The purpose of the present study was to examine the efficacy of a one day relational aggression program implemented to the ninth grade class at a local private school. The study aimed to measure the program’s three goals: (a) increasing participant’s knowledge of relational aggression, (b) decreasing participant’s relationally aggressive behaviors, and (c) increasing the participant’s pro-social behaviors. Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a delayed-control group. Results of the MANOVA indicated a significant difference between groups, Pillai’s Trace = .51, $F = 8.20$, $df = (31)$, $p = .001$. Univariate statistics indicated a significant difference for the knowledge questionnaire given post-assessment in the fall, $F = 31.49$, $df = (1)$, $p = .001$, and the knowledge questionnaire given in the morning of the spring, $F = 14.58$, $df = (1)$, $p = .001$. No significant difference was indicated for relationally aggressive behaviors or pro-social behaviors. Implications and limitations are discussed.
Removing the Sting of the Queen Bee: Efficacy of a One Day Relational Aggression Program

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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DEDICATION

The following work is dedicated to my mother, Kimberly Phillips for her support, strength, and faith in me, in which I would not have been able to achieve any of my endeavors without her. I am her little Glow Worm and I will continue to shine…”The journey of 1000 miles begins with one step.”
BIOGRAPHY

Kasi Lynch spent her childhood and adolescence in New Jersey before moving to North Carolina in 2002 to attend college. Kasi completed her undergraduate career at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) in 2006 obtaining her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She began her graduate career at North Carolina State University (NCSU) in 2008 working towards her Master of Science degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. While at NCSU, Kasi began her career in academia as a teaching assistant educating the students in the undergraduate course of Educational Psychology. In her last year in her degree program Kasi had the opportunity to achieve her goal of serving child survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault by being hired as a children’s counselor in the residential domestic violence shelter at Interact of Wake County. In addition to her scholarly endeavors, Kasi has a strong passion for dance in which shares her talents with the children she instructs in the K-Motion competitive hip-hop company at Techniques in Motion School of Dance.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this time to thank all of those who assisted me in my thesis research process. First and foremost I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Marc Grimmett and my mentor Dr. Millie Maxwell for all of their assistance in the process. Without the guidance of Dr. Grimmett and Dr. Maxwell I would have been lost in this process. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Edwin Gerler and Dr. Sylvia Nassar-McMillan, for dedicating their time to be a part of my thesis committee, and my ETD editor Erica Cutchins for her assistance in the ETD process. In addition I would like to thank the staff of Easton Academy for allowing me the opportunity to assess the programming at their school, and Dr. Jason Osborne for sharing his expertise in statistics to aid my statistical endeavors. Last, but not least, I would thank my support system including the my family, my boyfriend Tyler Anderson, my Techniques in Motion Dance Family, my cat Oreo, my close friends, and the lord above for serving as imperative support to me in my times of “storm and stress” during my thesis process.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In G. Stanley Hall’s two volume work *Adolescence*, Hall addresses a multitude of issues surrounding the period of adolescence in which Hall refers to as a period of “storm and stress”. In this text one feature of adolescence Hall addresses is adolescent aggression and remarkably records the first difference between genders in terms of aggression stating that “In the teens she almost always learns to control the more violent physical outbreaks, but may . . . use her tongue in place of her fists” (Arnett, 2006). Despite this remarkable early recognition of a gender differences in aggression, prior to the late 1980’s there was a great imbalance in human aggression research with too great a focus on male forms of aggression, with male subjects, and male researchers (Björkqvist, 2001). As a result, the literature concluded that males were more aggressive than females. While research does continue to support that males have been shown to be both more physically and verbally aggressive than females (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995) more recent research has found that females are equally as aggressive as their male counterparts (Crothers, Field, & Korbet, 2005).

The more recent research has identified a relationally oriented form of aggression in which harm is inflicted through the damage and manipulation of peer relationships, as opposed to behaviors that harm through physical damage (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Cairns et al., 1989; Crick and Grotpeter, 1995; Galen and Underwood, 1997) and in this form of aggression females have been shown to be the main perpetrators. Therefore the difference between the genders in aggression is that while males use more overt forms of aggression (i.e. physical aggression); girls use a more covert form of aggression referred to as relational aggression. The term is coined relational aggression due to the nature of the aggression, in
that it is used to harm others through the hurtful manipulation of peer relationships or friendships (Crick & Bigbee, 1998).

**Rationale for Study**

There are two main components of relational aggression: imbalance of power and intent to harm (Randall, 2008). In relational aggression the aggressor (sometimes referred to as the Queen Bee) purposely and intentionally perpetrates relationally aggressive behaviors onto their target (the one receiving the aggressive behaviors). Behaviors perpetrated by the aggressor may be motivated by fear, power, security, popularity, and/or control (Randall, 2008). More specifically relationally aggressive behaviors perpetrated by the aggressor include, but are not limited to: spreading rumors, social exclusion, betrayal or trust (Neal, 2007). It can be spreading a rumor to break up a friendship or couple, someone bringing invitations to a party and handing them out to a whole table minus one, purposely pushing someone out of a friend group, making fun of someone behind their back, and any behavior purposely and intentionally used to harm or manipulate a relationship. These behaviors are many times not outwardly overt, and therefore fly under the radar, and are not seen as aggression. Unfortunately, it is also why these behaviors go unnoticed and/or get ignored.

