to resolve their own conflicts with peers (Tutty et al., 2002). The same authors stated that if children were able to resolve their own conflicts at school without teacher mediation, then teachers would be able spend more time teaching. In the present study, children preferred to resolve their own conflicts if possible. However, they also know to seek support and mediation from adults when necessary. There are clearly, many social interactions between children that adults are not privy to unless the conflict escalates or remains unresolved. Children in the present study also described times when a teacher was informed of conflict but did not receive accurate information about what occurred and did not respond in a way that the participant felt was appropriate or fair. The children explained that it is because of this type of response that they preferred to

resolve their conflicts without adult involvement when possible. Children may be fearful of seeking adult intervention when they witness aggression between peers (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Children know that they can seek assistance from teachers or parents if needed. However, participants in the study were also fearful of retaliation or later victimization.

Labeling emotions. Four major emotions including sadness, happiness, anger, and fear were most commonly noted within the literature about children's emotional awareness (Widen & Russell, 2008), and were also most commonly used by participants in the present study. With time emotional categories used by children narrow to contentment, frustration, excitement, pride, embarrassment and guilt (Widen & Russell, 2008). Children in the present study often included one of the four major emotions, but also gave examples of more complex feelings such as disappointed, betrayed, confused, heartbroken, and guilty. To appreciate more subtle differences in emotion it has been noted that one must consider audience, have an understanding of social norms, and develop a personal responsibility for the results of a situation (Bauminger et al., 2005). Children in the present study seemed to be in the process of building a stronger emotional vocabulary as well as a personal responsibility and an understanding of their norms within their peer group.

Perspective taking. Along with an expansive emotional vocabulary, it is also important for children to take another person's perspective. As children age they are able to understand more complex emotions such as embarrassment, pride, loneliness and guilt because interaction between social understanding and emotion become more important during middle childhood (Bauminger et al., 2005). The participants noted that the

intention behind an aggressive behaviour by a peer determined their reaction and readiness to repair the relationship. They explained that if they judged a peer to be accidentally aggressive, or intended the aggressive action as a joke it was easier to repair the relationship than if their peer was intentionally aggressive.

Emotion and behavior. Emotions have four components including behavioural, cognitive, affective, and physiological. Anger is accompanied by biological changes such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, muscle tension, and a surge of adrenaline (American Psychological Association, 2012). Children in the present study provided many examples of ways they could or have behaved when angry, including positive and negative, as well as direct and indirect. Children associated aggressive behaviour with the emotion of anger. However they did not always act aggressively when they were angry. They had a sense of being able to choose behaviours when experiencing an emotion but admitted it was challenging to make a positive choice when feeling angry. It was less common for participants to be able to identify the cognitions that they associated with anger. This is developmentally appropriate because abstract thinking does not typically develop until older childhood (Kail & Zolner, 2009). However, participants also felt a lack of control when feeling angry. This may implicate cognition but often refers to behavioural means to gain back control. Participants recognized different physiological responses to anger within their own bodies such as muscle tension, red face, clenched jaw and increased rate of breathing.

Response to anger. There were ways individuals could respond to their experience of anger (American Psychological Association, 2012). Anger could be expressed by acting passively, aggressively or assertively. Anger could also be

suppressed and not (knowingly) communicated at all. Anger could also be calmed

through relaxation exercises that slowed physiological responses. Children in the study

provided examples of all three responses to their experiences of anger. Children

identified its expression through aggression in their own behaviours via examples such as

kicking, biting, and teasing. They also gave examples of their own expression of

assertiveness such as mediating conversations between peers, or by asking a peer to stop.

The participants also noted aggressive expressions of anger by adults and peers around

them. They gave examples of times they chose to suppress their anger and kept it inside.

They explained that they were fearful of telling someone the situation because it could

become worse, or that if they sought help they would not receive it. In both cases, it was

best to keep it to themselves. They also identified relaxation techniques used to calm their

anger, such as walking away, going to his or her room, squeezing something, taking a

bath, reading, or taking a nap.

Many anger management programs aim to reduce intense emotional responses to

frustrating circumstances and control the physiological arousal that ensues (American

Psychological Association, 2012). Children were aware that they could not always

control the external factors or individuals that aroused anger, but that they would be able

to control their reactions. At times they were able to reason about whether the problem

was significant enough to elicit a reaction, or if it was small enough to just let go and

move on. Although not all children can succeed in doing this every time, they do know

that they can walk away or ignore a provoking situation when feeling angry.

Somatic complaints. Children can learn to recognize somatic symptoms

associated with anger and recognizing these symptoms can act as warning signs of anger

(Tutty et al., 2002). Children in the present study were already aware of such warning signs. Children can be taught to implement relaxation techniques when they notice the warning signs to calm their bodies and re-focus their minds (Tutty et al., 2002). Again, children in the present study were aware that they could sooth themselves through relaxation techniques when they were feeling angry, but acknowledged they sometimes needed prompting from a parent or teacher to do so.

Tutty and colleagues also noted that if aggressive behaviour ceased, it needed to be replaced by another activity (2002). They suggested that children should be taught an alternative behaviour to implement when angry. Participants of the focus groups described replacement, or distraction activities they chose to do when they were angry. Replacement activities also noted by participants in the present study included listening to music, reading, or taking a nap.

Differences from the Literature

There were also differences between the results of the present study and the literature. Primarily these differences were attributable to limited literature on anger from the perspective of children. The differences included low acceptance of aggression with children's unwitting support for aggression and anger as a necessary and potentially useful emotion.

Although social learning theory posits that aggressive acts continue because of reinforcement for the behavior (Bandura, 1978), such as praise from peers, participants did not see it that way. Participants found aggressive acts to be unacceptable, and gave examples of alternatives to aggression as well as ways to intervene to stop aggression.

They described feeling afraid, sad, and angry when others acted aggressively. This was not praise from peers as would be expected through social learning.

However, there were examples provided by a particular participant during which he smiled and spoke about being aggressive towards a peer while others chuckled in focus groups. This would be considered peer reinforcement. Its inconsistent application could be seen as actually strengthening the aggressive behavior. From this, it could be argued that "no tolerance" policies and practices are potentially theoretically valuable ways of managing peer aggression. The challenge remains to reinforce the desirable non-aggressive behaviors consistently while extinguishing aggressive behaviors which, given the number of potentially reinforcing opportunities by peers, is practically impossible for school staff to do.

Primary grade children believed that their peers would still accept them if they acted aggressively (Shipman et al., 2003). Participants in the present study did not in general, support peer aggression and did not offer acceptance to their peers for that behavior. Attitudes against peer aggression were strengthened, from their perspectives, through exposure to aggressive behavior at home and on television. This was also inconsistent with research on the relationship between children's exposure to personal and media violence having a desensitizing or supportive effect on interpersonal aggression (Singer et al., 1999). Participants who discussed seeing aggression and violence by adults in their lives spoke out about how they thought that aggression was not an acceptable response to anger and how they felt unsafe as well as afraid when peers acted aggressively around them.

