



Girl Scouts®

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Sister to Sister

The Darker Side of Friendship



A GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS



Sister to Sister: The Darker Side of Friendship **Guide for Facilitators**

The middle-school years are filled with many physical and emotional changes for girls. These changes occur within a social environment that has the potential to exacerbate interpersonal conflict and destroy friendships that have taken years to build. One of the ways girls deal with this reality is to act in ways that are relationally aggressive. *Relational aggression*, or RA, refers to any act that actively excludes a person from making or maintaining relationships or being integrated into the peer group. Examples of RA include, but are not limited to, spreading rumors, exclusion, social isolation, gossiping, eye-rolling, purposely pitting friends against one another, using sarcasm at another's expense, revealing secrets of friends, and/or embellishing rumors.

There are three ways girls get involved in RA:

1. The bully/aggressor launches or perpetrates an attack.
2. The victims/targets are the focus of the attack.
3. The bystanders/witnesses watch RA occur. Sometimes they participate and encourage the bully, at other times they watch in silence (afraid if they intervene they might be the next victim), and still other times they are able to stop the bullying or prevent it from occurring in the first place.

Although these roles appear fairly simple and straightforward, girls can change their RA roles frequently, sometimes playing each of the three roles within a given day, depending upon the situations in which they find themselves.

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This guide is designed to provide you, someone who works with girls, with information about and strategies for handling relational aggression. Also included in this guide are activities that build girls' skills so they can prevent or deal with RA and help them engage their power in positive ways to become leaders—not relationally aggressive bullies.

You may want to introduce the program by discussing the importance of relationships to adolescent girls and explain that it is normal to worry about friendship during this time of life (and others!). It's important throughout the program to remember that everyone has the potential to be more or less aggressive than he/she should be, and the purpose of going through this program together is not to make particular girls feel badly about their behavior. Instead, the purpose is to find positive alternatives and form healthy relationship skills. *No names or identifying details should be used when discussing real life situations and/or behaviors.* In fact, doing so could be considered relationally aggressive, as telling stories or repeating gossip about other girls may cause more harm than good.



OUTCOMES FOR GIRLS

As a result of navigating and working on the activities in this guide and in *Sister to Sister: The Darker Side of Friendship*, girls will:

- » Identify healthy relationship skills.
- » Have greater confidence in their abilities to take action to protect themselves.
- » Be able to use their critical thinking skills to solve interpersonal problems.
- » Recognize that they are part of a social network that can support them in building their leadership skills.
- » Know how to speak up for themselves and speak and act on behalf of others.

YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH RELATIONAL AGGRESSION

Your own experience with RA will color how you deal with it in your group. If you were told and believed that RA was just a natural part of growing up, and that “girls will be girls,” you might see it as less harmful than it actually is. If you were treated this way and felt powerless to stop it, you may react by doing everything you can to stop it now. You might feel really angry with a relationally aggressive member of your group as you play out some of those feelings. If you perpetrated RA against others, even on isolated occasions, you might be left with strong feelings of shame about your actions. You might tend to overprotect the targets, rather than help them to develop the skills they need to combat this behavior on their own.

Spend some time reflecting on or discussing your own experiences with RA. How did those experiences affect you? Are they influencing your attitudes and actions today? The greater your insight into your own experiences and the more accurate information you have about RA, the more effective you will be in guiding girls.

LEADERSHIP VS. RELATIONALLY AGGRESSIVE BULLYING

Some young people (and adults) confuse bullying with leadership. They are very different. The chart below shows some of those important differences:

A BULLY

- Uses her power in negative ways
- Threatens other people
- Wants others to obey without question
- Focuses on herself and what she needs
- Acts to exclude certain people

A LEADER

- Uses her power to bring about positive change
- Makes other people feel comfortable
- Encourages others to ask questions and find solutions
- Thinks about what people in her group need
- Works to include and support others



How can you facilitate girls' understanding of the differences between bullying and leadership, particularly in situations in which a bully might be popular or even looked up to by her peers? One idea is to watch television programs or movies (that complement the videos included in this resource) that include a bully character, and then guide girls to figure out what a leader would do in the situation. Girls could also role-play situations they have created in which a bully becomes a leader.

NAVIGATING *SISTER TO SISTER: THE DARKER SIDE OF FRIENDSHIP*

You may want to click through the resource a few times, in order to familiarize yourself with all of the options and features before you introduce the program to the girls. Once you have done so, you can either develop a navigation plan to begin your sessions with the girls, or you can assist the girls in developing their own plan, based upon the knowledge about each section that you acquired during your preparation.

