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Social aggression in pre-adolescent females: A guide for school counselors

Emily Ann Kibler
James Madison University

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Social Aggression in Pre-Adolescent Females:

A Guide for School Counselors

Emily A. Kibler

A research project submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my mom, Eileen Haungs, who has provided me with love and support. I would also like to dedicate this project to my sister, Lisa Kibler, who has always believed in me and encouraged me in countless ways. I also dedicate this project to David Casdorph, who has remained by my side and provided me with strength and endless support. Without their support and love, this project could not have been completed.

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Abstract

Until recently, aggression in girls was primarily ignored in the literature. Social aggression in girls is prevalent and needs continuing attention. Social aggression can be particularly hurtful to girls as relationships and social groups are often of utmost importance in girls' lives. Reasons for and themes of female aggression are explored in order to help school counselors identify factors behind aggressive acts. Signs of aggression in victims and the effects on both the victim and aggressor are reviewed in order to offer intervention efforts. Interventions that school counselors may implement include: training in assertiveness and problem solving; combating isolation; peer-based methods; and educating staff. A detailed friendship group manual for elementary school counselors is provided in the appendix.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Ew, why are you friends with HER? She is so weird!” “Unless you do this for me, we are no longer friends.” “Don’t talk to her anymore, she is stupid.” The previous comments are common examples of aggression, but behaviors such as these were not considered as aggressive until recently. Both male and female adolescents can be extremely hostile to one another. For many years, research on violent behavior has primarily focused on physical aggression in boys. Initially, researchers did not believe that females were aggressive and, as a result, girls were often excluded from the research (Gomes, 2007; Underwood, Galen, & Paquette, 2001).

Owens, Shute, and Slee (2000b, p. 20) defined aggression as “behavior which is intended to hurt or harm others.” With this definition in mind, aggression can now expand beyond the physical to include other behaviors. Aggression often emerges in conjunction with friendship manipulation, gossip, exclusion from a social group, and other behaviors that hurt and harm emotionally. Recent research using this expanded definition suggests that girls are just as hostile as boys and it also suggests that girls often behave in ways that damage relationships. While boys can be physically aggressive, girls are more often indirectly, socially, and relationally aggressive (Underwood et al., 2001). Research indicates that most girls use their social intelligence, not physical prowess, when in conflict. Indirect, relational, and social forms of aggression are not only found in girls, but girls typically display these more subtle forms of aggression at higher levels than boys and are more likely than boys to be negatively impacted by these forms of aggression (Reynolds & Repetti, 2006). Girls in conflict use the traditionally female

desire for connectedness as leverage against each other, making indirect, relational, and social aggression especially hurtful to other girls (Crothers, Field, & Kolbert, 2005).

Indirect, relational, and social forms of aggression are separate, yet overlap extensively in meaning. All three forms of aggression have the same general purpose of inflicting damage on a victim's social relationships or social status (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006). Researchers have not come to a consensus on a single term for the type of aggression most commonly found in adolescent girls (Coyne et al.; Shute, Owens, & Slee, 2002). Researchers continue to argue whether indirect, relational, and social forms of aggression are distinct or are, in fact, the same construct (Coyne et al.).

The primary feature of indirect aggression is that, "the harm is delivered circuitously, in a covert manner" (Coyne et al., 2006, p. 294). Relational aggression involves behaviors that hurt others by damaging relationships or feelings related to relationships, such as acceptance and group inclusion. Relational aggression is similar to indirect aggression, with the main difference being that relational aggression does not need to be covert (Coyne et al.). Social aggression is behavior that is damaging to another's self-esteem, social status, or both. Social aggression appears to be the most encompassing term and is similar to both indirect and relational aggression. Coyne et al. believe that the term social aggression is able to include all the behaviors of indirect and relational aggression, in addition to hurtful non-verbal behaviors that are not included in the definitions of indirect or relational aggression. For this reason, social aggression will be the term used when discussing social, relational, and indirect aggression.

Girls will not simply outgrow aggressive behavior and social aggression will not just go away if ignored. Girls will not simply "get over it." Socially aggressive

behaviors are associated with negative psychological and social outcomes for both the victims and aggressors (Neal, 2007). Without intervention and prevention efforts, behavior and social problems may arise for many girls, even those who appear on the surface to be socially successful. Social aggression will continue to influence girls into adulthood as these behaviors often shape what they expect from other women (Vail, 2002). It is pertinent to take action to both prevent and intervene in social aggression (Neal). Change can come through prevention, intervention, and positive attention in the school system, family, and other social groups. School counselors do not have the ability to make a family or social group change, but they can help create and implement interventions in the school (Letendre, 2007). The school is a critically important setting for pre-adolescents, as they spend a majority of their time at school or school-related activities. In addition, the school provides the first experience for many children with social roles, expectations, and conflicts with groups (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006).

Many effective programs have been implemented in schools to reduce bullying and they have typically focused on reducing physical aggression and increasing positive social skills. Fewer programs and interventions, however, have addressed and centered on social aggression. Failing to consider social aggression limits the scope of the problem that anti-bullying programs can address. Many victims and aggressors are not identified when only physical aggression is considered. Programs focused broadly on bullying or more specifically on physical aggression can often serve as a starting point for programs targeting other specific forms of aggression (Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006).

Interventions must begin with the recognition that girls already have social intelligence, and that it can be used both constructively and destructively. It is important

for interventions to honor how females socialize and honor the emphasis that the socialization process places on the self in relation to others. In order to best help pre-adolescent girls, recognition must be given to the value girls place on their relationships and the anxiety that is often produced when the relationships are threatened (Letendre, 2007).

As mentioned, social aggression is harmful to both victims and aggressors. It is necessary to intervene and prevent social aggression, just as it is necessary to do so with physical aggression. For this reason, I have created a friendship group specifically for pre-adolescent girls in the fourth grade. I have chosen to create the group for fourth grade girls because by this time many of the girls will have experienced social aggression; however, the patterns and behaviors of social aggression may not be as ingrained as they would be for older students (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Having some experience with friendship difficulties can help the girls relate to the lessons in the group better than if they had no previous friendship difficulties. Fourth grade is often the year before transitioning to middle school, if not two years before transitioning. Regardless, it will be helpful for fourth grade girls to have this experience before the patterns are ingrained and before transitioning to middle school.

It is important to include a variety of roles in the group. For example, not only socially aggressive girls nor victims of social aggression would be included in the group. Good leaders can serve as models for social behavior in the group. Bystanders to social aggression can learn the critical role of observers/followers in social aggression (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). By only including one type (i.e. aggressor, victim, or bystander) in the group, the potential success of the group is reduced. Including only aggressive girls

in a group creates the risk of reinforcing the behavior as the girls may begin to be aggressive towards each other (Randall, 2008). The group, therefore, will consist of girls who are aggressors, victims, bystanders, and good leaders. Aggressors include students who are hurting or harming others. In social aggression, they are often the people who are damaging the relationship through socially aggressive acts. Victims include the students who are the subjects of aggression. Sometimes girls who are aggressive later become victims and vice versa. Bystanders are neither aggressors nor victims, rather they are somewhere in between. They often witness the aggression, but take no action. Good leaders are students who model social skills, healthy friendships, and empathy (The Ophelia Project, n.d.). It is important to note, however, that the girls who appear socially competent and model good social behavior to adults may be the ones who are socially aggressive to their peers. By including many types of girls in the group, the goal is for the effectiveness of the group to increase.

I have chosen to design a group for use in elementary schools because the school is the primary social network for children. The school provides an arena for prevention and intervention efforts. The school environment has a potentially large impact on whether and how social aggression appears (Merrell et al., 2006). In an effort to reduce destructive behavior in general, as well as reducing current and preventing future social aggression, the group will focus on promoting positive social behavior and healthy emotional development. There is considerable support for the usefulness of reducing disruptive, unfriendly behavior by promoting positive social and emotional development. On the other hand, there is little evidence of lasting change to support interventions that solely target social aggression (Merrell et al.).

According to Davis (2005), group counseling is one of the most effective ways to provide direct counseling services in a school setting. Groups address a variety of topics, including social aggression, that meet the needs of the students. In addition, groups provide a safe environment for students to express their feelings and to try out new behaviors. The group setting allows students to understand they are not alone, and that other students experience similar difficulties and share similar feelings. With the use of groups, the school counselor is able to serve more students than with individual counseling. Students are typically responsive to information from their peers. There is a greater probability of behavior change in groups than in individual counseling as a result of peer role modeling and the ability to role-play and rehearse new behaviors (Davis). Increasing the size of the children's peer networks is an important component in social aggression prevention and intervention efforts (Neal, 2007). Thus, group work with a heterogeneous group of girls can be extremely beneficial. Not only can girls learn new skills, but they can broaden their social networks as well.

The group members will have opportunities to learn new skills during the course of the group. They will apply what they learn through role-plays, games, and other enjoyable activities. These experiences will help the girls understand how to develop friendships and how to get along with one another, even when disagreements arise.

This paper will explore social aggression in pre-adolescent females and how school counselors can effectively prevent and intervene in social aggression. Chapter 2 will present themes of aggression in girls, the purpose behind social aggression, the signs and effects of aggression for both the aggressor and victim, and the relevance of social aggression to pre-adolescent girls. Chapter 2 will also discuss possible interventions for

school counselors in helping both aggressors and victims of social aggression. Chapter 3 will introduce Friendship Group: A Guide for School Counselors. In this chapter, information on the curriculum for a friendship group directed towards fourth grade girls will be provided. A complete guide for school counselors will be included in the appendix.

Chapter 2: Social Aggression and Interventions

Themes in Social Aggression in Females

Aggression in females seems to revolve around three main themes. Crothers et al. (2005) identified fear of social abandonment, involving a third person during a conflict, and negative perception of women as three themes of social aggression in girls. These three themes can be broken down into more specific themes, which provide more details about the use of social aggression rather than physical aggression (Crothers et al.).