Anger in itself is not a harmful emotion. It is a natural and adaptive response to threat (American Psychological Association, 2012). Children in the present study noted that it was not acceptable to feel or be angry. Rather, they informed that they were to try not to be angry, not to be aggressive, and not to fight with peers. They understood that aggression was unacceptable and from that, determined it was not acceptable for them to be angry. They had difficulty seeing potential benefits of anger. In contrast to their sophisticated understanding of emotions associated with anger (e.g. shame and sadness) and willingness look behind the behavior in their peers (e.g. note motives and intentions of aggression) before deciding on a response, they had a very simplistic label for anger as "bad".

Summary and Conclusion

Children's experiences and understanding of anger were largely consistent with the literature. Children in the present study, and apparent in the literature, were aware of aggression in both direct and indirect forms, how older children were potentially more indirect with their aggression, and the unpredictability of direct aggression in peers making them less attractive as friends. They were ambivalent about getting involved in other's peer conflicts personally as well as involving teachers because of potential for negative personal consequences. The children had a good beginning and advanced awareness of language to describe different emotions and beginning understanding that behavior (what they saw), was influenced by emotion (what they did not see), in peers. They were also becoming aware of their abilities to recognize emotion in self and take preventive action to avoid peer conflict.

Evidence from focus groups support constructs that researchers are using in research about children's emotional awareness. This is important, as there has been very little research about anger from children's perspectives. The consistencies are particularly significant when one considers the complexity of emotional awareness and connections children can make to personal thoughts and behaviors as well as recognition of thoughts-feelings-behaviors connections associated with anger in others. The children are actually quite sophisticated, though perhaps less consistent and efficient with application of their awareness of anger.

There were also differences between the results of the study and existing literature. One difference included low acceptance of anger and aggression among participants, which was at odds with their seeming support for aggression in form of rewarding aggressive behavior by laughing at aggressive behavior described by peers in the focus groups. This difference makes one wonder if the children knew what they were supposed to say to the adult researchers and trying to give the correct or socially appropriate answers without the ability or interest to act consistently in accordance with those answers in the presence of researchers.

Children who participated in the study thought that anger was bad. Children received this message from the adults in their lives. Abstract concepts such as "anger management" and "aggression prevention and intervention" have a clear message to adults who have developed the ability to think in an abstract manner. Children have not yet developed this skill and may be interpreting a message not meant to be implied by adults, which is that anger is bad. Yet, it is important to note that anger is an evolutionarily adaptive response to a perceived threat. It is what fuels the "fight" response

in the fight versus flight survival reaction. Anger can still be useful by letting us know when something is not safe, and it is therefore important for children to learn not to suppress anger but to understand anger and manage their actions when angry.

The perception that anger is bad may stem from some children's understanding of anger and aggression as the same thing. It is important to note that anger is not aggression. Anger is an emotion, not a behaviour. This important distinction may be lost, yet important to make with children. It is important that researchers and helping professionals remain vigilant of this distinction because asking children to avoid feeling angry is asking them to do the impossible, and the maladaptive.

Implications

The results of this study have implications for helping professionals who provide support and intervention to children as well as for future research.

It is important for counsellors and helping professionals to understand the essence of how children understand, experience and express their anger with others, from their perspectives because understanding children's early experiences with aggression can lead to a better understanding of the long-term effects. It is clear that children have a significant understanding of aggression; however they have a different understanding of the relationship between aggression and anger than adults. Children understand that when an individual is acting aggressively she or he is feeling angry; however they know that when they themselves are feeling angry they do not have to act aggressively. They have a choice in the way they act and react.

Children are developing a foundation for understanding and experiencing their world. An emotional vocabulary, emotional awareness, and appropriate coping strategies

at a young age will set them up for success in the long term. Research shows that maladaptive experiences with anger and aggression in childhood can lead to an increased risk of mental illness in adulthood (Burk, Armstrong, Park, Zahn-Waxler, Klein, & Essex, 2011; Martin-Storey et al., 2011; Merrell et al., 2008; Olweus et al., 1999). It is possible that an understanding of children's experiences with anger and aggression can identify antecedents that clinicians and school staff can recognize.

The social interaction effects of anger and aggression do seem to have importance for children. Friendship and peer acceptance can be an accurate predictor for future mental health. Children report that friendship is very important and that social isolation is a frightening idea. They trust that all relationships are repairable, but when it seems that this is not the case they describe feeling sad, angry, confused and heartbroken. These types of emotions could lead to depression later on if the relationship is never repaired and the child begins to feel hopeless and lonely as well.

Understanding how children experience and understand anger and aggression can teach counsellors how best to intervene in an effective manner. It has become clear that children have an entire world that adults are not privy to, with their own social norms and interactions that are never made aware to adults. Teachers and children agree that adult intervention is not always required or wanted. It is important for helping professionals to be aware that once they become involved, the problem may be beyond the child's ability to solve and that telling them to work it out themselves may not be successful. Teaching the basics and building on what children already know is the best way professionals can effectively help children.

It is important for researchers to understand how children understand experience and act their anger with others, from their perspectives because while there has been much research about children and emotions, currently there is little literature from the perspectives of the children themselves. Learning about a child's perspective of anger will provide a deeper understanding of a topic in which research has provided a breadth of understanding already. For example, it could have been predicted that children have a difficult time with social isolation, but to learn that they feel heartbroken provides a deeper understanding. Children's points of view are often negated because they are children. To understand children we need to give them a voice and the respect of hearing that voice.

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Appendix A: Letter of information

LETTER OF INFOMRATION
CONTROL

Introduction
My name is Jason Brown and I am an Associate Professor and Psychologist at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. My colleagues, Elizabeth Nowicki a former elementary teacher and now Associate Professor and Danielle Aziz a child and youth care worker and Director of Onward Social Skills are conducting research into emotional awareness among children and would like to invite you and your daughter or son and her or his teacher to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study
The aims of this study are to understand how talking about and labeling emotions can help children express themselves effectively with their peers at school. We will provide 10 one-hour group presentations to all students in selected grade 3 classes about emotions and getting along with others. Your child's classroom will serve as a control group – they will not initially receive the presentations but will complete the other tasks (only if you agree that your child may participate) so that we can compare their responses to the class that initially receives the program. However, your child's class will be provided the entire program after the research component is completed.

