

# Angry - intentional, harmful

## Concern

Angry, calculating behavior characterized by low affect and detached behavior that is directly or indirectly harmful to others.

## Description

These students represent a small but significant group of the larger population of kids with anger problems. Rather than being characterized by impulsivity, they are characterized by a cold, calculating approach to violence and manipulation of others. They often seem to be detached, or without affect. In extreme cases they may torture or injure animals, or set fires. More often than not, they will manipulate others into doing something, but will not themselves be vulnerable to punishment. They are often experts at playing teachers/counselors/parents/peers against each other. Sometimes they seem to be without a conscience. Their lack of affect is a clue that they are missing empathy. There are many fewer of these kids than the reactive type, but they account for a disproportionate amount of social injury and civic damage.

There are several possible reasons why students may demonstrate this kind of anger. Boys who witness abuse of their mothers at an early age may learn to stop identifying with her - and others - as a defense mechanism to manage their own emotional pain. Girls who have been seriously sexually abused may learn to not feel as they disassociate from their bodies. Emotional abuse may also cause students to close off their emotional response to others in defense. Members of gangs may have been systematically trained to unlearn their feeling response.

Allowing time for students to explore topics like "Domestic violence" and/or "Abuse" may be necessary. However, it is not necessary to know the root of the problem to provide empathy training.

In a small minority of cases, students are manifesting a deep conduct disorder that needs professional treatment. This program is not designed to meet the needs of those students. Other professional resources must be sought out. However, Ripple Effects can be very helpful with students whose harmful behavior is learned. It can be unlearned and retrained.

## Goals of intervention - students will:

- Develop empathy
- Manage their anger in appropriate ways
- Begin to understand reasons behind their behavior
- Understand the role of risk and protective factors in their actions
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Form positive connection to other students
- Leverage their learning style to develop social-emotional competence

## Suggested scope and sequence - Teens

### Knowing yourself

Learning styles  
Temperament  
Risk and protection  
Strengths  
Understanding feelings

### Managing feelings

Changing feelings  
Physical sensations  
Triggers - inside  
Trigger - outside  
Anger  
Frustration  
Anxiety  
Revenge  
Depression  
Letting go  
Mindfulness  
Self-talk  
Calming down  
Exercise

Identifying with others

Empathy  
Perspective taking  
Asking questions  
Paraphrasing  
Understanding motives  
Consent

### Body language

Showing you care  
Body language

### Challenge topics

Hurting animals  
Rape  
Mean  
Drug dealing  
Witness to violence  
Abuse - sexual  
Fire setting  
Domestic violence

### Being part of a community

Compliments - giving  
Compliments - receiving  
Conversations  
Expressing feelings  
Group discussions  
Introducing yourself  
Joining a group  
Receiving compliment  
Responsibility  
Making apologies  
Respect- showing  
Giving help