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Relational Aggression: A Classroom Guidance Activity with Middle School Students

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Abstract

A graduate student created and implemented a classroom guidance activity with middle school students on the topic of relational aggression. The purpose of this activity was to promote awareness on the prevalence of relational aggression and measure the sample student's participation in relationally aggressive behaviors. A twenty item pre and post-survey on aggression was given to a sample of 75 students at a Western New York middle school. The sample included 41 females and 34 males, ranging in age from 12-14. The sample included students from Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian racial backgrounds. Also included is a review of the current literature on relationally aggressive behaviors, differences in boys and girls in respect to relational aggression, the importance of relationships, cliques and popularity, the impact of aggression, and rationale for school based awareness and intervention. The project demonstrated that most students reported relationally aggressive behaviors before the classroom guidance activity was presented. There was an approximate 7% decrease in relationally aggressive behaviors on 17 of the survey items. Three of the survey items showed a 6% increase in reported behavior after the guidance activity. The project demonstrated that relational aggression occurs among boys and girls, and that it occurs across different racial groups. It also demonstrated that relational aggression is an important issue among middle school students. Implications for school based awareness, prevention, and intervention are necessary to combat relational aggression are also presented.

Relational Aggression: A Classroom Guidance Activity with Middle School Students

Children are attracted to friendship based on a need for connection to others, while a need for recognition and dominance leads to competition and conflict (Simmons, 2002). The social lives of children are based on the intertwining of individuality and belonging to the group, on the importance of cliques and status hierarchies, and on the loyalty of friends (Thompson & Grace, 2001). This attraction to friendship and belonging is based on a human's nature to be social beings, and on our ability to perceive the social reactions and strengths of other humans around us (Thompson & Grace, 2001). Children begin to experience the importance of friendship and belonging as they enter in to the school atmosphere (Thompson & Grace, 2001).

There are many changes in the lives of children as they move from elementary school to middle school or junior high (Wiseman, 2002). Elementary school is an intimate setting, where students stay with the same teacher all day and parents are more involved. Students then move on to the middle school environment, where aggression among children peaks, especially for girls, between the ages of ten and fourteen (Wiseman, 2002). Friendships among girls change tremendously during this transition, adding a larger pool of people to choose friends from, and an older population of students to fit in with (Eder, 1985). Relationally aggressive behaviors, while most prevalent during this stage, are demonstrated as early as preschool (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997).

Review of the Literature

This literature review will define relational aggression, and how it impacts girls during this crucial time of pre-adolescence. It will also include research on the differences between aggression among boys and girls, along with how society has influenced these differences. This review will focus on the importance of relationships,

cliques and popularity, and how exposure to relational aggression may impact girls into adulthood. The literature review will conclude with a rationale for school based awareness and intervention programs.

Relational Aggression and Aggressive Behaviors

Until the early 1990's, research on children and aggression primarily focused on boys (as will be discussed later), due to their tendency toward physical aggression as opposed to girls (Simmons, 2002). In 1992, a group of Norwegian researchers found that girls are not exempt from aggressive behaviors, but express different types of aggression (Simmons, 2002). In a study by Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson, and Gariepy (1989), it was found that children reported conflicts between same-sex peers differently. Conflicts among girls were significantly more likely to focus around social alienation and manipulating peer acceptance than those of boys.

The term "relational aggression" was originally utilized by Crick (1996) from the as a means to describe using relationships to hurt others (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). Relational aggression has since come to be defined by researchers as behaviors that "harm others through damage (or threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion (Bjoerkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Dellasega & Nixon, 2003; Simmons, 2002; Wiseman, 2002).

The behaviors that are characterized by the above definition of relational aggression use the relationship as the weapon (Simmons, 2002). One behavior is ignoring, which can be used by an aggressor as a tool to gain compliance and to get one's way (Simmons, 2002). Another behavior used by an aggressor to gain compliance, get their way, or as punishment is to exclude a person from the social circle or group (Simmons, 2002). Yet another behavior is the aggressor threatening to end a friendship or

to sabotage other friendships in order to gain control (Simmons, 2002). All of these aggressive behaviors are often done subtlety, outside of the attention of adults, so that the aggressor does not get caught (Simmons, 2002).

There are two other categories of non-physical aggression used subtly that parallel relational aggression, indirect and social (Bjoerkqvist, et.al., 1992). Indirect aggression is a way for the aggressor to avoid confrontation with the target, relinquishing them from responsibility or denying any intent of harm (Simmons, 2002). Relational, social, and indirect aggressions are all forms of bullying, although the tendency to be subtle and out of view from adults makes it difficult to detect and therefore, to discipline (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

 One form of this kind of bullying, social aggression, is particularly hidden from adults and utilized to damage the target's status within a social group or lower one's self-esteem (Simmons, 2002). This form of aggression can manifest itself in many ways including name calling, verbal abuse, the spreading of rumors, gossip, intentionally excluding someone, or manipulating friends (Mullin-Rindler, 2003). Miller, Danaher, and Forbes (1986) found that females would sometimes, "use tactics that diffuse conflict or otherwise try and maintain interpersonal harmony in the face of conflict" (p. 544). Girls are more likely to drop an issue that may lead to an open conflict (Lever, 1976) and especially so when that conflict occurred within their social group (Gilligan, 1982).

Another form of this bullying, relational aggression is also hidden from adults but characterized more as an imbalance of power and need for acceptance, using direct and indirect methods to sabotage relationships, reputations, and feelings of inclusion (Mullin-Rindler, 2003). The concept of using relationships to harm others usually involves an aggressor (or bully), a victim (or target), and often one or more girls in the middle of the

conflict (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). This process can turn into a cycle when a victim becomes an aggressor toward other girls or roles within the cycle change from girl to girl (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). Girls who utilize this kind of aggression to meet their goals are more likely to be less empathetic towards their peers (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). These girls are aware that in order to not revert back to the victim position, they must focus on themselves and securing their position of control (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

For the purpose of securing their position, many girls will not tell another girl directly why they are upset or angry, but instead have other friends become the middle person to act as a mediator (Simmons, 2002). Girls will also internalize feelings of hurt and anger rather than confront another girl or group of girls due to the fear of being ganged up on or left out (Simmons, 2002). This fear comes from the emphasis that is put on relationships and friendships in a girl's world, making it difficult to engage in confrontation or conflict (Simmons, 2002). A confrontation or conflict could result in the loss of a relationship or isolation from others, the harshest punishment (Simmons, 2002). Brown and Gilligan (1992) found that girls tend to apologize and dismiss conflicts quickly to end feelings of hurt and indignation.

