Lesson 3

So, What Are You So Mad About Anyway?

Goal: To assist students to better identify the causes of anger and aggression.

Materials: Marker board, markers, one copy for each student of "What Really Causes Anger?" handout, pens, index cards (have enough cards so that each student receives at least five to ten cards.)

1. Inform the students that they will be learning more about the causes of anger and aggression. Distribute the index cards to the students and ask them to write (or draw) on each card, one thing that might cause a person to become angry. Offer the following items as the type of things they may wish to include: "Dad yells at me", "I miss the bus" and "I have a test in math class." Collect the completed cards and review them with the class, acknowledging that there are many things that can cause people to become angry. Retain the cards for use later in the class.

2. Ask the students to explain the phrase "the last straw" (or "the straw that broke the camel's back"), and assist them to determine that this phrase refers to the event in a chain of anger-provoking occurrences, that evokes rage for that even as well as many or all of the preceding problems. Note that the "last straw" is often not a negative or anger-provoking event, but provides an opportunity to express rage for the accumulation of events. Ask the students to discuss if they have ever gotten angry at the "wrong" person after having many anger-provoking events happen, and then finally raging at the person who was involved or nearby when the "last straw" happened. Identify that the original anger-provoking events can be called "sources of rage", and that when people or events unfairly or disproportionately become the outlets for that rage, they can be called "targets of rage". Discuss these concepts with the students.

3. Distribute the copies of "What Really Causes Anger?" to the class, and ask the students to complete the form as shown in the instructions on that page. Discuss the completed forms with the class.

- Ask the students to sort the index cards into sources and targets of rage, and note that there may be more than one way to sort the cards. Discuss the results with the students. Ask the students to consider if they ever direct their anger at targets rather than sources of rage.

4. Review the major points of this lesson:
- There are many events that can provoke anger. Sources of rage are events that thoroughly anger you. Targets of rage is a term that can be used to describe when people or events unfairly or disproportionately become the outlets for your rage.
- Many people find that they do not direct their anger at the sources of their rage, but at targets.
What Really Causes Anger?

Find the real sources of rage, and also find the targets of rage, that are often mistakenly labeled as sources. Sources of rage are the things that really make you mad through and through. Targets of rage are the things that you may get mad at, but are not really the main source of your anger, but become the target of your anger release. Under each frame of each cartoon strip, write whether the picture shows a source or target of rage.