Crothers et al. (2005) found that a major concern of girls was fear of social abandonment. Subjects believed that they must be exceedingly cautious of maintaining their friendships, or else these relationships would fall apart. Many girls noted that their peers use the fear of social abandonment, especially when threatening exclusion from the group. Themes of jealousy, entertainment, social status, and deflection often fall under the higher order theme of social abandonment. Girls often become aggressors to make others jealous and to entertain themselves. They may also use it to raise their social status and to deflect aggression away from themselves. Girls are often able to use the fear of social abandonment to obtain control over and hurt other girls (Crothers et al.).

Another theme from the study was the use of a third person when in conflict. Girls often use a third person in order to gain an ally, decrease emotional intensity, process the event with a more objective person, or to maintain their anonymity. With the involvement of a third person during conflict, the aggression often becomes indirect (Crothers et al., 2005).

The third theme in the study was a negative view of women. Subjects expressed negative perceptions of women. Subjects considered their female peers as often being

judgmental, jealous, devious, untrustworthy, defensive, and manipulative. Subjects also saw themselves as being more fearful, wanting to avoid conflict, and maintaining resentment from past conflicts. The negative view of women seemed to have emerged from witnessing and being the victim of aggression. It also promoted further aggression, as these means of aggression became the norm for the subjects (Crothers et al., 2005).

Explanations for Social Aggression

Girls typically exhibit social aggression much more frequently than physical aggression; therefore, it is important to consider reasons for the use of social aggression in girls. Owens et al. (2000a, 2000b) identified two main categories of why girls use aggression. The first category, and also the most common reason for gossiping and spreading rumors, was alleviating boredom and creating excitement. The second category identified was friendship and group processes and included sub-categories of attention-seeking, inclusion in the group, belonging to the right group, self-protection, jealousy, and revenge. The two main categories help break down the reasons leading to social aggression in adolescent girls (Owens et al., 2000a, 2000b).

Alleviating boredom and creating excitement. Social aggression gives girls something to do with their time, therefore, alleviating them of their boredom. These behaviors were also seen as bringing excitement into their lives. In a study by Owens et al. (2000b, p. 28), one of the girls reported, “Like, people don’t have their own lives. I’ll see if I can involve myself in somebody else’s life. It might make mine a bit more exciting.” Girls see boys as being more active and having better things to do, such as play sports during free time, while girls often spend free time talking in small groups (Owens et al., 2000a, 2000b).

Friendship and group processes. The category of friendship and group processes contains many sub-categories. All of the sub-categories relate to the “desire for membership of the group or for close friendship” (Owens et al., 2000b, p. 30). The subcategories include attention seeking, inclusion in the group, belonging to the right group, self-protection, jealousy, and revenge. Many girls not only want to have something to do and create excitement, but they also want to gain attention for themselves. Group inclusion is critically important to girls. Membership in the group defines who is acceptable in contrast to non-members who are unacceptable. Once in the group, girls must work to keep their position. In order to keep their position, they may spread rumors and go along with current rumors to continue the exclusion of those who are “unacceptable.” In order to reduce the risk of their own exclusion, girls often agree with girl aggressors rather than oppose them. Not only must girls belong to a group, but they must belong to the “right” group. Exclusionary behaviors such as huddling, which is when girls group together to talk and prohibit others from joining, are a result of rivalries between groups (Owens et al., 2000a, 2000b).

Self protection, jealousy, and revenge are also related to the desire to be part of a group and have close friendships. Girls often become aggressors in order to avoid becoming the next victim and to protect one’s current position in the group. A sense of relief that they are not the target can accompany girls as they join in the victimization of a peer. Jealousy over grades and appearance is common, but jealousy over same-sex friendships is a serious manner. Conflict over friendships and competition over boys causes much of the jealousy. Revenge and retaliation occur when another girl does something unacceptable and when girls are left out or ignored. Many girls feel that

revenge is legitimate because they are just giving back what the other girl gave. In summary, alleviating boredom and the desire for membership in a group provide explanations for many of the social aggression actions seen in girls (Owens et al., 2000a, 2000b).

Victim Signs and Effects of Social Aggression

Seventy-two percent of school-aged females report being bullied or victimized (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001). Social forms of aggression are subtle and are often difficult to identify unless the person who is trying to identify the behaviors is deeply involved with the social group (Paquette & Underwood, 1999). Because these forms of aggression are difficult to detect, it is important to know the signs and effects of aggression. Signs of social aggression victimization include moodiness or sullenness, becoming aggressive, stomachaches or mysterious illnesses invented to avoid going to school, drastic changes in eating or sleeping patterns, unwillingness to discuss the situation, drop in grades, withdrawal from family and friends, sadness, crying episodes, and the sudden onset of wanting to be a loner (Gomes, 2007).

The consequences of victimization can be serious and are often long lasting. Victimization is associated with social and psychological maladjustment (Young et al., 2006). Feelings of loneliness and isolation frequently occur due to the effects of victimization (Gomes, 2007). Girls who are victims of aggression are at a greater risk of dropping out of school, becoming delinquents, and developing psychological problems, such as depression, which may lead to suicidal ideation or suicide. Victimized girls also have a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, increased fear, and lack trust in others (Paquette & Underwood, 1999). They also experience higher levels of peer rejection,

anxiety, poor academic performance, and delinquent behavior (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Randall, 2008).

In Casey-Cannon et al. (2001), one girl described seeing peers socially isolated from others:

I've seen it where they'd shun people from the group. They'll just flat out go up to them and say, you know, "We don't like you, you have to go, you can't be with us anymore. That's it, leave." ...It's brutal. I've seen it where girls have, you know run off in the bathroom and cried (p. 141).

Rejection from a group, as in the example above, often leads to lower self-esteem, depression, and retaliation. Some girls act aggressively in order to retaliate against the person who victimized them. Other girls lose confidence and try to hide in order to avoid more attacks (Casey-Cannon et al.).

Those who report experiences of aggression, express many emotions and feelings that result from victimization. Some victims report that they cry as a result of the aggression while others report that they purposefully did not cry so the aggressors and bystanders did not have more reasons to laugh. In Casey-Cannon et al. (2001), one victim reported negative feelings about herself being reinforced by her peers:

I guess you'd say I have low self-esteem about myself because of the way I feel about myself, and like my weight and stuff. And for somebody else to recognize that, it hurts. For you to feel one way about yourself and for somebody else to feel that same way about you and then tell you that: that's just kind of bad...It just like makes you feel like, so low (p. 143).

Acts of social aggression are hurtful to the victims and have lasting impacts on them as well. Not only is the victim harmed by the aggression, but the aggressor experiences negative consequences as well.

The Effects of Social Aggression on the Aggressor

The desire for manipulation and control, willingness to inflict torment, and lack of empathy are often present in aggressors. Female perpetrators of aggression experience increased peer rejection over the course of a school year. Socially aggressive girls are often rejected by the very group that they are attempting to manipulate and control. Aggressive girls are perceived negatively by their peers, and frequently have difficulties in relationships with mutual friends. Friends are important sources of social support for girls, and lack of strong relationships with friends puts aggressive girls at risk (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Reynolds & Repetti, 2006).

Aggressive behavior puts girls at a substantial risk for developing social and emotional problems. High rates of loneliness, depression, and social isolation are reported in girls who are socially aggressive. On the Ophelia Project website (www.opheliaproject.org), one girl reported getting back at another girl and then feeling bad about it later. She reported that she wished she had not done it and she hates what she did (The Ophelia Project, n.d.). School failure, school dropout, violent relationships with romantic partners, teen pregnancy, and participation in criminal behaviors are some of the behaviors that are associated with social aggression in girls (Letendre, 2007).

Relevance of Social Aggression to Children and Adolescents

Children, as young as three years old, display socially aggressive behaviors and they seem to recognize the power of these forms of aggression. Preschool children

understand how hurtful it is to be excluded and they often behave aggressively towards their peers in these ways. Children display social aggression in many ways including telling another child to go away, covering their ears to not listen to another child, walking away from a peer when a peer tries to play with them, and telling other children not to play with someone. Like adolescents, young children will also tell others that they will not invite someone to a party if they cannot have their way (Underwood, 2003). The acts of social aggression in young children mirror the acts of these forms of aggression in older children and adolescents.

Beginning in the preschool years, girls become less overtly and physically aggressive than boys and begin to express their anger socially (Underwood, 2003). As females grow older they tend to use social aggression more frequently. Girls are often more aggressive socially, which may be a result of earlier maturity in social intelligence than boys. The use of social aggression is a particularly effective way of hurting girls. Young girls and adolescent girls are more skilled in the expression of nonverbal communication. They are also more skilled in interpreting both verbal and nonverbal expressions and are likely to understand the aggressive and hurtful meaning behind nonverbal expressions (Shute et al., 2002).

During the preschool years, aggression is often triggered in children after items are taken from them or toys are not shared. Preschool children tease and call each other names frequently. They may be heard saying hurtful comments such as, "I won't be your friend if you don't sit by me." After the preschool years, aggression tends to be elicited by perceived threats and attacks against the child's sense of self. Children tend to be more intentional with their aggression beginning in middle childhood. Advances in

cognitive development and increases in the importance of social relationships beginning in middle childhood result in more social aggression (Moeller, 2001). Aggression becomes more covert during middle childhood and the interactions of the peer group are often used to hurt others. Lying about a peer, excluding a peer from the group, or taking part in covert actions to harm a peer are common ways children are victimized during middle childhood (Juvonen & Graham, 2001).