Leaving others out, spreading rumors, manipulating others to reach a goal, and using the threat of ending a friendship are aspects of relational aggression and fall in the same category as bullying (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Emotional bullying, as it is called, includes this kind of verbal harassment and humiliation (Juvonen, et al., 2003). Between 20% and 30% of students reported being involved in bullying situations as either aggressors or victims (Juvonen, et al., 2003). A recent national survey, 68% of 12 to 15 year olds named teasing and bullying as an important issue for people their age (Juvonen, et al., 2003).

Relational aggression, or emotional bullying, does not just happen during school hours or social events. The Internet allows girls to connect through e-mail, instant message (IM), and chat rooms (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). The Internet's role in relational aggression is a topic that is coming to the forefront of research, but for the purpose of this paper will only be briefly discussed. Due to the ability to be anonymous online, girls become more detached from the situation, feeling less responsible and accountable for their harsh behavior (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). In a study by the Girl Scouts of America of a thousand girls between the ages of 13 and 18, many reported sending mean e-mails to friends when upset, and reporting being meaner to others online than they would have been face to face (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). This form of online aggression can be just as detrimental as in person interactions, sometimes even more so due to the ability of the aggressor to remain anonymous (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Relational Aggression: Differences between Boys and Girls

Until the early 1990's, most of the research on children and aggression focused around boys, and concluded that girls did not show the same tendencies toward physical aggression. In a study by Crick and Grotpeter (1995), they found relational aggression to be more prevalent in girls and overt, or physical, aggression more common to boys.

In another study by Crick, Bigbee, and Howes (1996), overtly aggressive children were more likely to name overt aggression as the standard for girls mean behavior, whereas relationally aggressive children were more likely to name relational aggression as the mean behavior. Non-aggressive children were found to have an awareness of both methods of aggression in girls (Crick, et. al., 1996). Along with the differences between boys and girls, it has also been found that younger children are more likely to

demonstrate overtly aggressive behaviors, while older children are more likely to use relationally aggressive behaviors to reach their goals (Block, 1983).

When children are aggressive toward their peers, whether it is by physical or relational means, it is usually in an attempt to stop them from reaching their valued goals (Crick, 1996). Girls typically value relationships and developing closeness with others, so using relationally aggressive behaviors allow them to foil the development of social connections with others (Crick, 1996). It has been shown that boys have more instrumental and dominance related social goals, so they tend to use physically aggressive behaviors, such as hitting and verbal abuse, to reach them (Crick, 1996). Girls tend to be aggressive in their own social circles, as opposed to boys, who tend to act aggressively outside their social circles (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). In a study by Grotpeter and Crick (1996), it was found that overtly aggressive children were more likely to come together with their friends to act aggressively toward others, while relationally aggressive children were likely to lash out in a close, friendship circle. These were some of the earliest studies done on girls and relational aggression.

One explanation for the lack of research on relational aggression in girls is the subtlety and intricacy of this indirect method, and the difficulty in identifying it (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Some research demonstrates that this difference in expression of aggressive behavior can be attributed to the socialization of boys versus the socialization of girls (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Vail (2002) stated that "somehow, though, even in this post-feminist age, we still expect boys to be aggressive, domineering, and competitive, and we expect girls to be cooperative, nurturing, and nice" (p. 9). Rosenberg and Simmons (1973) found that girls are more likely to smile when they are unhappy and be

nice to people they don't like during middle adolescence. Girls, however, are aware of this double standard and recognize that the rules are different for boys (Simmons, 2002).

This assumption that we expect males and females to act in a certain way emphasizes sex roles when referring to aggressive behavior (Campbell, 1993). Our culture teaches girls confusing and potentially harmful ways to behave appropriately, such as being sexy, but not trashy, or being independent, but feeling worthless without a boyfriend (Wiseman, 2002). It enforces the idea that men should be strong and provide for their families, and that women should be caregivers and maternal (Simmons, 2002). When girls are raised under these preconceived ideas, they are denied the ability to openly resolve conflict and their aggression is then expressed in non-physical, non-confrontational, indirect ways (Simmons, 2002). It is girls' reputation of acting in this preconceived way that allows relational aggression to spread covertly, out of sight from teachers and adults (Orenstein, 1994). Relational aggression is covert in nature, making it difficult to detect, but still as painful as overt, physical aggression (Simmons, 2002). While girls usually degrade each other through verbal humiliation, boys are allowed, through society's concept of masculinity, to physically injure each other (Eder & Parker, 1987).

Relational aggression is not solely limited to girls; boys also participate in relationally aggressive behaviors, as do girls in overtly aggressive behaviors (Simmons, 2002). Girls usually exhibit relational aggression earlier, but as boys' verbal skills increase, so does their tendency to utilize these kinds of behaviors (Mullin-Rinder, 2003). It can particularly affect boys when engaged in relationships with the opposite sex (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Both boys' and girls' social and psychological development can be affected by relationally aggressive behaviors (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). Prinstein, Boergers, and Vernberg (2001) suggested that when an adolescent is utilizing a form of aggression that is out of the range of norms for his or her gender, it might indicate some internal distress. Girls who reported being more overtly aggressive also reported lower self-esteem levels and more depressive symptoms than boys who reported being more overtly aggressive (Prinstein, et. al, 2001). Likewise, boys who reported being more relationally aggressive reported higher levels of loneliness than the girls who reported being more relationally aggressive (Prinstein, et. al, 2001).

A study by Borg (1998) found that boys and girls did share the same feelings as the victims and perpetrators of aggression. There were no differences in the reported feelings of anger, helplessness, and indifference between the boys and girls who were victims of aggression or satisfaction in those who were perpetrating the aggression (Borg, 1998). Boys were also more likely to express feelings of vengeance, while girls tended to express feelings of self-pity and helplessness (Borg, 1998).

Relational Aggression: Cultural Differences

Differences in the way children are aggressive does not just pertain to sex, but possibly to culture as well. The study of relational aggression, especially between girls, continues to grow, and none of the research so far indicates that these aggressive behaviors differ for ethnic groups, urban versus rural settings, or economic classes (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). Although this differentiation hasn't been truly examined yet, some differences in the level of involvement of African American and Hispanic girls in relationally aggressive behaviors have emerged (Simmons, 2002).

