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Relational Aggression in Adolescent Girls: Developing Self-Esteem for the Target Girl

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RELATIONAL AGGRESSION IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS: DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM FOR THE TARGET GIRL

by

Lisa Suzanne Gulch

MASTER’S PROJECT
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Lisa S. Gulch
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ABSTRACT

Relational aggression (RA) is rampant in our schools, especially in middle schools across America. The name-calling, rumors, exclusion, eye-rolling, and whispers work to undermine relationships between and amongst girls. Because RA is covert in nature, the behavior goes mostly unnoticed by the adults in these girl’s lives. Society conditions girls, from a very young age, to respond to aggressive behaviors by not being aggressive back; girls are supposed to be nice. The target of relational aggression is especially hurt by this behavior. She generally suffers from low self-esteem and poor social skills, and when put up against a clique, she becomes even more defenseless.

This thesis project gives the School Guidance Counselor information and a group lesson to help targeted girls begin to regain some of the power lost through relational aggression. Focusing on building self-esteem and learning about who they are and what strengths they have is the foundation. Utilizing the entire school community and parents gives credibility to the target’s situation, and brings much needed awareness to the topic. Only then can we begin to eliminate relational aggression and make the schools a place of safe, fun learning.
Chapter One  
Project Proposal

Problem Statement

Adolescent girls who have been the target of girl bullies, or “relational aggression” (RA) experience adjustment problems and report more depression, anxiety and emotional distress, often carrying over into womanhood. (Patten, 2004) The impact of this behavior on girls and their environment has far reaching negative affects. A covert form of bullying, relational aggression often goes undetected. Threatening group exclusion, rumors, name-calling, laughing at, pointing, or silent treatment contributes to the deterioration of the targets’ self-esteem making it nearly impossible to concentrate on academic activities. “Moreover, relational aggression is significantly associated with social and psychological maladjustment during childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.” (Werner, 2004, p. 229) Girls who are not targets, but involved in the group also suffer from various self-esteem issues. For the bully and target alike, school becomes a place where maintaining status in their chosen group is priority. For the target specifically, school becomes a place of anxiety and fear. Whether you are a target, a bully, or a member, the affects of relational aggression can be devastating.

“Involvement in RA, whether as the aggressor, victim, or bystander can lead to many adverse outcomes for young women.” (Dellasega, 2005, p. 32) In Williamsport, PA, a fourteen year old girl who wanted to be part of the “popular” group took a gun and shot who she believed was the leader. Her attorney argued that
the girl had been subjected to “a lot of name-calling, derogatory comments, and injuriees.” (Dellasega, 2003, p. 10)

**Importance and Rationale of the Project/Study**

If you are involved in the school setting, have a daughter, sister or female friend, relational aggression should be important to you. We live in a world that is acutely aware of the impact of bullies. Turn on the Today Show or Oprah, or Dr. Phil, and you’ll hear stories that will make you shudder; many of these stories end in suicide completions. The development of girls becomes skewed when put in a situation of relational aggression, changing who they are and will become. Generally, “compared to boys, adolescent girls experience greater stress, are twice as likely to be depressed, and are four times as likely to attempt suicide.” (Rothenberg, 1995, p. 1)

We socialize our girls to be nice or nurturing and sweet; an obvious conflict to competitiveness. “Overt aggression is not considered feminine. A key element of girl aggression is that the aggressor set up a situation in which they can hurt someone and not be blamed-or even discovered.” (Vail, 2002, p.4)

The school climate is altered, affecting all students, not just the target and bully. Learning, the inherent objective of school, takes second seat to maintaining group status.

“Peer status, approval, identity, intimacy, as well as a sense of belonging, are all salient issues for adolescents. Although not harmful in their own right, these normative developmental tasks may lead to confusion, increased peer
competition, and selfish ambition, making the ground particularly fertile for relational aggression.” (Werner, 2004, p. 231)

Beyond the consequences of relational aggression in adolescent girls, it is now becoming more and more apparent that adolescent bullies grow into adult bullies. Throughout the female lifespan, victims will be victims, bullies will be bullies. In her book, *Mean Girls Grown Up*, author Cheryl Dellasega (2005) considers, “Because women traditionally have little power, this line of thought suggest that the instant there is a perceived threat, aggression occurs as a protective mechanism.” (www.abcnews.go.com, retrieved 10/14/05) The cost of aggression in the workplace, for instance, include “higher rates of sickness and absenteeism, low morale, reduced productivity, high turnover of staff, damage to mental and physical health and a poor company ethos.” (Cowie, Bradshaw, Kaipiainen, Smith, Liefooghe, Naylor, Olafsson, & Rayner, 1999, p. 8) Like the consequences of workplace bullying, the cost of RA for young girls is the same.

**Background of the Project/Study**

There have been volumes written on bullying and aggression in boys. We hear about it because it’s physical. It leaves a mark. It can be easily diagnosed and seen. Bullying among girls, however, is often covert and incognito. While there are many similarities between relational aggression in girls and physical bullying in boys, RA burrows itself into personal, intimate relationships. Ron Banks (1997) writes, “The act of being bullied tends to increase some students’ isolation because their
peers do not want to lose status by associating with them or because they do not want to increase the risks of being bullied themselves.” (1977, p. 2)

Beyond the need to maintain status and not become a target of bully, for example, both forms of bullying leave life long emotional scars, both require an aggressor and a victim or target, and often the process is witnessed by others who silently stand by (the “Torn Bystander”) hoping they are not next. RA alone, however, focuses on relationships between and amongst girls.

Relational aggression wasn’t identified until 1995 when researcher Nicki Crick, a professor at the University of Minnesota, brought it to our attention, and coined the term. Before that, research on bullying focused on the physical aspect of bullying, typically committed by boys. Physical bullying by both boys and girls is important in its own right, but the need to consider RA is gaining ground. In their article, When Girls Become Bullies and Victims: Relational Aggression, Skowronsiki, Weaver, and Wise (2005) say, “Many middle and high schoolers are fearful at school because of undetected peer aggression. In fact, it has been reported that 160,000 students each year fail to attend school out of fear of relational aggression.” (p. 2)

Nicole E. Werner and Charisse L. Nixon (2004) have done one of the few longitudinal studies of relational aggression revealing a correlation between belief systems and relational aggression. The 2004 study titled Normative Beliefs and Relational Aggression: An Investigation of the Cognitive Bases of Adolescent Aggressive Behavior also potentially found that “gossip is seen as a more “serious” form of retaliation than exclusionary acts.” (Werner & Nixon, 2004, p. 236) “Beliefs
about relational aggression were uniquely associated with engagement in relationally aggressive acts, whereas beliefs about physical aggression, but not relational aggression, contributed unique information about adolescents’ level of physical aggression. “ (Werner & Nixon, 2004, p. 229)

Given that low self-esteem is a characteristic of Targets, we can understand how they may be vulnerable to other relationship issues as well. For example, “40% of girls 14-17 years old know someone their age who has been hit by a boyfriend.” (Rocholi, 2005, p. 402) Girls who stay in abusive relationships suffer from very low self-esteem, and even consider the notion that they may have “deserved it”, another common characteristic of a target of RA.

While this thesis focuses on the victims of relational aggression, it is important to understand both sides – the aggressor and the target. Who is the aggressor, here? What does she look like? Often it is the most popular girl in school, known as the Queen Bee. “Through a combination of charisma, force, money, looks, will, and manipulation, this girl reigns supreme over the other girls and weakens their friendships with others thereby strengthening her own power and influence.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 25) Understanding that girls typically value intimate relationships with each other, the group leader is masterful at controlling group behavior without getting in trouble. She is “seemingly” well liked by other students and teachers, alike. According to Crick and Grotpeter (1995), “members of groups run by aggressive girls appeared to be caring and helpful toward each other.” (Davies, 2004, p. 1) Members also observed a higher level of intimacy and secret sharing,
putting other group members at risk because the bully is privy to personal information
that can be used against her later. The aggressor tells group members who they can
be friends with, what they can wear, and how they should act. If a member does not
fall into place, the consequences can be devastating to her.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a self-esteem program for girl’s ages
10 – 14 that schools can implement to reduce the negative affects of relational
aggression on its victims or targets. The main reason to create this program is to help
young women who are targets of RA to understand they can regain power in the
situation. Many of the young targets feel powerless against a group or clique –
especially when they gang up on her.

In her book Queen Bees and Wannabes, Rosalind Wiseman (2002) describes
the Target as “the one set up by the other girls to be humiliated, made fun of,
excluded.” (p. 34) Wiseman goes on to describe the feelings a Target may have as
“totally helpless”, “ashamed at being rejected” and “vulnerable”. These are powerful
feelings when one does not have the tools to understand the situation to combat it.
Helping girls retrieve their power is very relevant to this program for immediate and
future growth.

This project will develop small group lessons. The hope would be to share
personal experiences with each other so they will discover they are not alone in their
suffering. Trust building exercises will begin the group, setting group rules,
boundaries and limits of discussion, and explaining why they were chosen for this group.

Victims of relational aggression also experience adjustment problems, develop negative views of school, are lonelier, have more physical complaints and avoid school more. This carries into adulthood, where as adults these girls can expect to deal with mental health problems, higher rates of criminality, teen pregnancy, and adult depression. (http://library.adoption.com, retrieved 11/05/2004)

This project will not include the Bully in any manner, except to identify that behavior which is considered to be bullying. There will be no lessons on how to stop being a bully, or how to use communication skills as opposed to relational aggression. We’re not here to make the bully feel better or become cured. This specifically focuses on the girls who are low on the social totem pole due to lack of skills, self-esteem, or opportunities to grow.

Objectives of the Project/Study

The objective of this project is to develop a small group lessons program that could be implemented in a school setting, reducing the instances of relational aggression by focusing on the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the target girl. This project will not be implemented.

There are three long-term goals this project seeks to change, but will not measure. The first is to increase the ability of the target to positively combat relational aggression. By increasing the target’s social armor, the severe impact of
RA will be lessened. When the impact is reduced, it will automatically diminish the power the bully has over the target.

The second goal of this project is to increase the target’s self-esteem, coping and assertiveness skills. In an effort to eliminate feelings of helplessness to stop the bully’s behavior, develop allies, and lessen isolation, we empower the girl to grow beyond the incidents of bullying. Targets will learn how to stand up for themselves in an assertive manner, unlike the bully’s aggressive way.

The final goal of this project is to develop an atmosphere within the school that is conducive to learning, and safe for all students. Getting back to the inherent intent of school, an education, continued instances of RA reduce effective learning. By reducing the impact of RA, developing target’s social skills, and empowering her to be positive and powerful will lead to positive school experiences and impressions.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are identified through research and development for this project/thesis.

**Bullies** – Individuals who participate in bullying behaviors. (Hogoboom, 2004)

**Bullying** – Direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. (Banks, 1997)

**Indirect Bullying** – Socially isolating through intentional exclusion. (Banks, 1997)

**Relational Aggression** – Behaviors that best thwart or damage goals that are valued by their respective gender peer groups, done with the specific intention of damaging
another's friendships or feelings of inclusion within a social group.

(http://library.adoption.com, retrieved 11/05/2004)

Target – “A girl set up by the other girls to be humiliated, made fun of, and excluded.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 34)

Torn Bystander – The girl who is often in the middle of a conflict between two girls or two groups of girls, doing nothing to intervene on behalf of the target girl.

(Wiseman, 2002)

Limitations of the Project

This project is limited by various entities involved in the system of relational aggression and how it goes unnoticed. This project only defines a problem, and then gives specific lessons on how to assist girls who are targets of RA. Finally, this project is limited by its design that it has not been implemented in a school setting.

In order to develop a comprehensive program we would need to involve school administrators, teachers, school staff, parents and community alike. Each group has a unique role in the lives of girls, target and bully. Teachers and other school staff, for example, would need to step up to the ideal that this type of bullying is alive and well in their buildings, then be aggressive in responding to it when it is noticed. Because this is such a covert way of bullying, teachers and staff are key to working with the student to combat the incidences.

Parents will need to be proactive in discussing this type of aggression with their daughters, and understand that being the “Queen Bee” is not necessarily a good quality. Working with their daughters, side-by-side with school personnel to reduce
the allure of the status is just one step to be taken. A keen understanding of all the roles of each player in RA also needs to be completely understood and addressed.

