**Title: Understanding the Link Between Vulnerability, Anger and Violence**

**Introduction to the Lesson**

This is the fourth in a series of 7 one-hour lessons written by consultant, Lucy Holbrook, which explore the concept of “power” – power over, power to, power with and power within. The aim is to give learners a comprehensive Power Toolkit that includes an understanding of how to use their internal body resources to support that external process of nonviolent social change. Please see the supporting document written by Lucy explaining the rationale for the lessons (Resource Sheet 72).

**Curriculum links:** RSHE, Citizenship, English

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Understand that feeling vulnerable and having needs is a normal part of being human.
* Explain the link between unmet needs, vulnerability and violence.
* Recognise the gendered way males and females are expected to feel in relation to anger.

**Links to violence**

Destructive anger and vulnerability – Power Over as a way to avoid our own vulnerability.

**Links to nonviolence**

Constructive anger – harnessing the energy of our anger to bring about change - can fuel our power to/with/within.

**Concepts:**

Vulnerability (and trust)

Needs (necessities to live/survive) vs. wants (desires)

Feeling Safe (internal reality) Vs. Being Safe (external reality)

**Key Vocabulary**:

Vulnerable - capable of being physically or emotionally wounded; open to attack or damage (online dictionary [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)).

Early Warning Signs

**Activity Resources:**

Resource Sheet 84: “Anger” by Debbie Palphreyman, poem and questions

Resource Sheet 85: Where’s Your Anger in your body?

Video Clips: Inside Out on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1oXx4delIY> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1oXx4delIY>

Resource Sheet 86: “The Person Who Had Feelings”

Resource Sheet 87: Anger Iceberg

The Triune Brain Model PowerPoint

Resource Sheet 88: The Triune Brain Image

Quote “Nobody makes you angry..” on PowerPoint or printed.

PowerPoint

Resource Sheet 89: Anger Thermometer (optional follow-up activities)

Resource Sheet 90: Trigger Tracker (optional follow-up activities)

Resource Sheet 91: What would your anger be? (optional follow-up activities)

Resource Sheet 92: Examples of violence

Resource Sheet 93: Anger supporting information

1. **Starter activity**

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| **Activity** | **Time**  |
| 1. Introduce the theme for the lesson and read the poem “Anger” by

Debbie Palphreyman. (PowerPoint and RS84).Generate some discussion with following questions:* What is the poem about?
* What triggers does the person in the poem have? (Lines 1-4)
* How does being angry affect the person’s body?
* What is adrenaline? (A chemical released in our body to prepare us for action – often “fight” or “flight”).
* What affects did the adrenaline have on the person’s body (lines 10-14).
 | 15 mins. |
| 1. Give each learner a copy of RS85 “Where’s your Anger in Your

Body?” and invite them to spend 5 mins filling in where in their body their anger shows up? Or comes out? Or lives? What physical sensations to they notice and where? Are there any differences in where anger shows up in boys and girls? | 5 mins. |

1. **Main activity**

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| **Activity** | **Time**  |
| 1. **What is anger and what is its purpose?**

Show them the one of the Inside Out YouTube clips below then then ask learners to put their hand up * If theythink anger is positive?
* If theythink anger is negative?
* If theyexperience anger as comfortable?
* If theyexperience anger as uncomfortable?

"Disgust & Anger" Clip - Inside Out – YouTube1 minute <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1oXx4delIY>OR: Inside Out Anger Memorable Moments – YouTube5 min 44 secs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1oXx4delIY>Ask them to discuss in pairs or table groups What is the purpose of anger? What are the benefits of anger? What are the costs of anger?**Feedback:** Ask them to share their thoughts and ensure that the following key points are included in the discussion or your summary of what anger is and it’s purpose:* It is a normal and vital emotion - it doesn’t need to be cured - **AND** what we do with it matters
* Anger is an emotion designed to alert us to something that needs our attention or needs to change. It is a coping mechanism against threats to things we value
* It is often an **“END”** emotion that protects us when we feel vulnerable (you can refer back to triggers in the poem)
* We can use it either **PROTECTIVELY**  or **DEFENSIVELY; SELF AWARENESS** helps us recognise the difference
 | 3 or 7 mins depending which clip you show5 mins |
| 1. **Understanding our vulnerability behind our anger:**