According to society this is just what girls do, or better yet my favorite saying (note the sarcasm) “girls being girls”. Psychologist long ignored jealousy, quarreling, slander, gossip, and other similar behaviors as aggression (Underwood, 2003). With these behaviors ignored as aggressive behaviors and this “girls will be girls” concept of reality, these behaviors are just brushed aside and sometimes viewed as a rite of passage in a young girl’s life as “what girls do”. The societal notion that these behaviors are a normal part of
adolescence for females and the devaluation of the young women’s feelings by adults in regard to their hurt by the behaviors has the ability to continue to perpetrate the problem. (Simmons, 2002).

As much as people would like to believe the old saying “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”, present research on relational aggression disproves this statement as an unfortunate lie. Although it is a fairly new topic that has been introduced, over the past decade more literature has begun to focus on relational aggression due to its high prevalence and psychological effects on victims, as well as perpetrator’s. While it must be noted that males can and do use relational aggression, most of the research indicates that it is more commonly an issue in the female population. It serves a problem for females ranging from their childhood through their adulthood, peaking in late middle school (McKay, 2003).

Studies have shown that relational victimization within the general peer group during adolescence is associated with significant adjustment problems, such as poor peer relationships, internalizing problems (i.e. depression), externalizing difficulties (i.e. delinquent behavior); and future peer rejection (Crick et al., 2001). Perpetrators are more likely to be rejected by peers and experience loneliness and depression, while victims experience higher levels of anxiety, loneliness, psychological distress, social avoidance, and later perpetration of aggressive behavior (Neal, 2007). The children that are victimized through relational aggression use the experience as a basis for evaluating themselves and others, and therefore feel as an “outsider” to the peer group, resulting in present and future adjustment problems (Crick, Grotipeter, & Rockhill, 1999). Relational aggression has also
been found to interfere with learning. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, 22% of children between fourth and eighth grades report academic difficulties due to peer abuse (Randall, 2008). Relational aggression can create a negative school and class environment (Underwood, 2003).

Aggression in peer relationships may also affect young adolescents’ romantic/intimate relationships. Relationally aggressive behaviors among adolescent girls may include boyfriend stealing, rumors targeted toward breaking up a couple, and other types of behaviors associated with coming between a young women and her intimate partner (Underwood, 2003). Peer relationships also set the stage for these romantic relationships and peer aggression in friendships may result in leaving adolescent women vulnerable to aggression in their intimate relationship (Wiseman, 2002).

All the associated problems surrounding relational aggression can in turn impact adolescents’ development in negative ways (Crick & Bigbee, 1998) during adolescence, as well as into their adult lives. Much of the damage done through relationally aggressive behaviors carries with the targets of the aggression throughout their lives. Psychological and emotional damage can be prominent during adolescence, but does not mean it ends there. Most targets of relational aggression can distinctly remember these experiences and the pain endured through them.

With all of the negative consequences resulting from relational aggression one must wonder why adolescent girls do this to one another, and also why relational aggression more of a problem within adolescent females rather than males. To answer these questions there are several theories that surround the reasons that females may use relational aggression.
Again, it must be noted that since relational aggression is a new concept in the literature much research needs to continue to be done on the topic to further support the theories presented.

With this being stated, one of the potential roots of relational aggression that has been explored is gender socialization. Young girls learn from modeling the behaviors of their female caretakers and through this learn to develop an interest in others focusing on empathy, and mutual sensitivity and responsibility in their relationships (Letendre, 2007). Girls learn and understand the societal gender norms and incorporate these views in their behavior, thus girls with traditional gender identities match up with the traditional gender schema (Bem, 1981). Within this traditional gender schema for women is the understanding that girls are encouraged to be emotional creatures, with the exception of the expression of anger. Expressing anger is considered unladylike, and inappropriate for females, thus women are not encouraged to use overt forms of aggression and search for more covert means (Crothers, Field and Kolbert, 2005). These girls then resort to the use of relational aggression to express their anger, resolve conflict, and establish dominance (Bem, 1981).