There are two basic ways to navigate the resource: One is by clicking on the post-it notes on the Main page (which is a representation of a girl's daily planner) that appeal to the girls in whichever order they decide. The other is to turn the pages (click on the lower right-hand corner of the planner) and follow in a more sequential manner. Depending upon the knowledge and comfort level of the girls in your group about topics like RA, you may want to start with the "Hangin' Out" post-it, which houses the content on Relational Aggression.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FACILITATING *SISTER TO SISTER: THE DARKER SIDE OF FRIENDSHIP*

For girls to get the maximum benefit from *Sister to Sister: The Darker Side of Friendship*, use activities in this guide in conjunction with the activities in the resource (both interactive and printable) over about six sessions. When you come upon quizzes in the resource (located within the "Friendship Facts" – *Vital Signs and Tough Times* sections), you may want to ask girls to take out pieces of paper to answer the questions privately, and then encourage a dialogue about their answers, without asking them to share their responses with the others in the group. If a participant does want to share her responses, it may be appropriate to first remind girls of the need to respect one another's privacy and to keep what is shared within the group private.

This same strategy can be used for the RA Checklist (located within the "Hangin' Out" – *The RA Way* section). While this can be done as a group activity, if you feel it would work better within your group to do it individually, ask the girls to write out which of these behaviors they experience in their lives. Collect their lists and quickly tally which are the most prevalent. From there, discuss the results with the girls and ask them how they deal with these issues, as well as solicit their thoughts on whether or not there are other behaviors they see that would be important to add to the list.



Afterwards, using The RA Checklist of behaviors, describe how an aggressor/bully, bystander/witness, and target may be involved with each behavior. For example:

An aggressor/bully might start a rumor about another girl using gossip. The bystander/witness hears the gossip and reacts to it in different ways: repeating it, laughing at it, doing nothing, or trying to intervene to stop it. The target can be reluctant to go to school (or come to a Girl Scout event) because she feels everyone has heard the gossip—and believes it.

Throughout all of the activities, you may want to periodically ask the girls to share their opinions about why they believe girls interact this way instead of using styles that might be healthier and/or more productive. After they give their responses, provide opportunities for them to share any strategies they have learned that could combat the destructive behaviors they both perpetrate and witness each day.



PRINT RESOURCES

The following pages contain ideas and suggestions that correspond to the printable components of the digital resource. On the Main page of the planner, there is a link in the upper right-hand corner called Print Resources. Click on this link to access these PDF documents.

Friendship Facts

The Way 2 B

Printable companion activity for The Girl Scout Law pages.

Answers to the word completion are:

HONEST

FAIR

FRIENDLY

HELPFUL

CONSIDERATE

CARING

COURAGEOUS

STRONG

RESPONSIBLE

You may want to also read over The Girl Scout Law and talk about whether girls really think about the words they use when they say it. Ask the girls which of the words others would use to describe them and/or which of the words they would use to describe themselves.



HANGIN' OUT – SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT

You may want to go through the role plays one at a time on different days, or do all of them in a marathon brainstorm. Each corresponding printable document follows the same format: first some brief discussion points are offered and then a creative activity is used to further explore the subject of the role play.

Print out the related page for the role play you intend to do and read through it. Make a copy for each girl. Go back and watch the specific role play as many times as the girls want to look at it. (For example, they may want to watch it again as you begin or finish the discussion.)

Role Play #1: The Rumor Room

Discussion:

Have girls share their thoughts about what motivates others to use RA. The reasons listed on the RA Checklist (located within the "Hangin' Out" - The RA Way section) are the ones most commonly given, but they may be able to think of others.

Activity:

Encourage girls to interview others, but if that's not realistic you can do this during the session by allowing them to interview each other. Switch interviewees every five minutes, and make sure every girl is involved. Encourage them to adopt a journalist approach which focuses on facts and does not use anyone's name without permission. You may want to print out cards with the interview questions on them ahead of time, and have girls record the answers as they are given. Each girl can summarize her own answers in a set of guidelines, or they can do it as a group. Decide if they want to do any or all of the Additional Activities.

Role Play #2: No Cookies for You

Discussion:

Girls can complete the list of observed behaviors on their own or as a group. When discussing a movie, television show, or book example, a brief summary of the situation should be given for those girls who are not familiar with the source. OPTIONAL: Bring in a movie or TV clip, or story from a book to share an example of RA in the popular media.

Activity:

Encourage girls to be funny and creative with the made up names for the groups or cliques they observe. (If you're doing this on the spot, ask them to use their memory to think about which groups might exist in their school.) Bring a supply of index cards and markers to make the "Clique/Group Name Cards" and "Behavior" cards. Encourage girls to put a funny or lighthearted spin on the names and behaviors, as described in the handout.



Allow each girl to create a set of cards containing a Clique/Group Name card and at least one or two related Behavior cards. Then, collect Name cards separately from Behavior cards. Then, follow the directions for the "What's My Group" Game. NOTE: They should not put their names on the cards.