The level of involvement or dependence on relationally aggression behaviors can be associated with the individual's culture and how they were raised by their parental figures (Simmons, 2002). Most of the research found on relational aggression pertained to white, middle to upper class females who are trying to find ways to express aggressiveness without breaking out of the expectant mold of passiveness and niceness (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). The possibility of threats and racism make it difficult for African American girls to place a strong emphasis on friendships and being nice to everyone (Simmons, 2002). Many times, African American girls are raised to be aware of the existence of racism in society and to be prepared to protect themselves (Wiseman, 2002). Where as white girls may use covert measures of aggression, such as talking behind another's back or gossiping, African American girls are more likely to bring the issue to the forefront and engage in confrontation (Simmons, 2002).

The upbringing and culture of Hispanic girls also influences the way they deal with relational aggression (Simmons, 2002). The socialization of Hispanic girls more closely resembles that of the Caucasian girl than that of the African American (Simmons, 2002). Hispanic culture traditionally focuses around the family and gender roles, where girls are raised to respect the authority of men (Simmons, 2002). Girls are taught to be non-aggressive and their behavior guided by the rules of the family (Simmons, 2002).

Although differences may exist, no girl is safe from becoming involved in relationally aggressive behaviors, whether it is as an aggressor, victim, or bystander (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). The increasing importance of friendship as children develop opens the door for relational aggression to be used strategically to satisfy that need for connectedness (Wiseman, 2002).

Importance of Relationships

Aggression is an important issue among children because it either helps them or hinders them from reaching their goal of establishing friendships (Simmons, 2002). Most school-aged children have an average of five close friends (Thompson & Grace, 2001). Children need some form of peer relationship in their lives (Thompson & Grace, 2001). They don't necessarily *need* to have the most friends or be the most popular, but they do need to feel some acceptance from the group as a whole and to develop basic peer relationships (Thompson & Grace, 2001). Without some form of relationship or friendship, children are more likely to be at risk of developing psychological problems (Thompson & Grace, 2001).

Having friends and the establishment of relationships among peers are critical to a child's development. Friendships help children to gain confidence in themselves and to try new things (Thompson & Grace, 2001). When children have close friends who accept them as they are and understand them when others may not, they feel confident and less vulnerable to rejection (Thompson & Grace, 2001). This confidence encourages them to branch out and try new activities (Thompson & Grace, 2001).

Friendship can also help children grow by exposing them to different social norms outside of their own family (Thompson & Grace, 2001). By making friends and spending time with them, children are able to see how other families live, including different cultural or religious beliefs (Thompson & Grace, 2001). It opens up a child's perspective to the world outside his or her own family environment.

Children recognize the importance of friendships relatively early and as they get older their ability to enjoy the company of others, to depend on and trust their friends develops (Thompson & Grace, 2001). When children are between the ages of seven and

twelve, friendships develop beyond just playing and having fun (Thompson & Grace, 2001). It is at this time in a child's life that a friend becomes someone who provides him or her with respect and understanding, and also affirms the importance of the friendship (Thompson & Grace, 2001). This is the time when children are beginning to share thoughts, fears, self-doubts, and secrets with friends (Thompson & Grace, 2001). It is at this point that children begin to realize the most important factors in a friendship are reciprocity and dedication between two peers (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996). When children believe their friendship is loyal and reciprocal, they are more likely to have a positive self-image and feel connected to society (Bukowski, et al., 1996).

Relationships are especially critical in the social development of females (Gilligan, 1982). In a study by Gilligan (1982), it was found that girls reported a fear of isolation and being abandoned by the group. Gilligan (1982) found that woman's development points toward a different history of human attachment, stressing continuity and change instead of replacement and separation. Personal disclosure and empathy toward others becomes the bond of girls' friendships (Thompson & Grace, 2001). It is this level of personal disclosure and trust in friendships that allow adolescents to distinguish the difference between a friend and an acquaintance (Thompson & Grace, 2001). The awareness that girls have about relationships and their closeness to friends fuels their tendency toward an indirect type of aggression (Simmons, 2002). In relationships defined by aggression, friendship and manipulation are so intertwined; it becomes impossible to discriminate between the two (Simmons, 2002). Many issues characterized by relational aggression come from the depth of a close, trusting relationship (Simmons, 2002).

Relationships are important to all children, including children who use aggression to reach their goals. Aggressive children do have friends and also tend to develop friendships with other children who are aggressive (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, & Gariepy, 1988). In a study by Grotpeter and Crick (1996), the quality of friendships among 146 aggressive children was examined, both overt and relational, and their peers. It was found that relationally aggressive girls tend to be involved in friendships with others who are likely to self-disclose personal information (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). This behavior is usually thought to be positive in building and maintaining friendships (Parker & Asher, 1993), but relationally aggressive children can use this aspect of friendship to threaten and gain control over their friends (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). The study also found that those children who gravitated toward friends who were highly disclosing did not report high levels of self-disclosure in return (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). The forming and maintaining of relationships plays a key role in the development of children (Thompson & Grace, 2001).

Cliques and Popularity

Due to the importance of relationships shown in the previous section, belonging to a group or clique and being popular among their peers are valued goals for girls (Simmons, 2002). According to Wiseman (2002), the common definition of a clique is an exclusive group of girls who are close friends. Friendships, activities, and self-esteem are all parts of a child's social climate and their involvement, or not, in cliques (Adler & Adler, 1995). Cliques are comprised of the most popular individuals; offer exciting social lives, and command interest and attention from peers (Eder & Parker, 1987). Cliques are considered primary groups where individuals can choose their friends, learn about society, practice behaviors, and create identities (Adler & Adler, 1995).

Cliques have a chain of command, stand as a unified front in their environment, and depend on unquestioned loyalty to the group's leaders (Wiseman, 2002). This arrangement relies on the silence of its members, because those at the top will not take responsibility and anyone below them is scared to speak out against the clique for fear of being ostracized (Wiseman, 2002). Due to chain of command in a clique and the desire to move up the chain, friendship loyalties within cliques tend to be less reliable than they are in other groups (Adler & Adler, 1995). Cliques maintain their exclusiveness by carefully choosing who is allowed to join and by doing so; the newest member is elevated to immediate popularity by being approved by the clique leader (Adler & Adler, 1995).