Another theory surrounding why female’s use relational aggression is the importance of relationships to females. Crothers, Field, and Korbet (2005) state that female friendships are among the most important relationships that females develop during their lifetime, and Gillian (2003) believes acceptance by other women becomes essential to a women’s identity. Therefore damage to females’ relationships may be detrimental to their development and relational aggression can cause even more negative effects for adolescent females.
When adolescents harm a peer, she/he will select a method that will cause the most harm within that peer group (Bowie, 2007). Relational aggression’s sole purpose is to harm an individual’s relationships, thus for female’s relational aggression would be the most appropriate form of aggression to use. In addition, Letendre (2007) states that female’s sense of self is deeply intertwined with female’s connection with others and this is threatened when there is conflict. Fear of losing valuable relationships causes female’s to use covertly aggressive behaviors. The impact of relational aggression as it relates to females friendships may led to loneliness (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001) as well as lack of formation of positive self concept and low self-esteem.

Until recently, most of the interventions on aggression for adolescents have lacked a focus on the gender differences within aggressive behavior, focusing on the more overt forms of aggression (Letendre 2007). Due to the detrimental negative effects of relational aggression on female adolescents, a need for relational aggression interventions was recognized by a group of concerned adults in Erie, Pennsylvania and the Ophelia Project was born (McKay, 2003).

The Ophelia Project is an organization that offers a multitude of programs and materials to help individuals dealing with relational and other forms of non-physical aggression, through a combination of tools, strategies and solutions (The Ophelia Project, 2007). The organization states that it is “dedicated to creating a culture that is emotionally, physically, and socially safe, where girls are respected and nurtured. Through awareness education and advocacy, we promote positive change in families, schools and communities. By supporting a network of friends, mentors, and professionals, we encourage children to be
confident and healthy” (McKay, 2003). The Ophelia Project reaches these goals by offering programs for professional development of educators (i.e. faculty and staff workshops, speaker’s bureau), school programming (i.e. CASS: Creating a Safe School Program; curricula materials for K-12), community building (i.e. National Opheliate Program; Community collaborations with the Girl Scouts), as well as research and assessment through the Ophelia Projects research center the Ophelia Institute. (The Ophelia Project, 2007).

In addition to the Ophelia Project there are additional individuals committed to the education and interventions of relational aggression. Many of these individuals have written books to achieve these goals, have their own programs and resources to aid in their efforts, and/or conduct research in relational aggression. These individuals include: Rosalind Wiseman, Cheryl Dellasega, Rachel Simmons, and Marion Underwood.

Rosalind Wiseman is the author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, the book that the popular movie *Mean Girls* was based off of (Wiseman, 2002). In *Queen Bees and Wannabes* Wiseman seeks to educate parents of teenage girls on the world that their teenage daughter is living in and provides parents with insights and tools on how to aid their daughter through this period in their life. In addition to her book Wiseman also is the co-founder of the Empower Program, a non-profit that works to empower girls and boys to stop violence (Wiseman, 2002), has created her own curricula called Owning Up, to teach youth to take responsibility for their behaviors, and prevent bullying by focusing on the root causes of bullying (Rosalind Wiseman, 2009), and is currently in the process of her Girl World Tour touring the country hosting a night of fun and awareness for mothers and daughters (Rosalind Wiseman, 2009).
Another individual in the field is Dr. Cheryl Dellasega, co-author of the book *12 Strategies That Will End Female Bullying* written with Dr. Charisse Nixon. *12 Strategies That Will End Female Bullying* is a book educating readers on relational aggression and providing them with strategies in dealing with young girls experiences with relational aggression (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). Dr. Dellasega also has her own set of resources for confronting relational aggression on her website, as well as Club and Camp Ophelia, two programs helping teen girls build healthy relationships through arts based curriculum and mentoring (Cheryl Dellasega, 2010).

**Purpose of the Study**

At Easton Academy (i.e., pseudonym created for the study), a private all female school, a one day intervention for relational aggression has been built into the academic curricula through their life-skills programming for the ninth grade students. It is self-reported by the school that relational aggression is a problem among the ninth graders at the academy and that programming is a continued need to address the issue. The school spends a great amount of effort and resources providing the life-skills programming. For these reasons it is imperative to examine the efficacy of the relational aggression component of the life-skills programming to ensure that the one day program is meeting the needs of the school’s target population.

The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the program to ensure that the goals of the inclusion of the program are being met. The programs goals include: (a) increasing the awareness and knowledge about relational aggression, (b) decreasing the reported incidence of relational aggression in the population, (c) increasing pro-social behaviors (i.e. bystander
intervention, empathy) within the population. The intervention builds on the current programming that has been implemented at the site to combat relational aggression that utilizes the Ophelia Projects Curriculum for ninth graders.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context

Despite early mention of aggression in females in Hall’s 1916 work *Adolescence*, historically in the field of social science research aggression has been a phenomenon more closely studied within the male population. The imbalance in aggression research continued to permeate the field until the mid 1960’s when Feshbach (1964) put forth some of the first empirical studies examining *indirect aggression* (Underwood, 2003).

