

Second Step[®] teaches skills in three areas:

Empathy

Empathy means identifying and understanding others' feelings in order to be a more caring person.

In the empathy scene, you saw one parent deal with her son's angry feelings. How do you think empathy helped this situation? Are there things you could do to help your children share their feelings?

Empathy Skills

- 1. Listening:** Children and adults can understand others better just by improving their listening skills. Listening means not criticizing what the other person is saying and not giving advice unless the person talking requests it.
- 2. Acknowledging others' feelings:** It is important to listen to your child's feelings, even if you disagree with those feelings. Encourage your child to talk about her or his feelings and eventually s/he will learn to predict and understand the feelings of others.
- 3. "I feel" messages:** An "I feel" message lets a person know how her/his behavior and actions affect you. The parent in this scene did this when she said, "I know I feel sad that I won't be able to see you skate today."

Impulse Control

Most children could benefit by learning to slow down and think through options when faced with difficult situations or problems. Impulse control means using problem-solving skills. Using problem solving and controlling our first impulses is a big part of *Second Step* and it can be hard to do at first. That is why practicing at home is so important.

Like the father in this scene, you can help your child problem-solve by asking her or him the problem-solving questions below. This may take a little extra time at first, but will pay off when your child can figure out solutions to problems on her or his own.

How to Solve Problems

1. What is the problem?
2. What are some solutions?
3. For each solution ask:
 - Is it safe?
 - How might people feel?
 - Is it fair?
 - Will it work?
4. Choose a solution and use it.
5. Is it working? If not, what can I do now?

Anger Management

In most families anger and conflict are a normal part of family life. The point is how anger is dealt with. Anger in itself is not bad. The anger management steps can help all of us recognize, understand, and control anger.

Like the mother in the scene, help your child to pay attention to how her or his body feels when s/he is angry. Before trying to fix what made your child angry, help her or him to learn to *calm down*. Take a minute now and think of ways that might work for your child to calm down when s/he is angry.

What to Do When You Are Angry

1. How does my body feel?
2. Calm down:
 - Take three deep breaths.
 - Count backwards slowly.
 - Think nice thoughts.
 - Talk to yourself (tell yourself to calm down).
3. Think out loud to solve the problem (use the problem-solving steps).
4. Think about it later.