School staff who makes a commitment to changing the school climate by reducing relational aggression can expect a certain amount of negative feedback from the aggressors. The simple fact that this kind of behavior has gone on quite effectively for so long makes the aggressor uncomfortable with the changes: first by being discovered, then by the consequences that may be attached to the behavior. School districts may need to update their Bully Prevention policy to include relational aggression and consequences to the perpetrator.
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Introduction

Relational aggression, a term coined by Associate Professor Nicki Crick of the University of Minnesota (2002), is a relatively new concept, even though the behavior is generations old. Crick and her colleagues suggest RA is “more characteristic of girls, though not exclusive to girls, and is done with the intention of damaging another child’s friendship or feelings of inclusion within a social group.” (http://library.adoption.com, retrieved 11/05/2004) It’s a form of bullying that is highly effective, because as Leah Davies, M.Ed. states in her paper *Aggressive Girls,* “girls tend to value intimate relationships with girls.” (www.keelybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip 39.html, retrieved 11/05/2004)

Relational Aggression

The reality of using relationships against one another is something girls are relatively comfortable with. It is part of the girl culture that has been accepted as, among other things, “a phase”, or a right-of-passage. This nonphysical aggression that becomes labeled as “catty”, or “crafty”, is simply neglected by schools and written off as “what girls do.” (Simmons, 2002) And enthralled in the midst of this phase, girls describe themselves as their worst enemies. Rachel Simmons (2002) discovered this as she did research for her book *Odd Girl Out.* She writes, “Girls described themselves to me as disloyal, untrustworthy, and sneaky. They claimed girls use intimacy to manipulate and overpower others. They said girls are fake, using each other to move up the social hierarchy. They described girls as
unforgiving and crafty, lying in wait for a moment of revenge that will catch the
unwitting victim off guard and, with an almost savage eye-for-an-eye mentality,
“make her feel the way I felt.”

The behaviors, excluding girls from one group or another, starting rumors and
untruths aimed at hurting the reputation of a girl, intentionally withdrawing
friendship, as well as physical cues like eye rolling or turning away from the targeted
girl, or ignoring her, are intended to disrupt relationships with others. These
behaviors generally go unnoticed by the adults around, making RA covert in nature
and easily perpetuated.

The ideal of RA as a right-of-passage works not toward resolution of RA, but
instead plays into the hands of the bully. Rites of passage are rituals that mark the
transition from one status to another: the exact situation of RA. The bully uses RA as
a method of maintaining group status. To assume RA is a positive ritual assumes that
there is nothing we can do to prevent girls from continuing to behave in this way. It
further suggests that going through this passage is necessary for girls to learn how to
relate with each other. Simmons (2002) suggests a third and fourth assumption tied
to RA as a rite-of-passage. The third assumption “suggests that because it is
universal and instructive, meanness among girls is a natural part of their social
structure to be tolerated and expected. “ (p. 34) A final assumption, she calls the most
“insidious of all” is the assumption that the abuse girls subject on one another, in fact,
is not abuse at all. (Simmons, 2002) The saddest outcome of this is that targets have
no way out, and they continue to hurt in lonely silence.
A common theme of RA is suggesting that “bullied children are obviously doing something wrong if they are attracting the social abuse of others.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 35) The problem with this is it puts the onus on the target, leaving them with few alternatives for reaction. Being bullied can be taken as a lack of social skills, knowing what is cool to wear, or which sports to play, or simple conversation. This is echoed in a report by Ronald Oliver, John Hoover, and Richard Hazler (1994). They asked a group of students if victims brought on bullying themselves. Generally, students replied that indeed they brought it on themselves, with 61.2% “agreed that victims play a role in their own victimization.” (Oliver et. al, 1994, p. 4)

Adolescence seems to be the time in a girl’s life when relational aggression becomes most apparent, and they most vulnerable. “During the middle school years, when RA seems to peak, girls are engaged in the developmental process of identity formation, which makes them intensely aware of their ability to impact the lives of others.” (Dellasega, 2005, p. 33) Adolescence is also a time of growing independence, when children will turn away from parents and toward their peer group. “This reliance on peers for social support is coupled with increasing pressures to attain social status.” (Espelage, 2003, p.20) There are many reasons for this.

First of all, transition into middle school is often challenging due to many physical and social changes going on in their lives. Often, increases in academic load, additional choices in classes or increased autonomy begin the process of internal conflict. (Hart, 2003) “Middle school-aged students must, at the same time, contend with intense and rapid changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive development,
social approval, a large student body, and a student government as well as choices in sports programs and extracurricular activities.” (Hart, 2003, p. 1) The research attributes this to 5 factors, 1) girls are more negatively affected by experiences with failure than are boys, 2) many girls experience a conflict between feminine goals and competitive achievements, 3) girls are confronted with societal and school structures that favor boys, 4) girls are less satisfied with their body images compared to boys and 5) girls are more likely to worry about their problems. (Hart, 2003)

According to Dianne Rothenberg (1995), middle grades can be a time of decline in self-esteem and academic achievement. She attributes this to factors both in and out of the classroom. The preferential treatment boys receive in the classroom, girls’ observations about the different statuses between men and women is society, and cultural differences in sex role socialization are three factors that strongly influence a girl’s self-concept. (Rothenberg, 1995) In her article, Supporting Girls in Early Adolescence, she reports that many educators see a general decline in school performance for girls. “As a group, for example, girls exhibit a general decline in science achievement not observed for boys.” ( p. 1)

During this time of turmoil, self image problems arise, often tied to the “perfect girl” or “nice girl” syndrome. “They speculate that in trying to keep up with impossible demands of this unrealistic view of perfect feminine behavior, girls may suppress some of their ability to express anger or to assert themselves, and they may begin to judge themselves through others’ eyes and to question their own worth.” (Rothenberg, 1995, p. 3)
This socialization of girls being expected to be “nice” or “kind”, while boys are expected and often encouraged to be physical, does nothing to help girls deal with their emotions of anger in a productive, forth right manner. In a 1999 study at the University of Michigan researchers found that “girls were told to be quiet, speak softly, or use a “nicer” voice about three times more often than boys, even though the boys were louder.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 18) Girls want to be liked, and are willing to do just about anything to be part of the group. Colleagues Gillian and Lyn Mikel Brown call this the “tyranny of kind and nice” in their book called Meeting at the Crossroads.

“Girls are socialized to be nurturing and sweet, which forces them to express their aggression in backhanded ways. Overt aggression is not considered feminine. A key element of girl aggression is that the aggressor set up a situation in which they can hurt someone and not be blamed-or even be discovered.” (Vail, 2002, p. 17)

Phyllis Carter, a feminist scholar, professor, and author of Woman’s Inhumanity to Women supports this idea. “Being taught that you can’t compete openly, to smile when you’re mad, causes anger to fester and become toxic.” (Vail, 2002, p. 17)

A Norwegian study discovered that “girls were not at all averse to aggression; they just expressed anger in unconventional ways. When aggression cannot, for one reason or another, be directed (physically or verbally) at its target, the perpetrator has to find other channels.” (Simmons, 2002, p.20) Sharon Lamb, Ed.D. (2001) writes, “Because middle-class girls in our culture are not permitted to be angry, they go to
great pains to deny, suppress, mask, or hide it. Patricia Pearson, author of *When She Was Bad*, writes that girls are masters of indirection when it comes to anger. Psychologist and educator Dana Jack write that among women and girls “attempts to hurt, to oppose, or to express anger go underground to reach others through hidden channels, while surface behaviors mask the intent.” (p. 150)

Although girls felt anger, culturally, overt actions are not allowed so girls must find ways to get it out. Culturally, we require girls to be covert; anything less would not be “ladylike”.

We still expect boys to be providers for and protectors of families. Western culture exemplifies this further. “Aggression is a hallmark of masculinity” (Simmons, 2002, p. 17), while the role of caregiver and nurturer falls expectedly on the shoulders of girls. We consider a woman to be fulfilled if she fits the “good mother” definition; unconditional, caring, nurturing, and willing to sacrifice her own goals for her family goals. “Aggression undermines who girls have been raised to become.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 18)

It is important to understand how being the “good girl” plays out in the scenario of relational aggression. RA continues to go unnoticed when the popular girls, or the good girls are running the show. They become masterful at manipulating adults into believing that they would never hurt anyone and continue to operate just beneath the radar. “Covert aggression isn’t just about not getting caught; half of it is looking like you’d never mistreat someone in the first place.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 23)
Relational aggression is not limited to the confines of the United States of America. RA is rampant throughout the world. First brought to attention by Scandinavian researchers in the early 1990’s, RA is apparent in studies there, the United Kingdom, and here. In fact, “UK researchers have found that one in four children there have been bullied or threatened via computer or telephone, according to a study released last spring by the NCH, a London-based charity.” (Blair, 2003, p. 6) The Scandinavian social scientists looked at differences in how boys were aggressive compared to girls. Research by Crick, Gilligan and others suggest that girls are just as aggressive, but in different ways.

Relational aggression is also not limited to the confines of the school yard, either. Cyber bullying, bullying using the technology of e-mail and instant messaging, takes relational aggression to a whole new level. I personally was involved working with a 9th grade girl who was involved in a RA situation. She, I’ll call her “Julie”, was the target because of her “different” look. From the outside she seemed confident and assured in her friendships. After we talked, however, it became apparent she was petrified of what she had told a friend. The friend was now hanging out with others and Julie was afraid she would share her secrets. Julie was right to be concerned.

It happened, over about a week, her secrets were shared when the other girl posted a web page of Julie, filled with rumors and words like “slut”, “bitch”, and “whore”. The girl also said Julie was pregnant. When Julie came to school the next day, someone had printed the web page and taped it to her locker. She couldn’t
handle it any longer, went home and drank bleach, window cleaner, and took some pills. She survived and moved away. I recently saw her at a football game with the very girls that posted the web page. A testimony that it’s better to be in a damaged relationship than no relationship at all.

Using e-mail or IM is a dangerous endeavor. The lack of a personal connection sets up opportunities for people to be as mean as they feel in the moment. In her follow up book to Odd Girl Out, Rachel Simmons (2002, 2004) writes in Odd Girl Speaks Out, “Fighting on IM is a huge mistake. Girls know this but they do it anyway.” (p. 145) The lack of that personal connection, not seeing the face of the person you’re talking with, leaves all messages open to interpretation, often with an already insecure paradigm. You can’t see her hurt, you can’t hear her tone, “you can simply respond to the words on the screen.” (p. 146)

In a report from Washington-based Pew Internet and American Life Project, they noted that “seventy-four percent of the 17 million teenagers who surfed the Internet in 2000 used AOLs Instant Messenger. Further, “more than one-third of teens use IM to say things they don’t want to say in face-to-face conversations with their peers.” (Blair, 2003, p. 6)

One of the biggest problems with IM is that it occurs outside of school authority; in the homes of these teens. There is little that can be done by school administrators under these circumstances. This technology is typically dominated by girls, as well. According to Sherryll Kraizer of Coalition for Children, “incidents are vastly more skewed toward girls, because girls are more likely than boys to
communicate regularly by technology such as e-mail and instant messaging.” (Blair, 2003, p. 6)

The Players in Relational Aggression

To understand the cruel aspects of RA, we need to understand the role of each player, and their social structure. In her book *Queen Bees and Wannabes* Rosalind Wiseman (2002) discusses “The Queen Bee and Her Court” (p. 24) She suggests that cliques are sophisticated and complex, even comparing them to politics. The clique is a powerful entity, where the player’s roles are specifically defined, and rarely stagnate. The ever changing status of “Queen Bee” is the nature of beast of RA. Being the Queen Bee is powerful, and like many powerful position, there is someone just around the corner wanting to topple you. Wiseman identifies the role players as:

- Queen Bee
- Sidekick
- Banker
- Floater
- Torn Bystander
- Pleaser/Wannabe/Messenger
- Target

The Queen Bee enforces power with a “combination of charisma, force, money, looks, will, and manipulation. She can and will silence her peers with a look.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 25) The Queen Bee feels powerful and dominant over the other girls, not just in her clique, but in the school as a whole. Characteristics of a Queen Bee include getting her friends to do what she wants them to do, she isn’t intimidated by any other girl in her class, she focuses on the lame things other girls

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did or said, she requires being convinced to include others in experiences, her power of persuasion is strong and developed, she’s charming to adults, she makes another girl feel “anointed” by declaring her a special friend, she’s affectionate, but often at the expense of another girl in the group, she reluctantly, if ever, takes responsibility for her actions, and she feels she has the right to seek revenge; an eye-for-an-eye mentality. (Wiseman, 2002)

There is a downside to being Queen Bee, however. The characteristics of powerful positions make it difficult to hold onto. She can be so busy maintaining status that she often loses a bit of herself in the fight. The authority that she wields can make it difficult for her to have anyone to turn to in time of trouble. God forbid she admits she needs help, as it may be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Intimate relationships may suffer as well. Concern for her status is all important, and she may question if having a relationship with a particular person will challenge her status.