Feshbach studied children’s interactions with a newcomer and made some of the first observations of gender differences in aggression began to emerge (Feshbach, 1964; Feshbach, 1969; Feshbach & Feshbach 1969). Feshbach hypothesized that while boys would respond to the newcomer in a more directly aggressive manner, girls would respond in a more indirectly aggressive manner (Underwood, 2003). The results of her studies concluded that differences in gender are demonstrated children’s use of indirectly aggressive behaviors (Feshbach, 1964; Feshbach, 1969; Feshbach & Feshbach 1969). Due to these observations Feshbach encouraged scholars to continue to empirically examine gender difference in indirectly aggressive behaviors; however her fellow scholars did not follow her recommendations (Underwood, 2003).

It was not until a Finish research team in the late 1980’s, lead by Bjorkqvist and Lagerspetz, began to study indirect aggression that the research on indirect aggression was revisited. Bjorkqvist and Lagerspetz continued to notice the vast gender imbalance in the study of aggression. Bjorkqvist (2001) stated that there was “Too much focus on male forms of aggression, too often only male subjects, and the studies too often conducted by male
researcher. Female forms of aggression were not focused upon, or, alternatively, researchers thought female aggression was exactly like male aggression, only less” (p. 272). Although Bjorkqvist and his team were a male majority they were among the first to examine sex-differences and developmental trends in aggressive behavior (Bjorkqvist, 2001). After interviewing school-aged children to develop their quantitative measures, Bjorkqvist and his colleagues began their research on aggression by first examining the prevalence of direct and indirect aggression among 8-11 year old boys and girls (Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, and Pletonen, 1988) found that females may be just as aggressive as their male counterparts (Underwood, 2003). In the 1988 study, as well as in later research such as Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, and Kaukiainen (1992), the Finish researchers found that while young boys use more direct aggression, young girls utilize more indirect aggression.

During roughly the same time period Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, and colleagues were beginning to study indirect aggression in Finland, Cairns and Cairns began studying aggression in America. Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson, and Gariepy (1989) named the aggression they were studying social aggression. Cairns et. al conducted a longitudinal study in North Carolina examining conflicts in youth peer relationships of a cohort of students from fourth grade through eleventh grade. In the study, each year the researchers asked the participants to describe recent conflicts with peers. It was found that girls tended to report few physical altercations; however as the girls got older they experienced more disputes in regard to social conflicts (Cairns et al., 1989).

A few years after Cairns et al. published their article on social aggression, another group of American psychologist Crick and Grotpeter, began examining gender differences in
aggression and coined the term *relational aggression* (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). In the Crick and Grotpeter (1995) study a series of assessments, including a peer nomination measure of sociometric and behavior, was given over two separate sixty minute sessions. The peer nomination instrument consisted of 19 items, included a peer sociometric and four subscales designed to assess social behavior: relational aggression overt aggression, pro-social behavior, and isolation. The peer nomination instrument was completed by a group of 491 third through sixth grade students from four public schools in a Midwestern town. The four goals of the study were to: (a) develop a reliable measure for relational aggression that did not confound with other measures of aggression (b) to assess the gender differences in relational aggression (c) to access the degree in which relational aggression is distinct from overt aggression and (d) to assess whether relational aggression is related to social-psychological maladjustment. The results of the study indicated that relational aggression was more characteristic of girls than boys, separate from overt aggression, and is related to social-psychological maladjustment. Some of the social problems include relationally aggressive children being less liked by peers, having poor peer relations, and being socially isolated, while the psychological problems include internalizing problems such as loneness and depression.

Galen and Underwood (1997) revisited social aggression and extended its definition to “behavior which is directed toward damaging another’s self-esteem social status, or both, and may take such forms as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion” (p. 589). Galen and Underwood had previously examined the constructs of indirect aggression, social aggression,
and relational aggression, but chose to continue the work in the field of social aggression because “it seemed best to describe the function of these behaviors, namely, to do social harm” (Underwood, 2003). Galen and Underwood, therefore, chose the “construct” best suited to what they wanted to study based on the definition of the construct.

What’s in a Name?

As can be seen through the historical context of relational aggression, it was not until 1995 that the term was created and operationalized. Prior to this, the differences in gender in aggression research were examined through the study of indirect versus direct aggression and social aggression. Even after the construct of relational aggression was introduced, researchers continue research examining all three constructs. So the question remains “what’s in a name?”

The meaning of this question is to explore further whether these terms represent different terms for the same construct, or if they are they in fact different constructs. The initial question leads to an additional question: is it appropriate to blend indirect, social, and relational aggression and use them interchangeably? Relational aggression is also sometimes referred to as social aggression and/or indirect aggression (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006), however these may not be appropriate uses of the terms if they are in fact separate constructs.

Coyne, Archer, & Eslea (2006) examined the three constructs of indirect social and relational aggression and found that there is support that the terms are distinct, but overlapping constructs. Thus, in its present state research on indirect social and relational aggression combines three largely, but not perfectly, overlapping constructs in which scholars disagree if they describe a similar phenomena (Underwood, 2003; Bjorkqvist, 2001;
Underwood, Galen & Paquette, 2001a). Although scholars differ in their agreement of whether or not the constructs are separate or overlapping, the majority of scholars tend to agree that more research is needed for shared understanding in the debate (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006; Underwood, 2003).