If you agree to participate
If you agree to participate in this study your daughter or son will be asked to fill out questionnaires about anger, self-esteem, and relationships with peers at school. These will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and be given to students 10 weeks apart, at the beginning of the study and at the end, as well as 8 weeks later. She or he will also be asked to participate in audio-recorded group discussions with her or his peers at school about emotional awareness. These will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, each week for ten weeks, and once again 8 weeks later. The audio-recordings of the group discussions will be transcribed into written format for analysis. Students who do not have parental consent to participate in the research will not complete the questionnaires and will not participate in the group discussions, and instead be offered a separate activity, based on the regular curriculum, to be determined in consultation with their teacher.

Confidentiality
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name, your child's name nor information which could identify you or your child will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. It will be stored securely and shredded after the results are written.

Risks & Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on you or your child's treatment at school.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Jason Brown.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix B: Consent

Jason Brown, Ph.D., C.Psych., R.S.W., University of western Ontario

Elizabeth Nowicki, Ph.D., University of Western Ontario

Danielle Aziz, CYW, Director, Onward Social Skills, London, Ontario

CONSENT FORM
FOR STUDENTS

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that my child may participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of child (please print):

Signature of Child:

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Interview questions

1. What did you learn about dealing with anger this week?

2. What are some good/positive things that happened between you and your classmates this week?

3. What are some not so good/negative things that happened between you and your classmates this week?

Appendix D: Meaning Units by Code

Passages by Code:

Strategies to cope with anger

You should just try to not look at them and ignore them and like if you see them just walk away and don't think about it

Ya I did want to just squeeze something

you tell them that you don't like when they ignore you and if they could please answer you back but and then if they say I don't want to then you just say okay you don't have to answer me cuz you don't want to make a big fight about not saying hello

Like there's at my old school there's this boy in my class who had problems with anger and he used to get really upset and had to go out to the hallway to calm down

And um physical can lead to something worse like when you're get when you're angry it could lead to something worse like out of controlness and maybe even have to go outside because because you don't want to or you have to go in another room with a shut door

Um that I have friends to make me feel better when that [one girl and another girl] they um they made me feel better when people were teasing me

Because I don't like how it's said to me so I might go I have an anger ball at home and you have to squeeze it and then it tells you what to do when you're angry it's like a mood thing and so I squeeze that and it tells me what to do it either tells me to leave it alone if it's not that big so you squeeze it and then you shake it and then tell what happened and that tells you what to do

Um when I said that I want to bite something when im angry if I had play-d'oh nearby I would open it and bite that

When I'm mad I get tape and I wrap it wound my thumb and I bite on it

Sometimes when I get mad I do nothing

Um if it happens at school or at my house after school I would go into my hot tub but if it happens at my house I would just go into my hot tub.

So he could get calm and um we just like I let him play with my ipod cuz he doesn't have one yet

Well this is not how this is not about it but um my brother um he he was not really calm like it was like he was having anger problems but he actually doesn't so my mom is like but um my mom is like get some rope get some ductape and put the ductape on his mouth and tie him up

Playing games ya

Like I said sometimes I would go and my and my ball its not really squishy but it when you hold onto it for a really long time it gets warm and that sometimes makes me calm down

Like, I like I squeeze it for a long time and then my hands start to warm up and then it makes me feel like I don't want to do anything anymore.

Um I learned that if you have a problem that's too big for you to handle just walk away and put it behind you in the past

When you get angry um when something distracts you and you forget about it. Like me, once um somebody destroyed my foot and they destroyed one of my friends foot so they destroyed my foot and um without asking me and I didn't do anything to their foot

I got kinda mad but then I went up to into my room and I kinda just sat on my bed and had a nap and I forgot all about it.

Um it was a couple of days ago, like it wasn't that snowball fight thing, it was a different thing where we were also building a fort with a roof and it was really cool and someone also like I don't know him he decided to break my fort and then he ran out of the yard but then I just kept my problems to myself because I can rebuild it again

Um that if you have a problem and it's something that you can't handle just walk away and try and put it behind you in the past

That it makes you like want to squeeze something or makes you want to hurt someone or sometimes you want to break something

I didn't do anything, until she just said that one day she might say that she want to be my friend and id just say no

Um it was gonna make me sad and cry but I kept it in and then and then um ill just pretend to be her friend because my friend um she really likes her um I think and I'm her friend because my friend likes her so I'm her friend now

Um when you're angry you might want to jump off a cliff cause I was angry and I wanted to um I was pretending my bathtub was a cliff so um I I wanted to jump so I could break my leg cuz I was angry

That sometimes when you're angry sit down and try to like think about what you're gonna do or if you can't handle yourself then just sit in your room

If you're angry you can you want wanna like if you're angry then you wanna confess like you wan you wanna like to like I tried to tell my parents to take me to the park for my birthday but they said it was a rainy day so I tried to tried I tried to I was I I was angr I was angry at the weather so I argued with the weather

I hit my bed and hurt my knuckles

Ya I had my donkey and my donkey always makes me feel better

I got angry I tried to inoy noy ignore it but it didn't work so I went downstairs to my room and I read and I forget about forgot about it so when it was time for dinner um I wasn't mad

Where to get help

Go tell the teacher

If you see a fight you shouldn't get in it and tell the teacher

But this was at recess at my old school so I had to run and get a teacher

Um well last week there was someone that was really angry at someone and I asked them what the problem was but they didn't want to tell me because they were still really angry but then after a couple days later I asked them again and they told me what the problem was so and I asked who did that to you but then they didn't want to talk to me really so then in the afternoon I asked then again and then they answered and then I went and got the person and I told them to say sorry to each other and try to make and be friends again

I tried to make my sister um feel comfortable and I and then I made her feel comfortable again but but um but and then I helped her because she was I helped her because she was skipping classes and I was kinda helping her like doing her math and stuff.

And I made him cry and he went to the teacher

No I pretty much just sat there and tried to rebuild it but no matter how hard I tried I couldn't and then ... so after that I went to tell my mom and she got really upset and then she checked the backyard to find it but then my cat found it

So I told the teacher

Uh I would just say stop following me if they kept on following me I would tell the teacher

Um I someone I saw someone today getting beat up and it was really kind of bad for me and I felt bad so I went and told the teacher

Because I went and I told the teacher because they went and they ran onto the other side of the field

Resolving conflict

That I made good choices with somebody in miss d's class um one of their friends weren't being very nice, I mean not miss d's class they were two grade two students, and one I mean grade one students and one of them by accident hit them

in the nose so I got the other one that hit them in the nose and I told them to say sorry to his friend and he said that he already did and I but the other one said but I didn't hear you so I just made them say it again and then they were friends again

Ya, we solved it. And now we are best friends again, bfffs

Um so this girl and someone else in my class and another girl left this tiny girl and I was like are you okay and we started talking

Um we started to call parents and stuff but the parents wouldn't answer.