In adolescence, social aggression becomes more sophisticated (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). During middle and high school years social aggression continues to increase in girls, while acts of physical aggression decrease (Moeller, 2001). As in middle childhood, aggression occurs when there are perceived threats against the adolescent's sense of self and when a friendship is damaged or manipulated by a peer. In addition to harming friendships in same-sex relationships, adolescent girls begin to involve male peers. Peers may "steal" a dating partner, tell lies to ruin a friend's reputation, or intentionally make a friend jealous (Juvonen & Graham). These forms of aggression require complex thinking and as cognitive skills grow and enhance, children and adolescents are able to employ these forms of aggression more effectively and more frequently. As girls become increasingly aggressive, the behaviors are also more hurtful to the victims because of the increasing importance they put on relationships as they progress towards adolescence (Underwood, 2003). It is clear that social aggression becomes more complex with development and it mirrors gains in both the social and cognitive domains (Juvonen & Graham).

Girls are particularly hurt by social aggression. Girls tend to place much more importance on social relationships and they are more relationally and socially focused in

comparison to boys. They invest an immense amount of energy into peer acceptance. Girls rely heavily on feedback from peers to inform them of their self-worth. Feelings of insignificance and non-acceptance are extremely hurtful. Girls are aware of relational vulnerabilities and understand how to utilize the vulnerabilities in a particularly skillful manner that targets social relationships (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001).

As acts of aggression become more covert, they are more difficult to detect from an outsider perspective. Social aggression impacts the mental health and future well-being of girls. It is necessary for adults to be able to detect these forms of aggression and be able to intervene with both aggressors and victims (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2004).

Applications and Interventions for School Counselors

Girls will not simply outgrow their aggressive behavior. Change can come about through prevention and intervention efforts in the school system, family, and other social groups. School counselors do not have the ability to make a family or social group change, but they can help create and implement interventions in the school (Letendre, 2007). The school is a critically important setting for adolescents, as they spend a majority of their time at school or school-related activities. School counselors can advocate for students and become channels for improvement in policies regarding victimization assessment, intervention, and prevention (Shute et al., 2002).

Interventions must begin with recognizing that girls have social intelligence that can be used both beneficially and maliciously. Interventions need to honor how females socialize and recognize the importance that they place on the socialization process.

Acknowledgment of the value girls place on their relationships and the anxiety that is

often produced when the relationships are threatened is a necessary component of intervention efforts (Letendre, 2007).

In order for interventions to be successful, counselors must create a trusting and supportive relationship with students. Counselors can work individually with students by addressing causes and consequences of the behavior. Through supportive relationships, counselors can empower students to increase their sense of self-control over their experiences and learn techniques to help them successfully face conflict (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001).

Once a relationship is established, the counselor can begin to implement interventions. Interventions can be adapted and used with both the victims and aggressors of social aggression. Some interventions and applications for the school include assertiveness training, combating isolation, and problem solving training. Teacher and staff education is also a necessary aspect of prevention and intervention.

Assertiveness training. Aggressiveness is an action that enhances the aggressor while it reduces and harms others. The intent of aggressive behavior is to dominate and often humiliate the victims. Assertiveness, on the other hand, allows an individual to stand up for his or her own rights in a way in which others are not disregarded (Studer, 1996). Assertiveness training teaches girls to express their negative feelings calmly and in the least threatening manner. Girls can be taught to express their needs and desires more directly and to accept that conflict is a natural aspect of any relationship (Underwood, 2003).

One model for assertiveness training includes four steps to helping girls learn how to express their needs. The first step is to concretely describe the other individual's

behavior. It may sound like, “When you are late to my house in the morning...” The second step is for the speaker to describe objectively how the other individual’s actions have affected his or her life. This step may sound like, “I am late for school and my teachers get mad at me.” The third step in the process includes the speaker accurately describing his or her feelings and may sound like, “I am angry when I am late for school and my teachers yell at me.” The fourth step involves the speaker suggesting what he or she would like to see happen. This may sound like, “I would like for you to pick me up ten minutes earlier so that I am not late to school (Studer, 1996).” As girls learn these steps and practice them through role-play, they can begin to feel more comfortable directly voicing their concerns and asserting their social goals (Underwood, 2003).

Teaching girls to interrupt malicious gossiping and exclusion is another aspect of assertiveness training. The first immediate response to an initial evaluative comment influences all of the remarks to follow. If the first response is supportive of the initial negative remark, then all remarks following are likely to reinforce the negative evaluation. If the first response, however, is a challenge, then subsequent remarks are also likely to be more positive and less negative. In order to positively influence the remarks, they must occur immediately following the first negative comment. For example, if an aggressor says something about another person having a horrible haircut to a bystander, the bystander can make an assertive comment back that may sound like, “I don’t think her haircut looks horrible at all, and anyway, I’ve had many bad haircuts before and I had to just wait for my hair to grow back.” This comment does not reflect agreement from the bystander and it also displays empathy on the part of the bystander. The difficulty lies in the belief that girls should be agreeable. It is important to teach girls

assertive statements to use in situations where they would interrupt a malicious rumor or stop exclusion. Practicing in role-plays is beneficial because it helps girls become more comfortable and effective in voicing their disagreement (Underwood, 2003). As Simmons said in her book, *Odd Girl Out* (2002):

Girls have a critical role to play in changing the culture of their cliques and friendships. After all, most of us hate this way of life. I can't count the number of girls who have told me that they'd rather be beaten up than ignored or cut down spiritually by their peers. We need to abandon the belief that doing this is natural or unavoidable. It isn't. We can change (p. 252).

Through assertiveness training, girls can learn to assert themselves in healthy and productive ways, which will help in changing the way they try to address conflict and try to get their needs met.

Combat isolation. Both victims and aggressors experience loneliness and it is necessary to address girls who are isolated and spend too much time alone. Increasing their sense of belonging, reducing boredom, addressing aggression, and supporting all girls are ways to combat isolation (Straus, 2007).

Girls often feel as if there is only one possible in which they may belong, and if they are not in that group, they are doomed. By increasing belonging, girls are provided many opportunities to feel connected. Girls who participate in a broad range of activities have more possible venues for social acceptance (Straus, 2007). Group work with girls will help them increase their social network which will also help to combat isolation.

By reducing boredom and facing the fact that social aggression exists, school counselors and other school personnel can help combat isolation and aggression.

Engaging girls in more activities to reduce boredom will help reduce aggression. Social aggression in girls is often the result of boredom and too much unsupervised time.

School counselors can also address social aggression when they see it. They can help girls name the aggression and understand it as well. It is a mistake to believe the old saying that, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” It is important to call attention to social aggression in casual conversations with students, helping the school develop detailed anti-bullying programs, and providing girls with skills and resources to find another method of working through conflict and anger (Straus, 2007).

It may seem odd to support the socially aggressive girls; however, social aggression can serve a girl’s needs and it may serve the need of combating isolation. It is important to ask, “Was she a victim before she became a bully?” School counselors must ask these questions, in addition to increasing belonging, reducing boredom, and addressing aggression in order to combat isolation and aggression in schools successfully (Straus, 2007).

Problem-solving training. Problem-solving training can be helpful for both victims and aggressors of social aggression. This training emphasizes the thinking process rather than focusing on obtaining a right or wrong answer. The purpose of problem-solving training is to raise the level of understanding, empathy, and ability to solve a problem (Studer, 1996).

Students can learn to work through various problem-solving steps. One example requires the students to progress through six steps to solve a problem. The first step asks, “What is the problem?” In the first step the student can explain the problem descriptively

but succinctly in one or two sentences. The second step asks the student to answer the question, “What would I like to happen?” In this step the student is required to think about what they want to see as the end result. This may include for the bullying to stop or for the aggressor to get into trouble. The third step asks the student to list all possible solutions. After the student lists all the possible solutions they can go through their list and rank them as to which seems to be the best solution and which is the worst. In this step, the student should consider the consequences of their various solutions (Studer, 1996).

In the fourth step, the student picks the best solution after weighing the various consequences. The student may not pick the best solution from the point of view of an adult or their peers. After picking the best solution, the student should use the solution. After using the solution, the last step requires the student to reevaluate the solution. If the solution worked then the student is done. If the solution did not work well, the student should start back at the list of possible solutions and add solutions if needed. Problem-solving training, as described above, helps students learn to reason and think through their problems rather than having an adult tell them the best decision. This step gives students a chance to reevaluate their decision and consider what may have gone wrong in their original solution (Studer, 1996).

Students can learn problem-solving skills by working through scenarios with a group. Students can be asked to write possible or real scenarios to be used, or an instructor, such as the school counselor, can write scenarios to be used. Practice with problem solving helps enhance a person’s level of reasoning and it brings about empathic

behaviors as students begin to understand problems from another person's point of view (Studer, 1996).

Peer-based approaches. Girls are very skeptical about the value of teacher or parent involvement in attempts to resolve problems related to social aggression. Peer-based methods of addressing aggression in females may be particularly effective. "Thus, girls' interpersonal Achilles' heel—the closeness of their peer relationships—may also prove to be a source of strength" (Shute et al., 2002, p. 371). Peer counseling, peer mentoring, and peer mediation programs may be the most successful in reducing and resolving social aggression.

Peer counseling. Peer counseling is based on the idea that pre-adolescents and adolescents may be more effective than adults in addressing and meeting the needs of their peers. They can better understand and relate to the situation, therefore, they can provide better and more realistic solutions than adults. Students are also often more comfortable talking about their worries with other students than with adults. Peer counselors must be trained in the proper responses to give peers and how to handle social aggression (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2004)

Peer mentoring. Peer mentoring involves pairing high-functioning youth with students in need of assistance. These programs are used to reduce risky behaviors in students who are at-risk. It connects the youth to an individual or group within the school or community who can offer functional assistance. After involvement in a peer mentoring program, both the peer mentors and students being served show positive effects, such as increase in self-esteem and increase in perceived connections to the school, peers, and family (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2004).