Cliques are most prevalent during middle school years, in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades (Wiseman, 2002). In a study by Hallinan (1979), it was found that the number of cliques increased steadily between fourth and eighth grade. Cliques can be a very dominant force in a middle school girl's life and can dictate many of the choices she makes during this time, such as which classes to take, which boys to like, what to wear, what to do with her free time, and who to associate with (Wiseman, 2002). In research by Gilligan and Brown (1992), it is suggested that girls reach a certain point in their development when their fear of being left out or ostracized from a group is so strong they will do anything to gain acceptance and keep it. The use of covert measures characterized by relational aggression allows girls to reach their goals, without being confrontational (Simmons, 2002).

In using covert measures to avoid open conflict within a clique, but still get their way, girls may use what Sheldon (1992) called "double-voiced" or "single-voiced" dialogue. The "double-voiced" dialogue is used when an individual is trying to get her way, but without disrupting or causing conflict within the group (Sheldon, 1992). By

using "single-voiced" dialogue, the aggressor is pushing her own issues, but also taking

the other person into account (Sheldon, 1992). By playing both sides, the aggressor is

able to get her way and still keep interpersonal ties with other group members (Sheldon,

1992).

The goal is to be at the top of the clique hierarchy. At the top of the clique are the

most popular girls, who exemplify our culture's ideal of femininity, including being thin,

stylish, moderately athletic and intelligent, and pretty (Vail, 2002). Aggressive girls tend

to be popular (McGuire, 1973) and it has been suggested that girls have to be aggressive

to be popular (Viemero, 1992). These girls are charismatic and socially advanced; they

know how to draw girls into their circle and how to control their environment (Simmons,

2002). They keep their power by setting rules about what to wear, who to talk to, and

how to act (Vail, 2002). Girls in positions of power like this know and care little about

girls outside of their clique and are hesitant to admit to hurtful behavior (Wiseman,

2002).

There are, however, girls who are popular among their peer group because they

are genuinely nice and friendly to everyone, but these girls are not usually found to be the

leader of an exclusive clique (Wiseman, 2002). Being nice implies not just a positive

conversation or exchange, but concern for others, understanding, and support for peers

when it is needed (Becker, 1987).

In a study by Merten (1997), popularity was defined as a student not only being

recognized or well known by peers, but also that peers desired to be friends with them.

Some ways of reaching popularity for girls were by attracting attention from high-status

boys, being physically attractive, or by participating in activities that were deemed highly

prestigious by others (Merten, 1997). Popularity by means of recognition from boys

becomes more important as girls moved from elementary to middle school (Merten, 1997).

Merten's (1997) study also found that after reaching popularity, an individual would reach a crossroads. Individuals, who are recognized by their peers as mean, or stuck-up, can lose their status and fall from being well liked by peers to being disliked; this is called the paradox of popularity (Merten, 1997). There are strong boundaries between popular and unpopular children, which keep them socially separated (Kinney, 1993). There are smaller, friendship circles found among less popular and unpopular children, but are not considered to possess the same dynamics of a clique (Adler & Adler, 1995). Children considered on the outside of the clique are picked on to ensure that they accept their status as outsiders (Adler & Adler, 1995). Outsiders are afraid of becoming a target of the clique's aggression, so they disregard the idea of joining together against the clique (Adler & Adler, 1995).

Impact of Aggression

As previously discussed, the importance of relationships and measures taken to maintain friendships are an important part of development, as is the impact this has on children. In a study by Crick (1996) on the role of overt aggression, relational aggression and prosocial behavior, it was found that relational aggression is relatively stable over time and that it is foretelling of future social problems. Victims of relational aggression are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, school absenteeism, and are at higher risk of long-term mental health issues (Mullin-Rindler, 2003). Children who are frequently targets of aggression demonstrate significantly higher levels of social-psychological maladjustment than those children who are not deemed as targets (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996). One survey, carried out for Kidscape, found that 8% of

children reported that peer aggression had affected them to the point that they did not want to go school, were often sick, tried to run away, or tried to commit suicide (Elliot, 1992). Children who are victims of both physical and relational aggression are likely to report the highest levels of depression and loneliness (Prinstein, et al., 2001)

Children who demonstrate relationally aggressive behaviors are also adversely affected (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997). Relationally aggressive children tend to be socially and emotionally maladjusted when compared to non-relationally aggressive peers (Crick, et al., 1997). These children report substantially elevated levels of depression, loneliness, and negative perception of self and are more likely to be rejected by peers (Crick, et al., 1997).

The presence of relational aggression is also linked to the onset of physical aggression resulting in a confrontation between girls (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). Over half of the children who have experienced relational aggression have also experienced physical aggression, by way of hitting, pushing, and kicking, as opposed to a quarter of children who have not experienced relational aggression (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). A study by Paquette and Underwood (1999) used a sample of adolescents who could think of situations in which they were the victim of relational aggression and overt aggression, respectively. These adolescents reported that the situations involving indirect aggression caused them to feel sad and negative about themselves more so than the situations involving physical aggression (Paquette & Underwood, 1999).

Friendships that girls have during these critical years can be a precursor to adult relationships (Wiseman, 2002). The unconditional friendship of a few can propel a girl into healthy adult relationships with women, and manipulative and unstable relationships can also shape how they are in future relationships (Wiseman, 2002). Women don't stop

being relationally aggressive upon exiting their teenage years. Without intervention, these behaviors will continue into adulthood (Vail, 2002). Women who don't learn how to deal with conflict during childhood and adolescence often, as adults, have difficulty deciphering the difference between a regular disagreement and a personal attack (Evans, 2000). Research from the American Association of University Women (1991) demonstrates that boys tend to regain their self-esteem by the time they reach their high school graduation, whereas it could take women possibly into middle age to reach that point.

Relational aggression, however, it not always seen as serious problem (Simmons, 2002). Aggression between girls is sometimes seen as a phase or rite of passage; a stage that all girls go through and will eventually outgrow (Simmons, 2002). By denying that relational aggression is a real problem, it is implied that girls are naturally predisposed to be mean to each other and that prevention and/ or intervention is useless (Simmons, 2002). This approach to aggression also places the blame on the victim, suggesting that something is wrong with him or her to attract social abuse from other children (Simmons, 2002).

Rationale for School Based Awareness and Intervention

In the absence of formal or informal intervention, both overtly aggressive and relationally aggressive behavior problems are likely to continue over time for individual children (Crick, 1996). The research shows that how girls learn to deal with peer influences and self-doubt is how they cope with life as a whole (Cousette, 2002). The prevalence of relational aggression makes daily life at school unpredictable (Simmons, 2002). Teachers are often unaware of what is going on because the aggression is kept hidden from there view (Simmons, 2002).

