

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 5 (2010) 1371–1375

---

---

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

---

---

WCPCG-2010

# Anger management instruction for mothers: a cognitive behavioural approach

Mohsen Shokoohi-Yekta<sup>a,\*</sup>, Akram Parand<sup>a</sup>, Nayereh Zamani<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup>College of Psychology and Educational Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Received January 5, 2010; revised February 9, 2010; accepted March 28, 2010

---

## Abstract

The aim of the current study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral anger management program for mothers. The design of this study was quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest without control group. 22 mothers who were volunteers participated in this research and anger management program was implemented for seven sessions, each session two hours per week. Data were collected utilizing State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory and Anger Evaluation Scale to assess parents' anger toward their children. Findings of this research indicate the effectiveness of anger management training based on cognitive-behavioural approach on reducing anger in mothers. Finally, implications of the findings, research limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

*Keywords:* Anger control, parent education, cognitive-behavioral intervention.

---

## 1. Introduction

In the last decade many researchers have paid attention to anger, violence (Kitamura & Hasui, 2006; Slep & O'Leary, 2007; Peterson, Ewigman & Vandiver, 1994) and anger management programs for different age groups (Fung & Tsang, 2007; Sukhodolsky, Golub, Stone & Orban, 2005; Quong, 2006; Humphrey & Brooks, 2006; Kellner, Bry & Colletti, 2002; Sanders et al, 2004; Kipps-Vaughan, 2000). It has been demonstrated that anger is a critical problem in human communication (Koop & Lundberg, 1992).

Various studies show harmful effects of parent's anger on parent – child interaction (Sedlar & Hansen, 2001). A number of studies also show that expressing anger in an inappropriate way could be predictive of child abuse (Fetsch & SchultZ & Wahler, 1999).

---

\* Mohsen Shokoohi-Yekta. Tel.: +9821-88250062-5; fax: +9821-77636111.  
E-mail address: [ms-yekta@uiowa.edu](mailto:ms-yekta@uiowa.edu).

Considering the negative effect of anger and violent behavior on mental health of individuals, any tense and negative mother-child interaction could seriously affect child development and family well-being. According to different studies, anger and aggressiveness is an experience that children learn from their environment.

So, parents can be a model of violence for their children (Smith, 2004, Paterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). Researchers acknowledge that factors such as family insecurity, poor disciplinary actions, insufficient parental support, and parents' violent amongst the most important factors causing violence in children (Kazdin, 1991, Svare, 1983, Paterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989).

Novaco designs cognitive-behavioral interventions for anger management in 1975, based on Meichenbaum stress inoculation model. Anger management program offers training on cognitive, behavioral, and physiological components of anger, and enable learners to use these techniques in real life. Considering anger as a natural and normal emotion in any training program is crucial. The main objective of these programs is to help people to manage their anger, in order to express it in an appropriate and acceptable way in different circumstances (Sukhodolsky, Golub, Stone & Orban, 2005).

Anger management training programs usually have three sections covering different techniques. Anger eliciting management is based on relaxation techniques, which seeks to reduce severe experiences of anger (Kassinove, & Sukhodolsky, 1995; Matin, Watson & Wan, 2000). Problem-solving section consists of cognitive reconstruction techniques, and focuses on cognitive- social short comes in the process of anger and aggressiveness. Social skill section includes revising behavior, role modeling, and corrective feedback for inappropriate methods of expressing anger. These training programs will enhance social skills, and enable people to solve interpersonal conflicts, and increase their coping skills for expressing their anger (Sukhodolsky, Golub, Stone & Orban, 2005).

Sukhodolsky, Golub, Stone, & Orban (2005) studied the effectiveness of anger controlling training. Results show that social problem-solving and social skill trainings were effective in reducing aggression, misbehaviours, and frequency of angry expression. Fetsch, Schultz, & Wahler (1999) reported that teaching anger management to parents reduces family conflicts, violence, and verbal hostility. In addition, participants reported an increase in the level of anger control, knowledge and awareness, improved outlook, better behaviors, and a reduction in unrealistic expectation from children.

We used Fireworks interventional program in our study. This program using a cognitive-behavioral approach focuses on parent- child relationship, and offers a multi-facet model of anger management training. The present study is evaluating the efficiency of anger management workshops on reducing anger and improving parent-child relationships.