Peer mediation. Opposing results exist on the effectiveness of peer mediation with adolescent girls involved in indirect, relational, and social aggression. A study by Raskauskas and Stoltz (2004) cautioned against using peer mediation and conflict resolution strategies in cases of bullying as it forces victims to confront bullies, which may exacerbate the problem. Raskauskas and Stoltz warned that the imbalance of power may cause the victims to feel further victimized or that it may lead victim self-blame. They suggest that it is more beneficial to separate the aggressors from the victim and allow an adult to obtain the information in order to protect confidentiality and diffuse the power imbalance (Raskauskas & Stoltz).

Moeller (2001), however, suggests peer mediation programs are promising. Moeller describes peer mediation programs as programs in which student mediators are trained to help other students resolve their difficulties through discussion rather than aggression. It is important for the mediators to be carefully selected. Schools may have school personnel select mediators or have peers elect them. They must have extensive training in mediation, negotiation, and interpersonal problem-solving techniques. Mediators must also be under the supervision of trained school personnel, preferably a school counselor (Moeller).

Teacher and staff education. Many interventions focus on the aggressors and victims of social aggression. Often teachers and other school personnel do not know how to identify these forms of aggression (Shute et al., 2002). For prevention and intervention efforts to succeed, it is important to raise teacher and staff awareness of social aggression and to educate them on the need to intervene in this form of aggression. Teachers often do not believe it is necessary to intervene in social aggression because they see it as

normative development in adolescent girls. Teachers and staff must be educated and trained in the prevalence and potential hurtfulness of these forms of aggression (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2004; Underwood, 2003). Underwood found that teachers intervene in only one-sixth of bullying episodes on the playground and in only one-fifth of all episodes in the classroom. If teachers are trained, they can learn to recognize all forms of bullying, intervene when it occurs, and improve the quality of experiences in the school (Underwood).

Once teachers and other staff are educated, then they can begin to intervene in social aggression as well. It is important for staff to first and foremost model appropriate behavior. If students see teachers or other staff gossiping or participating in other socially aggressive acts, then the students get the impression that social aggression is acceptable. School staff members also need to observe girls and when they see aggressive behavior they must act (Randall, 2008).

A number of school-based programs that seemed promising have been shown to be ineffective in reducing aggression. These include suspension, detention, expulsion, corporal punishment, and recreational programs (Underwood, 2003). Interventions such as assertiveness training, combating isolation, teaching problem-solving, peer-based methods, and educating teachers and staff show promising results in reducing social aggression in adolescent girls. These various interventions have the possibility to be combined together to form a program for girls to help reduce social aggression and prevent future social aggression.

Conclusion

A plethora of research and interventions for physical aggression in boys exist. Only recently have researchers begun to investigate others forms of aggression, such as indirect, relational, and social aggression. Research of aggression in girls is also a new development, which has primarily occurred in the last decade. Until recently aggression in girls was virtually ignored (Gomes, 2007; Underwood et al., 2001). As the definition of aggression expanded and the inclusion of social aggression occurred, researchers began to explore the differences and similarities between these newly included forms of aggression (Owens et al., 2000b). The purpose and reasons for these forms of aggression have been addressed recently as well as various themes that occur in adolescent female aggression (Crothers et al., 2005).

Knowledge of the signs and effects of aggression in victims and the effects on the aggressor help in efforts to intervene and prevent social aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Randall, 2008; Reynolds & Repetti, 2006). Many interventions are focused on physical aggression, primarily in males. Recent findings show that some of these interventions can be successfully modified to help with the intervention of aggression in girls. Interventions such as assertiveness training, combating isolation, teaching problem-solving, peer-based methods, and educating teachers and staff have shown to be particularly effective and useful (Shute et al., 2002; Straus, 2007; Studer, 1996; Underwood, 2003). Research needs to continue to confirm the effectiveness of current interventions and expand to find new, effective interventions designed to address aggression particularly in adolescent girls.

Chapter 3: Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls

The following manual, *Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls* (see Appendix), was designed to help elementary school counselors address girls' needs for positive social behavior and healthy emotional development. This group was designed for six to eight members. It was ideally designed for fourth grade girls, but it can also be adapted to be used with younger or older girls as well. In addition, many of the topics included could be used to promote healthy social and emotional development in boys. The group includes a total of eight sessions. The group is designed to meet one time each week for 30 minutes.

There is little evidence that supports interventions that solely target social aggression; therefore, social aggression will not be the main topic of the group (Merrell et al., 2006). Rather, this group was created to address many areas that promote social and emotional development. The manual includes topics on healthy friendships, managing feelings, listening and empathy, self-esteem, problem solving, and assertiveness. These topics are included as they are necessary aspects in healthy social and emotional development. The group is designed to teach girls valuable information about friendships and how to care for themselves as well.

Purpose

Group counseling is an effective way for school counselors to meet the needs of many students at one time (Davis, 2005). Group counseling is also an effective way to address friendship with pre-adolescent girls. The group can be an opportunity to address the emotional and social need of the girls as well as increase the social network of the girls. Healthy friendships provide social support that helps increase self esteem,

attendance, and grades. The social support also lessens depression, and helps alleviate hard times. Group counseling also can allow the girls to express their feelings with their peers. This opportunity to express feelings will hopefully allow the girls to understand that other girls have similar feelings and that they are not alone in their experiences (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis).

Description

Each session of *Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls* focuses on an aspect of emotional and social development. During session one, the group members become more familiar with each other as they learn the rules, expectations, and purpose of the group. The group members also discuss the qualities of a good friendship and take a pre-group survey. The second session concentrates on healthy friendships, the qualities of a good friend and gossip.

The third session focuses on the management of feelings. Group members will learn and practice using “I” statements. In session four, the group members will learn how and practice listening and using empathic statements. Self-esteem is the focus of the fifth session. Group members will complete a self-esteem and self-talk worksheet. They will also discuss how being kind to others can help them develop a positive self-esteem.

The sixth session focuses on problem solving. The group members will learn six problem-solving steps. They will then practice as a group using the steps. After practicing the steps, they will complete a worksheet, which will ask them to problem solve a problem they have recently experienced or are currently experiencing. The seventh session concentrates on assertiveness. The group members will learn the differences among assertiveness, aggressiveness, and passiveness. They will practice

assertiveness skills and then practice problem-solving skills again. During the last session, the group members will review the topics from the group. They will complete a post-group survey and an evaluation. They will also have time to complete a Friendship First Aid Kit.

Future Possibilities

In the future, I would like to share the group curriculum manual with school counselors and other professionals who may find it useful. I hope to present the manual at the Virginia School Counselor Association conference in 2011. I believe in sharing information with and learning from others, rather than always starting from the beginning. I would like to continue to build on and improve this manual as more research becomes available.

Appendix

Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls

A Guide for School Counselors



“Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value; rather is one of those things that give value to survival.”

- C. S. Lewis

By: Emily Kibler

Introduction:

This section provides information on *Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls*. It begins by discussing the purpose for the group. The section then describes the benefits and possible difficulties of leading a friendship group for girls in the elementary school setting. The section will also address the group format, screening for group members, and informing parents and guardians. A sample parent letter is included. Finally, the section includes the details, including instructions, handouts, and worksheets, for eight groups lessons to use during the *Friendship Group for Pre-Adolescent Girls*.

Potential Benefits of a Friendship Group:

- Group counseling is an efficient way to provide direct counseling services in a school setting. It can meet the needs of many students at the same time.
- Group counseling occurs frequently in the elementary school setting; therefore, it will be relatively easy to incorporate as teachers and administrators are often already knowledgeable about group counseling.
- Groups provide a safe environment for students. Students can express their feelings and thoughts. They can also practice new behaviors in the group before trying them out in real-life settings.
- The small group atmosphere may be more comfortable for students who may have difficulty expressing themselves in classroom guidance settings or other larger settings. The small group may feel more secure for students.
- Group counseling may identify students who need further counseling.

- Group counseling can be beneficial for students nearing the end of individual counseling.
- Students are often more responsive to peers than adults. Peer modeling occurs naturally in the group counseling process.
- Activities such as role-plays can add to peer modeling and can help students see how others would respond to applicable and challenging situations (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006; Davis, 2005; Randall, 2008).
- The group is dedicated to promote positive social and emotional development. The group will not only address the immediate concern of social aggression, but it will hopefully help the girls feel better about themselves, improve their relationships, and help them grow into emotionally and socially healthy adolescents.

Potential Difficulties of a Friendship Group:

- Finding a time for all students to meet can be a challenge. In the elementary level it is possible to schedule the students during lunch.
 - By meeting at lunch the school counselor can reduce missed class time.
- Because counseling groups are not viewed as directly related to test subject areas, the groups may have low priority.
- Groups may not be able to meet weekly as planned due to school breaks/vacations, school field trips, snow days, or absent counselors.

- Inconsistent group meetings can cause problems for group cohesiveness and the possibility of connecting group lessons to future lessons and real life scenarios.
- There may be more students who are referred than can be seen at one time.
 - Groups should not exceed 8 members as it may decrease the effectiveness of the group and it may take away from the experience of the group members.
- Getting parental consent may be difficult. Consent forms may be sent home with students. The counselor can also call the parents or guardians to inform them of the group and that the permission form will be coming home with the student; however, getting the form back may be difficult. Some parents may also think that their child does not need to be in a group (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis, 2005; Taylor, 2008).

Organizing the Group:

- A meeting with administrators to propose the group idea including the purpose, goals, structure, and timeframe is a starting point when organizing a group.
- The Friendship Group should include between six and eight members.
- The group should meet once a week for 30 minutes. The group will meet a total of eight times.
- The group schedule is important to consider. It is necessary to determine when the group will take place each week. It is possible, especially in the elementary school, to have a lunch group. The counselor can collaborate with teachers for

additional time before and after lunch to allow for the group session. The girls can eat their lunch during the first part of group.

