

Module 7 Overview

	I. What’s New with the Crew
10 minutes	Use this time for dads to update the group about what is going on in their lives. Facilitators should ask about work, relationships, etc.
	II. When Trouble is Brewing
15 minutes VIDEO & DISCUSS	View “Construction Clips” video and discuss how contractors handle conflict with and among their crew.
	III. Managing My Anger
20 minutes DISCUSS	Managing anger in others begins with managing anger in one’s self. Participants learn to recognize physical signs of anger build-up in themselves.
	IV. Managing Angry Others
20 minutes DISCUSS	Participants consider the ways they handle anger and frustration in others, including ways they may escalate a situation. They identify important actions to de-escalating angry emotions in others.
	V. Nailing it Down
20 minutes ACTIVITY	Participants use a “four cornerstone” approach to managing scenarios common to parenting upset and angry children.
	VI. Checking for Square
5 minutes	Participants are encouraged to consider the concepts and strategies learned in this lesson and apply them to themselves and their families. Facilitators should solicit questions from the group.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to do the following:

- Explain why conflict is a natural part of life.
- Explain why conflict with and among peers can be managed in positive ways.
- Identify and explain personal “anger styles.”
- Recognize cues when one is becoming angry.
- Explain and demonstrate ways of resolving conflict with children without threatening words or actions.

Materials Checklist

- Construction Clips
- Equipment to show Construction Clips
- Music
- Whiteboard and/or newsprint
- Pens
- Colored markers
- Blank sheets of printer paper, 8 ½” x 11”
- Smaller markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils (optional)
- Facilitator toolkit: Plum bob, square, level, hammer, and nails
- Participant Handouts

I. What’s New with the Crew?

II. When Trouble is Brewing (DISCUSS – Page 1)



VIEW Contractor Clips #7: Conflicts on Site

ASK: How should contractors handle conflicts on site? How do you handle conflict directed at you?

- **Conflict is a natural and unavoidable part of life.**

While it often causes us great discomfort to confront a conflict, you have to be able to recognize conflict when you see it. Diagnosing conflict in your family is not meant to make anyone feel bad about themselves. The goal instead is to keep the whole family operating smoothly like a well-organized building site.

- **Conflict is easier to handle when there are structures, rules, and responsibility.**

A construction crew generally handles conflict well on a site because there is structure and hierarchy. Good teamwork means each builder knows his responsibilities, and he knows who to report to when there’s a problem. The contractor enforces rules, too. When a worker arrives late, fails to follow instructions, or doesn’t show up to work at all, everybody knows there will be consequences.

- **Conflict becomes complicated in situations where it feels like there are no rules to govern behavior.**

Things are not so simple in a family. Men often handle conflict well in business, in the military, and in sports because each of these institutions rely on structure, regulation, and a clear hierarchy. But when emotions are high, it can sometimes feel as though there are no rules at all. Consequences become unclear. The situation may become confusing. The outcomes are unknown.

*Hierarchies exist in families, too, but these hierarchies are less effective in managing conflicts. Telling your children “I’m the boss,” or “because I said so,” or “no ifs, ands, or buts” may work in only a few family conflicts. Phrases like these do not teach a child **how** to solve conflict.*

Facilitator directions: Ask participants to write down their ideas about important skills for handling conflict at home. Be sure to solicit ideas from the group. Answers may vary, but touch on each of the following concepts during discussion. Invite participants to write these skills down in addition to their own ideas about conflict-management skills.

- 1) Calm Down.
- 2) Listen.
- 3) Avoid rushing to a solution.
- 4) Be willing to work together to solve a problem.

- **Calm down.**

It's hard to listen when we are upset. Take time to calm yourself before you try to move toward any kind of resolution for the conflict.

- **Listen.**

Whether you're involved in a conflict or mediating one among others, you must actively listen to understand the motivations, emotions, and reactions of others.

- **Avoid rushing to a solution.**

First and foremost, even if they can't agree, all parties need to feel understood and like their perspective is honored or has value. This might sound like:

1. *"You really wanted the last cookie for yourself and you feel like you should have it because your brother got it last time."*
2. *"You really wanted to _____ tonight and you're upset because your sister got to choose instead of you. You feel like that happens a lot."*
3. *"When the two of you work together on the yard, you feel like you almost always end up doing more work than your brother."*

The important thing here is not agreement, but learning to validate the feelings and perspective of another—acknowledging what is important to them even (and especially) when you don't agree.

- **Be willing to work together to solve a problem.**

Reaching an agreement after a conflict that prevents further conflict requires concessions on each side. Aim for a win-win situation when you've encountered a disagreement.

If it's a short-term problem (like who gets the last cookie) you may simply decide as a parent and move on. If it's an ongoing problem (where one child consistently has the upper-hand), then trying out a solution for a period of time

is useful. Once you've decided on an approach, agree to try for a designated length of time and agree to meet again to address how things are going.

This approach accomplishes two things: It opens up different options for those involved in a conflict or disagreement. It also helps children learn ways to resolve conflict by themselves.

III. Managing My Anger (DISCUSS – Page 2)

ASK: Why is learning to manage one's anger important? Discuss answers as a group.