Similar to the approach used by Galen and Underwood, relational aggression was selected as the focus of this study as the definition includes behaviors most congruent to the phenomena of interest. For these reasons the term and construct of “relational aggression” utilized in this study.

Relational aggression is defined as a form of aggression in which peers intentionally seek to harm and/or manipulate others interpersonal relationships (Crick, 1996). The “intent to harm and/or manipulate others interpersonal relationships” is distinction from indirect and social aggression that elected me to utilize the construct of relational aggression in my research. While the intent may be present in indirect or social aggression, and both may be utilized in relational aggression to achieve its goals, it is the definition of relational aggression that was the most appropriate fit for this study.

**Relational Aggression and Gender**

While there is some research that negates the gender differences of relational aggression, most researchers in the field support the claim that relational aggression occurs more frequently within the adolescent female population (Crick and Grotpeeter (1995); Crick et. al. (1997). Research supporting the gender differences in relational aggression have further found that relational aggression serves as a problem for females ranging from childhood through adulthood, peaking in late middle school (McKay, 2003).
Several theories address the development of gender differences in young females and males. One theory is the Two Cultures Theory that emerged in the 1980’s (Maltz & Borker, 1983). Maccoby (1998) states the basic tenant of the Two Cultures Theory is that “the distinctive play styles of the two sexes manifest themselves in distinctive cultures that develop within boys’ and girls’ groups as the children grow older” (p. 78). Associated with this gender segregation, through the formation of two distinct cultures of girls and boys, gender socialization of these children is open to occur. Through gender socialization females that identify with traditional female gender role identity match their preferences, behaviors, and personal attributes with the feminine gender schema (Bem, 1981b; Crothers, Field, and Korbert, 2005). If females are led to believe that they should be ‘nice’, then they are less likely to behave in a manner that is inconsistent with that view. As a result, it is quite possible girls have learned to express frustrations and emotions in a manner that has been traditionally viewed as non-threatening (Bjorkqvist et al. 1992, Bjorkqvist 1994, Bjorkqvist & Niemela 1992), and are thus more covert. The gender socialization of females may therefore be one underlying root of females’ use of relational aggression (Crothers, Field & Korbet, 2005). Possible evidence of the connection of relational aggression and gender socialization was analyzed in Crothers, Field & Korbet (2005) in which adolescent girls’ relational aggression use and gender role identity was examined. Results of the multiple regression indicated that girls who identified with a more traditional feminine gender role relational aggression were more likely to perceive themselves using relational aggression than were adolescent girls who identified with a more nontraditional gender roles (Crothers, Field & Korbet, 2005).
Consistent with the social gender construction of “female,” theories of the development of psychopathology also suggest that girls are more likely than boys to behave in ways that preserve relationships. Research suggests that girls may be more vulnerable than boys to the harms of relational aggression, including peer rejection and victimization (Crick and Nelson, 2002; Paquette and Underwood, 1999), which is consistent with the adolescent using the method of aggression that will cause the most harm within that peer group (Bowie, 2007). In addition girls also may be more likely than boys to use more covert, indirect, or relational aggression as a means of achieving social goals, such as maintaining status, power, and popularity in peer groups (Pepler et al., 2004; Putallaz et al., 2004; Zahn-Waxler and Polanichka, 2004; Leadbeater, Boone, Sangstar, and Mathieson, 2006) and/or control, fear, and/or security (Randall, 2008).

Although there are still debates on the gender differences in relational aggression Leadbeater, Boone, Sangstar, and Mathieson, (2006) assert that there may be sex differences in the functions and consequences of physical and relational aggression. Many theorists have noted that, compared to boys, girls show greater relational orientation and greater reactivity to interpersonal stressors (Cross and Madsen, 1997; Rudolph, 2002; Leadbeater, Boone, Sangstar, and Mathieson, 2006). In reviewing literature on gender differences and implications related to relational aggression use and negative effects Merrell, Rohanna, Buchanan, and Tran (2006) state:

Henington et al. (1998) found that relationally aggressive behaviors only predicted peer rejection when combined with physically aggressive behaviors in boys, a finding that differed from their research which indicated that only overt aggression predicted
peer rejection in girls. Paquette and Underwood (1999) found that while both girls and boys reported that incidences of relational aggression made them feel worse about themselves than incidences of physical aggression, girls reported feeling more hurt by it. Furthermore, the frequency of experiencing relational aggression was tied to negative feelings of self-worth for girls more than for boys. These findings seem to show that while both boys and girls experience relational aggression, the negative effects may be more pronounced for girls (p. 349).

Thus, while it is important to recognize that males may utilize and be affected by relational aggression as well, the main population affected tends to be the adolescent female population.