- Elective or special classes, such as art, music, and physical education are another option for scheduling the group time. It is possible to have the group during this class time; however, it is important to not remove students from their favorite class if possible. If students are removed from their favorite classes, the group may seem like a punishment.
- Communication with both administrators and teachers is imperative when organizing the group.
- The setting for the group is vital. If the school counselor has an office that can hold six to eight students, it would be an ideal setting. If the school counselor does not have a private office, then it is important for the counselor to find a location that can provide privacy and enough space for the group members. The space should be comfortable and, again, private (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis, 2005; Taylor, 2008).

Screening and Selecting Group Members:

- Conducting a needs assessment at the beginning of each school year can help identify the students' needs. Girls who could benefit from a friendship group may be identified in a needs assessment. The needs assessment also gives students the opportunity to ask for help in certain areas.
- Receiving referrals of students for both individual and group counseling by teachers, parents, administrators, and other staff is helpful.

- Building a positive relationship with students through classroom activities and discussions helps students feel comfortable and develop a level of trust with the school counselor. A positive relationship makes students more willing and eager to participate in groups with the school counselor.
- Adding “model students” to groups is helpful. Students who have good social and friendship skills can be a resource to students who are struggling with these skills. Selecting model students for groups is easier if students have a positive relationship with the school counselor.
- Screening potential group members from the list of referred students is important.
- Meeting with potential group members can help the school counselor determine the appropriateness of a particular student for the group. The time spent meeting with the prospective group members will prove invaluable once the group begins.
 - A student who does not fit in to the group can create a negative climate that impacts the students and the counselor.
 - Some students may require individual counseling before they are ready for a group setting.
- Giving a brief description of the group should be adequate. At this time, the counselor can ask the student if she is interested in becoming a member of the group.
- Obtaining parental consent following the selection of six to eight group members is necessary.

- Having other students on a reserve list is helpful if parental consent is not given for students originally selected (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis, 2005; Kupkovits, 2008; Taylor, 2008).

Informing and Obtaining Consent from Parents/Guardians:

When working with elementary school students, it is important to obtain parent/guardian consent for group membership. It is important to communicate the group purpose and goals to parents and guardians. Communicating the length of the group is also important. Both calling the parent and sending a letter home for the parent to read, sign, and return will communicate this information (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis, 2005).

When communicating with the parent, it is necessary for the school counselor to express their desire to support the child. The school counselor should provide the parents with contact information and encourage the parents to call if they have any concerns or questions. Some school counselors and school systems only require an informational letter to be sent home, while others require informed consent.

Sample Parent/Guardian Information Letter:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is ____ (insert school counselor's name) ____ and I am a school counselor at ____ (insert school name) ____ Elementary School. This letter is to inform you that I will be starting a group in which I would like your daughter to participate. The group is a friendship group that is designed to promote healthy friendships and address the emotional and social needs of the girls. The group will meet for thirty minutes, once a week, for eight weeks. Group members will receive support from both their peers and from me during the group.

I truly hope that you will allow your daughter to participate in the group. I believe that she would benefit from the group and help contribute to the experience of the other group members as well. Please detach and sign the permission slip below. Have your daughter return it by ____ (insert date) ____ . If you have any questions or concerns at any point, please feel free to contact me at ____ (insert phone number) ____ .

Sincerely,

(signature)

School Counselor

Friendship Group Consent Form

I give my daughter, _____ permission to take part in the Friendship Group at ____ (insert school name) ____ Elementary school. I understand that the group will meet once a week for thirty minutes for eight weeks. I understand that my daughter may miss a small portion of class in order to participate in the group.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Contact Information: (Work) _____

(Home) _____

Created by Emily Kibler 2010

Session One: Introduction

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- In this session, the group members are introduced to each other and the school counselor. Taking care to allow rapport to develop within the group should increase the effectiveness and openness of later sessions. Group rules are established, which allows for a sense of safety for group members (Corey & Corey, 2006; Davis, 2005; Taylor, 2008). The session also prepares the students for the group by introducing the topic of friendship, which is the focus of the group.

Objectives:

- Group members will understand confidentiality.
- Group members will create group rules.
- Group members will agree to the group contract.
- Group members will understand the purpose of the group.
- Group members will understand the qualities of a good friendship.

Materials:

- Large piece of paper to write down group rules
- Copies of the group contract for each group member (at end of Session 1 Lesson)
- Question Ball (see outline for more information)
- Copies of the Friendship Pre-test for each group member (at end of Session 1 Lesson)

Outline:

- Introduce yourself to the group.
- Explain the purpose of the group.
 - Explain when and where the group will meet. Let the group know how many weeks the group will last. Give time for the group members to ask any questions.

- Allow group members to create the group rules.
 - As the group creates the rules, write them on a large piece of paper that can be hung up during group meetings.
 - It is necessary to have confidentiality as part of the group rules. If the members of the group do not present this as a group rule, make sure to explain to them what confidentiality is and why it is important to have it as a group rule. Explain the consequences of breaking confidentiality.
 - A sample set of group rules is included at the end of this lesson.
- In addition to the group rules, you can present a group contract as additional rules that you would like the group to follow while in the group.
 - Have a copy of the group contract for each group member to sign. Read the contract aloud to group members and explain anything that they do not understand.
 - A sample of a group contract is included at the end of this lesson.
- Discuss the group expectations.
 - Ask students what they would like from the group. Then, tell the group what you expect from them. Some expectations may include: honesty, participation, and attendance.
- Get to know each other activity.
 - It is important for the girls build rapport and establish a relationship with not only the counselor but with the other group members as well.
 - The activity will include a question ball.
 - A question ball is an inflatable ball that has icebreaker questions written on it for students to answer. Examples of questions are:
 - Do you have any brothers or sisters?
 - What is your favorite season?
 - What is your favorite thing to do for fun?
 - To play, the group members should stand in a circle. The first group member will toss the ball to another member. The group member who catches the ball will answer the question that is under

her right thumb. After answering the question, she will toss the ball to another group member.

- Each group member should go once before anyone gets the ball for a second time.
- Give out the pre-survey.
 - Using a pre and post-survey for groups helps to see how attitudes and beliefs change. This is an important aspect of accountability. If any person wants to see the effectiveness of a group, you can show them results. It also helps to show what aspects of a group may need to be modified to be most effective.
 - A sample survey is included at the end of this lesson.
 - The survey will be used to help determine the effectiveness of the group and areas which may need improvement. The data and information obtained in the survey can serve as an important aspect of accountability to administrators, parents, teachers, etc.
- Discuss the definition of a good friend.
 - Brainstorm with the group the qualities of positive friendships.
 - *Ask the group to think about the people that they really like as friends. Ask them what are those friends like.*
 - Make a list of things that go into being a good friend on a large piece of paper or the blackboard.
 - Point out that friendships are often based on sharing things in common. Also point out that there are always ways that friends are different from each other.
 - *Each person shows respect to the other and does not tease or criticize the other for these differences.*
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Remind the members that they will have another group meeting the next week. Thank them for contributing.

Worksheet:

- Friendship Pre-survey

Sample Group Rules:

Group Rules

- 1. No interrupting. Only one person can speak at a time.**
- 2. Give everyone a chance to share.**
- 3. Be respectful of everyone in the group.**
- 4. Do not talk about members if they are absent.**
- 5. What is said in the group stays in the group.**

Sample Group Contract:

Group Contract

- 1. One person speaks at a time.**
- 2. Each person has a chance to talk.**
- 3. No one is made to talk.**
- 4. No one laughs or makes fun at what someone else says.**
- 5. What is said in the group stays in the group.**

Signature

Date

Sample Friendship Pre/Post-Survey:**Pre-Group Survey****Name:** _____

Directions: Read the following questions to yourself and answer them by circling your answer. Only choose one answer for each question. Please answer questions as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. If you Strongly Disagree, answer with a “1” and if you Strongly Agree answer with “5.” If you are somewhere in between, answer with the number that best reflects your answer to the question.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
1. I know who my good friends are.				
1	2	3	4	5
2. My friends know a lot about me.				
1	2	3	4	5
3. I consider myself as a good friend.				
1	2	3	4	5
4. I say things to my friends that are kind of mean that I think are true, but then I say something like “I’m just kidding!”				
1	2	3	4	5
5. When I hear gossip about a friend, I tell other friends.				
1	2	3	4	5
6. It is not okay to talk about someone behind their back when I am mad.				
1	2	3	4	5
7. It is important to listen to my friends when they are talking to me.				
1	2	3	4	5
8. I can tell my friends how I am feeling.				
1	2	3	4	5
9. I leave some friends out so that I can fit in with and be friends with other girls.				
1	2	3	4	5
10. Talking about problems with friends helps us end disagreements.				
1	2	3	4	5
11. I like to make decisions for my friends and tell them what to do.				
1	2	3	4	5
12. I can tell when my friends are mad or upset.				
1	2	3	4	5
13. I always tell my friends that I’m sorry when I know I have hurt their feelings.				
1	2	3	4	5
14. Sometimes when I am bored, I make fun of other people.				
1	2	3	4	5

Created by Emily Kibler

Session Two: Healthy Friendships

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- To set a foundation for the group, it is important to discuss healthy friendships. This session takes a look at unhealthy and healthy friendships. It also includes gossip and how gossip impacts friendships. Gossip is a mode of social aggression used by some girls. It is important to discuss in the group because girls are often impacted by gossip and rumors in one way or another (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Owens et al., 2000a, 2000b; Underwood, 2003).

Objectives:

- Group members will review names and group rules.
- Group members will identify what a healthy friendship looks like.
- Group members will identify what qualities they look for in a friend.
- Group members will identify what others look for in a friend.
- Group members will discuss how gossip impacts their friendships, their lives, and the lives of others.
- Group members will discover the role they play in gossip.