- **Managing yourself is a priority before trying to manage anyone else.**

While it is true a father must address his kids' emotions and the conflicts among his children, his first priority always is maintaining his own emotions. Dads owe it to themselves and their families to work on their own emotions and their inner conflicts before they can address child-to-child, parent-child or parent-parent conflicts.

- **Consistent, unchecked anger can have dangerous repercussions for a family.**

It destroys the safe and stable foundation necessary for a happy home. Think back to the conversation from Lesson 2 about safety and structure. We learned about the importance of stability in a home. You can't have happiness without safety and stability as part of the foundation. It would be like having a beautifully decorated house with the floor falling through to the basement.

Unchecked anger is akin to a crumbling or sinking foundation. When a home's foundation is in jeopardy, so is the rest of the building. Repairs—for foundations and for explosive anger—can be costly.

- **Learn to recognize when you are "heating up," i.e., experiencing low-level anger.**

The first step to managing your own anger is recognizing when you are feeling angry. Contractors need to express their anger wisely while on a build site because there are steep consequences for blow-ups. They could be moved to a different assignment or lose their job altogether. Outside of work, dealing with low-level anger is crucial to keep it from progressing to higher levels.

Do and Discuss

ASK: What measures do you take to manage your own emotions well in the midst of a tense situation?

Facilitator directions: Ask participants to fill out Boxes 1 and 2 on page 2 of the participant guide by themselves. Solicit input from the group, especially with their responses to Box 2. Write down examples of physiological responses to low-level anger on the whiteboard or on a piece of newsprint at the front of the room as you lead the discussion.

1. Step one: Learn to recognize low-level anger.

It's not always easy to recognize low-level anger because it's often cloaked in other terms.

ASK: Think about the last time you felt bugged, irritated, annoyed, or bothered. What caused you to feel this way?

These responses are easy to ignore because they are labeled as only a precursor to anger. We've often been socialized to ignore low-level anger, but addressing it can prevent, or at least reduce, emotional build-ups that can lead to higher anger levels. Never ignore low-level anger: It's your body's way of warning you.

ASK: Recall how your body reacted when you were bugged, irritated, annoyed, or bothered. List examples of physiological responses to low-level anger.

Answers may include:

- Clenched jaw
- Feeling warm
- Increased heartbeat

2. Step two: Take a time-out.

Taking a time-out does not mean you've accepted defeat, let your emotions get the better of you, or that you're not "man enough." Instead, view taking a time-out as a responsible approach to keeping your cool and preventing yourself from doing something you'll regret.

Facilitator directions: Instruct participants to stand up and find another dad in the room to brainstorm collaborative answers to the Boxes 3 and 4. Tell dads to be ready to share their responses. Write down examples of healthy time-outs and positive outlets to anger on the whiteboard or on a piece of newsprint at the front of the room as you lead the discussion.

ASK: List examples of healthy time-outs. What can men do to remove themselves from an angering situation and prevent doing something they'll regret?

Answers may include:

- Taking deep breaths
- Taking a walk
- Closing your eyes
- Counting down from 10
- Evaluating whether now is the best time to say something

3. Step three: Channel the emotion into something productive.

Remember, the goal is to avoid high levels of anger, which means you'll face steep consequences, which could mean betraying your family's trust, making people scared to talk to you, or isolating yourself from others.

ASK: List examples of positive outlets for anger. What can men do to channel their emotions into something productive and avoid negative consequences?

Answers may include:

- Exercise
- Walk away
- Listen to music
- Distract yourself
- Change your surroundings

ASK: How do you handle conflict directed at you?

The goal is to manage your rising emotions well so they do not boil over in a regrettable way. Practice noting your physiological responses to situations that bug you and try one or more of the outlets for the anger that we discussed in class.

VI. Managing Angry Others (DISCUSS – Page 3)

- **As we learned from the activity on page 2, managing your own emotions is a crucial element in conflict resolution skills.**

Everyone knows the world is much bigger than yourself, though. Fathers need to be prepared rely on a number of skills to manage child-to-child, child-to-parent, and parent-to-parent conflicts to keep a happy, healthy family.

ASK: What sorts of situations generally make people feel angry? Frustrated? Hurt? Embarrassed?

Facilitator directions: As a group, brainstorm a few instances where a builder on a crew or a child may feel this way. Examples may include:

A crew member might feel angry, frustrated, hurt, embarrassed, etc. when ...	A child might feel angry, frustrated, hurt, embarrassed, etc. when ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their boss ignores them • Their needs aren't met • They are physically hurt • They are treated unfairly • They mess up/let the crew down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent ignores them • Their needs aren't met • They are physically hurt • They are treated unfairly • They mess up/disappoint a parent

Recall again the last time you felt angry, frustrated, hurt, or embarrassed. Take a moment to imagine how you would want someone to react to your situation. What are the necessary ingredients to create a solution?