And I told them to not go there but you know [name], like she was saying its okay I know how to deal with him but

Um that [name] was feeling sad because somebody in our class was teasing her about the person that she likes and I went over and I asked her if she was okay and cuz I a saw her feeling sad. And I have another thing

Somebody had a fight and then we made up again

They said sorry

Because it tells me if I have to leave the problem alone or continue with the problem and try to fix it

I would tell them, I would ask them what the problem is about and then if it was a problem about an arguing problem about that I know this and you don't know that then I would like if it was an arguing problem about a weird thing that you don't need to be arguing about then I would just tell her or him to just leave it alone and leave it in the past but if it was a problem like a big problem where you had to fix it or something would happen then I would sometimes tell them to maybe go and fix their problem and try to make friends again like this week there was somebody that was crying and I asked him what happened and he told me because his friend poked him and then I asked him who is it and he told me and then I asked him and then I went and got the person and then I standed there and then they were talking and then I asked did you guys say sorry to each other and then he said yes the one person said yes but the other person said I didn't hear you but he's like but I did say it so I was like just say it again.

Um by by doing by doing like making her feel better like it's okay what kind of classes do you have

Somebody got mad at me and then I brought my toys out and he was like can you play and I was like ya I can let him play and that's how I solved my problems

He said that he would never play with me again if I didn't let it happen

So after like today I made up with her again

I was just calling her well she called me and said that she was sorry

Um me and my friend made up. / because I kept on saying sorry and sorry and then she got really annoyed and then finally she just said I forgive you

Um me and we were like we had a big fight it was last year well it was when I was um in a different school and um she really got angry at me but then I said you can you please be my friend and cause she was so sad cause like we were like best friends but we had like a big fight and she was so sad and I was so sad and then we became best friends forever but I still miss her because I live far away from her

Um me and my classmate had a fight and I'm trying and trying to say sorry and stuff but she won't forgive me I don't know why but I'm trying my best to be nice to her and she's still being rude to be back and I'm trying to be like I'm trying to be nice to her I'm trying to like help her she's still not my friend so I keep on saying sorry but she still won't forgive me so that sorta makes me sad

Because she's actually my best friend and then we had a sort of a fight and now she won't forgive me

I let it go. I didn't hold a grudge.

Sometimes you guys have a big fight and sometimes it's really hard to make up like you try your best you try to do everything you try to apologize but they still don't say sorry for the mistakes that you do

Well usually when me and my friend have a fight it usually ends the day like either I'm mad at her or she's mad at me

It usually ends that we say sorry to each other.

Um one like me and my friend had a fight and it's still not ending so one of my fights are one of my fights I don't think will ever end

Cause I've tried my hardest and she still says no to me

I've tried apologizing, I've tried saying I won't do it again and I've tried saying I've tried being nice to her I've tried helping her and she always says you know I'm still not your friend

Um me and my friend were really mad at each other um and then we got back together

I have this friend um um she um she we made up today and then she said were not friends because there was this we were playing tag and she couldn't get anybody and I was trying to help her by being happy and then um she um she told me she's not my friend

Um one of my friends, I'm not gonna name her name, but um uh like she took one of my other friend's shoe and like um I like I was trying to get it back from her to give it back to the other friend and like now she's not my friend because of like because like I gave it back to her and not her and like I've been trying to apologize but like I don't think she's gonna forgive me

Um it might take like maybe a couple days but I was friends with this person so I think they're gonna forgive me? I was friends like with them before today so I think they're gonna forgive me

Um I think it might take a week or maybe two because that girl and [another girl] were really good friends

Uh huh, something good that happened is you know how I was mad at that person this week um I made up

Um they told me they were sorry, but then the first time I didn't forgive them

Five times – it was the I decided that we were really good friends before that happened so I decided to forgive them

I said somebody pushed me down the slide and I hurt my knee and then that person said it might be me but I didn't mean to because I was sliding down the slide too and then maybe I might have slipped your foot and I said okay well that's okay and now I'm gonna be your friend

Because she said sorry and she said that she didn't mean to. But other people were saying I didn't do it but she said that maybe I'm honest

Um so a long time ago I was mad at my friend and I was really mad at her and she was really mad at me and then finally after like I don't know 6 weeks we became friends again.

She forgave me and I forgave her … well the first time I didn't forgive her

And then I forgave her

But we made up

Ya cause we made up re: Oh kay, and she's still a friend of yours? You called her your friend, right?

Oh my brother um we um we're playing a game and then I won and then he choke-slammed me onto a bed his bed but it's not very bouncy so I hit I hit the floor and then I didn't talk to him for a couple of days and then he buyed me a smoothie and then we're brothers again

Making choices

Yes, sometimes no. (re: you should never start a fight - is that easy to do?)

Um to be a friend means that you don't lie and stuff because I made a bad choice because I have a friend and she's in my class and we pretended that we were sisters and we told everybody but and then my friend that I said that I was sisters with told everybody the truth and now one one person is not my friend anymore

Where anger initiates

They do nothing I hate them sometimes because I say hi and they don't say it back

He called me a whoopdidoo butt

Like you feel like out of control because sometimes because I have this friend in program when somebody wouldn't let him make a sword and he was out of control

He thought it would be funny when you're when this guy that he doesn't really like when he pulls out the chair cuz he sits behind him he's gonna pull the chair even further and then he sat the other one tried to sit down he fell he hit this side and then he fell again hit this his throat and then his the other side and now he can't eat because his jaw's all messed up and then now he's in the hospital. And he got suspended

Um well she was being mean by like getting me in trouble when she did something but she just got me in trouble.

Um well um I was like playing with my friends and then um there was this girl I forgot her name she tripped and she blamed it on me so I had to go on the wall and it was at recess

Um people keep on teasing me about who I have a secret crush on

I have a friend that has a secret crush she told me too and there's this girl that hates her and um she heard her talking to me about her secret crush and then she went and told the whole school

But he came after me and then he told the principal on me but I didn't do anything

Sometimes I get angry at my brother cuz he um he does like mean stuff and um but sometimes I'm not angry at him because like he's being nice but um sometimes I am angry at him because he did something and it gets me upset

Um sometimes I get mad at my brother for like changing my passcode on my ipod

Um one time my dad got angry at my sister because um she was skipping classes

When I built a fort ummm today they destroyed the fort

Angry. And they broke my snow chair

Ya I made a fort and someone broked it, like him

Um a couple days ago, me and my friends had a snowball fight and someone broke my fort on purpose and it wasn't part of the snowball fight, like I went in to get a drink but then someone I think said lets go destroy a girl's fort and then they destroyed it and then they ran away and they hid

Um there was one time when my brother he took he took something that my friend left um at my house and I got mad at him because um cause it was something that was very special to them, it was a ring

Something about everybody, it happens to people. So it you are very mad and you can't do anything and the person is laughing at you and you punch him if ya for real that happen everybody. The getting mad