Materials:

- Large piece of paper or blackboard
- Blank paper (1 piece for each group member)
- Tubes of toothpaste (one per group- for activity)
- A sheet of lined paper (one per group- for activity)
- Friendship Challenge Cards (sample questions in lesson)

Outline:

- Review names.

- Review the group rules. Have group members state the rules out loud, until all group rules have been reviewed.
- Ask the group members to describe what a good friend is like.
 - *What positive things do friends do together?* Encourage each group member to participate in the discussion.
 - Write down the qualities of a good friend on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper as the group discusses them.
- Ask the group to list qualities of a negative or unhealthy friendship.
 - *What negative or unhealthy things do friends do together?*
 - Write down the qualities on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper as the group discusses them.
- After the group has listed numerous qualities of a good friend, ask the group members to identify what qualities they look for in a friend.
 - Write down the qualities on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper as the group discusses them.
 - *Are these qualities the same as a good friend?*
- Ask the group members to evaluate their own behavior to see if they act in a way that promotes healthy friendships.
 - Ask the girls to write down the things from the list that they do (these can be from any of the three lists that were created).
 - Then ask the girls to write down the things that they do not do (these can be from any of the three lists as well).
- After the girls have completed the two lists, have them rate themselves as a friend from 1 to 10, with 1 being I need to work on my friendships and 10 being I'm a great friend.
 - Some discussion questions include:
 - What kind things do I do for others?
 - What are qualities that I have that make me a good friend?
 - What are some kind things that I could begin doing?
 - What are some things that I could do to become a better friend?
 - What are some things that I am doing that harms my friendships?

- Would I want to be friends with myself?
- Friendship Challenge. Have the girls pick a card that includes a friendship challenge that they will do before the next meeting.
 - The cards can include:
 - Offer to do a favor for someone you like
 - Make a friend laugh
 - Help someone with something
 - Let someone go ahead of you in line
 - Smile and say “Hi” to a kid that you do not know very well
 - Open the door for someone
 - Write a thank you letter to a teacher, custodian, or someone else in the school and give it to them
 - Say something nice to someone whom you do not know very well
 - Sit with someone new at lunch
 - Invite someone to sit with you at lunch who normally sits alone, and have a conversation with that person.
- Toothpaste Activity.
 - Divide the group members into groups of two or three.
 - Have the groups already made before the group members arrive.
 - Give each group a tube of toothpaste and a sheet of lined paper.
 - Ask each team to cover each line on the paper with toothpaste as quick as possible.
 - When the first group finishes, instruct the group to then put the toothpaste back in the tube.
 - *Discuss with the group that toothpaste is like our words. They are easy to put out, but are difficult (if not impossible), to put back.*
- Discuss what gossip is- ask the girls define gossip.
 - How does gossip impact friendships?
 - Have you ever been hurt by gossip?
 - Can gossip be avoided? Why or why not?
 - How does gossip hurt others?

- Does gossip still hurt even if it is true?
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Thank them for contributing.

Session Three: Managing Feelings

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- Self-protection, jealousy, and revenge are some of the common themes in social aggression. Girls, who do not know how to manage their feelings or how to show how they feel in an acceptable manner, often resort to socially aggressive behaviors. Teaching girls how to identify how they are feeling by using “I” statements should help reduce socially aggressive behaviors (Studer, 1996; Underwood, 2003).

Objectives:

- Group members will define the terms feeling and emotion.
- Group members will identify various emotions.
- Group members will be able to understand how they are feeling in specific situations.
- Group members will learn and understand acceptable and unacceptable ways of showing how they feel.
- Group members will learn how to use “I” statements to describe how they are feeling.

Materials:

- Copies of the “I” Statement Practice worksheet for each group member (at end of this lesson).

Outline:

- Review the group rules.
- Discuss the friendship challenges from the previous week.
- Ask group members how they are feeling.
- After each group member responds with how they are feeling, ask the group members what feelings and emotions are.
 - Why do we have feelings and emotions?

- *Emotions/feelings tell us about something and allow us to change what is happening or what we are doing.*
- How can we recognize our feelings or emotions?
 - *Feelings and emotions can be recognized physically and mentally.*
 - *We may feel physical symptoms (stomach ache, racing heart, tearful, headache, etc) or we may notice changes in thinking.*
- What are some different emotions?
 - *Jealous, hurt, anxious, optimistic, satisfied, miserable, bored, relieved, confident, curious, sad, disappointed, disgusted, undecided, ecstatic, happy, envious, frightened, scared...*
- Scenarios: How would you feel in these situations?
 - Read the scenarios out loud to the girls, and then have the girls respond with how they would feel in the various scenarios.
 - Your best friend starts to ignore you and you find out that she has a new friend.
 - You overhear a group of friends talking about someone and you think they are talking about you.
 - You hear your friends talking about how they had a great time at the movies last night. You did not know that everyone was going to the movies together.
 - You wear a new outfit to school and your best friend tells another friend that it is ugly. When you confront her she says that she was just kidding with you.
 - Your friend tells you that you are not invited to her birthday party.
- Discuss acceptable and unacceptable ways of showing feelings.
 - Ask the girls if all emotions are acceptable.
 - *It is normal to feel all emotions. Some emotions are enjoyable and some are unpleasant. Conflict is normal among friends.*
 - What are some unacceptable ways to show how we feel? Is it okay to exclude someone or spread a rumor about someone even if they the same thing to you?

- *Spreading a rumor, excluding others, isolating others, and seeking revenge are some unacceptable ways to show how we feel.*
- What are acceptable ways to show how we feel?
 - *Talking to the friend, problem solving with the friend, “I” statements (which will be discussed next).*
- “I” Statement: Powerful communication tool that helps us tell others how we are feeling.
 - The “I” Statement includes the following parts:
 1. Say how you feel (mad, happy, sad, etc)
 2. Say what the person did or said that made you feel that emotion (the action)
 3. Say how the action affects you.
 - *Examples:*
 - *I feel embarrassed when you make fun of my shoes because I think my shoes are cool.*
 - *I felt hurt when you said you were coming over and then you canceled at the last minute because I was really looking forward to you coming over.*
- “I” Statement Worksheet (copy of worksheet at end of the lesson):
 - Ask the girls to complete the worksheet then discuss their answers as a group.
 - Ask for volunteers to role-play their answers.
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Thank them for contributing.

Worksheet:

- “I” Statement Practice worksheet (at end of this lesson).

“I” Statements Practice

Let's practice making “I” statements. Include these parts in your “I” statement:

I feel _____ (Emotion) _____

When you _____ (Action) _____

Because _____ (say how the action affects you) _____

Example: I feel mad when you make fun of me because it makes me wonder if we are really friends.

Directions: Remember the scenarios that you talked about how they would make you feel. Now, respond to the scenarios with an “I” statement.

1. Your best friend starts to ignore you and you find out that she has a new friend.

Reply with an “I” statement:

I feel

when you

because

_____.

2. You hear your friends talking about how they had a great time at the movies last night. You did not know that everyone was going to the movies together.

Reply with an “I” statement:

I feel

when you

because

3. You wear a new outfit to school and your best friend tells another friend that it is ugly. When you confront her she says that she was just kidding with you.

Reply with an "I" statement:

I feel

when you

because

4. Your friend tells you that you are not invited to her birthday party.

Reply with an "I" statement:

I feel

when you

because

Session Four: Listening and Empathy

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- Listening skills and empathy are two aspects that are necessary for later lessons to build upon. In order to problem solve with peers it is necessary to be able to listen to what they are saying and understand how they may feel. Lack of empathy is often present in aggressors. In order to combat social aggression, girls must learn to listen to each other and understand how their words and actions impact each other. Understanding how words and actions impact another person is an important aspect of reducing socially aggressive behavior (Randall, 2008; Studer, 1996).

Objectives:

- Group members will learn how to listen effectively.
- Group members will learn how to take turns while talking.
- Group members will understand the meaning of empathy.
- Group members will show empathy towards others in role-play situations.

Materials:

- Crayons
- Drawing paper 12" by 18"
- Copies of the Empathy worksheet for each group member (at the end of the lesson)

Outline:

- Listening Activity: Four Corners
 - Instructions—Drawing:
 - Draw your name in the middle of the paper. Use name that you like to be called by friends. Decorate your name any way that you like leaving four corners open.

- **Upper left:** Draw your favorite thing to do by yourself (besides eat, sleep, watch TV).
- **Upper right:** Draw your favorite thing to do with other people.
- **Lower left:** Draw something that makes you angry or frustrates you.
- **Lower right:** Draw something that scares you.
- Processing:
 - Ask each girl to pair up with the person next to them (or you may want to pair girls who normally do not talk with each other).
 - If there is an odd number of people then there can be one group of three.
 - Ask each group to share their pictures and to talk about each drawing.
 - When a group member is sharing, it is the partner's job to listen.
 - The partner can ask questions about what your partner shares or share a feeling that they have had that was similar.
 - Allow five to ten minutes for this phase depending on the energy level that you observe.
 - Then ask each person to share something about their picture with the group.
 - Encourage the members to talk about their experiences and things they learned.
- Ask the girls about the importance of listening.
 - How was listening important in the activity?
 - How did it make you feel to be listened to by your partner?
 - How was it for you to listen to your partner?
 - Was it harder or easier than you thought it would be?
- Ask the girls about empathy. What does empathy mean? How do you show empathy?