Facilitator directions: Ask each participant to define the four elements of a solution at the bottom of page 3 in their participant guides. When everyone has finished writing, ask for volunteers to read what they wrote to the class. Answers may include:

EMPATHY	Everybody needs someone to tell them it's okay to be upset. Justification can be a first step to expressing anger in a positive way. Tell your family: "That sounds frustrating," "I'm sorry that happened to you," "It makes sense that you are feeling the way you're feeling," to communicate empathy.
SAFETY	Everybody needs an environment where they feel comfortable expressing themselves. Tell your family that their feelings matter, and that they are always welcome to express feelings.
PERSPECTIVE	Being in a conflict with a family member isn't easy, but one path to reaching a resolution is to view the conflict from the opposing perspective. Ask questions such as: "How does X feel about this?" and "Why do you think X reacted the way they did?"
UNDERSTANDING	Understanding goes beyond comprehending why the conflict broke out. Coaches and fathers both need to be aware of what each person wants out of the situation. Evaluate the rights, wants and needs of yourself and others when looking for a solution.

The conflicts a family endures are not always child-child, child-parent, or parent-parent. A family has to juggle conflicts with many external forces, too. But when your family works well together, you are best equipped to manage anything that comes at you.

V. Nailing It Down (ACTIVITY – Pages 4-5)

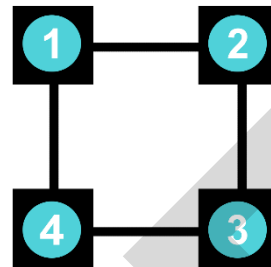
Practicing conflict resolution with a child can prevent anger erupting into violence when they reach adulthood. When respectful conflict resolution isn't mastered during early childhood, the skills prove far more challenging to learn as an adult.



Four Cornerstones of Problem-solving

A cornerstone is a stone that forms the base of a corner of a building, joining two walls. Without them, a home can't stand on its own. When teaching your children about conflict-resolution, try visualizing the foundation of a home:

- **Cornerstone 1:** Identify the problem.
- **Cornerstone 2:** Weigh potential options.
- **Cornerstone 3:** Decide on a solution to try.
- **Cornerstone 4:** Evaluate the decision.



Facilitator directions: Consider using the first scenario with Elliot as an example, and walk through the Four Cornerstones of Problem Solving with the group. Use a whiteboard or newsprint at the front of the room to write down the options and outcomes.

Then split the dads into small groups and assign each group one of the following scenarios. Instruct them to use the Four Cornerstones of Problem Solving on page 5 of the participant guide. Consider splitting up dads based on the ages of their children and assign them a scenario that fits best with their kids. When you return as a big group, ask the room to determine how their solutions will hold up under inspection.

<p>Your toddler, Elliot, loves his LEGO collection. He doesn't clean up his toys when playtime is over, despite your reminders. One day, you step on a LEGO on the staircase. So now you're mad at Elliot, and your foot's throbbing in pain. See the next page for an example.</p>	<p>Your daughters, Tamika and Monique, are very picky eaters. When Tamika says she doesn't like the dinner, Monique follows suit, and vice-versa. The problem boils over when Monique requests chicken nuggets for dinner, but Tamika won't eat the food you put in front of her.</p>
<p>Your 14-year-old son, Michael, has developed the habit of demanding things from you. He wants you to do his laundry, make his sack lunch and buy his favorite snacks. He never says "thank you," and you're disappointed he doesn't acknowledge your hard work or express gratitude for your efforts.</p>	<p>Ten-year-old Maggie has been playing basketball since first grade. It's a lot of work to drive her to practices and games, and her uniforms aren't cheap, either. But it's important to you that she plays sports because you did the same thing growing up. She's been less enthusiastic about going to practice lately, and one day she blows up. "I hate basketball! I never wanted this, and you never cared!"</p>

- 1. Cornerstone 1: Identify the problem** You are disappointed because Elliot has repeatedly ignored your instructions to clean up his toys. You're angry that you've hurt yourself as a result of his actions.
- 2. Cornerstone 2: Weigh potential options.** You could yell at Elliot, throw away the LEGOs, say nothing and move on, ground Elliot, embarrass Elliot, etc.
- 3. Cornerstone 3: Decide on a solution to try.** You decide to ground Elliot from screens for a week so he will have time to work with you on developing the skill of picking up after himself and others, i.e. cleaning up the house.
- 4. Cornerstone 4: Evaluate the decision.** You and Elliot will need to have another conversation about LEGOs after a week doing household chores together. You know Elliot now understands what is involved in picking up after one's self and others because he's had a lot of practice doing this. You expect that Elliot will be more eager to follow through on your requests in the future.

Encourage participants to use the additional space in their participant guide to record strategies or ideas they heard from other groups in the space provided at the bottom of page 5.

VI. Checking for Square (Page 6)

- **Finding the right solution during a conflict isn't easy.**

A family endures many conflicts, and each one is unique. But remember, conflict resolution goals are twofold: They are meant to reach a compromise and operate as a learning moment for the parties involved.

- **In the minutes we have left before dismissal, think about the conflicts you face in your life write on one or more of the following guiding questions:**
 1. How can I incorporate empathy, safety, perspective, and understanding into my everyday life?
 2. What sorts of low-level anger do I experience the most?
 3. How does it feel to suffer the consequences of a burst of high-level anger?
 4. Which healthy time-out methods sound like they'll work for me?