## 2. Methodology

Sample comprised of 22 volunteer mothers; 18 of these mothers were homemakers, and four were employed. Thirteen hold an associate degree or less, six had bachelor degree, and three had a master or higher degree. Their age varied from 27 to 48 years old with an average of 35.54.

Data were gathered before and after the workshop. We used Anger Evaluation Scale (shokoohi-yekta & Zamani 2008) and Spielberger's State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (1999). These instruments were given to participants, before the first session and after the last session of the workshop. Two mothers were absent during the pretest and posttest stages, and their questionnaires were not included in the final calculation. In total, 20 questioners were analyzed.

### 2.1. Instrument

**Anger Evaluation Scale** (Shokoohi-Yekta & Zamani, 2008): This scale was made through a semi-structured interview with mothers and has 69 items in lickret scale, which evaluates three components of anger eliciting situations, anger out, and control strategies. In the present study, we just used anger eliciting situations, which has 30 items in Lickret scale. It evaluates the level of parents' angry reaction, in real or simulated challenging situations, toward their children. In this section, parents evaluate their anger from one (no anger) to six (very angry). Anger

intensity varies from little irritability to a full-size furore. Reliability, using test- retest, after a week was  $r=0.82$ , and  $r=0.96$  using Chronbach alpha procedure.

**State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory** (Spielberger, 1999): This inventory, which is used vastly in pre and post-test stages of many anger management-training programs, is revised version of 44 item-inventory of Spielberger (1999). The revised copy has 57 items, and was published in 1999..In the present study, scales of trait anger, anger expression-out, Anger expression-in, and anger control-in and anger control-out was used.

*2.1.1. Fireworks Program*

In our workshop, we used Fireworks program (Smith, 2004). This program focuses on reducing anger and managing it in parent-child relationships. It utilizes a cognitive-behavioral approach and emphasizes on increasing knowledge, offering strategies to deal with anger eliciting situations, and cognitive reconstruction.

Anger management program was planned in 7 sessions of two-hour workshops. In this program, the definition of anger and its functions, then the difference between anger and other emotions such as fear and shame is explained. In other sessions, the definition of proper and improper anger, the relationship between anger and other emotions, and hypothetical circumstances eliciting anger are explored. Teaching self-monitoring strategies, and explaining the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and actions is the main objective of this training. Through teaching self-expression, seeking assistance (such as social supports, and using different sources in order to solve the problem), and negotiations are some of the measures that are included in teaching problem-solving skills. During workshop sessions, parents were exposed to different, simulated challenging anger eliciting situations in order to evaluate their chain of thoughts, the intensity of their anger, and their physiological and behavioral reactions.

This program is based on the assumption that adjusting irrational thoughts will lead to the change of feelings, and behaviors.

**3. Results**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of participants’ pre and posttest scores in each scale. Despite the positive change in the mean of each factor in posttest stage, some of these changes were not statistically significant. Pretest mean ( $M=8.50$ ) in angry temperament subcategory reduced comparing to its posttest score. In the subcategory of angry reaction ( $M=13.7$ ), average of scores in posttest show reduction. Mean of pretest for anger out ( $M=17.33$ ), and anger in ( $M=19.63$ ) shows reduction. Average of anger control out and in scales in posttest increased comparing to pretest. It means that participating in workshop could increase parents’ skills to control their in and out anger, and they were able to use positive ways of expressing their feelings.

Results from anger evaluation scale shows that pretest mean ( $M=89.0$ ) compared to posttest mean ( $M=79.86$ ) decreased. This is a significant decrease in mothers’ anger toward their children.

Table 1. Average and standard deviations of pre and post-test scores for each subcategory

	Subscales	N	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
State-Trait Anger expression Inventory	Anger temperament	20	8.5	2.35	7.8	2.39
	Anger reaction	20	13.7	2.57	13.1	3.66
	Anger expression out	20	17.33	4.04	17.3	4.24
	Anger expression in	20	19.63	3.38	18.86	4.78
	Anger control Out	20	19.62	5.19	20.8	4.87
	Anger control in	20	19.8	5.04	21.73	4.47
<b>Anger Evaluation Scale</b>		20	89	20.16	79.86	23.87

Mean differences were calculated using t- test. Results from t- test show no significant difference between pre and post-Test scores in subcategories of State-Trait Anger Inventory ( $p>0.05$ ). (see table 2).

Also results presented in table 2 show that difference between pre and post-test means for anger eliciting situations in Anger Evaluation Scale is significant ( $p=0.03$ ). In other word, participating in anger management workshop helped mothers to reduce their anger in specific circumstances toward their children.