The old cliché, “It’s lonely at the top” becomes quite relevant here. Often, the Queen Bee is unliked, untrusted, and generally not very popular, at least in a good sense of the word. Wiseman (2002) identifies popular as “good” and “evil”. “The good [popular] kind is when a girl is genuinely liked because she’s nice to people.” (p. 24) The “evil” popular girl is opposite that. In Queen Bees and Wannabes Wiseman (2002) allows the girls to identify the evil popular girls; “She’s the meanest to everyone”, “People live in fear of her”, and, “She has all the power and she’ll crush you.” (p. 24)
The girl who is the lieutenant or second in command, closest to the Queen Bee, backing her up no matter what is known as the Sidekick. (Wiseman, 2002, p. 27) The Sidekick is the girl who dresses most like the Queen Bee and behaves strictly as directed by the Queen Bee. The difference however, is that when separated, the Sidekick can change for the better. Being the Sidekick gives her power over other girls, and has a close friend in the Queen Bee. Often, though, at the risk of losing status, she will lose the right to express herself, and if she hangs out with the Queen Bee too long, she may even forget who she is altogether.

As a Banker in the finance world, he is the keeper of money. In girl world, the Banker is the keeper of secrets, only to use them at a later time to her benefit. “For example, if a girl has said something negative about another girl, the Banker will causally mention it to someone in conversation because she knows it’s going to cause a conflict and strengthen her status.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 29) This Banker is generally cute and harmless, hence the allure and sense of trust, allowing her to fly just under the adult radar.

What she gains is power and security because of the way she can get others to share information with her. However, once girls realize what she is doing with the information they share, she loses their trust. Charlotte, age 15, shares with Wiseman (2002), “The girls can’t oust the Banker from the clique because she has information on everyone and could make or break reputations based on the information she knows.” (p. 30)
The Floater is a unique and rare girl in a clique, able to float freely between groups and cliques. She’s not terribly threatening because she is “beautiful, but not too beautiful, nice, not terribly sophisticated, and avoids conflicts.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 30) Her higher level of self-esteem allows her to maintain this status because she’s not mirroring her self-image to any particular group. This lack of worry about being disbarred from a clique makes her one of the few people who can and will stand up to the Queen Bee. She is well liked by her peers. She is rare, at best.

In all kinds of bullying, we hear the phrase “bystander”: the one who witnesses the bullying behavior and chooses not to do anything about it. The Tom Bystander in a clique of girls carries the same burden. She knows that what the Queen Bee is doing is mean and wrong, but she’ll rationalize it and apologize for her. She lacks self-esteem the most, pinning her entire self on the clique. Typically the Tom Bystander is most uncomfortable with boys, is easily influenced by what the cliques wants her to do, and the thought of standing up for herself in the clique is terrifying. The lack of ability to be strong often puts her in the middle of conflicts between two or three girls, wanting everyone to “get along”.

One of the saddest characteristics of being the Tom Bystander is that she will often go along to get along. Never developing courage to stand up to conflict for herself, will very likely carry over into adulthood. This girl often becomes the woman who will stay in violent relationships, easily giving up things that she enjoys or wants to try. Often she’ll present herself as “dumb” when actually she can be quite intelligent.
The Pleaser/Wannabe/Messenger is a precarious role to uphold. She can be in the clique or at the perimeter trying to get in. She is a keen observer, especially of the higher status girls, and mimics their every move. She’s a bit of a chameleon, changing her mind depending on which group she’s with, getting her into messes. Her power lies in being the messenger, the go between when girls fight. The Queen and Sidekick use her to fulfill their needs, which she finds important, but they also talk about her behind her back.

Other characteristics include, other’s opinions are more important than her own, she can’t tell the difference between what she wants and what the clique wants, she’ll stop doing things she enjoys in order to “fit in”, and she loves to gossip – “the phone and e-mail are her lifeline.” (Wiseman, 2002, p. 34)

As the Pleaser/Wannabe/Messenger, she gives up her “authenticity”. She spends so much energy trying to figure out what others want from her that she has little time left to think about what she wants for herself. Relationships suffer because of her insecurity. She questions whether or not someone likes her for herself, or for the gossip she holds. Personal boundaries with this girl are obscure due to her inability to effectively communicate with others.

Finally, the Target; the Target is the victim, the one humiliated by the Queen Bee and her court. She is teased, ridiculed, embarrassed, threatened, and excluded at the whim of the Queen. A Target can be both a member of a clique or not. One distinctive characteristic of a clique is the hierarchy that needs to be maintained, including the role of Target, the lowest person on the totem pole. Outsiders typically
become Targets when they’ve challenged the clique, or something about them does not fit the idea of what “normal” is. For example, they may dress or behave differently.

One thing the Queen Bee counts on is the inability of the Target to get help. The Target is keenly aware of her ability to maintain an outward appearance of “sweet” or “nice”. She is also keen to the fact that the Queen is masterful at escaping being ratted out because she flies just under the adult radar. The Target feels that no one will believe her. Often she’s right. They rarely even share their hurt with their parents. Jennifer, a girl interviewed by Rosalind Wiseman (2002), for her book *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, said, “Targets don’t want to tell their parents because they don’t want their parents to think they’re a loser or a nobody.” (p. 35)

Queens prey on certain characteristics of a Target, making them almost easy to bully. These characteristics include a feeling of helplessness to stop the Queen’s behavior, no allies or anyone to back her up, she is isolated, and is skilled at masking her hurt by rejecting people before they have the chance to reject her. (Wiseman, 2002)

Wiseman (2002) writes about the benefits and losses of being a Target. Oddly enough, one benefit she identifies is the Target gains insight and empathy for others. Also, the Target can gain authenticity because she doesn’t gauge her self-worth on members of a clique. That said, the Target loses self-esteem by feeling rejected and like she doesn’t add up. She’ll most likely be tempted to want to change herself, thus
losing herself in the process. She develops a sense that she doesn’t really deserve anything better, which, again, leads to bad choices as the girl grows into womanhood.

**Being A Target**

Relationships play a big role in the lives of girls, more so than boys. Girls seem to be intrinsically tuned into relationships, and working within relationships. Simmons (2002) writes about work that researcher Carol Gilligan has done with girls. Gilligan found that “girls perceive danger in their lives as isolation, especially the fear that by standing out they will be abandoned.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 30) So, being singled out, even within a clique, is a scary place to be. Conflict that arises within relationships could very well cost the players position and status within that group.

One of the most paralyzing feelings a girl can endure is the feeling of isolation and solitude. It can be overpowering, leading girls to balance a willingness to do just about anything to be in or stay in a group, including staying in abusive relationships. “Targets often lack the confidence to stand up for herself and may accept harassment because inside she feels it is deserved or true.” (Dellasega, 2003, p. 8) Dellasega goes on to suggest, “A girl who is repeatedly victimized by others may come to accept this treatment as normal and stay in unhealthy relationships.” (p. 17) That sense of being afraid of living alone, or “he said he was sorry”, can be a direct result of RA. When Rachel Simmons (2002) interviewed girls for her book *Odd Girl Out*, she discovered that what targets recalled most was the feeling of loneliness. “Despite the cruel things that happened – the torrents of vulgar e-mail and unsigned notes, the
whispered rumors, the slanderous scribbling on desks and walls and lockers, the sneering and name-calling—what crushed girls was being alone.” (p. 32)

Being alone in some ways meant that you were not the “perfect girl”. Girls are acutely aware that perfect girls have perfect relationships, and lots of them. One girl said, “People who are alone are pitied and no one wants to be pitied. They’re secluded. Something’s wrong with them.” (2002, p. 32)

Consequences of being a Target have long reaching affects. Growing into adulthood with a feeling that you have no power, or even worse, that you deserve no power, penetrates every relationship. That feeling of isolation, leading you to stay in bad situations is just one. As Rachel Simmons (2002) put it, “she chose a damaged relationship over no relationship at all.” (p. 54) As the targeted girls grow into women, many do not have intimate relationships with their female peers. The mistrust is so ingrained in them they purposely avoid female relationships. Simmons (2002) writes of Vanessa, a woman who suffered from relational aggression as a girl, “And yet, Vanessa said, she’ll tell a man her deep secrets, even men she doesn’t know that well, because she feels safer. Because girls had made her feel so sexually unattractive, she made sure to let me know she has made a point of sleeping with men on the first date, to silence the haunting feeling, instilled by Vanessa, that she would never be “girlfriend material.”” (2002, p. 56)

Psychologist Carlotta Miles suggests that we need to help girls find closure on relational issues, and that closure “might help reduce the amount of manipulation and fantasizing we find in adult women.” (Dellasega, 2003, p. 64) Even as grown
women, there are often times when they continue to relate to one-another in the same manner that was damaging as adolescent girls. "The mean girls of middle school may change into grown-up "shrews," "witches," "prima donnas," and "bitches," but underneath, the same game that started in grade school is still being played." (abcnews.go.com, retrieved 10/13/2005) The same rules apply, status is everything. Their tactics become more deliberate as well as subtle. (Dellasega, 2003)


1. Threat to professional status (e.g. belittling opinion, public professional humiliation, accusation regarding lack of effort)
2. Threat to personal standing (e.g. name-calling, insults, intimidation, devaluing with reference to age)
3. Isolation (e.g. preventing access to opportunities, physical or social isolation, withholding of information)
4. Excessive overwork (e.g. undue pressure, impossible deadlines, unnecessary disruptions)
5. Destabilization (e.g. failure to give credit when due, meaningless tasks, removal of responsibility, repeated reminders of blunders, setting up to fail)

Does this sound familiar? Women who are in influential positions often reflect that they much prefer to supervise men as opposed to women; it’s easier.
Reasons for this seem to echo middle school reasoning: power, inferiority, status and the competition to maintain each.

“The results can be long lasting: The head of a clique of mean girls in middle school aggressively makes her way through high school and college and bullies her way to the top in career or volunteer pursuits. The go-between girls who learn to survive by staying in the middle position continues to operate “behind the scenes” in adulthood. Tragically, the teen who believes she deserves the role of victim continues to place herself in a passive role in relationships long after she leaves the halls of high school.” (abcnews.go.com, retrieved 10/13/2005)

So, what do we do about it? Much of the literature suggests that the most effective manner to handle relational aggressions from the perspective of the target is to help give her some power in the situation. When we begin to introduce the idea of power, we begin to develop much lacking self-esteem for these girls.

In their book, Girl Wars 12 Strategies That will End Female Bullying, Cheryl Dellasega and Charisse Nixon (2003) explore strategies that “girls can – and must – be taught to capitalize on the strong, resourceful positive and powerful side that lives inside them”. (p. 5) Jumping from the belief that we all have a positive and powerful side automatically leads us to focusing on personal self-esteem. Developing a girl’s self-esteem builds strength from within, which she can pull from later to deal with situations of relational aggression. That empty seat at the lunch table that is “saved for someone else” can be devastating when filled with self doubt. Put a girl with a
strong sense of herself in that same position, suddenly she just moves past the table, not missing a beat because she gains her self worth from deeper inside. Each time this occurs, she regains a bit more power from the bully, ultimately rendering her behavior invalid.

While the book discusses how parents can get involved in helping their daughters combat RA, there is great information for anyone working with adolescent girls. Dellasega and Nixon (2003) discuss how we must first become informed about RA. Although this behavior is not new, it has evolved. For example, the authors delve into the problems associated with what they call “cyber-RA”; harassing another girl via instant messaging or e-mail. As discussed before, cyber-RA is becoming more involved and lethal, through web pages and blogs.

Next, Dellasega and Nixon (2003) go into RA prevention. Here the authors talk about building a girl’s Anti-RA skills, and encourage introducing this arsenal at a young age. Girls as young as kindergarten participate in RA. At that level it manifests as, “if you don’t do _____, I won’t be friends with you.” Along with prevention, they discuss how girls can gain esteem through what they call, “confident kindness”. Giving these girls permission to be kind, kindness that comes from an inner sense of self and security, develops their self-worth and esteem further.