When I was playing x-box um I was playing call of duty and my brother shut it off

Knocked him out

Once my friend and me was very very mad at each other because he wants the black controller and I want the white one and he just wants the white one for no reason

Um they may get along by saying by getting like a group of different friends that they haven't met before and like they didn't want to be friends with someone else and like excluding them and not being nice to them and saying like your hair is pretty and then not saying that to the other person

When I was playing x box, I was on my kills streak and um my game controller was done

Um sometimes when I um get angry cuz yesterday my brother he was annoying me and calling me poopy pants

Um I was angry at my brother cuz he kept putting his hand in my face and he's like I'm not touching you I'm not touching you and then um s um my mom was really tired and so I didn't want to punch him so then um I slapped him and then he pinched me really hard and then I pinched him really hard and then that was it that was the whole day

Um when somebody's making a joke and then they kick you and then they kick you when they're making a joke you can get angry and react

Ya um sometimes when sometimes me and my sister have problems and um I kinda get angry at her because cause cause she always always always says that I'm you're I always try to say that you're not the boss of me and she says oh yes I am because I'm technically stronger than you and bigger than you and I'm almost taller than her, and and she says that I cannot and she hits me sometimes

One time um when when I was when I was when when at program I was with um somebody they they were my buddy to go to the washroom and so so my buddy got

angry at me for some reason and she said that she she was angry at me because I left when she was doing something in the washroom

Um so one time I was mad at my friend and it was for this really good reason it was because one time she pushed me and another time she kicked me and the other time once she hit me

One time um we were doing a play in front of the class and one of my friends um she came up and pushed me when that wasn't part of the play and then I got mad at her because she kept on pushing me and I didn't want to ruin the play and then so I said so and then I said I'm mad at you

How anger builds

And then I don't know my passcode. And he doesn't tell me.

And then and then sometimes that you need to like before you do something you sorta gotta think

Um this happened today with my friend um I had this friend I don't want to say her name and I tried to be her friend in lunchtime and then I was and um then she wasn't and then I saw her put the paper um like she was talking to my other friend I saw her put the paper like this and she was talking and I thought she was talking behind my back

No, still mad

Um me and my friend had a fight like not fighting as in punching, like a verbal fight and I don't want to give her name though and we were fighting then every time I would look at her she would roll her eyes at me and then I would at the carpet I would try to smile at her and then she would roll her eyes at me and then she would be she would ask everybody and say like oh I like your shirt and I like your shoes but she said it to everybody in the class except for me

Um I learned that normally people have problems when they're angry when like someone's annoying you and you don't tell them you're angry and it just keeps on happening and happening and happening

Normally when that happened to me I would sit there quietly until I get too annoyed and then I would either tell the teacher or just go like that

They said only only 10 and up can go in here and some and my cousin got to go in and she was 9 cause she was she wasn't bugging them and um and um she wasn't bugging them but I was just trying to say to them they kept shutting the door on me because um cause I was just trying to say something

Um I didn't say anything or anything uh I just um I just ignored it and I just pretended like they didn't say anything cause I don't want to make anything worse

Because sometimes the people follow you

I feel nerve wrecking because you're trying to get away from the problem but that person keeps on like wanting to fight with you more

Um I have this friend and um um um she threw her shoe and then um the people that were playing grounders with her um kept playing with it and playing catch and then uh when we came in I told them that person like that was holding it like this over the fence um that they shouldn't do that with um um that's they shouldn't do that with um that's they shouldn't do that with but if it's not their stuff and then she turned out to be not my friend and then the friend that I was standing up for her was not my friend and if happened just today

Something that happened is that I got really mad at one of my friends and it was really I really didn't like it and then it was a friend on my street I'm not gonna say her name though and she was really annoying me and we got into a fight

Um when we were playing grounders, me and [a girl] and [another girl] and [name] and [name] we were all playing grounders and I was it and a friend and I was it and you have to shut your eyes on the climbers and so I did that and somebody came up behind me and they took my shoe off and then another girl went to try and grab it but now this other person is not her friend because I went and I told the teacher because they went and they ran onto the other side of the field with it and [name] holded it up and it almost went over the fence

Rationale for anger

I dunno feel happy (re: what happens when you punch someone)

Maybe you feel like you can't really control yourself like you feel like you want to stop inside but you don't want to outside

Like well ya sometimes when I'm really really angry um or sometimes I just think about that I might get in trouble if I do something like that um so

I was playing and he got too out of control and I made him cry and he went to the teacher and I went away before the teacher got me

He got too mad and I couldn't keep it because he was annoying me

Um I just forgot, oh ya, me and my friend we had to run away from this girl, I'm not gonna tell her name, and now they are friends

This week I was mad at someone and it was because I was always it for a game and they never picked me to be out and it made me feel really bad and also I was always it at my old school like everyone always picked me so I didn't like the feeling of doing that all over again

No like my brother my brother was teasing me so then he kicked me and I'm like rrr I got my I got my toy donkey and started sma sma hitting him with that

Physiology of anger

Um sometimes uh I just um hold my breathe and I pass out

Um I've seen people like my friend at my old school um he used to get really red in the face and he used to push me over.

You feel like you want to squeeze something

Sometimes I make fists

Sometimes when you're angry like when I'm angry I want to bite something

Reaction

Yes I get so mad get very frustrated and I hit them

He started to kick walls and he started to punch people and started to push people and I was one of the person that got pushed

And he used to push me over

He used to use me as a punching bag

I kinda get pushy and sometimes I slam doors and I yell and kinda hit people sometimes

Um I learned well I didn't really learn it um like um my friend he got really angry and he started like punching and hurting people

Like this week I looked up like what anger and like what people can do about anger and sometimes people get like really angry and like push people and they start like attacking people and do really bad stuff

Um my friend got really really angry at my old school and he tried to punch me and then he tried to kick me

Um sometimes I feel like I can't do anything about it but I want to do something about it like if I'm getting called names I don't want to do something to hurt somebody but I want to do something about it

Um when you when you're angry you kinda react

I learned that if you get too angry you can like punch someone or burn a building

Like just yesterday, there was someone who I don't want to say her name but she got really mad at me and she started to yell at me

Um me and my friend I don't want to say this person's name we had a fight and then she went and told the teacher on me and she said that I said something about her but I didn't um and then because I asked her if I could use a book and she wouldn't let me and she wasn't using it it was in her desk, and then so I was sorta

felt bad about that so I didn't want to be her friend anymore because she was sorta being rude to me and then now she is giving me dirty looks

And then every time when I try to talk to her she won't answer me

So I punched him in the face

He punched me back

I bit my sister

Um if you are angry you might want to set a fire - a place on fire

My brother has um anger problems and so when he gets angry he can't control it

Um I learned that well someone someone in my family well it's one of my friends, they got really really really angry and they punched me and like broke something and that was really upsetting for me because it was one of my things

Cause you might break something.