Table 1. Results of t -test for comparing pre and post-test means

State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory	subscales	t	df	sig
	Anger temperament	1.67	19	0.11
	Anger reaction	0.79	19	0.43
	Anger expression out	0.03	19	0.97
	Anger expression in	0.82	19	0.42
	Anger control Out	-1.15	19	0.26
	Anger control in	-1.91	19	0.07
<b>Anger Evaluating scale</b>		2.32	19	0.03

## References

- Fetsch, R. J., Schultz, C. J., & Wahler, J. J. (1999). A preliminary evaluation of the Colorado rethink parenting and anger management program. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 23, 353-360.
- Fung, A. L. C., & Tsang, S. K. M. (2007). Anger coping method and skill training for Chinese children with physically aggressive behaviours. *Early Child Development and Care*, 177, 259-273.
- Humphrey, N., Brooks, A. (2006). An evaluation of a short cognitive-behavioural anger management intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion. *Emotional & Behavioral Difficulties*, 11, 5-23.
- Kassinove, H., & Sukhodolsky, D. G. (1995). Anger disorders: Basic science and practice issues. In H. Kassinove (Ed), *Anger disorders: Definition, diagnosis, and treatment*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Kazdin, A. (1991). Aggressive behavior and conduct disorder. In T. Dratochwill & R. Morris (Eds), *The Practice of Child Therapy* (pp. 174-221). New York: Pergamum Press.
- Kellner, M. H., Bry, B. H., & Colletti, L. (2002). Teaching anger management skills to students with severe emotional or behavioural disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, 27, 400-407.
- Kipps-Vaughan, D. (2000). The integration of object relations family therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy: The development of a treatment protocol for increasing anger control in male adolescents with externalizing behaviour difficulties. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61, 1639.
- Kitamura, T., & Hasui, C. (2006). Anger feelings and anger expression as a mediator of the effects of witnessing family violence on anxiety and depression in Japanese. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7, 843-855.
- Koop, C. E., & Lundberg, G. D. (1992). Violence in America: A public health emergency. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 267, 3075-3076.
- Matin, R., Watson, D., & Wan, C. K. (2000). A three-factor model of trait anger: Dimensions of affect, behaviour, and cognition. *Journal of Personality*, 68, 869-897.
- Novaco, R. W. (1975). *Anger control: The development and evaluation of an experimental treatment*. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Paterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, B. B., & Ramsey, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behaviour. *American Psychologist*, 44, 329-335.
- Peterson, L., Ewigman, B., & Vandiver, T. (1994). Role of parental anger in low-income women: Discipline strategy, perceptions of behaviour problems, and the need for control. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 23, 435-443.
- Quong, M. K. (2006). The effectiveness of the open minds peace signs program (structured anger management and life skills program) in the reduction of aggression and behaviour problems in elementary school students in Hana, Maui. *Dissertation*. Argosy University/Hawaii.
- Scott, W. O., Baer, G., Christoff, K. A., & Kelly, J. A. (1984). The use of skills training procedures in the treatment of a child-abusive parent. *Printed in Great Britain*, 15, 329-336.
- Sedlar, G., & Hansen, D. J. (2001). Anger, child behaviour, and family distress: Further evaluation of the parental anger inventory. *Journal of Family Violence*, 16.
- Slep, A. M., & O'Leary, S. G. (2007). Multivariate models of mothers and fathers aggression toward their children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 75, 739-751.
- Smith, C. (2004). *Fireworks*. <http://www.ksu.edu/wwparent/courses/index.htm>.

- Sukhodolsky, D. G., Golub, A., Stone, E. C., & Orban, L. (2005). Dismantling anger control training for children: A randomized pilot study of social problem-solving versus social skills training components. *Behaviour Therapy*, 36, 15-23.
- Svare, B. B. (1983). *Hormones and aggressive behaviour*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Spielberger, C. D. (1999). *Manual for the State Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Whiteman, M., Fanshel, D., & Grundy, J. F. (1987). Cognitive-behavioural interventions aimed at anger of parents at risk of child abuse. *Social Work*, 32, 469-474.
- Shokoohi –Yekta, M., & Zamani, N. (2008). Efficacy of Anger Management Training on Relationship between Mothers and Their Mildly Mentally Retarded and Slow Learner Children. *Journal of Family Research*, 3, 231-246.