"If girls are whispering, the teacher thinks it's going to be all right because

they're not hitting people. If they punch, they get sent to the office. Teachers

think they're not hurting you, but they are" (Simmons, 2002, p. 25).

Schools do not usually have consistent protocol in effect for dealing with

aggression that reaches beyond the limits of physical or verbal aggression (Simmons,

2002). Thirteen states have laws on school bullying, but few include indirect aggression,

such as exclusion (Mullin-Rinder, 2003). The focus on bullying in schools has emerged

in recent years, but with more research focused on boys and violent behavior, whereas as

relational aggression has been written off as "what girls do" (Simmons, 2002).

"In a culture that cannot decide who it wants them to be, girls are being asked to

become the sum of our confusion. Girls make sense of our mixed messages by

deciding to behave indirectly, deducing that manipulation- the sum of power and

passivity- is the best route to power" (Simmons, 2002, p. 116).

Some schools consider the threat of withholding friendship if one does not

comply as a form of peer pressure, not relational aggression (Simmons, 2002). This form

of aggression does not cause disruptions in the school or classroom; therefore it is often

overlooked by teachers and administrators (Vail, 2002). The occurrence of relational

aggression is very prominent in schools and the pain and hurt felt by victims of this form

of bullying should not be passed over (Vail, 2002).

Due the relatively new awareness of relational aggression and an inability to

recognize it, girls who are targets often feel this is a part of friendship and blame

themselves for falling victim to others (Simmons, 2002). Victims of physical and

emotional bullying often suffer quietly undetected by teachers or adults (Juvoven, et al.,

2003). In a study by Juvoven, Graham, & Schuster (2003) teachers did not rate victims of

bullying as having higher levels of distress than those students not involved in bullying, yet victims reported high levels of psychological distress. Students who are victims of bullying often do not report the incidents to teachers or talk about it at home because they are fearful of their aggressor(s), afraid they will not be believed, or just see it as a normal situation (van der Wal, de Wit, & Hirasing, 2003). Therefore, emotional bullying can continue on for years without being noticed by an adult (van der Wal, et al., 2003).

Awareness and prevention strategies are the key to revealing this hidden aggression (Simmons, 2002). Some steps toward this are identifying contributing factors, creating rules and policies, getting adults involved, teaching students, providing counseling for students involved, and teaching students to develop effective ways to resolve conflicts and issues (Mullin-Rindler, 2002). Working with girls directly and raising awareness are also possible strategies (Vail, 2002).

One way to help girls develop the skills and confidence necessary for combating relational aggression is to involve them in team building activities, both in and out of school (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). By bringing girls from different groups together in a task oriented way, such as fundraising or volunteer work, they are able to connect with each other and learn an alternative way to look at aggressive behaviors (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Another approach to helping girls deal with relational aggression is to teach them different ways of dealing with aggressive feelings and behaviors (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). A balance between supporting girls and teaching them to be responsible for their actions is essential (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). When working with students, it is also important to focus them on building trust in their relationships with others and building confidence in their ability to utilize behaviors that aren't manipulative or aggressive

(Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). To help girls feel confident about their ability to make good choices and trust others, it is necessary to squash any myths or preconceived ideas about relationally aggressive behaviors (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). The damage and hurt that is caused by relational aggression needs to be exposed, so that girls can see that it is not normal behavior and that the effects can be detrimental (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Schools serve as an ideal place to spread awareness and educate about relational aggression. School counselors can have a profound impact on students' educational and personal development (Borders & Drury, 1992). Classroom guidance activities presented by school counselors, along with individual and group counseling, seem to have a positive affect in respect to students' growth in these two areas (Borders & Drury, 1992). When creating a program to deal with relational aggression, facilitators should strive for interactive discussions, participation based activities, and fun, creative ways of delivering the facts (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

These behaviors are deep seeded in many school's cultures (Vail, 2002). It is necessary to promote awareness of relational aggression and engage a combined effort from students, parents, counselors, teachers, and administrators to implement change (Vail, 2002). One way to promote awareness and to implement changes is to educate, not only children, but school faculty, parents, coaches, or anyone who works with this population (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). It is important to emphasize that relational aggression is real and that it is a problem that needs to be addressed (Simmons, 2002). It should not be looked upon as a passing phase or as "what girls do" (Simmons, 2002).

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this thesis project is to conduct a classroom guidance activity with middle school students on the topic of relational aggression. To obtain this goal, the

existing research on relational aggression will be examined and a classroom guidance

activity created and implemented.

The objectives of this project are based on learning about relational aggression in

middle school students and finding effective ways to deal with aggressive behaviors. The

first objective is to increase awareness regarding relational aggression among middle

school students at the chosen site. The second objective is to increase awareness of

feelings resulting from relationally aggressive behaviors. The third objective is to

measure the prevalence of aggressive behaviors before and after the classroom guidance

activity is implemented. The fourth objective is to increase awareness of ways to combat

relationally aggressive behaviors. These objectives are focused around awareness,

understanding, and learning, which will then possibly contribute to a decrease in

relational aggression among the population of middle school student participants at the

site.

Method

As the literature demonstrates, relational aggression is a serious problem facing

today's students, although the awareness of the issue is lacking. In an attempt to bring

awareness about Relational Aggression to the middle school students at the chosen site, a

classroom guidance activity was created and implemented.

Site

The site chosen to conduct the classroom guidance activity is an urban high

school in Western New York. It is a public school for urban residents. This site is an arts

based school that houses both middle school students (seventh and eighth graders) and

high school students (ninth through twelfth graders). There are a total of 1,160 students

enrolled in the school. Students who attend this school are selected after completing an

audition. To be selected for the visual arts or creative writing department, a portfolio of work must be submitted for review. For admission to the dance, drama, vocal, or instrumental departments, a live audition piece must be performed. After acceptance, students combine academic classes with classes from their arts major. The site's overall attendance record is approximately 92% of students a year.

The school has a diverse population. Fifty percent of the students are African American, 30% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic, and two percent Asian or other. Forty seven percent of students are on a free or reduced lunch program.

Of the graduating class of 2004, 53% went on to a four year college or university, 45% went on to a two year community college, 1% went into the military service, and 1% directly entered the workforce.

Sample

The classroom guidance activity was conducted with a sample of 75 students. All students used in this sampler were in the seventh grade, ranging in age from twelve to fourteen.

