



www.risemagazine.org

## LEADER'S GUIDE:

**Walks, Talks and Tears** by Carmen Ortiz

I am trying new ways to get my anger under control.

---

### DISCUSSION FOCUS:

Taking control of anger.

---

### ACTIVITY GOAL:

Participants will identify signs that they are getting angry and methods to help themselves cool down.

---

### STORY SUMMARY

*As a child, Carmen was terrified by the ways family members expressed their anger, but as she grew into an adult, Carmen found herself lashing out in similar ways and regretting it. She did not know how else to handle her anger or where to turn for help.*

*After she hit her son, Carmen enrolled in a parenting class where she learned to identify that she was getting upset and take steps to calm herself down. Carmen learns new ways to calm herself down: taking walks, talking to friends, crying, and reminding herself that she makes mistakes, too. Now she is helping her children learn to control their anger.*

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### GROUP INTRODUCTION: 10 minutes

Today we're going to talk about how we can control our anger. When parents have trouble staying calm, they are at risk of hurting their children. Many times, we feel like we go from 0 to 60 in seconds. Often, that's because—stressed out by issues with our kids, job, bills, and neighborhoods—we're already at 59 but don't know it. It's easier to control your anger if you can recognize early that you're heating up, and if you can identify coping mechanisms that help you to calm down, like calling a friend or taking a walk,

- How do you feel about this topic?
- Do you have experiences related to this topic that you'd like to share before we get started?

## READ AND DISCUSS STORY: 15 + 30 minutes

Read the story out loud as a group. Help participants recognize the writer's emotions and coping mechanisms and their own. Go back over important moments in the story and ask the participants about how they've handled similar experiences:

STORY MOMENT	DISCUSSION QUESTION
Carmen learned negative ways of handling anger when she was growing up.	How did the people around you handle anger when you were growing up?
A turning point for Carmen was when she hit her son.	What was a moment that made you decide you wanted to get help handling your anger?
Carmen learns about "trigger points"—situations that often make her angry.	What are some trigger points for you?
Carmen starts to pay attention to signs she is getting angry, like her heart racing or palms getting sweaty.	What changes do you notice in your body or mind when you begin to get angry?
Carmen finds that talking to herself calmly, calling friends, taking walks and crying all help her calm down.	What helps you to calm down when you're upset?

## JOURNAL TIME: 15-30 minutes

By writing in their journals, participants can more deeply reflect on their own experiences. Hand out the "Journal Reflections" worksheet and give participants time to write. They can share their responses with the group or in pairs, or after the workshop with a peer, family member, therapist or other important person in their lives.

NAME:

DATE:

**JOURNAL REFLECTIONS: Walks, Talks and Tears** by Carmen Ortiz

In a parenting class, Carmen learns that anger is like a staircase—or even an escalator. It's easy to keep going up and up, but hard to come down. Carmen begins to recognize common situations that make her mad, and changes in her body that signal that she's starting to get upset. That helps Carmen to calm herself down before she gets out of hand.

Take some time to think about your "trigger points" and the methods you can use to calm down.

1. What situations—especially with your children—often make you angry?

---

---

---

---

2. How do you feel in your body when you're getting mad?

---

---

---

---

3. Think of a time when you handled your anger well. What did you do to stay calm?

---

---

---

---

OVER →

4. What are some other methods you could use to calm yourself down when you're mad?

---

---

---

---

### **ACTION STEPS**

As parents, we often find ourselves getting angry at certain times of day (like when we're trying to get out of the house in the morning), or when our children behave in certain ways. Think of a few times of day or behaviors that often annoy you and brainstorm about how you could handle those moments without getting upset.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

3. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **A SUPPORTIVE CONNECTION**

I plan to get support and encouragement by talking about my reflections and action steps with:

---