

Name:

Relational Aggression

Sometimes, when people (especially girls) find themselves in unresolved conflicts or when they are feeling powerless, they can fall into patterns of behavior called Relational Aggression. Relational Aggression includes acts that “harm others through damage (or the threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion.”

Alliance Building: Alliance Building happens when friendships are formed in order to gain more sympathy or numbers for “your side” of the conflict.

What we all do sometimes...	When it becomes alliance building...
You are mad at friend A and you need to vent, so you complain to friend B. You need to vent so that you can have a calmer conversation with friend A later about your anger and resolve the conflict.	You're mad at friend A and you need to vent, so you complain to friend B. You get friend B to see your point and why you should be mad at friend A. Later, you go to friend A and tell her “I'm mad at you, and (friend B) agrees with me.”
Friend C comes to you, wanting to vent about her anger at friend D. You want to be a good friend, so you listen and empathize. You console her, but you also encourage her to bring the issue up with friend D so that she can resolve the conflict.	Friend C comes to you, wanting to vent about her anger at friend D. You want to be a good friend, so you listen and empathize. Even though you haven't witnessed any of the events, you agree with friend C's point of view. She asks you to not hang out with friend D and you agree.
Friend E confronts you about something you did that was hurtful to her. You hate feeling like you did something wrong, but you see that you did. You apologize sincerely.	Friend E confronts you about something you did that was hurtful to her. You hate feeling like you did something wrong, so you point out everything friend E did to hurt you in the past. You seek the comfort and company of friend F, who you believe is a “much better friend” and won't point out your faults. You never own up to or apologize for your actions toward Friend E.
Friend G asks you to stop doing/saying something hurtful to her. You hate feeling like you did something wrong, but you see that you did. You apologize sincerely and you stop the behavior.	Friend G asks you to stop doing/saying something hurtful to her. You hate feeling like you did something wrong, so you tell her, “Gosh! It was just a joke. You're so sensitive.” You find others who aren't hurt by those same behaviors to confirm that friend G is being too sensitive. You neither apologize nor stop the behavior.

Your Own Examples:

Clique Exclusiveness: Remember that for some, cliques (groups of people who are very similar in dress, tastes, behavior, interests) are a normal phase of social development. What isn't normal, though, is clique exclusiveness – a refusal to let someone into the group or punishment of someone who is trying to act independently of the group.

What we all do sometimes...	When it becomes clique exclusiveness...
<p>You sit at the same table with the same friends nearly every day. You rarely ask someone outside of the circle to join you, but you don't freak out if someone does.</p>	<p>You sit at the same table with the same friends nearly every day. You save seats for each other, and you never ask anyone outside of the circle to join you. If someone does ask to join your group, you say "sorry," "all the seats are taken," "it's too crowded," etc., even though you would probably make room if someone in your group came up. If this outsider joins anyway, you actively exclude her from the group activity by turning your back in her direction or not acknowledging her presence.</p>
<p>You have a party at your house with your closest friends. It is a wonderful time full of laughs and good times. Whenever you get together, you bring up and laugh at the in-jokes from the day.</p>	<p>You have a party at your house with your closest friends. It is a wonderful time full of laughs and good times. Whenever you get together, you bring up and laugh at the in-jokes from the day. Even when you are with other people who weren't at the party, you and those who were at the party are constantly bringing up these same in-jokes. You don't explain these in-jokes, saying things like, "you wouldn't understand – you just had to be there."</p>
<p>Someone in your clique is expanding to friendships outside of your group. There are times when she is talking about things she did with others, and when the group is talking about things they did together without her. There is constant "catching up" so that no one feels in the dark.</p>	<p>Someone in your clique is expanding to friendships outside of your group. When she is talking about things she did with others, you don't really listen or care. When the group is talking about things they did together without her, you don't make an effort to catch her up on the happenings. If things continue, she will no longer belong with the group.</p>
<p>Someone in your clique is like everyone else in most every way except one. She is very strong in her passion for this different aspect of herself. Although no one else in the group really shares the passion, you understand that it's important to her and so you always try to listen and participate whenever possible.</p>	<p>Someone in your clique is like everyone else in most every way except one. She is very strong in her passion for this different aspect of herself. Since no one else in the group really shares the passion, you don't listen or participate when she behaves in a way that is different than the group. You suggest that she doesn't bring up that part of herself when she's with the group because "we just don't get it."</p>