The sample was comprised of forty-one female and thirty-four male students. Fifty-seven percent of the students sampled were African American, 23% were Caucasian, 17% were Hispanic, and 3% were Asian. This sample closely resembles the respective percentages of each ethnic group to the school as a whole.

Procedure

At the beginning of class, it was explained to the students that a classroom guidance activity would be conducted on the topic of Relational Aggression in Middle School Students. It was explained to the students that everything the information

exchanged and shared by them was for a project and would be kept confidential unless harm to self or others was presented.

The students were first given a survey on aggression (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of twenty items. The instructions were to reflect on your behavior over the past week. The students were then instructed to check off any behaviors they participated in or experienced. At this point, the confidentiality of the survey was also reiterated to the students. When completed, the students were to raise their hand and the surveys were collected and secured in a folder.

The second part of the activity required the students to brainstorm ideas about aggressive behaviors. They were asked to describe what they perceive as aggressive behavior. Two students were chosen to come to the front of the class and write down all behaviors expressed by the class. One student was responsible for writing down the class' examples of "physically aggressive" behaviors (see Appendix B). The other student was to write down examples of "relationally aggressive" behaviors (see Appendix C) given by the class. Students were required to raise their hand in order to be called on. All students were encouraged to participate. Class discussion emerged from the examples given.

After identifying and giving examples of physically and relationally aggressive behaviors, the students were then asked how the behaviors compare in terms of damage caused. The students were asked which caused more hurt feelings, physical or relational aggression. Class discussion continued. Then the students were asked if they believed relational aggression was a problem in their school.

Students replied that they did concur that relational aggression was a problem. The class was then asked for suggestion on ways to stop or curb this kind of behavior, as well as physically aggressive behaviors. After students were finished sharing ideas of

how to implement change, a chart was displayed for the class. The chart, titled "What can YOU do?" (see Appendix D), listed ways that students can combat aggression, or bullying, in their school.

The students were then asked to give examples of who they could speak with about aggressive behaviors. They were encouraged to share the names or positions of people that they feel comfortable sharing with who work within the school. They were also asked to name those people they felt safe talking to outside of school in the community (see Appendix E).

The students were then told that they would be asked to complete the survey again in one week. The students were then thanked for their cooperation and honesty. The confidentiality of the survey and exercise were again reinforced. One week later, the survey was administered for a second time to the same group of students.

Evaluation

The student aggression survey (see Appendix A) was used to determine if students' behaviors had changed due to the classroom guidance activity. The pre and post survey was utilized to measure if the students' awareness of relationally aggressive behaviors changed the participation level or frequency.

The survey used for this activity was a twenty item survey. Sixteen items (items 1-8, 10, 11, 14-19) were direct relationally aggressive behaviors. One item (item 20) referred to physically aggressive behaviors. Two items (items 9 and 12) pertained to being the victim of relational aggression. One item (item 13) was a positive behavior in reference to relational aggression.

Results

Out of a possible 75 students, 67 students completed the pre-survey, guidance activity, and post-survey. Eight student surveys were discarded due to completing one or the other, but not both surveys. Figure 1 shows the results of the pre- and post-survey. The first column shows the item number. The second column shows the percentage of students who reported that they did participate in the behavior designated by the item number before the classroom guidance activity. The third column shows the percentage of students who reported that they did participate in the behavior designated by the item number after the classroom guidance activity. The fourth column shows the percentage that the frequency of the behavior either increased or decreased.

For Item 1, 72% of students surveyed reported calling other kids names that made fun of them before the classroom guidance activity. When surveyed a week later 60% reported the same behavior, a decrease of 12%.

There was also a decrease in behavior for the second and third items. Seventy-five percent of the students reported saying something about someone else that they knew wasn't nice and laughed when someone else made fun of another student. The post-survey showed that after a week, 71% reported participating in the Item 2 behavior, while 69% reported participating in the Item 3 behavior. This is a decrease of 4% and 6%, respectively.

Twenty-nine percent of students surveyed agreed with Item 4, that they had written a note or graffiti about someone else that wasn't nice. The same percentage reported that they had let someone else talk them into doing something they didn't really want to do, agreeing with Item 5. Although slightly decreased by 3% and 5%, respectively, both items received similar response on the post-survey.

Item 6 showed a 47% response to repeating a rumor you heard about your friend. This topic was discussed during the classroom guidance activity and many students shared that it was difficult for them to know that their friends participate in the spreading of rumors and gossip. Subsequently, the post-survey showed a 10% decrease in reported behavior, at 37%. Item 9 corresponded with Item 6 in that 46% of students reported having been the target of a rumor. This item showed a larger decrease in post-survey behavior, where 29% of students reported being the target of other's rumors.

Sixty-eight percent of students reported that they made fun of another person's clothes, hair, or appearance. This item was also part of the classroom discussion. Most students expressed that it was hurtful to have others make fun of the way they look, yet 63% percent of students reported the same behavior on the post-survey, showing a 5% decrease.

The lowest reported behavior on the survey was Item 8. Only 16% of students reported sending e-mail, text messages, or Instant Messages that said something negative they wouldn't say in person. The post-survey showed almost equal results, 15% of students checked that they had participated in this behavior. Over half the students surveyed, 57%, reported threatening someone else due to anger. This behavior was checked by 49% percent of the students on the post-survey, showing an 8% decrease.

Items 11 and 12 also correspond. Less than half of the class, 40%, reported leaving someone out to make them feel bad before the classroom guidance activity. Fifty-seven percent of students, however, reported that they felt bad that someone was mean to them or left them out. During the activity, students spoke up about how difficult it was when friends made plans to do things and left them out. Many reported it was the most hurtful behavior between friends. The post-survey demonstrated that 31% of students