Role Play #3: No Repeats!

Discussion:

Talk about whether girls believe school uniforms are a good idea or not, and then discuss the other points.

Activity:

Have a supply of index cards and colorful pens.

For Part One, you can bring in some small mirrors, or have girls think about how others would describe their *outer* personae, focusing on physical appearances. Stress that the descriptors have to be factual, not opinions. For example, "I am pretty" is an opinion, while, "I have curly hair" is a fact. Write all the descriptors on an index card without names. Follow first part of Activity directions.

For Part Two, repeat with a factual descriptor about their *inner* personae, but without revealing information girls would be uncomfortable sharing in a group. See examples on the activity sheet within the print resources section.

For Part Three (additional), you will need girl-friendly magazines, blank legal-sized white paper or banner paper, and glue. (Scissors are optional.) Follow directions to create a personal fashion time line.

Role Play #4: A Trip Down the Hallway

Discussion:

Have girls work on the discussion points individually, or as a group. Talk about the answers.

Activity:

Even if girls don't want to do anything more than create a "Girl Greeter" program that could really be used, they will be more aware of the feelings and needs a new girl might have. Even on a one-to-one basis, they will be better prepared to help newcomers adjust.

If girls want to do the Additional activity, help them brainstorm ways to implement their program, and volunteer to go to the school with them to see if they can really get a Girl Greeter group started.



Role Play #5: Photo Friend or Not?

Discussion:

Share experiences of having a picture taken of yourself that you didn't like, perhaps from childhood. How does it feel to have an embarrassing/funny/strange picture on permanent record?

Activity:

Girls can do this activity on their own, but set guidelines so every girl is involved, and privacy and confidentiality are respected. For example, if one girl doesn't want to be photographed for an entire day, she might consent to part of a "typical" day.

Girls can take the pictures and give them to you so you can get them developed or printed. You may also buy them albums to use for final assembly.

If finances are limited, girls can use a regular (non-disposable) camera and print out pictures on the computer, or you can bring your own camera and take a few posed photos of girls that they feel are good representations of who they are. You can then print out the pictures and bring them in for a decorating session. Share the finished product in a group session.

If you choose to use a digital camera instead of a film camera, please first have a discussion with the girls about the responsibilities associated with using a medium that enables girls to manipulate the images produced. Explain to them that you would like them to leave the files as they appeared when the pictures were taken, as the point of the activity is both to represent how the day actually transpired, as well as how the girl(s) in the pictures actually looked. The ability to alter images is a key aspect of this role play, as well as an important issue within any discussion about RA.

Role Play #6: Transitions

Discussion:

Discuss how it felt to start school as a kindergarten student. Have girls make a list of feelings they can remember from that first day, and then talk about the beginning of middle school. How was it different from or similar to their beginning school for the very first time? What did friends do to help ease the transition in both situations?

Activity:

Again, talk about the "journalistic" style of interviewing, respecting privacy and obtaining permission to use names and direct quotes. You might want to print out the questions to make it easier to do the interviews.

If possible, encourage girls to interview individuals who are older than they are. If time doesn't permit, have them interview each



other. Give them 3-4 minute time segments to get all the questions asked, switching interviewees until everyone has several sets of answers to work with.

Additional:

You will need cardstock, paper, magazines, stickers, etc. for girls to create a collage.

Role Play #7: Working the Books

Discussion:

Talk about the different ways girls manipulate each other. Why might girls do this at school, especially in terms of cheating on tests or copying homework?

Activity:

Pick one or more topics the girls want to explore further. Assign at least two teams to investigate each topic using different strategies. Which strategy worked best, using print sources like books and magazines or computers? How did the girls decide who would perform which tasks to research the topic? What insights did they gain about working as a team vs. working as an individual?

Role Play #8: Communication Skills

Discussion:

Have girls discuss the difference between talking face-to-face, by phone, or via the computer. What body actions influence the messages they give? (Expression, gestures, tone of voice, posture, etc.)

Turn the sound down and replay the role play silently. Have girls make a list of the unspoken messages they see being given. Discuss.

Activity:

Guide girls through the activity by making sure they each have a partner with whom they aren't close friends, so they find it easier to assume a role. You can suggest other topics to act out, such as both girls liking the same boy, one girl posting something negative about another on her blog, etc.

If using the computer, make sure the activity is supervised and it's clear that the message is a pretend one. Some ideas include:

I can't believe you did that...

What were you thinking...

She's really something...



HANGIN' OUT – NEW GIRL

Watch the story of the “New Girl” by yourself, and then with the girls. A Summary, Discussion Questions, and Breakout Activity are provided for each scene. The Breakout Activity can be done at the same time as the discussion, or in a follow-up session.