Dellasega and Nixon (2003) go on to discuss RA prevention, providing support and finally changing the culture. This is where adult women can really make a contribution. Changing the culture comes from us: adults in the lives of these adolescent girls. When girls can see that adult women are getting along, having
productive discussions about issues, and not spreading rumors or criticism, they will learn how to socialize in a positive manner. Communication will become overt, a direct counter to the covertness of RA. Within all the words of *Girl Wars*, Dellasega and Nixon take on bullies and honor and support the stories of the target girls.

Julia DeVillers (2002) echoes much of what Dellasega and Nixon (2003) recommend. Ms. DeVillers (2002) wrote *Girl Wise: How to be Confident, Capable, Cool and in Control*, as sort of self-help book for adolescent girls. Throughout the book are guidelines, ideas, role plays, and solid advice for girls on all topics. On the topic of put-downs, a form of bullying and certainly relative in RA, she recommends taking out the emotion (don’t cry or get mad), ignoring it, (even though it may be difficult to do), acknowledge it, if it’s true, understanding that it disarms the bully, laugh about it and “give it right back to them so they know you stand up for yourself” (DeVillers, 2002, p. 173), and finally, practice, practice, practice a comeback ahead of time.

Another big point DeVillers (2002) makes is that girls need to understand what their requirements are in a friend. Actually, understanding that one should have requirements of a friendship will help to alleviate some RA. That mentality of “at least I have a friend...even if she’s not a very good one”, opens a girl up to all levels of disrespect. DeVillers (2002) asks girls to consider the importance of things like trustworthiness, loyalty, respect, laughter and most importantly, is she safe.
Finally, the overall message of *Girl Wars* is to give girls that tool box, to be introspective, set boundaries, and react with confidence and control. Learning these behaviors instead of relationally aggressive behaviors will last a lifetime.

**Conclusion**

There is an abundance of literature on bullying. Information on what a bully looks like, his/her family background, characteristics one possesses that lead to being a bully. There is a wealth of resources available to help a counselor counsel both the bully and the victim, and to run small group lessons for both. The information is targeted at all groups that care about helping kids have healthy relationships with one another; parents, counselors, school administrators and staff alike. There is, however, very little information on the kind of bullying that goes on between girls known as relational aggression.

Not only is there little information on RA, there is even less information on what it's like to be the target in an abusive girl relationship. That said, of all the information used for this thesis, there was one common factor: targets of relational aggression more often than not, suffer from lower self-esteem and self-confidence.

Further, it also seems understood that targets of RA carry this behavior into their adult relationships. In her books *Odd Girl Out* (2002) and *Odd Girl Speaks Out* (2004), Rachel Simmons tells the stories of many girls that had been victimized by RA. “As a result, girls may be learning submissive behavior they will import, uninterrupted, into intimate adult relationships. In other words, the failure to
recognize abuse may not confine itself to girls, or to girlhood.” (Simmons, 2002, p. 267)

It is imperative that we learn ways to teach girls, targets, how to combat RA in order to develop healthy relationships and self-esteem so they can feel good about being in school, being in a relationship, and most importantly, good about who they are and will become. In Chapter three, a self-esteem program is presented for girls ages 10-14 to address these issues.
Chapter 3
Project Report

Introduction

Adolescent girls who have been the target of girl bullies, or “relational aggression” (RA) experience adjustment problems and report more depression, anxiety and emotional distress, often carrying over into womanhood. (Patten, 2004) The impact of this behavior on girls and their environment has far reaching negative affects. A covert form of bullying, relational aggression often goes undetected. Threatening group exclusion, rumors, name-calling, laughing at, pointing, or silent treatment contributes to the deterioration of the targets’ self-esteem making it nearly impossible for her to concentrate on academic activities. “Moreover, relational aggression is significantly associated with social and psychological maladjustment during childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood.” (Werner, 2004, p. 229) Girls who are not targets, but involved in the group also suffer from various self-esteem issues. For the bully and target alike, school becomes a place where maintaining status in their chosen group is priority. For the target specifically, school becomes a place of anxiety and fear. Whether you are a target, a bully, or a group member, the affects of relational aggression can be devastating.

The purpose of this project is to develop a self-esteem program for girl’s ages 10 – 14 that counselors can implement to reduce the negative affects of relational aggression on its victims or targets. The main reason to create this program is to help young women who are targets of RA to understand they can have power in the
situation. Many targets feel powerless against a group or clique – especially when they gang up on her.

**Project Components**

Scandinavian social scientists began, in the early 1990’s looking at the difference in ways girls and boys display aggression. (Vail, 2002) Up until that point, it was assumed that girls were simply less aggressive than boys. They couldn’t be aggressive if we nurtured them to be “nice” and “sweet”, right? The term, “Relational Aggression” has only been around since the early 1990’s (the behavior has been around for generations), when researcher Nicki Crick, Ph.D. coined the phrase. After much research, she realized that girls are indeed aggressive, and bully in a much more hidden manner, operating just out of the view of adults. And they’re good at it. It’s the covertness of RA, coupled with the idea that “girls will be girls” that makes tackling this problem so important. Breaking with tradition is never easy, but often necessary.

The objective of this project is to develop a small group lessons program that could be implemented in a school setting, reducing the instances of relational aggression by focusing on the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the target girl. The advantages of utilizing a group setting for this population are abundant. Groups promote a safe atmosphere where students can share ideas and concerns, encourage and support each other to improve behaviors, take risk, and achieve personal goals. (Blum, 1998) When working in a group, the experiences of others, when shared, aim to help others not feel as isolated. This project will not be implemented.
There are three long-term goals this project seeks to change, but will not measure. The first is to increase the ability of the target to positively combat relational aggression. By increasing the target’s social armor, the severe impact of RA will be lessened. When the impact is reduced, it will automatically diminish the power the bully has over the target.

The second goal of this project is to increase the target’s self-esteem and coping and assertiveness skills. In an effort to eliminate feelings of helplessness to stop the bully’s behavior, develop allies, and lessen isolation, we empower the girl to grow beyond the incidents of bullying. Targets will learn how to stand up for themselves in an assertive manner, unlike the bully’s aggressive ways.

The final goal of this project is to develop an atmosphere within the school that is conducive to learning, and safe for all students. Getting back to the inherent intent of school, an education, continued instances of RA reduce effective learning. By reducing the impact of RA, developing target’s social skills, and empowering her to be positive and powerful will lead to positive school experiences and impressions.

The project that follows is a group lesson project lasting 8 weeks in duration, meeting once per week. Each lesson is designated Week 1 through Week 8. Week one and eight will be introduction and wrap-up meetings, respectively. Integrating lesson from *Skills for Living: Group Counseling Activities for Young Adolescents* (Smead, 2000) and *The Teen Relationship Workbook: for professionals helping teens to develop healthy relationships and prevent domestic violence* (Moles, 2001), the overall goals of running each group lesson include,
1. To facilitate development of a trusting, supportive environment in which members feel secure to risk and share, in particular about issues that cause difficulties relating to girls and women.

2. To promote the group norms of becoming a supportive, encouraging person.

3. To ensure that members can discriminate thinking, feeling, and behaving.

4. To assist members in assessing their own trouble spots in relating to other females.

5. To raise members' awareness of pressures to affiliate that take a toll on one's identity and detract from self-development.

6. To discuss the concept of gossip and its personal and social consequences.

7. To review the group experience and set goals for future personal work. (Smead, 2000, p.29)

The group lessons have not been implemented, and are intended to be used with adolescent girls, ages 10-14. The lessons can be modified to fit an older population, younger population or to meet the values of a specific school district.

Group member selection is based on referrals by school staff and interviews by a school counselor. Staff will be asked to complete a referral form, see Appendix
A. Based on staff replies, counselors will then meet with the students to discuss RA and self-esteem issues and determine if they would benefit from participating in this group. A Parent/Guardian letter, see Appendix B, explaining the group, meeting times, and for how long, along with a Consent form, see Appendix C, will be sent home if it is determined the student would be a good candidate for this group. Once permission is granted, the counselor can begin to invite participants in a manner that is appropriate for his/her building and begin lessons. In Appendix D are lessons for each week’s group meeting. Following is a brief description of each.

**Week One: Getting Started**

The goal of week one is to get the girls to begin to feel comfortable sharing with each other, and the group experience overall. Also, we’ll introduce how feelings, thoughts and behaviors work together toward positive outcomes. During this week, we will spend time setting ground rules for group, to foster trust within the group and amongst its members. A pre-test (Appendix F) will be administered so that measures of effectiveness can be assessed. The same test will be given again in Week 8, and results compared.

Also during this meeting, girls will make a Relationship Portfolio and Support Map to be used throughout group for the girls to put worksheets, journals, etcetera in to review later. The Support Map will be used to help the girls identify who in their lives they can go to when in need, and to begin to identify positive characteristics in relationships.
Week Two: Sorting Things Out

This lesson is to continue developing trust by having the group share a thought and relate it to another member within the group. This allows for communication to happen between members, not through the facilitator.

Often what can happen in a group is the participants, especially if they don’t know each other, will allow the facilitator to do all the talking, either by directing activities or helping girls find their words. The problem lies in that the girls do not develop communication skills, necessary for combating relational aggression.

Week Three: Aliens

The goal of this lesson is to help the participants become aware of the importance of choosing friends carefully, and how the impact of that can leave positive and negative influences for a long time.

Sharing and discussing how belonging to a group can be good or bad continues the intent of this lesson. This lesson also connects the thinking and feeling lesson from week one, when we ask them to think about and consider how they feel when put in a situation of choosing behaviors within a group.

Week Four: The Green Gossip Monster

Using four gossip situations, girls begin to understand some very important aspects of gossip; gossip about others, and gossip about themselves. With green “goo” representing gossip, the girls must hang onto a handful of it as discussion begins to make them realize that this goo, like gossip, is difficult to manage and contain. This comparison is especially poignant because the girls begin to realize that
even though they may be victims of RA, they too sometimes participate in hurtful gossip. By understanding this, they begin to change their own habits, resulting in heightened self-esteem.

**Week Five: Building Self Esteem Through Positive Self-Talk**

In this week’s lesson, (Moles, 2001) we begin to discover the power of self-talk, and how it can develop positive feelings within themselves that will ultimately foster self-esteem. Discussion includes the concept of self-esteem and how it relates to relationships, as they practice making self-affirming statements. We’ll discuss what self-esteem is, how we get self-esteem, what does it have to do with relationships and how we can build better self-esteem. Using “I am” statements helps the girls to focus on what their strengths are, such as, “I am a good and caring person and deserve to be treated with respect.”

**Week Six: Action Plan for Improving My Self-Esteem**

Leaping from Week Five, this lesson gives the girls an opportunity to make a plan of how to improve their self-esteem. Here we’ll brainstorm ideas on how to increase self-esteem. Then, utilizing the action plan handout, the girls will make a personalized “plan” about how using each strategy will improve their self-esteem. The handout gives them eight specific strategies, such as journaling and exercise, as well as a place to write new ideas that were brainstormed earlier. The goal is to get the girls to think about what works for them, not what someone else picks for them.
**Week Seven: My True Colors**

Holding onto their true selves can be a difficult task for many adolescent girls. They are often faced with having to make choices to be part of a group. This week’s lesson takes a look at one’s true colors. Using a scenario of being asked to be part of a group, then finding out you’d have to change your colors, or who you are, to belong, the girls are asked, “What would you do?”

This lesson starts the discussion of how girls will sometimes “sell out” in order to belong to a group. Then it takes it one step farther, by attaching this idea to becoming adult women. Girls and women, more so than men, will rearrange themselves to fit-in, at the expense of losing who they really are. It is important for targets of RA, especially, to make this connection so they have an opportunity to correct the fallacy. Being true to you and loving yourself first, is what will ultimately make girls fit-in wherever they want.

**Week Eight: That’s A Wrap**

In this week’s lesson, we spend time looking back on the seven prior lessons, and processing what the girls learned. The facilitator asks questions like, “What have you learned from the group that has resulted in some behavior changes that you are going to keep in place?” (Smead, 2000, p. 54) In a share-around, the girls spend time sharing what changes will take place in their lives, and how they will implement those changes. By now the girls should have developed trust within the group, so it may be reasonable to expect some candid replies.
End the session, and group with a sincere, heartfelt thank you, and an invitation to reconnect in 1 to 2 months. In this informal session of reconnecting, the girls will have an opportunity to discuss what is/isn’t working and make adjustments.

**Project Conclusions**

The research in Chapter 2 supports the problem stated that targets of relational aggression face deep issues both within the school environment and at a personal level. Research supports further that targets of RA often carry this learned behavior into their adult relationships. By implementing a program such as this, counselors can begin to help targets amplify self-esteem, and decrease instances of relational aggression. Another benefit of implementing this program is the school environment overall becomes safe and conducive to learning.