Item Number	Percentage of students BEFORE CGA	Percentage of students AFTER CGA	Percentage of increase or decrease
1. Called other kids names that made fun of them.	72 %	60%	- 12%
2. Said something about someone else that you knew wasn't nice.	75%	71%	- 4%
3. Laughed when someone else made fun of another student.	75%	69%	- 6%
4. Written a note or graffiti (on a desk, wall, bathroom) about someone else that wasn't nice.	29%	26%	- 3%
5. Let someone else talk you into doing something you didn't really want to do.	29%	24%	- 5%
6. Repeated a rumor you heard about your friend.	47%	37%	- 10%
7. Made fun of another person's clothes, hair, or appearance.	68%	63%	- 5%
8. Sent an e-mail, text message, or IM message that said something negative you wouldn't say in person.	16%	15%	- 1%
9. Been the target of a rumor.	46%	29%	- 17%
10. Threatened someone because they made you mad.	57%	49%	- 8%
11. Left someone out to make them feel bad.	40%	31%	- 9%
12. Felt bad that someone was mean to you or left you out.	57%	47%	- 10%
13. Made a new friend or talked to someone you don't usually talk to.	84%	66%	- 18%
14. Did something on purpose to hurt someone else's feelings.	40%	37%	- 3%
15. Threatened not to be friends with someone if they didn't do what you wanted them to.	18%	24%	+ 6%
16. Insulted someone verbally because they looked at you the wrong way.	37%	35%	- 2%
17. Called someone a mean name when they could hear you.	50%	53%	+ 3%
18. Teased someone you know, but not very well.	35%	44%	+ 9%
19. Ignored someone on purpose when they said "hi" to you.	44%	43%	- 1%
20. Hit, pushed, shoved, etc. someone because you were mad at them.	57%	53%	- 4%

Figure 1. The percentage of students who reported each aggressive behavior on the survey before the classroom guidance activity and after the classroom guidance activity, and the percentage of increase or decrease in reported behavior.

engaged in leaving someone out, and 47% still felt bad about being left out. This showed a 9% and 10% decrease, respectively, for the items.

The highest reported behavior on the pre-survey was Item 13. Eighty-four percent of students surveyed responded that they made a new friend or talked to someone that they don't usually talk to. The post-survey response dropped to 66% of students reporting the behavior. It also showed the largest decrease in reported behavior at 18%. Even with an 18% decrease, it is still a favorably high response to the behavior.

Items 14 and 16 received similar responses on both the pre- and post-surveys. Forty percent of students reported that they did something on purpose to hurt another's feelings and 37% of students reported that they insulted someone for looking at them the wrong way. Both items demonstrate rather aggressive behaviors. The post-survey had similar results, with a slight decrease in reported behavior at 37% and 35%, respectively.

Items 15, 17, and 18 are the only items that showed an increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Fifty percent of students reported calling someone a mean name when the person couldn't hear them on the pre-survey. At 18%, a relatively low number of students reported threatening their friendship if another person didn't comply with them. On the post-survey, however, the percentage went up to 24% of students, and increase of 6%. Fifty-three percent of students reported this behavior on the post-survey, a 3% increase. Thirty-five percent of students reported teasing someone they didn't know very well, and 44% of them reported teasing after the classroom guidance activity. This item had a 9% increase. Each of these is categorized as a relationally aggressive behavior.

Item 19 showed stable results over time with 44% of students reporting that they ignored someone on purpose when that person said "hi" to them. After the guidance

activity, that percentage was reduced by 1%, with 43% of students still reporting the same behavior.

The last item in the survey, Item 20, was a primarily physically aggressive behavior. Fifty-seven percent of the students surveyed said that they had hit, pushed, shoved or were physically aggressive to someone else because they were mad. The students shared during the guidance activity that physical aggression, although not appropriate behavior was sometimes effective in getting their way. Fifty-three percent of students reported this behavior on the post-survey, showing a 4% decrease in behavior.

Overall, the pre and post-survey portrayed moderate effectiveness with the middle school students sampled. The average decrease in behavior was approximately 7% and the average increase in behavior was 6%.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

This project, Relational Aggression: A Classroom Guidance Activity, was an examination of middle school students and their experience with relational aggression. The research presented in the literature review demonstrated that building relationships among peers is a critical part in a child's development. Aggressive behaviors emerge as a mechanism for children to either attain or maintain these friendships. This project focused on relationally aggression behaviors that children use toward each other to reach their goal of friendship attainment or maintenance, the differences between males and females, and among different racial/ethnic groups. Also discussed was the importance of belonging to a group and being popular among peers, the impact that aggression has on children, and evidence of the need for intervention in schools. As students transition from elementary school to middle school, they also transition into the time when aggression is most likely to peak, between ages 10 and 14.

The prevalence of relational aggression was measured in a diverse sample of both male and female middle school students; seventh graders who this year are experiencing the transition. These students were identified as Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, or Asian. The sample of students used closely resembled the percentage of students representing the racial/ethnic makeup of the site. The sample comprised of 41 females and 34 males. Overall, about 46% of students reported relationally aggressive behaviors. This demonstrates that, although much of the research focused on Caucasian, middle-class females, relational aggression can occur in both males and females, and across racial/ethnic lines.

Relational aggression, in the research, was found to be primarily focused around girls, while physical aggression more identified with boys (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). This project demonstrated that boys, as well as girls, are prone to these types of behaviors, just as girls may be susceptible to the use of physical aggression. Fifty-seven percent of students reported using physical means to express aggression on the pre-survey, and 53% on the post-survey. The findings of this survey and the class discussion the occurred during the activity time support the idea that relational aggression may not just pertain to girls. The literature supports the idea, however, that girls are more likely to hide their aggression due to the way they are socialized and expected to act (Campbell, 1993; Simmons, 2002; Vail, 2002; Wiseman, 2002). It is possible that this sample also supports the idea that girls do express their aggression toward others relationally.

The sample students reported personal experience with relational aggression and the incidence of relational aggression in the school. The students completed a 20 item pre- and post-survey on aggression. The survey was given before the classroom guidance

activity was presented and then a week after the activity. The average decrease in behavior was 7% over 17 items, while the average increase in behavior was 6% over 3 items. Almost all of the students reported participating in some form of relationally aggressive behavior both on the pre- and post-survey.

The results of the survey demonstrated that relational aggression is an important issue that middle school students at this site face. Over 70% of students reported that they called other kids names that made fun of them, said something about someone else they knew wasn't nice, and laughed when someone else made fun of another student. Also, 68% of students reported making fun of another's clothes, hair, or appearance. These numbers are significant because it demonstrates the commonness of relational aggression and how sometimes these behaviors aren't recognized. All of these behaviors constitute relational aggression, but are not always identified as being as serious as they are (Simmons, 2002; Vail, 2002). Over half of the students reported feeling bad that someone was mean to them, showing that this behavior is potentially harmful. As demonstrated in the literature, relationally aggressive behaviors can be detrimental to a child's development (Crick, 1996; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). The impact of aggression on children can affect them to the point that they don't want to go to school, experience depression, and even suicidal tendencies (Elliot, 1992; Mullin-Rinder, 2003).