Scene One:

Review Summary and Discussion Questions from the Print Resources.

Breakout Activity:

This activity will help girls think about the idea of compatibility, and whether they get along better with girls who are the same or different than they are. There may also be further discussion on “friendship comfort zones,” (i.e. sticking with the same friends you’ve always had, or only choosing friends who are the same as you), and looking beyond the surface when seeking to make friends.

Scene Two:

Review Summary and Discussion Questions from the Print Resources.

Discussion refers to Ashley’s body language:

She *rolled* her eyes

She *raised* her eyebrows

She *shrugged* her shoulders

Scene Two Questions:

1. What body language did Maria and Nan use?

They stood close to Ashley, nodded at her in agreement, looked at her more often, laughed, etc.

2. Rewrite this scene, first changing the behavior of Ashley, then Nan and finally Maria to make it less hurtful. If one or all of the girls changed how they reacted to Jessica—even just a little—what might have happened differently?

This is a matter of opinion, but guide girls to give positive alternatives that wouldn’t be relationally aggressive. For example, having Nan get in everyone’s face about Jessica may have spared Jessica’s feelings, but it would have continued the RA.



3. What, if anything, could Jessica have done to change the situation?

Again, have girls share their opinions. Did Jessica do anything wrong? Did she deserve to be treated like she was? How likely is it that a girl would go any further than a mild confrontation with Nan, as Jessica did?

4. Which girls are you most like:

- a. Ashley, the aggressor who tries to control other girls through her behavior
- b. Maria and Nan, who don't start mean behavior but don't do anything to stop it
- c. Jessica, who was on the receiving end of hurt and humiliation, even though she didn't deserve it

Girls can think about this, but do not have to self-identify in front of others. The point is that every girl has the ability to be like one of the girls in the video: sometimes too aggressive, sometimes not intervening, and sometimes not standing up for herself.

5. Are there ways you could change your behavior for the better?

Again, without humiliating anyone, girls can reflect on this.

Breakout Activity:

Print out and cut up the statement cards. You can tape them onto index cards for ease of use. If the group is large, you may want to make doubles.

Girls should draw out one card randomly and as they do, use their body language to portray the behavior or attitude on the card. The other girls should note what the "actress's" face, body language, and posture convey.

After each girl has had a turn with this activity, repeat. This time, girls should act out the statement by both reading it out loud and using their body language for emphasis. They can choose to give the statement any emotional spin they want, i.e. positive, negative, neutral, etc.

Scene Three:

Review Summary and Discussion Questions from the Print Resources.

Go to a library or resource room to find information on women throughout history who took a stand on something. Or use a newspaper or online news source and find an example there. (That in itself can be an interesting activity.)

Art materials will help girls get creative in compiling the results. These could be shared during an event focused on women, at school, or in the library. Note: Women's History Month is in March, so that might offer an ideal opportunity.



Scene Four:

Review Summary and Discussion Questions from the Print Resources.

Again, girls should be allowed to share their reflections on the first two questions, or keep them to themselves. Take a poll of opinions on the last two questions.

Breakout Activity:

Find some (older) girls to print out pages of their blogs, or blogs they like, and bring them in. They should make sure to include pages with Profiles on them.

Since girls may or may not have their own blogs at this point, you can have them debate whether blogs are helpful or not. Then have them (with as little input from you as possible until the end) create a tip sheet for younger girls.

Scene Five:

Review Summary and Discussion Questions from the Print Resources.

Breakout Activity:

Make copies of the page for each girl. Have her write in her answers to the first two questions, and discuss. Again, girls can have the option of sharing their answers or not.

Most of the items on the "If My Friend Wanted Me To, I Would" quiz are straightforward, but others may not be so easy to decide or justify. You can have girls raise their hands if they checked off the behavior, and perhaps even do some role plays where a "friend" really pressures another girl into one of the behaviors.

Listen to Karina's Story:

Listen to Karina's story and discuss:

The RA behaviors described

The role(s) Karina and other girls played

Poll the group to see if there is agreement with Karina's conclusion or not.



REAL GIRLS SOUND OFF

The run time for this video is approximately five minutes. Again, Summary and Discussion Questions are provided to delve deeper into the content. You can print out copies of the Discussion Questions and have girls write their answers individually, or go over them as a group.

The “How I Am” Activity can be used to help girls explore how they feel and act when they are in romantic relationships. Print out both pages and make a copy for each girl. Have them write in the answers to the questions, and then go through the activity on the handout. They can share their specific responses, or you can have a general discussion about whether girls do act differently when they are and are not romantically involved with someone.

WRAP-UP

To end the program, use the final activity/discussion to help girls think about the bigger impact this program can have on their lives, and about how they can use their newfound knowledge about these topics to make the world a better place.



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