Through interventions that include identifying friendship requirements and developing self-esteem, the target can now begin to learn new behaviors, which have a positive impact on her general life outlook. She will then, in theory, take this into adulthood where she will handle situations with more assertiveness and effectiveness.

**Plans for Dissemination**

The importance of sharing this information with colleagues is so important, first to bring attention to the topic, second to give tools to combat the problem. The group lessons accomplish the latter. Equally important is the need to get the information out to all staff within the school environment. Once staff knows what to look for, we can begin to promote alternatives. First, however, we must recognize
that relational aggression exists, that it is detrimental to the students involved, and decreases the effectiveness of learning.

An excellent way to share this plan is during a staff in-service day. This time can be used two fold. First, it demonstrates support by the administration in the building by allowing time for the counseling staff to share. Second, all staff is typically present for in-service, allowing the counseling presenter to talk to the mass. Sharing the history of RA, the academic and personal consequences of RA, and why staff needs to be aware of this phenomenon should be the foundation of the presentation. Utilizing the Teacher/Staff Referral form (see Appendix A) as a handout can start the conversation and lead into an open questions/answer forum. Counselors can expect questions regarding the validity of relational aggression, simply because it is covert, and often believed to be “girls being girls”. The counselor must get this message across, “Most adults are aware that RA starts early and continues throughout the school years, they too often think this behavior is “typical kid behavior” and subsequently, do not address it.” (Nixon, 2005, p. 1) School counselors at all levels of education need to work hard to crush that mentality, and this is a perfect opportunity to begin.

The use of a school district newsletter is another excellent resource for getting out the information. Typically sent out to all families in the district, the newsletter begins to educate parents and guardians on the issue. Often times parents feel helpless in helping their daughters through this, especially if they were victims
themselves. Also, by developing trust with parents and guardians, counseling staff can begin to elicit their support for the future.
References


http://www.abcnews.go.com/GMA/print?id=1195438

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Appendix A

Sample Teacher/Staff Referral
Teacher/Staff Referral to Relational Aggression Group

Date ____________ Teacher/Staff Name ________________________________________

Student/Grade Being Referred ______________________________________________

How do you know this student? _____________________________________________

Relational Aggression is behavior between girls that aims to damage relationships by exclusion from groups, name-calling, rumors, eye-rolling, silent treatment, etc. This behavior typically occurs between girls and often goes unnoticed by teachers, parents, and staff alike. The Guidance Office will be running a group for Targets (or victims) of Relational Aggression. If you know of someone who may benefit from our group, please complete this form and return it to the Guidance Office by ________________.

Please describe behaviors that make you believe she would be a good candidate for our group. Examples include low self-esteem, few or no friends, you’ve seen or heard of her being bullied by other girls, or she has shared with you situations of RA, poor self-concept, etc.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you share with the girl you would be referring her to our group? __________

Please understand that although you have referred a student to a group, as School Counselors, we are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of the group and students participating, and cannot update you on their progress. We sincerely appreciate your assistance as we work together to build strength and self-esteem in all students, and to make the school environment one that is safe and conducive to learning. Thank you.

________________________________________________________________________

Student Interviewed by _______________________________ Date ________________

Candidate for Group? ______________

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Appendix B

Sample Parent/Guardian Letter
Dear Parent or Guardian:

During the school year, your school counseling staff will be offering students in need of services the opportunity to participate in group counseling. About six to eight youths are selected to be in the group.

Group counseling is an excellent way for some students to learn new skills, develop self-confidence, become more aware of how others see them, practice new behaviors, and better understand how to deal with the many problems life presents.

Your child has expressed interest in participating in a group that will be starting soon. Enclosed is a form that asks you to give your consent for your child to participate. He or she has not been selected yet and will not be considered until you give your permission. Only a few students will be able to have this opportunity at a time. If your child is not selected but is an appropriate candidate for future services, he or she will have other opportunities to participate. Participation in the group is completely voluntary and will not affect your child’s grades in any way.

Please read the Parent/Guardian Consent Form thoroughly and return it by __________ (date). If you have questions, concerns, or comments, please call us at the number and times listed below. Thank you very much for considering this opportunity for your child.

Sincerely,

School Counseling Staff

Telephone number _______________________
Best times to call _______________________
Appendix C

Sample Parent/Guardian Consent Form
Your permission is requested for your child, ________ (name), to participate in group counseling activities at ________ (school). The group counseling will run for approximately ________ (number of weeks), from ________ (date) to ________ (date). A total of ________ (number of sessions) of ________ (number of minutes) each is scheduled. The group is entitled ________ (topic/title) and will include discussion of ideas, behaviors, feelings, attitudes, and opinions. Some of the subjects to be covered in the group are as follows:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Participants will have the opportunity to learn new skills and behaviors that may help their personal development and adjustment. The group will be led by ________ (name(s)), of the school counseling staff.

Because counseling is based on a trusting relationship between counselor and client, the group leader(s) will keep the information shared by group members confidential except in certain situations in which there is an ethical responsibility to limit confidentiality. In the following circumstances, you will be notified.

1. If the child reveals information about harm to himself/herself or to any other person
2. If the child reveals information about child abuse
3. If the child reveals information about criminal activity or the court (a judge) subpoenas counseling records
4. Other ____________________________________________________________

By signing this form I give my informed consent for my child to participate in group counseling. I understand that:

1. The group will provide an opportunity for members to learn and practice interpersonal skills, discuss feelings, share ideas, practice new behaviors, and make new friends.
2. Anything group members share in group will be kept confidential by the group leader(s) except in the above-mentioned cases.

Please return this form to __________________________ (name) by __________ (date).

Parent/Guardian ______________________________________ Date ________________________
Parent/Guardian ______________________________________ Date ________________________
Student _____________________________________________ Date ________________________
Appendix D

Lesson Plans

Week 1 – Getting Started
Week 2 – Sorting Things Out
Week 3 – Aliens
Week 4 – The Green Gossip Monster
Week 5 – Building Self Esteem Through Positive Self-Talk
Week 6 – Action Plan for Improving My Self-Esteem
Week 7 – My True Colors
Week 8 – That’s A Wrap
GETTING STARTED

GOALS

Affective
To begin to become comfortable with self-disclosing and the group experience

Behavioral
To thoroughly discuss confidentiality and its limits
To establish ground rules with other members to encourage ownership
To participate in a getting-acquainted activity

Cognitive
To understand the purpose and general goals of the group
To learn what confidentiality is and understand its importance
To clarify the concepts of thinking, feeling, and behaving
To begin to select personal goals

MATERIALS

Limits of Confidentiality sign (see Appendix A, page 270)
Thinking-Feeling-Behaving Gears (see Appendix A, page 271)
Easel pad or posterboard and marker
Large sheet of newsprint
Colored markers
Healthy snacks (such as fruit, crackers, juice, raisins)

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time

For sessions after this first one, Opening Time will take up about one-fourth of the typical 40- to 50-minute session time, or about 10 minutes. For this session, however, you will need to plan on more time to discuss confidentiality, develop ground rules, and conduct a getting-acquainted activity. See the book’s introduction for some ideas on how to schedule this extra time.

1. Welcome girls to group and go over the group’s name, purpose, and goals. Stress that this group is going to help them deal with some of the difficulties they may be having from growing up female in our society and with how being a girl can be painful due to pressures from others as well as choices we make that are not in our own best interest.

2. Thoroughly discuss confidentiality (the “no-blab” rule): What is said and done in the group stays in the group. Be sure to give some examples of things adults or peers outside the group might say to pressure group members to share what happens in group. For example:

   What do you guys talk about in group anyway?
   Shara shouldn’t be in the group—what’s she doing there?
Do you tell who smokes and drinks beer in that group?

After members are clear on what confidentiality is, share the Limits of Confidentiality sign (either as a handout or poster) and discuss: Let group members know you are bound by the confidentiality rule but that as the leader you are required to tell about what goes on in the group if you think someone will do harm to self or others, if someone says anything about child abuse or criminal activity going on, or if a judge orders you to turn over information.

3. Explain that in addition to confidentiality, the group needs a few other basic rules so members can feel safe. Present the ground rules you have decided on for your group. For example:

- Take turns.
- Everyone has the right to “pass” (not share unless that’s comfortable).
- Respect others’ opinions (no put-downs).
- Come on time.

Don’t move on until the group agrees on the ground rules. Write or have the group write the rules on an easel pad or piece of posterboard and have each member sign the document to show agreement. You can then post these rules every session.

4. To help group members get acquainted, have them form dyads and share their names, what secret name they would like to have, and what they like most and least about being a girl. Set a time limit for the activity so they can share equally and tell them they will also be sharing this information with the rest of the group.

5. Reassemble in the group circle and let the pairs introduce each other and share the information.

Working Time

- Working Time will be half of a typical session, or about 20 to 25 minutes.

1. Introduce the idea that thinking, feeling, and behaving are three major parts of who we are. Show the group the Thinking-Feeling-Behaving Gears and explain, in your own words:

   In group, we will be talking about what we are thinking, feeling, or doing to add to our problems in coping with life, and how we can change thinking, feeling, and doing to live more effective and happy lives. Thinking, feeling, and behaving are just like these three interlocking gears—whatever one is doing affects the others. In this group it is important that each of you understand what is being said when we ask, “What are you thinking?” “What are you feeling?” and “What are you doing?”

2. Write the three categories on the easel pad or posterboard and invite the group to give examples of each type. For instance:

   Thinking: Imagining, deciding, examining, learning, organizing, remembering, wondering
   Feeling: Annoyed, confused, doubtful, joyful, humiliated, jealous, motivated, resentful, weary
   Behaving: Arguing, digesting, eating, flirting, gossiping, imitating, laughing, smiling

3. As a fun way to clarify these ideas, invite the group to make a drawing to show the three types of words in some connected way, similar to the Gears drawing (but not gears). For example, for a tree, the ground and roots could represent thinking words; the trunk,
behaving words; and the branches, feeling words. For a butterfly, the head could be the place for thinking words, the body for behaving words, and the wings for feeling words. Let the girls decide how they are going to represent the three concepts and, as a group, draw them with the colored markers on the newsprint. They can sit on the floor or do this at a table. The only rule is that everyone must agree on the concept and participate in some way in the drawing. Encourage and praise as they decide together what to draw. Be sure to give them a time limit for the drawing so they will have the opportunity to present their work.

4. When the girls have finished their drawing, have them place it in the middle of the floor in the center of the group and share what their picture represents and how they came to decide on the format. After sharing, they may sit on the floor or chairs in a circle. Ask the following questions:

What are some of the things that you **think** about being a girl?
What are some of the **feelings** you have about being a girl?
What are some things you **do or don't do** because you are a girl?

5. Ask, “What would be a realistic goal for you in this group?” Girls might express some realistic goals by finishing this sentence: “By the end of this group I want to . . .”

   - Stop saying negative things about my body.
   - Learn to stand up for myself and my ideas.
   - Speak up when I get blamed for things others do.
   - Take more time getting ready for school so I look better.
   - Not worry about how I look so much.
   - Take classes I want to take, not what others want me to take.

**Processing Time**

Processing Time takes one-quarter of a typical session, or about 10 minutes.

1. Ask at least one question from each of the four processing levels:

   **INTRAPERSONAL**
   Today was our first session. What have you been thinking or feeling during the time we have been together?

   **INTERPERSONAL**
   What did you notice about being a member of the group today? What did you notice about the other group members?

   **NEW LEARNING**
   What ideas or feelings have you experienced today that are new for you?

   **APPLICATION**
   What can you take from the group today that you can use to help you between now and the next session?

2. Give the group a hope statement like the following example:

   _I feel confident that each of you will be successful in identifying and making progress on changes that improve things for you—your friends, family, and schoolwork._

3. Remind them of the day and time of the next session, then share the snacks.
Although you may be thinking a lot about your relationships with ‘romantic’ or ‘intimate’ partners, first let’s take a look at some of the other relationships in your life. This is important, because sometimes we focus so intensely on one relationship that we lose sight of the importance of our other relationships, like with friends, family and other people who can help us reach our goals. Remember that no one relationship can ever meet all of your needs.

Below you can create a ‘map’ of your support system. In the center circle, put your name or paste a picture of yourself. In the boxes connected to you, write the names and telephone numbers of the people or organizations who are or could be a part of your support system. This means anyone you could call on for help or support in any area of your life from a serious personal problem, to health care, to help with your math homework. Feel free to draw in extra boxes if necessary!