My brother punched me

I ran into the wall

Then I punched him

Um they start breaking stuff and they start hurting people

Um it's like you could scratch yourself like right here

When you're angry and you can stamp your feet and you can hurt yourself every time you're too mad

I almost broke the TV

Acting angry is like if you're really angry you might run into something or do something that's or like break something that's breakable

When you're driving angrily beep beep crash!

Um I grab my donkey and I smack him with it

That people can get very angry and they can sometimes react physically

Like they can hit you they can punch you they can kick you that whats happened to me

Um when I got angry cause my brother was annoying me he was poking me in here and there and I told and I told them to stop and he wouldn't stop so I wanted to punch him but I couldn't because I knew I was going to get in trouble so all I

did was try to punch my fist through the wall and in my but that was in my mom's room and there's still a hole in the wall and it hurt

Um mad and then I I go and I march into her room and we start tackling each other

And then there was another girl and then she came up and she punched me in the arm and it really really hurt

Definition of anger

Anger is when you're mad at someone and you sometimes can get out of control

Anger is when you're really mad at someone or something and you and sometimes you feel like you want to hit something or break something or do something that you wouldn't usually do

I learned that anger can sometimes be out of control

re: So has everybody here every had a fight with their friend? - Ya

Cognitions

Well when you think angry it's like you're always thinking bad things about the person that you're angry at or you sometimes you just have to let your thoughts out and you have to like see them

I thought um I'm gonna be like I'm all broken boned and I would never see the sunshine again because when you're angry you feel darkness in you and so and so I was never gonna see the sunshine because I might die

Related feelings

I feel guilty

You could feel, you would feel mad and um you could feel like you're doing something wrong

Kinda sad and angry cuz it was technically her fault

It makes me feel really bad and kinda breaks my heart too

When people were teasing me, it made me feel insulted.

Very confused

Very betrayed.

You feel sometimes like … you're not you're sad you're mad you're anything else but happy

You might feel betrayed

Disappointed

And I felt kinda scared because he was yelling and um I kinda cried because it was it was really really scary for because I'm 8 years old right now um and it's a big problem it was a big problem

Okay

They were acting like silly and they wanted to break it just to be cool then they came destroyed it and I looked at it and I laughed

Angry upset

It makes me feel angry and sad because I feel angry because she told a lie to the teacher that I said something about her

Like angry and sad because I shouldn't have scared him I should have just said can you please put it back

Keep on saying sorry but she still won't forgive me so that sorta makes me sad

Sad because I made a bad choice and I'm trying to make it up but she's still won't let me

That made me feel really sad because I it would just happen today and like we just made up and um um at lunch recess and then at the end of the day she doesn't want to be my friend which made me really sad

Because it happened today in music class and it really hurt my feelings because one of my friends said [name] because we got out when we were playing 4 corners and then one of my friends said that it was all because of me

Sad

You might feel guilty inside you might feel like guilty for doing something that made you feel angry

I feel nerve wrecking

Kinda sad because I stood up for her um and then I kinda felt happy cuz she um she sometimes bullied me

Because I got to slap him(re: Can you tell me why you're smiling when you say that?)

Awareness of anger

That one time that me and [a friend] um fighted about something ... I don't remember but we fight we fought we ...

re: So you understood how that person felt? – Nod

I felt really angry but I don't know why he was angry at me

Effects of anger on others

Cries and goes to a teacher (re: what happens to the person you punch)

Um it made me feel a little mad because I don't like getting pushed but I was a little bit okay with it because sometimes I I feel like I want to do something when I'm mad too

And um I was just scared because um he was actually getting really out of control

He got really angry and he started like punching and hurting people and one had to go to the hospital

I felt kinda scared and I just wanted to run out of the room (re: uncle drunk and angry)

Um um once my my brother got me angry and my friend because whenever he comes to my house he tried to attack us so we get so we get anything we can to protect ourselves

She was yelling at me and I had to run away because she tried to bite me

I made someone cry today

[Name] called me and then she said my brother my brother got mad at her and he was gonna kill himself and crash into stuff in the car but he didn't. I said I said lock the door. She locked it the front door and she said but it doesn't lock and then and then my brother just came in and she's like all the doors are locked and I heared a door slammed and he was like oh I just came in.

Try not to be angry because you might hurt somebody and you might like you might bring the deaths to somebody and you might end somebody else's life

Consequences of anger

I don't know, happy still? (re: how would it feel if someone hit you)

Because if they punch they have a very bad attitude and they get beat back

Ok, well me and one of my friends she's in miss d's class and you do teach her, we we weren't fighting all weekend and all week since a couple weeks ago and so we get to have a sleepover on Friday

And um then um he felt really really guilty and he was afraid to come back to school because he thinks people are gonna tease him and tell him why did you do that

I was playing on my Wii and um my brother shut it off so he could watch his favorite episode of I really do not know what it is but he shut it off and I really didn't like it so um then I scared him then he bit me

Um I have this friend um she um um she I went I'm not her friend um because like the fight started when she found something on the ground and I told her it was like this hand sanitizer I told her to leave it because it wasn't her property it was somebody else's I told her to leave it so some the person could find it when it wouldn't they come back to school and um she didn't leave it she just took it so um and it was um and it was also a fight um of a big lie.

Sometimes you want to hit something but you know you don't want you know you can't because it can get put behind the law

Um you can maybily get hurt by being yourself by being angry like me while I was riding my bike when I fell and got really angry because I was crazy. I was just wanted to go to see Boadie but I was crazy

Um I learned that it could take you the wrong place to the wrong place um it might take it might also take you to drugs

Like if you feel angry sometimes um sometimes when you like if you get hurt and you're really really really angry you might even hurt yourself even more and then sometimes when you're angry angry you might even lead yourself to hospital

Knowing I could get in trouble and just trying to do something else

My mom did know she she knew but she didn't get that angry at us because she got angry at him not me it was his fault so and my brother he technically is going to be angry for the rest of his life to me

I'd tell you that sometimes adults can get angry at other adults and they can get a divorce

Responsibility for actions

I learned that a lot of the time when people get angry they lose control of themselves

How to avoid provoking anger

To not talk out while other peoples talking out.

When there's like little problems don't' like make it into a big fuss.

You shouldn't make the smallest problem into the biggest problem.