Read RS86 “The Person Who Had Feelings” which illustrates how we hide vulnerability behind our anger and toughness. Ask the learners what they think and feel about the poem? Remind them masking feelings is a very normal thing to do and can sometimes be a really useful short-term strategy to help us get through something. However, if we keep masking uncomfortable feelings for a long time then it can make us unhappy and cause depression and mental ill-health. Explain learners are now going to get the opportunity to think about what might be behind their anger. Show them a copy of RS87 (or PowerPoint slide) the “Anger Iceberg” image and give each learner a sheet of paper so they can create their own Anger Iceberg. Invite them to remember times they have felt angry and if they can remember what was the “trigger” and what were the feelings they didn’t catch because their anger got in the way. Remind learners that our emotions affect our thoughts and behaviour and the sensations we feel in our bodies. **NB** it may be important and helpful to stress that all emotions are normal – they are simply messages about our internal state. None are good or bad, right or wrong; some are just more comfortable than others to experience.  | 13 mins |
| 1. Finish by sharing the **Triune Brain Model** powerpoint slides 3-8 which helps explain howanger can trigger a reptilian brain reaction, rather than a considered response that includes our thinking brain.

Share the two calming strategies:* Flower and Candle Breathing: imagine holding a flower between finger and thumb and breathing in the scent of the flower; then as you breathe out imagine blowing out a candle you are holding between same finger and thumb.
* Breathing: breathe in for the count of 3 and out for the count of 5 (activates the parasympathetic nervous system and helps us calm down).
 | 10 mins |

1. **Reflection**

Share the quote “Nobody makes you Angry you decide to use anger as a response”.

Ask the learners:

If they think boys and girls express their anger differently?

How the link between vulnerability and anger relate to violent and nonviolent action and behaviour?

(**Destructive anger** - Power Over as a way to avoid our own vulnerability

**Constructive anger** – harnessing the energy of our anger to bring about change; can fuel our Power To/With/With)

1. **Suggested follow-up activities**

**1. Anger Thermometer**

Anger always starts “reactive” because the impulse to protect us is primitive and comes from our reptilian brain so isn’t rationalised through our feeling and thinking parts of the brain.

However, when we are calm and have access to feeling and thinking parts of our brain we can learn to analyse our anger more rationally and with practice we develop more self-awareness. The more we get to know our anger the sooner we catch the reactive impulse that starts our anger, and more choices and flexibility we give ourselves for dealing with it.

Conversely, if don’t get to know our anger well we will have very few options for dealing with it, and maybe only one – reacting aggressively.

Many people equate anger with aggression and vice versa. However, they are in fact different – anger is the emotion and aggression is our behavioural response to our emotion - the behaviour we choose when we feel the emotion anger. Aggression is what we do with anger, using its energy to fuel us in going after our target. The difference between anger and aggression is that aggression

* Attacks and we close off from others
* We lack empathy and compassion
* Allows us to avoid the vulnerability and hurt beneath our anger

As with all emotions we experience them on a spectrum from mild through to severe. The

**Anger Thermometer** can help us learn how to differentiate the different levels of anger we experience.

0-4 – Mild Anger

4.5-8 – Moderate Anger

8.5-12 – Intense Anger

Give each learner a copy of the Anger Thermometer (printed in colour if possible) and spend time reading through and circling the emotions they recognise most from their own experience. (5 mins.)

Once they have done this have a class discussion about the ways they can deal with **MILD, MODERATE and INTENSE Anger. (**15 mins.)

**MILD Anger** – when we experience only mild anger we are likely to have access to our thinking brain so can use our thinking to help us decide what to do. From your own experience can anyone share ways that you have dealt with mild anger?