- *Empathy is having compassion for someone else and understanding how they feel emotionally.*
- *Being empathic means you stop and think about the other person's situation before acting in a way that may hurt them.*
- *Befriending someone new at school is one way to show empathy.*
- Empathy worksheet. Have the group members complete the empathy worksheet (at the end of this lesson) and then discuss their answers.
- Role Plays: Empathy. Have the girls read the scenarios one at a time, and answer the questions below.
 - You walk into the lunchroom and see another girl looking at you. She turns to her friends and begins to laugh. You automatically think they are laughing at you.
 - Your friend asks you to bump into a girl sitting at the lunch table alone. Your friend says that this girl thinks she is better than everyone because she never bothers to talk to anyone.
 - Your friends are making fun of someone who is wearing old clothes. They are talking about how the girl has no idea about fashion because she wears ugly, old clothes.
- For each role play, have the girls answer the following questions:
 - How are the people in each situation feeling?
 - What clues did you use to understand their feelings?
 - Why is it important to see things from another person's perspective?
 - How can you show empathy in each role-play? Act it out.
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Thank them for contributing.

Worksheet:

- Empathy worksheet (at the end of this lesson)

Empathy

1. A new girl at your school has no one to sit with as lunch.

- Has this situation ever happened to you? _____

- How could you show empathy in this situation?

2. You see a group of girls excluding another classmate from joining their group.

- Has this situation ever happened to you? _____

- How could you show empathy in this situation?

3. You see your friends making fun of someone else about their clothes because they are not trendy.

- Has this situation ever happened to you? _____

- How could you show empathy in this situation?

Empathy

(continued)

4. Girls are staring and pointing at another girl at lunch.

- Has this situation ever happened to you? _____

- How could you show empathy in this situation?

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Session Five: Self-Esteem and Personal Strengths

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- Social aggression damages the self-esteem of many girls. Being the victim of socially aggressive behaviors can cause serious, long-lasting consequences. In order to try to take back some control, victims may become aggressors. It is important to address self-esteem and personal strengths with all girls, especially those who are somehow involved in social aggression. In this lesson, kindness is also addressed. Teaching girls that friendly acts can improve their own self-esteem will also help reduce socially aggressive behaviors (Kupkovits, 2008; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Young et al., 2006).

Objectives:

- Group members will be able to define self-esteem.
- Group members will be able to identify their abilities that make them unique.
- Group members will identify how they feel about themselves.
- Group members will understand how self-talk influences their self-esteem and confidence.
- Group members will be able to begin developing a positive self-esteem by being kind to others.
- Group members will learn how to be kind to others through complimenting others.
- Group members will discuss how being kind to others influences their self-esteem.

Materials:

- Candy pieces for each group member
- Copy of the Self-Esteem and Self-Talk worksheet for each group member (at end of lesson)

Outline:

- Ask the group members what self-esteem means to each of them.
 - Create a definition of self-esteem for the group.
- Candy Game: The objective of the game is to help the group know more about each other and to get each member to think of things that are unique about themselves.
 - Directions:
 - Have the group members sit in the circle.
 - Give each group member the same amount of candy (for example, 10 pieces of Starbursts).
 - Begin by having one group member share one thing in their life that they think is unique or special (talents, abilities, interests, experiences, etc).
 - After the group member shares, the other group members will throw a piece of candy towards the group member if it is something that they do not have in common.
 - *For example, I say, “I love taking pictures and making crafts with the pictures I take.” If another group member also takes pictures and makes crafts, then they will do nothing. If another group member does not do that, then they will throw me a piece of candy.*
 - Go around the circle so that each person can share.
 - Note: Some group members may have a hard time thinking of something. Encourage them to think of something.
 - End the game when all members have a similar amount of candy.

It is up to the leader when they want to specifically end the game.
- Discuss that there are many unique characteristics, abilities, interests, experiences, roles, and strengths that make us who we are. *We all have things about ourselves that make us different and unique from each other.*

- Describe Self-Talk.
 - *Self-esteem is influenced by the way we think and feel about ourselves (self-talk).*
 - *If we think and feel bad about ourselves, we will likely have a lower self-esteem.*
 - *If we think and feel good about ourselves, we will often have a higher self-esteem and feel more confident about ourselves.*
- Complete Self-Esteem and Self-Talk worksheet.
 - *Discuss with the group their thoughts about the worksheet. Encourage the group members to share, but do not force group members to share.*
- Ask the girls how they think kindness influences their own self-esteem. How does being kind to others make you feel about yourself?
- Compliment circle activity.
 - Directions:
 - Have group members stand in a circle.
 - Instruct them that they will be complimenting each other.
 - The compliments must be meaningful.
 - *For example, they cannot say, “I like your shirt.” Rather, they must say a compliment about the person. For example, they can say, “You are friendly—you say hi to me in the hall.”*
 - One group member will begin and give each person in the group a compliment.
 - The next member will go and do the same.
 - Continue until each person has given compliments to all of the group members.
 - The group leader can go first to model appropriate compliments if it seems necessary.
 - The game can continue to a second round if time allows.
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Thank them for contributing.

Worksheet:

- My Self-Esteem and Self-Talk worksheet (at the end of this lesson)

My Self-Esteem and Self-Talk

What I think about myself:

How I feel about myself:

Rate your self-esteem. Do you have a positive self-esteem (What are your thoughts and feelings? Do you recognize what your strengths and weaknesses are?)

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Session Six: Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- Problem-solving training can help raise the level of understanding, empathy, and ability to solve a problem. Practice with problem solving helps to bring about empathic behaviors as students learn to understand problems from another person's perspective. The problem solving strategy in this lesson focuses on thinking through the process, not obtaining a right or wrong answer (Studer, 1996).

Objectives:

- The group members will learn about problem solving.
- The group members will learn to use problem-solving strategies.
- The group members will understand their choices have consequences, which can be positive or negative.
- The group members will practice the problem-solving strategies.

Materials:

- Copies of the Problem Solving Steps worksheet (at the end of this lesson)
- Large piece of paper or blackboard
- Copies of the Problem Solving Practice worksheet (at the end of this lesson)

Outline:

- Ask the girls how they usually solve problems or conflict in their friendships.
 - *Example: If someone were mad at another girl for not playing with her at recess, how would they work it out?*
- Pass out the Problem Solving Steps worksheet (at the end of this lesson).
- Before going over the steps review "I" statements.
 - Remember the "I" Statement includes the following parts:

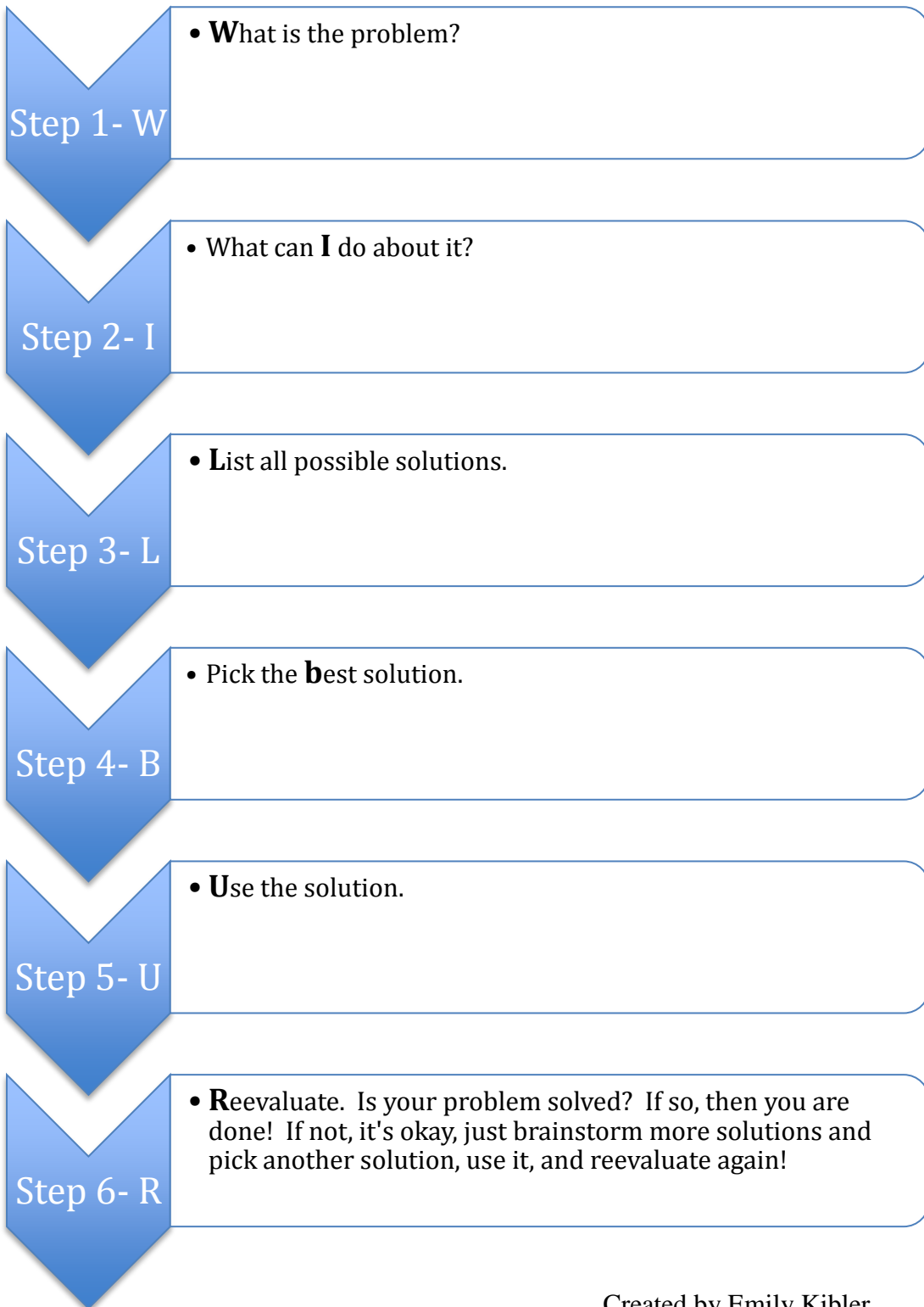
1. Say how you feel (mad, happy, sad, etc)
 2. Say what the person did or said that made you feel that emotion (the action)
 3. Say how the action affects you.
- Go over the problem solving steps with the girls.
 1. What is the problem?
 2. What can I do?
 3. List all possible solutions.
 4. Pick the best solution.
 5. Use the solution.
 6. Reevaluate. *Is your problem solved? If not, then go back and brainstorm more possible solutions or pick another solution.*
 - Ask the girls to write down a problem that they are experiencing on a piece of paper.
 - Let the girls know that one of the problems will be used as an example.
 - After all the girls have written down a problem, look through the problems, and pick one to use as an example.
 - Use the selected problem as an example, and go through the problem solving steps with the girls.
 - Write down each step, and answers on a large piece of paper or on the blackboard.
 - Go through each step thoroughly.
 - Be sure to discuss the consequences of each choice made, especially when the students are picking the best solution.
 - Discuss why it is the best solution and why the others are not the best solution.
 - After doing one example together, give the girls the Problem Solving Practice worksheet to complete (at the end of the lesson).
 - Allow time for the group members to complete the worksheet silently.
 - When all of the group members have completed the worksheet, ask them to share their problem solving approach with the group.