**Summary**

Relational aggression has been shown to lead to damaging and lasting psychological effects on victims, as well as perpetrators including loneliness, depression, peer rejection, and adjustment problems (Crick et al., 2001). Relational aggression can be even more detrimental to the victim because of its consequential effects on the social and psychological development. The experience of being a victim of relational aggression can be traumatic and have lasting damage to the victim’s image of self (Gomes, 2007).

Due to the detrimental negative effects of relational aggression on female adolescents, targeted interventions are needed. In addition, interventions require continuous assessment and evaluation to determine success, effectiveness, and achievement of the appropriate goals. The main purpose of the present study, therefore, is to evaluate the relational aggression component of Easton Academy’s life skills program.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Participants

The participants of the study were 52 students between the ages of 13 and 15 years old in the 9th grade class at a private, all female, school referred to, for the purpose of this study, as Easton Academy.

Measures

The measures used for the study incorporated pre- and post-assessments and included: the Demographic Questionnaire (DQ), the Relational Aggression Survey (RAS), the Peer Nomination Instrument of Social Behavior (PNISB), comparative media literacy assessments, and a program evaluation. All of the information contained in the each of the packets consisted of the same materials for the respective pre- and post-assessments; however the order of the measures were varied in an attempt to control for threats to internal validity.

Demographic Questionnaire (DQ)

The Demographic Questionnaire contains eight demographic questions in an effort to gain the demographic information of the participants. Information obtained through the questionnaire included the participant’s age, race, type of student (boarding or day), height and weight (included for the comparative media literacy program) and hometown. See Appendix B for the Demographic Questionnaire.

Relational Aggression Survey (RAS)

The Relational Aggression Survey is compilation of various measures drawn from The Mean Girls: 101 ½ Creative Strategies and Activities for Working with Relational
Aggression (Randall and Bowen, 2008) and Girl Wars: 12 Strategies to End Female Bullying (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003).

Section I of the RAS, the Relational Aggression Prevalence Survey, was extracted from Mean Girls: 101 ½ Creative Strategies and Activities for Working with Relational Aggression (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pp.18-27). The main purpose of the Relational Aggression Prevalence Survey is to assess the present relational aggression use in the school, as well as the participant’s individual participation in relational aggression. The Relational Aggression Prevalence Survey was the survey previously used to gather data to assess the current relational aggression programming at Easton Academy. See Appendix C, section I of the RAS, to review the Relational Aggression Survey.

Section II of the RAS, the Relational Aggression Likert Scale, consists of 15 Likert scale statements assessing the thoughts, opinions, and feelings of female students on relational aggression in their school and regarding themselves. The statements are ranked 1-4 with 1 being the participant strongly agrees with the statement and 4 being the participant strongly disagrees with the statement. The Likert Scale was drawn from a previous Likert Scale used to assess the program at Easton Academy and revised by the principal researcher. The principal researcher revised the Likert Scale based primarily from information and questions found within Mean Girls: 101 ½ Creative Strategies and Activities for Working with Relational Aggression (Randall and Bowen, 2008) and Girl Wars: 12 Strategies to End Female Bullying (Dellasega and Nixon, 2003). See Appendix C, section II of the RAS, to review The Relational Aggression Likert Scale.
Section III of the RAS, the Relational Aggression Quotient is comprised of the Relational Aggression Quotient Survey included in *Mean Girls: 101 ½ Creative Strategies and Activities for Working with Relational Aggression* (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pp.18-27). The main purpose of the survey is to assess the participant’s relational aggression beliefs and actions. See Appendix C, section III of the RAS to review The Relational Aggression Quotient.

Section IV of the RAS, the Relational Aggression Checklist, contains the relational aggression checklist from *Girl Wars: 12 Strategies to End Female Bullying* (Dellasega and Nixon, 2003, pp.237-232). The checklist, consisting of 48 items, is used to assess the participant’s use of relational aggression (29 items), victimization of relational aggression (9 items), negative bystander behaviors (2 items), and power moves/pro-social behaviors (8 items). See Appendix C, section IV. The Relational Aggression Checklist of the RAS to review the measure.

Section V of the RAS, the Knowledge Questionnaire, consists of nine knowledge based questions, and twelve opportunities within these questions to show knowledge of the subject, used to assess the participant’s knowledge gained through the programming of relational aggression. See Appendix C, section V of the RAS to review The Knowledge Questionnaire.

**The Peer Nomination Instrument of Social Behavior (PNISB)**

Created by Werner and Crick (1999) the Peer Nomination Instrument of Social Behavior consists of 34 items with seven subscales: pro-social behavior, relational
aggression, physical aggression, verbal aggression, nonverbal aggression, internalizing behavior, and affective intensity (Werner and Crick, 1999).