E.g. Press “PAUSE” before responding e.g. breathing slowly (3:5 or Flower and Candle Breathing), moving away; hiding in a den; running fast; having a cry; counting back 8 from our age.

**MODERATE Anger** - in addition to the above suggestions we can learn better ways of *handling* the people and circumstances that triggered our anger. Ask for suggestions from learners.

E.g. Learn how to be more assertive, solve problems and negotiate; learn to recognise their triggers.

**INTENSE Anger** – when our anger is already markedly aroused and our temper is beginning to approach the boiling point, none of the above is likely to work because we will be operating from our feeling and reptilian brain. When we are in this state we first have to *physically*calm ourselves down. For only when we’ve begun to cool off can we get our thinking brain back online. So firstly we might need to take time out. Secondly: do some physical activity such as a walk or exercise can release pent up emotions; or do any activity that helps us relax.

**NB** It can be helpful to suggest learners give their anger a name in order to de-personalise it and make it into something separate from the person. This can help them understand that they as the person are not the problem, but the problem is the problem.

**Trigger Tracker**

This activity can help the learners to start to think about the kinds of things that trigger their anger – whether that is Mild, Moderate or Intense anger. Give each learner a copy of RS90 Trigger Tracker sheet and invite them to fill it in. For each trigger ask them to think about which level of anger it links to on the Anger Thermometer and what kind of anger they feel – using the words on RS89 Anger Thermometer. (15 mins.)

**NB** Depending on the age of the learners you can incorporate some or all of the examples below into the sheet before copying it, or let them come up with their own examples.

* Being told ‘no’
* Getting teased
* Being interrupted
* Not being listened to
* Someone chewing with their mouth open
* When something is unfair to us or someone we care about
* Losing a game
* Getting stuck with homework
* Getting ready for school in the morning
* Hunger
* Someone taking something that belongs to me
* Turning off video games
* When someone hurts me
* Feeling let down
* Untidiness
* When I feel criticised
* When things don’t work
* Having to wait
* Being told I’m no good at something

**2. Use Brene Brown quote on Vulnerability** as P4C stimulus (60 mins.)

“ Vulnerability: The last thing I want you to see in me. The first thing I want to see in you”

**3. What would your anger be if it were…?** RS91 (5-10 mins.)

**4. Language and Violence: Not if it happens but how much** Activity from Feeling Safe and Standing Strong Facilitator’s Manual

* As a class ask learners to list violent words or common sayings we hear in everyday language. These may include racist terms, words to discount people with different abilities and any others the group can think of. (Typical responses may include blow you away, target group, attack a problem, disarming personality, bring out the big guns, I’ll kill him/her, fire away, kill two birds with one stone etc.)
* Think of possible alternatives to the expressions given.
* Ask learners to observe for one day and record all the violent words or metaphors they hear. They could be on the TV, school toilets, the corridors, the hall, with friends and even used by themselves.
* Ask learners to bring their recorded observations with them to the next session to share with the group.

**5. Is Mine Worse Than Yours?** Activity from Feeling Safe and Standing Strong Facilitator’s Manual

This activity helps learners to understand that violence is perceived differently by different people. We cannot rank one type of violence as more severe over another as we cannot weigh or measure one person’s suffering or hurt over another person’s hurt. All violence is unacceptable.

Using RS92 Examples of Violence:

* Ask each learner to individually rank each example according to the severity of violence with one being the most violent. First response with no discussion.
* After a few minutes divide into small groups and discuss responses and try to come up with a group ranking of severity. (People will vary in how they perceive a situation based upon their values and attitudes)
* Ask the groups how they felt about doing this exercise.
* Ask the learners to reflect on their own lives in response to the following questions – Has there been a time when someone has minimised your feelings about an important event or experience in your life? How did it feel when another person discounted or minimised your experience? Where in the body do you experience these feelings? How does this relate to safety? What protective interruptions could you use when someone discounts or minimises your feelings or experiences?