Examples of people and places you might have in your support system...

- Parents
- Brothers or sisters
- Other family members
- Close friends
- A teacher you trust
- Your counselor or therapist
- Your church, temple or place of worship
- Your dating partner
- Youth center
- Crisis hotline or youth line
- Health clinic
- A club, team or group you belong to
- Your co-workers or boss
- Your school
- Other ___________
- Other ___________

As you continue to work on developing healthy relationships, strong or confusing feelings may come up. Who in your support system can you talk with about these feelings?
Facilitator's Information for
My Support Map

Purpose: To identify supportive people and organizations where teens can seek help with relationships and other issues.

Materials: One photocopy of worksheet per participant
Instant camera or existing picture of each teen
Glue stick or rubber cement
Fine-tipped colored markers
Phone book
List of numbers for local/state hotlines, shelters, youth counseling centers, etc.
Optional: Flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk

Activity (Group or Individual):

1. Explain to participant(s) that they will be creating a map of their support system.

2. Discuss the concept of a support system, and together read the introductory paragraph.

3. Either take instant photos of each teen, give out existing pictures, or allow teen(s) to draw a picture of themselves or just write their name in the circle in the center of the support map.

4. Instruct participant(s) to begin writing in the name and telephone number of people or organizations that are a part of their support system or they would like to be a part of their support system. Encourage teen(s) to use the checklist at the bottom of the page for ideas about people or organizations to put in their support map, but also encourage them to think of other support resources that are not listed. Aside from the teen's parents or primary caretakers, the support map should include adults who are not necessarily authority figures. It may include community-based organizations, which may be able to provide confidential or anonymous counseling and other services, and peers. Ask teen(s) if there is a situation they can imagine running into at some future date in which they might need help from a community organization. Use phone book to look up numbers of organizations that can meet that need - for example, if a teen were ever worried she might be pregnant, where could she get a free, confidential pregnancy test? Tell teen(s) to feel free to draw in more boxes if necessary, and encourage them to decorate the page any way they want.

4. Process by asking teen(s) how easy or difficult it is to ask for help and support with various issues. Ask for a volunteer to choose a situation in which it is difficult to ask for help, and role-play asking for help in that situation.

Facilitator's Note: When beginning the support map, teens may write the name of their dating partners first - this is fine and should not be discouraged. It is critical not to discount the importance of the partner, even in the most abusive relationships. Doing so will only alienate the teens you are trying to work with, and make it less likely that they will consider you part of their support systems. Instead, validate teens' feelings of being supported by their partners, and then move on to ask whom else they might include in their support systems. When the map is complete, the teens should be able to see that their partners are one of many support resources.

Use In Conjunction With:
SEALS+PLUS, "No One is an "Is-land"," (page 63)
SEALS II, "Supportive Relationships," (page 40)
SEALS III, "Personal Network Profile," (page 80)
cROSSING THE BRIDGE, (pages 49, 50, 51)
Harm
(to self or others)

Abuse

Courts
Girlfriends: Understanding and Managing Friendships

Instructions: Each of the statements below concerns your ideas, beliefs, attitudes, or feelings about personal and friendship issues. After each statement is a response you could choose. Circle the response that is how you think or feel now.

1 = never  
2 = hardly ever  
3 = sometimes  
4 = most of the time  
5 = always

*Example:* I like to eat pizza and drink Dr. Pepper.

You hardly ever like to eat pizza and drink Dr. Pepper.

1. I am able to express my feelings to my family and friends.
2. I am aware of stresses caused by friends and peers with negative attitudes.
3. I can tell when someone is not good for me to hang out with.
4. I know how to end a friendship that is not good for me.
5. I can tell when a situation means trouble, and I can avoid it.
6. I am aware of how my body reacts to too much stress.
7. I can tell exactly what is and what is not gossip.
8. I know what my values are, and I make decisions based on them most of the time.
9. I know what to do if someone is sexually harassing me.
10. I have a positive attitude about being a girl.

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SESSION 2

Sorting Things Out

GOALS

Affective
To relax and lessen stress involved in disclosing personal information

Behavioral
To learn and practice the use of the linking and connecting skill

Cognitive
To introduce the concept of friends as a support system and sounding board for answering the question “Who am I?”
To become aware of choices of friends who are accepting as well as self-defining

MATERIALS

Easel pad or posterboard and marker
Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (¼ session time)
1. Welcome the girls back to group. Ask what ideas, concerns, or questions the group might have concerning confidentiality. Ask if anyone had to deal with outside-of-group queries about what was happening in group, and reinforce anyone who did for dealing with the situation appropriately. Ask the group how they think the current ground rules are working for them. Are any changes needed?

2. Review in a few sentences the topic and activity from the first session (thinking-feeling-behaving and personal goals for the group). Address any specific interpersonal issues (disagreements, lack of trust, and so forth) from the first session that might need revisiting.

Working Time (½ session time)
1. Invite the group to participate in a share-around for the purpose of hearing what each one believes is important about having both a “best friend” and lots of girls as friends. Work the share-around until everyone responds or passes. Use the following scaling question:

   On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to you to have a best girlfriend? One means not important at all and 10 means that you absolutely must have an identified best girlfriend at all times.

2. Without processing that information, go on to a second scaling question:

   On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to you to have several girlfriends to hang out with? One means it is not important to you at all and 10 means it is absolutely essential for you to feel you have several friends who like and accept you.

3. Begin building cohesion by teaching the girls the linking and connecting skill. In your own words, share:
I noticed while you were sharing how important a best friend and a group of friends are to you that you were watching each other and some were nodding and smiling at others. This shows that you were thinking or feeling the same thing as the one you were acknowledging. Let’s begin to communicate directly with one another, instead of to me or through me because this is your group—you are the most important. Tell whomever you linked with that you made a connection with her, using this formula. It will be stiff and funny at first, but after you do it a time or two, it will feel great to know that someone else is thinking and feeling the same as you.

4. Write the following formula on the easel pad or posterboard:

_____ (name), when you said . . .

I thought (or felt) . . .

because . . .

Be sure that group members say the person’s name, that they linked with the person about whatever, and what they thought or felt about that situation. Be sure the person linked with has time to say something back. (It’s a good idea to post a chart with this linking statement somewhere in the group room and refer to it as needed during each session.)

5. Ask: “Would you be willing to share with the group some of the reasons you value having a best friend and perhaps several other close girlfriends in your life? Tell everyone.” Encourage group members to share their ideas.

6. Invite responses to the following questions:

How can you tell if a friend is for you, meaning a person who will not do harm to you in any way, or against you, someone you cannot trust not to hurt you in some way?

How does it feel to be influenced for a long time by someone you feel deep down inside is not good for you? What can you do if you feel stuck in that situation?

By staying in a friendship that influences you to do things you aren’t comfortable with and causes you to get in trouble or lose good things you have, what are you really saying about yourself? (I care more about others than I do about myself; it is more important to be liked by the “right” people than to be my own person; I need to work on my own self-esteem and let go of people who drag me down.)

7. Ask and invite sharing:

Can you think of someone who has been a positive influence on you—your parents or another older member of your family—for many years?

How do you feel about trusting the rest of the girls in our group to keep on coming to group and sharing, in confidence, your ideas about friendships?

Processing Time (¼ session time)

1. In your own words, explain, then ask at least one question from each of the four processing levels:

Today was our second time together, and we talked about some serious ideas and some fun ideas about identifying how girlfriends are a special and wonderful part of our lives, who also can cause us a lot of emotional pain and irritation.

INTRAPERSONAL

What have you been thinking and feeling inside yourself about girl friendships during our time together today?
INTERPERSONAL
What was it like to be a member of the group today? What did you notice about the other group members?

NEW LEARNING
What did you learn today about yourself and your ideas and feelings, or about how other girls think about friendships?

APPLICATION
If during the time before our next session you watched and listened as other girls interact, what do you think you might learn? Would anyone be willing to try this before the next session and let us know what you learned?

2. Thank group members for their participation and give them a hope statement about how friendships are very powerful and can influence us to behave in ways that are either positive and growthful for us or negative and hurtful for us. Say, “We are now ready to explore what personal challenges each one of you wants to work toward resolving.”

3. Remind members of the day and time for the next session, then share the snacks.
Aliens

GOALS

Affective
To have fun with the concept of “aliens” coming to the school
To get in touch with feelings associated with attracting, having, and losing girlfriends

Behavioral
To explore the stresses and pressures close friendships bring

Cognitive
To become aware of the importance of choosing friends carefully because they have strong positive and negative influences on us for a long time

MATERIALS

Three representations of an alien creature, such as dolls, pictures, videotape jackets, posters, puppets, and so on. Good “aliens” are available from Oriental Trading Company (1-800-228-2269). If you can find candy or treats in the form of aliens, great!

Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (½ session time)
1. Welcome girls back to group. Ask if there are any concerns or questions about confidentiality. How are the ground rules working for everyone at this time?

2. Briefly connect with the previous session, on choosing friends who are good for you, and ask if anyone noticed anything about their own choice of friends in the past week. What was it about another girl that made that person valuable as a friend or potential friend? What negative influences might they have noticed?

Working Time (½ session time)
1. Paraphrase the following:

   Sometimes you find a group of girls that you really want to be like and be with. You really want to be part of their group, but for some reason they don’t want you. Maybe they are subtle about it, and maybe they are rude and just tell you to get lost. How do you feel?

2. After some discussion, say, “Who else in the group might be thinking and feeling like you? Tell them you linked with them.” Review the linking and connecting formula described during the last session and encourage group members to use it. Then move on.

3. Show the group the alien dolls/representations and ask what group members think these objects are. Pass the aliens around for everyone to see and hold. Let the group have a few minutes to talk about who or what an alien is, what alien means, and the whole concept of alien as being someone or something we think might come from outer space—a creature that “doesn’t belong here.”

4. Point out that alien can also mean a feeling we have when we are the “outsider” and thought of as different. Ask: “Have you ever felt like an alien when you wanted to be part of a group and the group didn’t want you? What was that like?” Encourage differences of opinion and
ways of looking at this issue of belongingness and discuss how important it is to feel part of a group, or at least to have one or two girlfriends you can count on to go places with and be there for you.

5. Tell this story:

*Now suppose some really cool alien girls named Zanta, Phanta, and Yxinta, from Planet X, come to your school. They’re very smart, beautiful in a weird sort of alien way, have really cool alien clothes made out of shiny metallic stuff that has its own built-in computer signals, and know the best places to hang out to have fun and meet cool guys. All of the girls in your class want to be best friends with Zanta, Phanta, and Yxinta. There is only one little problem, and that is the alien girls have certain requirements for anyone who wants to be in their exclusive friends’ club. One of the requirements is that everyone in the group of friends will make fun of other kids who are different in any way, such as kids from another country or culture or kids who look different, like some students with special needs. This is very strange indeed, because the aliens are the most different of anyone in the school! The aliens insist that their friends use put-downs and negative, hurtful gossip about other kids and teachers, even if it isn’t true. They also require anyone who is in their friendship club to smoke “doedoe weed,” rolled up in rhododendron leaves. Doedoe weed makes your mouth and clothes smell like disgusting rotting eggs, as well as doing away with some of your IQ points.*

6. Remind the group that they really want to be friends with these aliens, then ask the following questions:

What would you be willing to do to be best friends with the aliens? What would you not be willing to do?

What positive influences on you do you think the aliens would have—what could you learn from them that would help you in your life?

What negative effects do you think hanging out with the aliens might have?

Why do you feel like an alien when you are rejected by real girls you highly value? Why does it bother you? Why not just forget it and find someone else who would be glad to be your friend?

When you do feel like an alien, how do you handle it? What kinds of feelings do you have and how do you deal with those feelings, even when they might be overwhelming?

What kind of stresses do you have that are caused by trying to make and keep desirable friends? Do you think an alien from outer space might have those same stresses on earth? (Just joking!)

What kinds of feelings do you experience when you have a good friend and then all of a sudden you lose your friend, either because the friend moves away or because your friend ends the friendship with you?

Are close friendships with other girls worth the emotional pain that you have to go through to make, keep, and maintain?

**Processing Time (¼ session time)**

1. Begin by saying, “Today we talked about some imaginary friends you could have. Even though this isn’t real for us right now, it gave us an interesting way of thinking about real friends.” Then ask at least one question from each of the four levels of processing:

**INTRAPERSONAL**

While we were talking about what some people might want us to be like to have them as friends, what were you thinking and feeling?
INTERPERSONAL
How are you feeling about our group right now—how does it feel to be a member of our group today?