Reliability coefficients for all of the subscales are as follows: pro-social behavior (Cronbach's α = .91), relational aggression (Cronbach's α = .87), physical aggression (Cronbach's α = .82), verbal aggression (Cronbach's α = .89), nonverbal aggression (Cronbach's α = .93), internalizing behavior (Cronbach's α = .62), and affective intensity (Cronbach's α = .42) (Werner and Crick, 1999). These reliability coefficients indicate an overall high degree of internal consistency within the measure, with the exception of the internalizing behaviors and affective intensity subscales. At the time of the study there was no validity data present for the measure.

In using the measure, the participants receive the PNISB along with a roster of their classmates’ names, in which each classmate’s name is coded with a number. Each of the 34 items in the measure is a description of social behavior in which the participant is instructed to select five individuals from the class roster who best fit the description and list those students’ numbers on the answer space provided for each description. See Appendix D to review the PNISB.

**Program Evaluation**

A brief program evaluation comprised of seven questions was included to allow the participants to self-report their opinions, thoughts, feelings, and feedback on the program. See Appendix C to review the program evaluation.
Procedure and Data Collection

After obtaining approval from the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board, the 55 students were randomly assigned using a computerized random assignment procedure to either the relational aggression group or a delayed-control group. The experimental group consisted of 27 students receiving the relational aggression program in the fall semester lead by the principal researcher. The delayed-control group consisted of 28 students receiving a comparative program in the fall on media literacy and eating disorders lead by Dr. Millie Maxwell, PhD, a clinical instructor in the Eating Disorders Program in the Department of Psychiatry in the School Of Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The comparative program on media literacy and eating disorders, which educated the young women on eating disorders and the role of media in this pathology, is another program included in the life skills programming at the school that the students are required to participate in. In the past the media literacy program has taken place in the fall and the relational aggression program has taken place in the spring. To assist with the study the school agreed to split the 9th graders up and have both programs take place in the fall and spring. Thus, in the spring, the media literacy participants received the relational aggression program, and therefore all participants received the relational aggression program and served as participants in the study.

Pre-Assessment

Students in both groups completed pre-test assessments on the morning of the first day of the program including a brief demographic questionnaire (DQ), the Relational
Aggression Checklist of the RAS, the Knowledge Questionnaire of the RAS, and comparative media literacy/eating disorder assessments. See Appendix B for the pre-assessment instruments.

The program was conducted after completion of the pre-assessment questionnaires. The programming for both groups provided pertinent information that targeted the social and developmental stages of the participants. The facilitation of each program (i.e., relational aggression and media literacy/eating disorders) was standardized and included similar elements in an effort to make the programs as comparable as possible for the students. Both programs included educational pieces, inclusion of media components, skills training, large group activities as well as small group activities of roughly six to eight students. Small groups were led by one of three facilitators in both groups. Two facilitators in each group were female members of the school administration, familiar with the programming and subject matter. The principal researcher served as the third facilitator for the relational aggression program. Millie Maxwell, PhD, served as the third facilitator for the media literacy/eating disorders program.

**Relational Aggression Program**

The relational aggression program was designed based on resources from the Ophelia Project’s *Relational Aggression: High School Lessons* (The Ophelia Project, 2009), *Mean Girls: 101 ½ Creative Strategies and Activities for Working with Relational Aggression* (Randall & Bowen, 2008), and *Girl Wars: 12 Strategies to End Female Bullying* (Dellasega & Nixon, 2003). The workshop used the activities in these resources to educate participants about: relational aggression (i.e., a form of aggression that seeks to harm others
relationships), the causes of relational aggression (e.g., gender socialization, importance of female friendships), relationally aggressive behaviors (e.g., gossiping, social exclusion), the different roles one may play (e.g., the Queen Bee, the target, the bystander), the impact of relational aggression (i.e., role plays, personal stories), how technology may be used (e.g., cyber-bullying), what one may do if she experiences relational aggression (e.g., coping skills), what one may do if she sees relational aggression taking place (e.g., bystander intervention), how the media plays a role (e.g., Gossip Girl), and further resources on relational aggression (e.g., school counselor, the Ophelia Project, books), etc.

A power point was created for the organization of the program and for visual guides for the students. Students were also given a packet of information which included the activities and the power point presentation; see Appendix F for the information packet.

The program was divided into the following four sections: The Language of Peer Aggression, Normative Beliefs, Healthy Friendships, and Bystander Intervention/ Empathy.