The literature also presented the importance of belonging to a group and feeling included (Eder & Parker, 1987; Gilligan & Brown, 1992; Simmons, 2002; Wiseman, 2002). This also was evident among the sample of middle school students. Forty-percent of students reported leaving someone out to make them feel bad and 57% said that they felt bad when they were left out. Only 18% of students reported threatening to end a friendship to gain compliance on the pre-survey, which went up to 24% on the post-

survey. These are all behaviors linked to the characterization that friendship can be used as a weapon or threat against others. One behavior that is also linked to this misuse of friendship, but was refuted by this survey was the invitation or inclusion of new people. Eighty-four percent and 66% of students reported making a new friend or talking to someone they don't usually talk to on the pre- and post-surveys, respectively. This demonstrated that these students were more willing to open up to meeting new friends outside of their groups.

Implications for School Counselors

These are all examples of the presence of relational aggression in schools, which point to the need for awareness, prevention, and intervention to curb these behaviors. In the absence of formal or informal intervention, both overtly aggressive and relationally aggressive behavior problems are likely to continue over time for individual children (Crick, 1996). Due to the lack of recognition and awareness about relational aggression, many of these behaviors are going unnoticed by parents, teachers, and other adults (Simmons, 2002; Vail, 2002). The more these behaviors are ignored, the more persistent the problem will become for children (van der Wal, de Wit, & Hirasing, 2003).

The lack of recognition includes characterizing relational aggression as something that girls do or as a passing phase (Simmons, 2002). It is rarely recognized or taken as seriously as bullying, although it should be. It is imperative that the hidden culture of relational aggression be exposed. The classroom guidance activity implemented during this project shows that relationally aggressive behaviors have become a part of student's average school day at this site. The decrease in behavior after the classroom guidance activity was presented supports the idea that bringing the issue out into the open and discussing it among students may be an effective strategy toward prevention.

School counselors can play a critical role in developing and presenting prevention strategies. This may include identifying relational aggression, bringing awareness to students and staff, and teaching students effective ways to combat relational aggression. It is also important to involve not only parents, but teachers and administrators as well. The establishment of rules and policies against these aggressive behaviors may be effective in the exposure of relational aggression, and to define behaviors and consequence of those behaviors. It is important that relational aggression be taken seriously by students and adults alike. Implementing a classroom guidance activity with middle school students was an effective way for the counselor to reach a certain population of students at the site.

It is equally imperative to interact with students as individuals as it is to interact with a group. As school counselors, it is essential to be aware of the psychological and emotional affects that being a victim of relational aggression can cause. The literature shows that students who are victims of aggression can suffer many negative effects, such as not wanting to come to school and experiencing depression (Elliot, 1992; Mullin-Rinder, 1993). Along with the victims of aggression, it is equally important to focus attention on the perpetrator of aggressive behaviors. These students also may be experiencing psychological and emotional distress (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997).

Implications for Future Research

Relational aggression has the potential to cause harm and distress among children and, therefore, should be brought to the forefront. The research reviewed for this project exemplified that this issue is fairly new and requires further examination. It is important to look at the factors and environment that allow relational aggression to develop and grow as acceptable behavior. Studying relational aggression more in depth in terms of its

correlation with different racial and ethnic groups would also be beneficial. The implementation of a study focusing solely on urban or inner-city schools may produce the information needed to see relational aggression from a different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic viewpoint. It is important that the scope of reference is extended to students of all backgrounds and in all different types of school settings.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Connecting with others is a critical piece of human development, especially in the life of a child. Building friendships based on trust and loyalty during childhood and adolescence can affect the way relationships are formed into adulthood. The pain felt from being rejected by peers, left out of a group, or made fun of by other has the potential to leave a permanent scar. Although relationally aggressive behaviors are covert and often unrecognized, the damage caused by them is very real. It is crucial that this problem be brought into the awareness of children and adults and programs be implemented to curtail these hidden aggressions.

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Appendixes A-E

Appendix A

Aggression Survey

NAME: _____   Grade: _____

Think about your behavior in the last week. Check off each of the following behaviors you have done.

1. _____ Called other kids names that made fun of them?

2. _____ Said something about someone else that you knew wasn't nice?

3. _____ Laughed when someone else made fun of another student?

4. _____ Written a note or graffiti (on a desk, wall, bathroom) about someone else that wasn't nice?

5. _____ Let someone else talk you into doing something you didn't really want to do?

6. _____ Repeated a rumor you heard about your friend?

7. _____ Made fun of another person's clothes, hair, or appearance?

8. _____ Sent an e-mail, text message, or IM message that said something negative you wouldn't say in person?

9. _____ Been the target of a rumor?

10. _____ Threatened someone because they made you mad?

11. _____ Left someone out to make them feel bad?

12. _____ Felt bad that someone was mean to you or left you out?

13. _____ Made a new friend or talked to someone you don't usually talk to?

14. _____ Did something on purpose to hurt someone else's feelings?

15. _____ Threatened not to be friends with someone if they didn't do what you wanted them to?

16. _____ Insulted someone verbally because they looked at you the wrong way?

17. _____ Called someone a mean name when they could hear you?

18. _____ Teased someone you know, but not very well?

19. _____ Ignored someone on purpose when they said "hi" to you?

20. _____ Hit, pushed, shoved, etc. someone because you were mad at them?

Appendix B

Chart: Physically Aggressive Behaviors

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Punching
- Tripping
- Slapping
- Shoving
- Picking on someone because they are smaller than you.

Appendix C

Chart: Relationally Aggressive Behaviors

- Talk about you behind your back

- Call other people names

- Threaten you

- Look at you in a mean way

- Spread rumors

- Write graffiti on desks or in the bathroom about someone

- Leaving people out of a group

- Ignoring people

- Threatening to repeat something told in private

- Making fun of the way people look

- Writing mean messages on the computer (IM)

Appendix D

Chart: What Can YOU Do?

- Treat others the way that you would like to be treated.

- Don't believe everything you hear or read, ask the person.

- Stand up for yourself and your feelings.

- Avoid gossip and talking about others behind their back.

- Make a new friend.

- Include new people in your group.

- Respect others' differences.

- Respect yourself.

- Tell someone if you are being bullied or if you see someone else being bullied.

Appendix E

Chart: Who Can You Talk To?

- School Counselor

- Intervention Specialist

- Teacher/ School Staff

- Administrator

- Coach

- Parents

- Family Member

- Friends