Like if somebodys not answering you you don't don't be physical with them

To try to not fight, not add onto fights

Me and one of my friends this was weird because um there is this little dollhouse in program and my friend is in program too and me and my friend were playing with the dollhouse cuz it has like a bunch of people and I was playing with the dollhouse and one of my friends came over and they said that we have to let them play but there was no more things left because there's only three houses (no two) ya there's like a half of a house and a half of a house and then if you put them together it only equals one and there's a little van which is a truck, I mean a car and then she went and told the teacher on us because we said that there wasn't anything left and then we ended up solving it because we let her play and we just shared the house

Yes yes yes yes yes because we weren't trying to be rude, we were just trying to play because she always plays with the dollhouse'

Um you shouldn't like push people when you're angry or don't get really angry and like try to leave somewhere and go get angry at someone else for no reason

Do's and Don'ts

You should never start a fight.

If you're mad at somebodry don't like start a fight.

That's not the way to solve problems (re: hit someone)

Don't be angry.

When you're angry don't physically try to do something to somebody or something

I learned that sometimes when you're angry don't say something hurtful to somebody like (whispered I don't like you) like say like if you did something wrong or if it or if you did something and you didn't mean to do it one of your friends shouldn't say oh [name] oh it's all your fault or something

Um I kind of learned something – never beat up a strong person if they're really strong don't beat them up

That when you're mad you shouldn't punch somebody because let's say I let's say I hot somebody and then they punched me back but if I punched them then that's just giving them the right to punch me back

Making and keeping friends

What it means to me having a friend cause like if you didn't have a friend you'd be all lonely and sad, but when you have a friend it just cheers you up and sometimes you can be as happy as ever and once like um when I wasn't even here I didn't really have that much friends but um so I was kinda broken hearted and when I had a friend it just cheered me right up.

So me a friend means like being kind, sharing, um being nice to each other, ya

It means like always being honest and um um never telling lies to your friend, so like um so you if uh if someone told you that they had to go somewhere and you were supposed to play with them that would make you sad and that they wouldn't be a good friend, so it means to be honest

It means to be honest because when I had a friend she said she um she promised me she would have a playdate and she pro and she thought she told me a lie that she had a family thing but she actually went to another person's house um and she um she went to another person's house and like I was her best best best friend and the other girl was not really her friend she was just like the bullier and she because she gets bullied from her she thought to be her friend and um then she told me why because she thought I won't let her but I actually would if she for her not to get bullied anymore.

Ya I have this one friend and um she was the nicest girl in the other school and um she helps me and I help her

Um me my friend was mad at me for something because I was scared to show the real me in front of her and then final cause me and my friend , she is in with you guys but in miss d's class and I was lying to my other friend that me and [a friend] have never ever been friends but we really have always been friends so and then I told her and then she got really really mad but and then we made up today

Um I'm friends with most of them but not the girls

I'm friends with all the girls almost all the girls from grade three but no boys only my brother

Because some people might think that boys like star wars and they they like to play star wars all the time when you play with them but you like girl stuff like jewelry and Barbie's and necklaces and hair stuff

I had a problem with one of my friends because um one of my friends were using me as a friend because I would teach like I would make up cheers and stuff and then she said oh I'm not your friend anymore and then she went and now she's using my cheer that I made up and I don't want her to use it because I made it up and now she's showing her whole class and saying that she made it

My friend wasn't my friend because well I didn't say anything someone else told her a lie that I said something but I didn't and it really upset me

I have this friend we were um fighting cause of this toy um um um she didn't really like it cuz she thought that was her and I didn't like it cuz she was not my friend and she kept fighting with me and there's this girl that goes with you too um um she keeps um like hurting my feelings and even though I am her friend she is still hurting my feelings um and once she was like to me at lunch time and

didn't like it and um it was gonna make me sad and cry but I kept it in (you decided to keep it in?) and then and then um ill just pretend to be her friend because my friend um she really likes her um I think and I'm her friend because my friend likes her so I'm her friend now

A friend means like me and [name] are friends because we don't get into arguments and we share our toys with each other and we play with each other but with say if yusar wasn't my friend then we wouldn't play together and we wouldn't share with each other and we wouldn't talk to each other

Um I would say it would take when you have a fight with your friend you might not want to make up with them because if it's technically their fault but it would take some time to make up with them and then if the person makes up with you that's a real friend

Um like a friend is someone who shares with you and plays with you and a friend is someone who well like always be your friend and like even if you get mad at each other you'll stay friends forever

Um a friend means a loving caring helpful like person that you like

So what a friend is is someone who is really nice to you someone who cares for you and someone that always forgives you even if you're really mad at them or if they're really mad at you

This is what a friend is not um I when I tried to make up with that friend I didn't really want to be her friend anymore cause she bullies me a lot and tells me what to do and I don't like it so um I'm thinking not to be her friend ever again

When she starts being nice and not being like a bully and ya (re: Okay do you think you'll change your mind one day?)

So once at school we were looking in the bushes and we found like a gigantic nest of silk worms and we put it in a container and then um everybody got mad at us because we wouldn't let them have one be and especially gage because he would probably ruin them and but like I felt bad because they were getting all mad at me and I still wanted my friends so I let um everybody hold one not keep one and then they made up

It wasn't a fight / I know but shhh ... when she held the shoe over the fence [name] isn't your friend really anymore? / She is / Okay Well [name] isn't really? / No she is. [name] not [name]'s friend

Developmental differences

We don't scream at each other we talk to each other rudely

I think that it's different because the kindergartens don't really care who they're friends with I would say that because like they don't know yet

Most of the kindergartens here they always fight and scream at each other

But I think that um the kindergarteners don't fight like we do because they don't know as much drama as we do like if you're an older girl then you have drama about like hmm like you have drama like well this is my friend and it can't be your friend but in kindergarten they fight about like you said that my hair doesn't look pretty but if my friend said that to me then I wouldn't really care

Cause cause a big kid might like big kids in grade 8 think it's funny to swear at people like miss somebody in miss V's class today um he was swearing at another kid and then they got into a fight but if you're in my grade then if you swore then you get in trouble but if a big kid swore they would still get in trouble but not as much as we do and and I wouldn't fight with my friend and swear in the fight

Um they're older so like their friends would be different and they would like know more about each other if they've known each other for a long time so they might know what they don't like and like so if they're really good friends they wouldn't say something that they don't like

Appendix E: Codes by Theme

Theme 1: Managing anger

Strategies to cope with anger, Where to get help, Resolving conflict, Making choices

Theme 2: The roots of anger

Where anger initiates, How anger builds, Rationale for anger

Theme 3: The expression of anger

Physiology of anger, Reaction, Definition of anger, Cognitions, Related feelings, Awareness of anger

Theme 4: Consequences of anger

Effects of anger on others, consequences of anger, Responsibility for actions

Theme 5: Avoidance strategies

How to avoid provoking anger, Do's and Don'ts

Theme 6: Impact of anger on relationships

Making and keeping friends, Developmental difference

Appendix F: Ethics Approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Western *Education*