- Ask the group members how they could use this problem solving approach in future friendship problems.
 - *What would help them remember to stop and think to use the steps?*
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up. Thank them for contributing.

Worksheets:

- Problem Solving Steps worksheet (at the end of the lesson)
- Problem Solving Practice worksheet (at the end of the lesson)

Problem Solving Steps



Problem Solving Practice

Directions: Think of a recent problem you have experienced with a friend. Follow the problem solving steps to help you figure out your friendship problem!

Step 1- W	• W hat is the problem?
Step 2- I	• What can I do about it?
Step 3- L	• L ist all possible solutions.
Step 4- B	• Pick the b est solution.
Step 5- U	• U se the solution.
Step 6- R	• R eevaluate.

Session Seven: Learning to be Assertive

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- Assertiveness allows students to stand up for their rights in a way that is respectful of self and others. Assertiveness training teaches girls to express their negative feelings in a way that is not aggressive or humiliating to others. Conflict is a natural aspect of relationships, and assertiveness allows girls to express their feelings and needs in a direct way. Interrupting socially aggressive behaviors, such as gossiping and exclusion, is an aspect of assertiveness training (Studer, 1996; Underwood, 2003).

Objectives:

- The group members will be able to define assertiveness, aggressiveness, and passivity.
- The group members will understand the differences among assertiveness, aggressiveness, and passivity.
- The group members will learn assertiveness skills.
- The group members will practice the assertiveness skills through role-play scenarios.
- The group members will review and practice problem solving skills.

Materials:

- Large piece of paper or blackboard
- Learning to be Assertive worksheet for each group member (at the end of the lesson)

Outline:

- Ask the girls to define aggressiveness.
 - Create a working definition for the group.
 - Write this definition on a large piece of paper or on the blackboard.

- *Aggressiveness is bullying behavior, it can include excluding others, isolating others, gossiping about others, using relationships to hurt others, not considering another person's feelings.*
- Ask the girls what being passive means.
 - Create a working definition for the group.
 - Write this definition on a large piece of paper or on the blackboard.
 - *Being passive means doing nothing or remaining neutral about something. It may appear to others that you are accepting the behavior.*
- Finally, ask the girls to tell you what being assertive means.
 - Create a working definition for the group.
 - Write this definition on a large piece of paper or on the blackboard.
 - *Being assertive is not being a bully. It is getting your needs met without hurting others. It includes stating your feelings and thoughts in a way that is acceptable, and not hurtful.*
- After discussing all three definitions, teach the group members assertiveness skills.
- Give each group member a Learning to be Assertive worksheet (at the end of the lesson).
- Assertiveness skills include skills already learned, such as the “I” statement and problem solving.
- When being assertive there are three steps:
 1. Acknowledge the person.
 2. Change the situation by telling the person how you feel and what you want to be different.
 3. Work together to come up with a solution (Use the problem solving steps).
 - *Example: I like being friends with you (acknowledge). It makes me sad when you talk behind my back to other people because I want to be friends (change). I want to get along and still be friends. How can we make this work? Can we talk about it (work together)?*
- Role-play: Being assertive.
 - Use the following scenarios:

- Ask for volunteers to practice being assertive. After they practice being assertive, practice the problem solving steps together as a group for each scenario.
- Your friend whispers to you that your other friend is wearing an ugly outfit.
- You overhear your friends talking about going to the movies. You ask if you can go too and your best friend says, “as long as you don’t go looking like that!” When you look hurt, she says that she was just kidding.
- A group of girls that you want to become friends with tells you that you can be their friend. To be friends with them you cannot be friends with Rachel, who has been your best friend since preschool.
- After class you find a note that you saw girls passing around in class. It says, “_____ is so stupid. I don’t know why anyone would be friends with her.” The note has your name on it.
- Briefly review what was discussed in the session to wrap up.
- Remind the group that the next meeting will be the last time you meet as a group. Ask them which snack they would like to have at the last group meeting. Remember some schools have restrictions on which snacks are allowed. Have all the group members come to a consensus on what they want.
- Thank the group members for contributing.

Worksheet:

- Learning to be Assertive worksheet (at the end of the lesson)

Learning to be Assertive

Acknowledge

- I like _____
_____.

Change

- I feel _____
when you _____
_____.
because _____
_____.

Work Together

- Can we _____?

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Session Eight: Let's Wrap It All Up!

How this Lesson Addresses Social Aggression:

- This lesson reviews all of the lessons from the group. Reviewing will help remind the girls of the important lessons that they can use. The Friendship First Aid Kit is a creative tool that is used to help review. It also allows for flexibility so that the girls can spend time together, as the group members may have established deeper relationships during the course of the group (Kupkovits, 2008; Taylor, 2008).

Objectives:

- Group members will complete the post-group survey.
- Group members will evaluate the group.
- Group members will review all topics that were discussed in the group.
- Group members will create a Friendship First Aid Kit.

Materials:

- Snack
- Copies of the Friendship Post-survey for each group member (at the end of the lesson)
- Copies of the Evaluation form for each group member (at the end of the lesson)
- Friendship Kit worksheet for each group member (at the end of the lesson)
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, and other art supplies
- A brown lunch bag for each group member
- Friendship First Aid Kit materials (see Friendship Kit worksheet at the end of the lesson)

Outline:

- Hand out the snack to group members

- Ask students to take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the post-survey.
- Ask students to complete the evaluation form.
- Review the past seven sessions and the skills that the group members learned.
- Friendship First Aid Kit:
 - Hand out art supplies and brown paper bags
 - Allow time for the girls to decorate their bag
 - Read each item on the Friendship First Aid Kit. After reading each item, hand it to the girls to place in their bag. Read each item. Also give each girl a copy of the Friendship First Aid Kit worksheet.
- Thank the group members for participating in the group. Remind them that you are available if they need a person to talk to.

Worksheets:

- Friendship Post-survey (at the end of the lesson)
- Group Evaluation Form (at the end of the lesson)
- Friendship Kit worksheet (at the end of the lesson)

Sample Friendship Post-Group Survey:**Post-Group Survey****Name:** _____

Directions: Read the following questions to yourself and answer them by circling your answer. Only choose one answer for each question. Please answer questions as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. If you Strongly Disagree, answer with a “1” and if you Strongly Agree answer with “5.” If you are somewhere in between, answer with the number that best reflects your answer to the question.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
1. I know who my good friends are.				
1	2	3	4	5
2. My friends know a lot about me.				
1	2	3	4	5
3. I consider myself as a good friend.				
1	2	3	4	5
4. I say things to my friends that are kind of mean that I think are true, but then I say something like “I’m just kidding!”				
1	2	3	4	5
5. When I hear gossip about a friend, I tell other friends.				
1	2	3	4	5
6. It is not okay to talk about someone behind their back when I am mad.				
1	2	3	4	5
7. It is important to listen to my friends when they are talking to me.				
1	2	3	4	5
8. I can tell my friends how I am feeling.				
1	2	3	4	5
9. I leave some friends out so that I can fit in with and be friends with other girls.				
1	2	3	4	5
10. Talking about problems with friends helps us end disagreements.				
1	2	3	4	5
11. I like to make decisions for my friends and tell them what to do.				
1	2	3	4	5
12. I can tell when my friends are mad or upset.				
1	2	3	4	5
13. I always tell my friends that I’m sorry when I know I have hurt their feelings.				
1	2	3	4	5
14. Sometimes when I am bored, I make fun of other people.				
1	2	3	4	5

Created by Emily Kibler

Sample Group Evaluation:

Group Evaluation

1. What was the most helpful thing that you learned in the group?

2. What was the least helpful think that you learned in the group?

3. What did you like the most about group?

4. What did you like the least about the group?

5. What would you change about the group?

6. Would you recommend the group to your friends? Why or why not?

Created by Emily Kibler

Friendship First Aid Kit

Tissues to dry our tears

Band-Aids to heal our hurt feelings

Hershey Hugs and Kisses to help us make-up with each other

An eraser to remind us that it is OK to make mistakes

A piece of yarn to tie our friendship together

A penny to bring our friendship good luck

Gum to help us stick together

Paper to write down our feelings

A smiley face to cheer us up

A toothpick to remind us to pick our battles

A lifesaver to remind us that we are there for each other

Conclusion:

It is necessary to consider the successes and struggles of the group. Take the evaluations seriously and consider changes for future groups if necessary. Keep all pre-test and post-test data. The data can help you demonstrate to others the successes of your group and you can use the data to help modify your group. Collecting data is an important aspect of accountability. As mentioned in the last session's plans, it is important to be available for group members after the group has ended. Some group members may need more support after the group than other group members.

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