NEW LEARNING
What new ideas or insights did you have about girlfriends today?

APPLICATION
What changes might you need to make to have friends who are more helpful and who don't cause you to have negative experiences? Who would be willing to think about this outside the group and notice what is going on in their friendships? (Explain that this information will help the group plan skills they could learn in group and figure out what skills might be available from other sources.)

2. Thank group members for coming and give them a hope statement. Remind them of the next session’s day and time, then enjoy the snacks.
The Green Gossip Monster

GOALS

Affective
To increase sense of community with the group by working and practicing together

Behavioral
To practice the use of coping statements to deal with gossip about self and others
To learn the use of “I-messages” as a coping and assertion skill

Cognitive
To be able to identify what is and what isn’t gossip
To realize how gossip affects both the sender and the receiver
To identify concerns about how words wound one’s reputation

MATERIALS

Green Gossip Monster Situations (Handout 1)
One or more containers of green slime, apple jelly, or Jello
A spoon or ladle to deliver the green goo
Some napkins or paper towels and a bowl or bucket of water—or a nearby sink!
Green candy (if possible)
Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (¼ session time)
1. Welcome girls to group and ask what concerns about confidentiality group members might have. Inquire about the ground rules: How are they working at this point?
2. Briefly connect with the previous session’s topic of dating decisions. Ask and encourage members to share experiences:
   - Who would like to share ideas or steps they took toward dealing with dating issues or feeling OK about where they are about their dating status at this time?
   - What dating pressures (knots) were you able to notice between sessions, either for yourself or for friends?

Working Time (½ session time)
1. Ask the girls to form dyads, then give each pair a copy of the Green Gossip Monster Situations (Handout 1). Show them the green gooey stuff and tell them it represents how sticky, spreading, and hard to clean up gossip is . . . and that they are to keep the goo in their hands for a while, until the end of the activity: “Keep thinking of how yucky it is and how it manages to slink around your hands and get into every crack—like gossip you can’t get back!” Then give each girl a big spoonful of green goo.
2. Assign one of the Green Gossip Monster Situations to each dyad. Request that they come up with a way to resolve the gossip situation and keep the green goo off the paper!
3. Let the dyads read and discuss their situations for about 5 minutes. Tell them to try to identify who is being hurt and how the gossip affects the sender (person who starts the rumor or gossip) and the receiver (person who is the target of the hurtful statements or person who hears about the hurtful statements and knows the target person). They must keep holding the goo and the paper in some way!

4. After they have discussed the situations, have them come back to the group circle. One member of the dyad reads the situation to the rest of the group. Ask them both to share what exactly the gossip is, who the target of the gossip is, and what thoughts and feelings they have about how damaging this situation is to the people involved. Go through all four situations, still holding the goo!

5. Ask the following questions. Don’t drop the goo!

   How do untruthful, mean-spirited words wound you when you are the target of gossip? (Encourage the group to share feelings of helplessness, rage, desire to retaliate, and so forth.)

   How does gossip affect others when you are involved?

   If you are angry at those who gossip about you and want to get revenge, what could you expect from the situation? (More of the same, no resolve, more wounding words, perhaps physical fights where someone is violent and both parties are in danger of being expelled from school or involved with the law.)

6. Say:

   Even though you might not be able to change other people who have already done damage to you, you do have the right to tell them how you feel and how it affects you. One way you can do this is to use I-MESSAGES. Here are some examples:

   When you say things about me that are untrue, I feel hurt and angry because you do not have the right to damage me, and I want you to stop it immediately.

   I feel furious when you spread lies about me because I have the right to respect, and I want you to treat me the same way you want to be treated.

   I feel outraged when you spread hurtful gossip because it is untrue and hurts your reputation as someone who can be believed, and I want you to respect yourself as well as me in the future.

7. Continue:

   When you are in a situation where people are spreading untrue or hurtful things about other people, such as a teacher or other students, you can express yourself by making COPING STATEMENTS. Here are some examples:

   I’m going to respect other people the same way I want to be respected, and I’d appreciate it if you would do the same.

   Gossip is hurtful, and I choose not to be that way.

   Gossip hurts everyone involved. I’m outta here!

   Sorry guys, I’m taking the high road on this one.

8. Explain:

   Yes, you might have to take some ribbing from your friends, but YOU CAN TAKE IT! The gossipers know they are wrong, so just walk away. It’s not the worst thing that could happen, and you are showing your individuality and courage—others will respect you in the long run.
9. Have the girls look at their hands with the green goo on them. Ask:
   What was it like to have this awful green stuff, like sticky gossip, all over your hands?
   Was it possible not to get it all over your paper, maybe even your clothes?
   How is the goo like gossip? (Can't take it back once it's out!)
   What did you learn from having to deal with this stuff?
10. Let them clean up and get the green goo off. Perhaps have some green candy to reward
    them and replace the green goo.

**Processing Time (¾ session time)**

1. Ask and discuss at least one question from each of the four levels of processing:
   **INTRAPERSONAL**
   When you were reading the situations about gossip about yourself or other people, what
   were you thinking and feeling?
   **INTERPERSONAL**
   What did you notice about the rest of the girls in our group when we were trying to figure
   out how to deal with these situations?
   **NEW LEARNING**
   What new ideas about gossip do you have now that you didn’t have before you came to
   group today?
   **APPLICATION**
   What would you be willing to do between this session and the next about the issue of gossip
   among your friends?
   How could you make a change in how you do things or how you act in situations where
   gossip happens?
2. Thank them for coming, give them a hope statement, and remind them of the time and day
   for the next session. Enjoy the snacks!
Green Gossip Monster Situations

**GREEN GOSSIP SITUATION 1**

You and your best friend, both eighth graders, and some other girls are eating lunch in the cafeteria. Two of the seventh-grade girls say that they heard Alyssa and Allison, who aren't there, are lesbians and do weird and sinful things. They say that all the seventh-grade girls know it now, so you and the eighth-grade girls might as well know it, too. You and your girlfriend know this isn't true and are mad as wet hens when you hear these mean-spirited seventh-grade girls are spreading this around. What would you say? (Gossip about others)

**GREEN GOSSIP SITUATION 2**

You finally get a date with Josh, a cool guy you really like. He is nice and fun, and you get along great on the date. You had to beg your mom to let you go out, and she trusted you to go out the first time without a group of other friends. Renee, a girl who used to like Josh, is jealous he went with you—she even lives on your street. When you get home your mom confronts you with the information that some neighbor kids said they saw you and Josh with cans of beer in his car when you went on the date. Your mom is furious. You know this isn't true, but the trusting relationship with your mom has been damaged. It was probably Renee who made up this vicious lie. You try your best to convince your mom that this is the case. What would you say? (Gossip about you)

**GREEN GOSSIP SITUATION 3**

This guy named Rob has been giving you a ride to school for a month, since he got his license. He is really mean and talks dirty when he is driving. He also drives too fast, taking chances passing people he should stay behind. But going to school with him has saved you a lot of time, and you can practice cheerleading with your friends because you get there early when Rob drives. Now you hear that Rob has been bragging to his friends that you have been having sex with him on the way to school. The rest of your friends are really disgusted with you when they hear this. You try to tell them Rob is making this up, but he has them pretty well convinced. Your reputation is the pits. What would you say? (Gossip about you)

**GREEN GOSSIP SITUATION 4**

You are at the mall shopping for earrings with your two best friends. They start saying that they heard Mr. Michaels, the French teacher, used to be in prison, and that he smokes dope at the football games. You are shocked that they would say something damaging that might not be true about Mr. Michaels. They said that some sixth graders just made it up, and now the whole school is starting to believe it, and because they are afraid of Mr. Michaels, they laughed at him, too. What do you think? (Gossip about others)
**Building Self-Esteem Through Positive Self-Talk**

**What is Self-Esteem?** Self-esteem refers to how you think and feel about yourself. It is your sense of self-worth, your belief about how valuable and worthy a person you are. People with high self-esteem feel good about themselves, and people with low self-esteem feel badly about themselves.

**How do we get self-esteem?** Self-esteem usually comes from messages you get about yourself. These messages can come from other people (like parents, teachers or friends) or from your self. When we get messages from other people that tell us we are ‘bad,’ we often learn to tell ourselves that we are bad or unworthy, and we develop low self-esteem. When we get messages from other people that tell us we are ‘good,’ we usually learn to tell ourselves that we are good and valuable people, and we develop high self-esteem.

**What does self-esteem have to do with relationships?** The messages we get from people we care about have a very strong affect on our self-esteem. If you are in a healthy relationship, your partner acknowledges your strengths and positive qualities, has confidence in your ability to make good decisions, trusts you and encourages you to pursue your goals. Having a supportive person like this in your life probably makes you feel good about yourself, so your self-esteem improves. If you are in an unhealthy relationship, your partner might put you down, blame you for all of the problems in your relationship, and discourage you from activities that will help you grow as a person. Even if you have high self-esteem when you start your relationship, if you are around an emotionally abusive person for long enough, your self-esteem will eventually get lower.

**How can I build my self-esteem?** Self-esteem doesn’t only come from the messages other people send you – it also comes from the messages you send yourself, called ‘Self-Talk’. If you are used to hearing negative messages from other people, chances are you will send yourself negative messages too. Things like “I’m so stupid,” “I’m not good enough at this…” or “It’s my fault this happened because…” are examples of negative self-talk. One way to build your self-esteem is to re-train yourself to engage in positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is when you focus on your strengths and positive qualities, reminding yourself that you are a good and valuable person.

Some examples of positive self-talk

“I am a good and caring person and deserve to be treated with respect.”
“I am capable of achieving success in my life.”
“There are people who love me and will be there for me when I need them.”
“I deserve to be happy.”
“I am entitled to make mistakes and to learn from them.”

Finish the sentences below:

1. I am a strong person. An example of a time I was strong is ____________________________
2. I am capable of being happy. A time I was happy was ____________________________
3. I am a good friend. A time I was there for a friend was ____________________________
4. I am capable of making decisions for myself. A time I made a good decision was ____________________________
5. I am lovable. People who love me without abusing me are ____________________________
6. I am talented. One thing I am good at is ____________________________
7. ____________________________

Repeat the above sentences to yourself regularly to get in the habit of positive self-talk.
Facilitator's Information for
Building Self-Esteem Through Positive Self-Talk

Purpose: To understand the concept of self-esteem and how it relates to relationships.
To identify personal strengths and practice making self-affirming statements.

Materials: One photocopy of worksheet per participant
Pens/pencils

Activity
1. Read or have participant(s) read aloud the four questions and answers, taking time to discuss concepts and terms.
2. Ask participant(s) to volunteer to read the examples of positive self-talk statements (in a group, try to have a different participant read each statement.)
3. Instruct participant(s) to complete the six sentences at the bottom of the page, and to add at least one other self-affirming statement.
4. If working with a group, have participants go around in a circle taking turns repeating each of the positive statements they have written about themselves. If working with an individual, encourage teen to repeat each self-affirming statement several times.
5. Process activity with the following questions and points:
   * How did it feel making positive statements about yourself? It might be awkward at first but it will probably get easier as you get more comfortable with the truth about your positive self.
   * What are times when positive self-talk might be helpful to you?
   * Can anyone give examples of negative self-talk they engage in? Can you turn those negative statements into positive statements about yourself?
   * How could positive self-talk help a person in an abusive relationship?
   * Do you think most people have times when their self-esteem is low?
6. Tell participant(s) that their 'homework' assignment is to repeat their 'Positive Self-Talk' statements aloud, either in a mirror or while sitting quietly with their eyes closed, every day, between now and the next session. Be sure to check in about this experience at the beginning of the next session.

Facilitator's Note:
Often a participant will raise the idea that some people's self-esteem is too high, and they act 'conceited'. Point out that often people who feel badly about themselves put on an act in order to hide their bad feelings, and they come off as acting conceited. That kind of behavior is actually often a sign of low self-esteem.

Follow-up Activity:
Action Plan for Improving My Self Esteem, (page 80)

Use In Conjunction With:
SEALS+PLUS, "I Will Like Myself A-Z," (page 53)
SEALS II, "I Am Someone Who," (page 58)
SEALS III, "Self Talk," (page 45)
CROSSING THE BRIDGE, (pages 12, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 36, 37, 38)

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Action Plan For Improving My Self-Esteem

After reading each of the strategies for improving self-esteem, check the ones you plan to use and fill in your personal plan for using these strategies.