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1104-3
Principal Investigator: Jason Brown
Student Name:
Title: Promoting positive peer relations through emotional awareness training within inclusive elementary classrooms.
Expiry Date: May 31, 2012
Type: Faculty
Ethics Approval Date: May 30, 2011.
Revision #:
Documents Reviewed &
Approved: UWO Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2010-2011 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Jacqueline Specht	Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music
Dr. Robert Macmillan	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs & Research (ex officio)
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (ex officio)

Nicole Hamel

Education	MASTERS OF EDUCATION – Counselling Psychology
	University of Western Ontario, London ON
	Pending Completion: April 2013

BACHELOR OF ARTS – Psychology Major
University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge AB
GPA: 3.58/4.0   Dean's Honour List
Date of Completion: October 14, 2006

BACHELOR OF ARTS – Psychology Major (Univ-Transfer Program)
Mount Royal College, Calgary AB
September 2002 to April 2004

Related Experience
Madam Vanier Children's Services, Focused Family Therapy / Early Years Therapy
September 2012 – April 2013
- Providing brief family therapy for children aged 7-13, and children aged 6 and under
- Writing comprehensive assessment reports, planning weekly therapy session, case management and coordination

Woods Homes Float Staff, Youth and Family Counsellor
July 2011 – August 2011
- Providing Counselling on a daily basis at various agency programs with clients ranging from age 6 to 24, in need of stabilization, with severe behavioural and mental health concerns, child sex offenders, and youth with adult transition needs.
- Learning and implementing routines, structure and expectations of agency each program
- Constant assessment of clients progression
- Co-facilitating different therapies and treatments with the children

Boys and Girls Club, Millstream Community Club, Assistant Coordinator
September 2010 – June 2011
- Running before and afterschool programming for children in kindergarten to grade 6
- Planning and preparing activities and snacks, and purchasing necessary supplies (taking into consideration the needs of 2 children diagnosed with Autism, 2 children diagnosed with ADHD, and the various financial, social, and emotional struggles of various youth in club).
- Creating monthly calendar and newsletter to keep parents informed of club activities and events.
- Supervising club staff, and serving as a main contact for club volunteers.
- Promoting night programs by contacting area schools, and planning special events such as family BBQs.
- Maintaining open communication with parents on a daily basis, and informing parents of any noteworthy events involving their children.

- Addressing any behavioural issues and facilitating resolution to conflict between children.

Woods Homes Community Resource Team, Crisis Counsellor
September 2009- July 2010

- Providing over the phone support to individuals in crisis, typically parents or guardians in crisis with their adolescent.
- Collecting necessary information over the phone to properly assess the current situation, then consulting with a team of crisis workers and psychologists about challenging cases.
- Facilitating in-home mediated visits with parents or guardians and adolescents to discuss the issues surrounding the crisis event and helping the family come up with a plan for change.
- Providing information about resources for callers to follow up with, often for longer term supports.
- Making follow-up calls to check in with the families who had home visits, may need further supports, or where safety was a concern.
- Making referrals to a 5 day Stabilization program within the Woods Homes agency.
- Completing Triage Assessment Scales to assess the level of crisis the parent or guardian is in based on emotional, cognitive and behavioural components, and rating any changes.
- Collecting and compiling clientele demographic data to target service needs.

Woods Homes Exceptional Needs Program, Youth and Family Counsellor
February 2007- September 2009
Supervisor: Jeanette Tetreault, Annick Mulvihill, Tobi Martin (Clinician)

- Case Management (Attending case management review meetings and intake meetings, client goal planning and tracking, journal work and processing, arranging family meetings and conducting weekend debriefs, using different counseling interventions to suit each client's needs)
- CAFAS (Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale) rating to assess client progress.
- Implementing and maintaining daily structure and routine
- Supporting families and youth in crisis (over the phone, in person, and in home) before bringing them back to the program during home visits.
- Providing community resources for family and getting youth involved with resources and activities, and ongoing supports once they leave the program.
- Serving as a liaison between youth, families, counselors, social workers, doctors, and schools
- Co-facilitating parent support group
- Planning activities for program, youth, and families (organizing campus BBQs, creating a Christmas calendar, facilitating a booth at the CAMHP fair, organizing Christmas fundraiser, planning and cooking for Thanksgiving and Easter dinners)
- Volunteering for various agency events (Children's Gala Fundraiser, Summer activities, Youth week BBQ, Christmas Booths)

Research Experience
University of Western Ontario, Teaching Assistant
September 2012 – April 2013
- Assisting with teaching of Cross Cultural Counselling course for M.Ed Counselling Psychology program.
- Reviewing and planning weekly course content.
- Supporting students with group class projects and liaising with community partnerships with South London Community Resource Centre and Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

Wilfred Laurier University, Research Assistant
May 2012 – December 2012
- Assisting Jocelyn Booton and Carol Stalker on a project entitled "Clinical Outcomes and Cost-Effectiveness of Walk-In Counselling Clinics: A Controlled Study"
- Participant recruitment and data collection at Family Services Thames Valley counselling centre.
- Consent for participation obtained over the phone through reading a scripted letter of information.
- Contacting participants over the phone to complete Baseline questionnaire and follow-up questionnaires.
- Coding questionnaires for data and entering data into spreadsheets.
- Working independently while being supervised long distance; regular and effective communication with fellow data collectors as well as supervisor.

University of Western Ontario, Research Assistant
June 2012 – November 2012
- Assisting Jason Brown with a project through South London Community Resource Center with Mohamed Al-Adeimi to facilitate focus group for youth and parents of newcomer families
- First round of focus group collected information from each focus group on flip charts
- Transcribed information from flip-charts into coherent word document
- Prepared themes for concept mapping in round two of focus groups
- Facilitated youth focus group round two to rank themes for concept mapping.

University of Western Ontario, Research Assistant
January 2012 – March 2012
- Assisting Jason Brown and Elizabeth Nowicki on a project entitled "Promoting positive peer relations through emotional awareness training within inclusive elementary classrooms"
- Supporting in the facilitation of the Anger Blanket Program in a grade 3 classroom
- Running weekly focus groups with grade 3 participants regarding their understanding of anger within their social contexts
- Administering pre and post study questionnaires to grade 3 participants (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, and Children's Inventory of Anger)
- Transcribing focus groups for qualitative analysis

Awards and Honours

- Woods Homes Service Recognition: Nominated for Service to Colleagues Award 2009
    For providing Service to other staff that was helpful or innovative.
- Woods Homes Service Recognition: Nominated for Direct Service Award 2007
    To an individual who has demonstrated outstanding ability and extraordinary effort while consistently maintaining an exceptional level of competence in their daily service delivery.
- Jason Lang Scholarship 2005
    A scholarship awarded to full-time students with a minimum of a 3.2 GPA.