Your Own Examples:

Bullying: A consistent or intentional targeting of someone. Bullying can take many forms: isolating, hitting/tripping, verbally harassing/teasing, taking/hiding things, spreading rumors, sending hurtful emails, and more.

What we all do sometimes...	When it becomes bullying...
You sit at lunch at a table with someone. You see your friends coming so you wave them over to sit with you. You talk to your friends mostly, but you include the other person into your conversations. If your friends wave you over, you ask if the person would like to join you so that she doesn't think you're leaving because you don't like her.	You sit at lunch at a table with someone. You see your friends coming so you wave them over to sit with you. You talk to your friends exclusively and do not acknowledge the presence of the other person. If your friends wave you over, you pack up and move to your friends without any acknowledgement that you are leaving the other person alone at the table. This is a common occurrence.
Someone tells you a secret or something embarrassing about another person. Even though you've never been fond of this person, you feel uncomfortable with being told this information. You tell the speaker to please not spread what sounds like rumors and gossip.	Someone tells you a secret or something embarrassing about another person. Since you and your friends have never been fond of this person, you tell them what you've heard and have a good laugh about it.
You happen upon someone's email address and password. Even though you've never been fond of this person, you let her know that this information was left for anyone to see and that she might change her password to protect her privacy.	You happen upon someone's email address and password. Since you've never been fond of this person, you use her account to send messages to everyone in the class stating, "I am a big jerk with acne, and I hate you all. Don't speak to me again." You delete all her archived email and sign her up for inappropriate chat rooms. You say nothing as all these actions start to have severe consequences for her.
You go into someone's file cabinet, take her Spanish book, and hide it in the file cabinet below hers as a joke. Later, you see that she was worried and did not find your practical joke funny. You apologize sincerely and you stop the behavior.	You go into someone's file cabinet, take her Spanish book, and hide it in the file cabinet below hers as a joke. Later, you see that she was worried and did not find your practical joke funny. You decide she needs to lighten up, so you start hiding different things that belong to her in different places.

Your Own Examples:

Yikes! What if I've Done These Things Before?

Hey, we all make mistakes. Now that you know the reality of how it plays out, it is important that you learn to change your patterns to not do these things anymore. Check out the handout on "What should I do if I have bullied?"

What if These Things Have Been Done to Me Before?

Well, now you know that it has happened to others, and that there are terms for these things. Now that you know the reality of how it plays out, it is important that you learn tools of advocacy and self esteem so that you don't feel targeted anymore. Check out the handout on "What should I do if I have been bullied?"

What Happens if These Things Continue?

Please know that we have zero-tolerance for harassment of any kind. Relational aggression falls into the category of harassment. It is important that, as with any school rules, you do not fall into the patterns of relational aggression so that you might avoid disciplinary consequences. As always, it is best to own up to your behaviors, take responsibility for your actions, and set future patterns to improve your impact on the community. If you witness or are the target of these actions, it is important that you act to ensure a safe community. Your actions may include speaking up for yourself and/or your peers. You can also bring it to the attention of adults.

How Do I Learn More?

Knowledge is power! Ask lots of questions, and check out some web resources on tackling bullying in your community!

Anti-Bully Websites
www.bullypolice.org
www.cyberbullying.ca
www.bullyonline.org
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
www.bullying.org
www.safeyouth.org
www.stopbullyingnow.com

Record Cyber Bullying
with Specter Pro 5.0
Cyber Bully Prevention
Software
Available at:
www.netbus.org/cyber-bully.html