☆ Positive self-talk:
I will be aware of my self-talk. I will try not to put myself down, but to put myself up instead, with positive self-talk. Here are some examples of statements I will repeat to myself when I start to feel badly or get the urge to put myself down.

Journaling:
I can use a journal to help me sort out my feelings and to write down positive statements about who I really am (another way of practicing positive self-talk.)

I have a journal __ Yes __ No
If I don’t have a journal, here is my plan to get and use one:

Exercise:
Exercise can relieve stress, give me time to think positively about myself, and make me feel good about my health and my body. It does not have to be strenuous, but I will try to exercise at least three times a week.

I have written the exercises I can do:
☆ Walking on the streets or in a park
☆ Riding a bike
☆ Working out with weights in a gym
☆ Dancing
☆ Jogging on the streets or in a park
☆ Swimming
☆ Taking an aerobics class
☆ Taking a martial arts class

Activities I feel good about:
I will try to put aside some time every day to do something I enjoy, like a hobby or activity I can do on my own. I have checked some of the things I can do, or written in my own activities.

☆ Take a walk outside
☆ Listen to music
☆ Attend a support group
☆ Play a sport
☆ Make crafts
☆ Work out
☆ Play a musical instrument
☆ Write in a journal
☆ Participate in a club or after-school group
☆ Do volunteer work
☆ Meditate
☆ Meditation

(continued on next page)
☆ Assertiveness:
Speaking up for my rights will help others respect me and help me respect myself. I have learned about assertiveness by completing the assertiveness activities in this workbook or in other ways: __ Yes __ No
If yes, here are some of the people and situations I will be more assertive with:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

If no, here is how I am going to learn about assertiveness and develop my assertiveness skills:

__________________________________________________________________________

☆ Increasing Independence:
One way to increase my confidence in myself is to increase my independence - this could be financially, emotionally, socially, physically or in other ways. I will work on becoming more independent in the following areas:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

☆ Working with a counselor:
A therapist, counselor or other supportive person can help me to explore any negative self-images I have and turn them into positive ones! This is the person who will work with me on this:

__________________________________________________________________________

☆ Social life:
Hanging around with people who make me feel good about myself and participating in healthy activities will help me improve my self-esteem.
These are the people I will hang out with: _______________________________________
These are the healthy social activities I will participate in with them:

__________________________________________________________________________

☆ Other:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Facilitator's Information for
Action Plan for Improving My Self-Esteem

Purpose: To identify strategies for improving self-esteem.

Materials: One photocopy of each worksheet per participant
Pens/pencils
Additional for GROUP: Flipchart and Markers/Blackboard and chalk

Activity (Group or Individual):
1. Review previous activity/discussion on the topic of self-esteem, and ask participant(s) to remember one strategy that was discussed for increasing self-esteem (i.e. positive self-talk.)
2. Tell participant(s) that the purpose of today's activity is to come up with additional ways to improve self-esteem.
3. If working with an individual, ask teen if s/he can think of other ways a person might be able to improve his or her self-esteem. Write a list or just facilitate a discussion.
4. If working with a group, brainstorm a list on board or flipchart, or break participants up into smaller groups and ask each group to generate its own list of ways to increase one's self-esteem.
5. After processing list, hand out worksheet(s) and pen(s). Explain that this paper lists some strategies for working on improving self-esteem, and it will allow each participant to make a personalized 'plan' about if and how they want to use each strategy. Point out that if participant(s) came up with strategies that are not on the list, there is room to write them at the bottom.
6. Read or have participant(s) read each strategy, then instruct participant(s) to check the box and fill in the blanks if they think that strategy would be useful to them.
7. As you go along, be sure to point out strategies that are the same or similar as strategies the participant(s) brainstormed.
8. At the end of the page, instruct teen(s) to fill in any other strategies for improving self-esteem that they came up with that are not listed on this page.
9. Suggest each participant set a goal to use at least one of these strategies before the next session. Allow each participant to state which strategy they are going to use, and tell participant(s) that you will check in at the beginning of the next session to see how things worked. (Be sure to follow up during the next session.)

Use In Conjunction With:
SEALS+PLUS, "Exercise Interest Checklist," (page 35)
SEALS II, "Relationships & You," (page 35)
SEALS III, "Your Picture of Health," (page 12)
CROSSING THE BRIDGE, (pages 20, 21, 23, 26, 56, 57)
My True Colors

GOALS

Affective
To experience a risky disclosure of very personal foibles and frailties

Behavioral
To identify some stable aspects of “who I am”
To explore what aspects of friendship are truly important
To share with others errors in thinking and behavior

Cognitive
To learn that we can “sell ourselves out” as girls and women in order to be accepted
To plant the seeds of the idea that we must love ourselves first before we can be loved by others

MATERIALS

Eight or more plastic chameleons. (These are plastic fish bait; they come in packages in the fishing equipment section at discount stores, usually alongside plastic worms!)
Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (¼ session time)
1. Welcome girls back to group and ask what concerns they might have about confidentiality. How do they think the ground rules are working out?
2. Briefly connect with the previous session’s topic (gossip). Ask who would be willing to share what they realized about gossip or what they did in situations to deal with gossip, either about themselves or about others.

Working Time (½ session time)
1. In your own words, explain:

At this time of your life there are so many things happening around you and to you that sometimes it’s like there is nothing stable, nothing you can count on. What your parents value and what your friends value seem to be so different, from music to careers to ideas about dating, curfews, and everything that makes a difference in your life. You have lived with yourself and know yourself the best of anyone! You might be trying out some new ideas and values now, but there are some things about yourself that you like and choose and want to stay the same. What are some of the values you want to hang on to, not throw away because others are pressuring you?

Let them name some of their values. For example:

Sticking up for a friend
Working hard to get something you want
Being a good sport
Being helpful to people who need or ask for your help
Standing up for your rights
Making good choices that are helpful, not hurtful, to yourself
Avoiding using drugs or alcohol
Not taking chances or doing risky behaviors that could be harmful to yourself and others

2. Summarize:

Girls and boys have different ways of dealing with things. As you know, girls very much like to have other girls to share their feelings, ideas, dreams, problems, and just “girl talk.” Guys don’t always tell their thoughts and feelings to other guys as much as girls share with other girls. It is extremely important to girls to have other girls to help process all the stuff that is going on in life! It is important to guys to be “in control”; they often deal privately with their problems and hurts, not discussing them with other guys.

Sometimes it becomes so important to have a particular friend, or to have a boyfriend, that girls “sell out”: That means they deny their real thoughts and feelings and change their behavior in order to be liked or accepted by others. THIS IS NOT GOOD! If you have to give up being your own true self to have friends, then who are you, anyway? If you can’t stand up to others and speak up for yourself, your self-esteem is the pits. You don’t like yourself enough to be an individual, your own true, beautiful self. Do you know anyone like this?

3. Allow some time for responses, then show the group the chameleons. Say:

What are these? Well, we are going to call them chameleons, even though they are really plastic fish bait! What is it that is unique about chameleons? (They change colors in different situations to protect themselves from predators.) What color person would you say you are, if you have to choose one color? For example, I am a (purple, yellow, whatever) person. What color are you?

4. Let each girl choose a chameleon and say what color person she is. Continue:

Now suppose you were in this situation: Some really neat girls ask you to be part of their group . . . to hang out with them. You have been wanting to get into this crowd all year! You are so excited that they want you to be with them, because they are so cool! So you say, “Sure, I’d love to!” Then you find out that all of them smoke pot when they get together on the weekends. It has always been your value to keep healthy and eat right because you are in gymnastics. Your coach is very supportive but strict about good health habits. What do you do? Do you stand up for your value of not using drugs, or do you change your color, give up your “true colors,” to be part of the group?

5. Let the group discuss this, then ask the girls to share situations in which they faced making a change from their true colors, like a chameleon, to be accepted by a group, a boyfriend, or someone in another situation. Let as many share as want to.

6. Ask the following questions:

What happens to you if you give up on yourself to be liked by others? On a scale of 1 to 10—1 means very easy and 10 means extremely hard—how hard is it to stand up for your values, for your true colors?

How do you feel about yourself if you give in?

How would your friends who really know and love you feel if you change yourself just to buy friendship?

How can you keep good friends and be true to yourself also?
Processing Time (¼ session time)

1. Ask at least one question from each of the four processing levels:

   INTRAPERSONAL
   What kind of feelings did you experience today when we were talking about giving up or selling out our true colors, our real values and feelings, in order to have friendships?

   INTERPERSONAL
   What happened in group today that resulted in your feeling more or less part of the group?

   NEW LEARNING
   What new ideas or thoughts do you have about being true to yourself, liking yourself?

   APPLICATION
   What would you be willing to do between now and the next session to stand up for being yourself?

2. Thank group members for their very personal sharing and give them a hope statement. Remind them of the time and day for the next session and let them know that there is only one working session left—the last session will be a review and celebration. Share the treats.
Girlfriends: Understanding and Managing Friendships

Instructions: Each of the statements below concerns your ideas, beliefs, attitudes, or feelings about personal and friendship issues. After each statement is a response you could choose. Circle the response that is how you think or feel now.

1 = never
2 = hardly ever
3 = sometimes
4 = most of the time
5 = always

Example: I like to eat pizza and drink Dr. Pepper.
You hardly ever like to eat pizza and drink Dr. Pepper.

1. I am able to express my feelings to my family and friends.
2. I am aware of stresses caused by friends and peers with negative attitudes.
3. I can tell when someone is not good for me to hang out with.
4. I know how to end a friendship that is not good for me.
5. I can tell when a situation means trouble, and I can avoid it.
6. I am aware of how my body reacts to too much stress.
7. I can tell exactly what is and what is not gossip.
8. I know what my values are, and I make decisions based on them most of the time.
9. I know what to do if someone is sexually harassing me.
10. I have a positive attitude about being a girl.
Appendix E

Pre-test/Post-test
Appendix F

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From: wlgulch@accn.org

Maria: Thank you for your phone call regarding duplication.

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Specifically, I would like to use the following lessons:

My Relationship Portfolio (p. iii)
My Support Map (p. 1-2)
Building Self Esteem Through Positive Self-Talk (p. 78 – 79)
Action Plan For Improving My Self-Esteem (p. 80 – 82)

12/5/2005

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Thank you in advance for your consideration. Your immediate response to his request is greatly appreciated.

Lisa S. Gulch

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DATE: December 1, 2005

FOR THE USE OF:

Skills for Living: Group Counseling Activities for Young Adolescents, Volume 2: "Girlfriends: Understanding and Managing Friendships" (p. 29 – 54); "Sample Letter to Parent/Guardian" (p. 268); "Sample Parent/Guardian Consent Form" (p. 269)

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Master's thesis

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From: Karen Steiner [steinerk@researchpress.com]
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Subject: Re: Permission to duplicate
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Oops! File attached. K

Original Message

From: W. Lynn Gulch
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Sent: Friday, December 02, 2005 3:32 PM
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Ms. Steiner:

Thank you for replying to my email requesting permission to duplicate lessons in Skills for Living, Vol. 2. However, that said, there seems to be no text in your email reply! Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Best regards,

Lisa S. Gulch

Karen Steiner [mailto:steinerk@researchpress.com]

From: Karen Steiner
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2005 12:25 PM
To: wlgulch@accn.org
Subject: Re: Permission to duplicate

Original Message

From: W. Lynn Gulch
To: rp@researchpress.com
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2005 8:15 PM
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To Whom It May Concern:

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Specifically, I would like to use the following lessons:

- Girlfriends: Understanding and Managing Friendships (p. 29 – 54)
- Sample Letter to Parent/Guardian (p. 268)
- Sample Parent/Guardian Consent Form (p. 269)

Your immediate response to this request is greatly appreciated.

12/5/2005

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Best regards,

Lisa S. Gulch

12/5/2005
NAME: Lisa S. Gulch

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

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____ Elem Ed  ____ G/T Ed  ____ Early Child
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TITLE: RELATIONAL AGGRESSION IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS: DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM FOR THE TARGET GIRL

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)  SEM/YR COMPLETED: December, 2005  

X Project  
____ Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL

Using key words, choose as many descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your paper.

1. relational aggression  6. women bullies
2. girl aggression  7. workplace violence
3. girl bullies  8.
4. adolescent girls behavior  9.
5. girl empowerment  10.

ABSTRACT: Two to three sentences that describe the contents of your paper.

This paper is written to help the school counselor identify relational aggression, the players, and to support the Target girl with self-esteem lessons, in group format. Identification of RA is important as it is very often kept incognito, allowing the Queen Bee and her court to continue to harass and hurt the target girls.