PURPOSE OF GROUP: to explore how self-talk impacts anger
   to identify triggers to anger
   to increase anger management skills

MATERIALS NEEDED: pens/pencils for each group member
   print p. 4-5 of guide; have enough copies for each group member

1. 
   - Facilitator opens group by introducing topic, **self-talk** (and how it impacts anger).
   - Self-talk is essentially the constant dialogue we have running through our head!

   - Unfortunately, our self-talk is often negative, whether it is about ourselves, other people, or situations we’re in. The following are **examples** of negative self-talk:
     - **About ourselves**: “I can’t do this!”; “I’m so stupid!”
     - **About others**: “She’s doing this to me on purpose!”; “He’s such a jerk!”
     - **About a situation**: “This is always happening to me!”
   *You can ask group members, “Do you struggle with negative self-talk? Why do you think that is?”

   - It’s important to become more aware of our negative self-talk because it impacts our emotions & behaviors. For example, **it can escalate our anger**.
     - **Example**: Mike’s classmate is throwing paper airplanes, which have hit Mike twice. Mike thinks, “He’s doing this on purpose! He’s trying to embarrass me. If it happens again, I will fight him!”
     *You can ask group members, “How does negative self-talk affect your anger?”
2.
- Our negative self-talk is often about ourselves because we tend to blame, criticize, doubt, & judge ourselves.
  - We are our own worst enemy!

- Our harsh inner dialogue about ourselves can escalate our anger, but positive self-talk can cool us down! See the following example & take note of the difference between the negative self-talk & the positive self-talk:
  - Scenario: James is writing a paper, and he's getting flustered because he’s not a good writer
  - **Negative self-talk:** “I can’t do this! I’m no good. I’m about to explode!”
  - **Positive self-talk:** “Breathe- you got this! Take your time & you’ll be fine. Take a break if you need to”

3. Our negative self-talk also contains a lot of distortions. **Distortions can further escalate our anger.** The following are examples:
  - **“Should” Statements:** “She should have been here by now!”; “I shouldn’t make mistakes”
  - **Black & White Thinking:** “He is completely useless!”; “I’m such a failure”
  - **Jumping to Conclusions:** “This is not going to work!”; “He did that on purpose!”
  *You can ask group members, “Can you think of other cognitive distortions that might contribute to anger?”

4. Group members will now participate in an **activity** in which they will further explore their self-talk.
  * Give them handout, “**Self-Talk & Anger**” (on p. 4 of this guide). Read the example & ask them to complete the handout
  * You can also give them the handout on p. 5, “**Examples of Positive Self-Talk**”
  * Allow them to share when they’re done

4a. After the activity, you can ask group members the following questions:
  - Look at the scenarios you wrote down. Do you think positive self-talk would have made
a difference in how you handled those situations? Why or why not?
- How else might positive self-talk help you? (i.e. it will help self-esteem, increase motivation, decrease anxiety, etc.)

5. Facilitator can conclude group by going over more ways to manage anger.
- Consider creating an anger journal. Log daily triggers/situations/thoughts when angry. This would allow you to identify patterns that contribute to your anger
  a. Awareness is key! You can’t work on your anger until you’re aware of what’s contributing to it
- Use relaxation techniques (i.e. breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation exercises, etc.)
- Allow yourself “time-outs”
  a. Examples: Pause & walk away from argument if you’re too heated; take a break if you’re working on something that is making you frustrated
- Get your anger out in a safe, effective way - art, poetry, music, physical activity, etc.
* You can ask group members, “What are some other ways you can manage your anger?”
## Self-Talk & Anger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Negative Self-Talk</th>
<th>Reaction/Consequence(s)</th>
<th>Positive Self-Talk To Use Instead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> I was writing a paper, and I was getting flustered because I’m not a good writer.</td>
<td>I can’t do this! I’m no good. I’m about to explode!</td>
<td>I was too frustrated &amp; angry to focus. I only worked on the paper for 20 more minutes and turned in subpar work.</td>
<td>Breathe- you got this! Take your time &amp; you’ll be fine. Take a break if you need to.</td>
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Examples of Positive Self-Talk (for anger)

“I can handle this”

“I’m going to let this go. It’s not worth it”

“I’m in control”

“It’s okay to make mistakes”

“Breathe & relax”

“Don’t take this personally”

“Keep calm & carry on”

“Don’t rush to judgment!”

“It’s okay that I’m feeling angry. It’s how I handle it that counts”