Part I. The Language of Peer Aggression opened with a discussion of peer aggression. The discussion was drawn directly from “Topic 1: The Language of Peer Aggression” found in The Ophelia Project’s High School lessons resource It Has a Name Relational Aggression (The Ophelia Project, 2009, pp.7-11). To supplement the peer aggression discussion media clips from the CW series Gossip Girl found at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNwjcBA4uq4 and

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQW92eIJHh0, and the “Hating Tami”Youtube.com clip found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vALGUpNoz0 were used to serve as examples to illustrate relational aggression to the students.
After completion of “Topic 1: The Language of Peer Aggression” informational components were shared with the young women to educate them on relational aggression. First the girls were asked who uses relational aggression more males of females and were then provided the answer that according to research, while both males and females utilize relational aggression, it has been found to be more problematic within the adolescent female population. Then, in an effort to explore why females may utilize relational aggression more the “Girls, Girls, Girls” activity (pp. 59) as well as the “Sugar Sparks” activity (pp. 42) from Mean girls: 101½ strategies and activities for working with relational aggression (Randall and Bowen, 2008) were used. In addition, the researcher distributed Sour Patch Kids candy to the students and asked them to discuss how a sour patch kid is like a relationally aggressive girl and how girls can sometimes be sweet and then other times be sour.

After the completion of these activities the principal researcher then provided the students with research on the roots of females’ relational aggression. The roots discussed were as follows:

Gender socialization: Young girls learn from modeling the behaviors of their female caretakers. Through this they learn to develop an interest in others focusing on empathy, and mutual sensitivity and responsibility in their relationships (Letendre, 2007). Girls learn and understand the societal gender norms and incorporate these views in their behavior, thus girls with traditional gender identities match up with the traditional gender schema (Bem, 1981). Within the traditional gender schema for women is the understanding that girls are encouraged to be emotional creatures, with the exception of the expression of anger. Expressing anger is considered unladylike, and inappropriate for
females, thus women are not encouraged to use overt forms of aggression and search for more covert means (Crothers, Field and Kolbert, 2005). These girls then resort to the use of relational aggression to express their anger, resolve conflict, and establish dominance (Bem, 1991).

Importance of relationships/friendships: Crothers, Field, and Korbet (2005) state that female friendships are among the most important relationships that females develop during their lifetime, and Gillian (2003) believes acceptance by other women becomes essential to a women’s identity. Therefore damage to females’ relationships may be detrimental to their development and relational aggression can cause even more negative effects for adolescent females. When adolescents harm a peer, she/he will select a method that will cause the most harm within that peer group (Bowie, 2007). Relational aggression’s sole purpose is to harm an individual’s relationships, thus for female’s relational aggression would be the most appropriate form of aggression to use. In addition, Letendre (2007) states that female’s sense of self is deeply intertwined with female’s connection with others and this is threatened when there is conflict. Fear of losing valuable relationships causes female’s to use covertly aggressive behaviors. The impact of relational aggression as it relates to females friendships may led to loneliness (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001) as well as lack of formation of positive self concept and low self-esteem.

After the information of the potential roots of relational aggression were shared, relational aggression use across females of different cultures was then discussed by asking the students if they thought that females of all different cultures use relational aggression and
why or why not. The principal research then shared that although more research is needed in the area, some findings show that while relational aggression can transcend through cultures, in cultures where a more independent and strong feminine figure is desired (i.e. African-American women and Latina women) relational aggression is not as prominent an issue. The students were then asked their thoughts on these findings.

After the discussion on culture, the students were then asked what they believed some of the motivators of relational aggression might be. The main five (fear, power, control, popularity, and security) motivators were then shared with the students, as well as the two different types of relational aggression (proactive and reactive). Negative consequences of relational aggression were then shared with the students in terms of significant adjustment problems including: poor peer relationships, internalizing problems (low self-esteem, loneliness, depression, anxiety), externalizing difficulties (delinquent behavior), future peer rejection, and suicide. It was also noted that these negative consequences can occur in both targets and aggressors of relational aggression.

Bringing Part I., The Language of Relational Aggression, to a close was a discussion on cyber-bullying. The students were asked to define cyber-bullying, a definition was provided, and examples of cyber-bullying were asked for and provided.

After a ten minute break Part II of the program, Normative Beliefs, beliefs began. In this section of the program the student’s were educated about normative beliefs (i.e. the beliefs that a person carries with them as a result of their social norms) through completing “Topic 2: Normative Beliefs” found in The Ophelia Project’s High School lessons resource It Has a Name Relational Aggression (The Ophelia Project, 2009, pp. 12-15).
After a two hour and ten minute break for lunch, Part III of the program, Healthy Friendships, began. For this piece of the program, the students participated in the activity for “Topic 3: Friendship” found in The Ophelia Project’s High School lessons resource *It Has a Name Relational Aggression* (The Ophelia Project, 2009, pp. 12-15).

To bring the program to a close Part V of the program, Bystander Intervention and Empathy, consisted of a series of activities and discussions from the Ophelia Project’s *It Has a Name Relational Aggression: High School Lessons* (The Ophelia Project, 2009) and *Mean girls: 101 ½ strategies and activities for working with relational aggression* (Randall and Bowen, 2008). First the student’s competed the “It’s Her Story” Activity (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pg. 65), followed by the Ophelia Project’s “Topic 5: The Power of One: The Role of Bystander Intervention” (The Ophelia Project, 2009, pp. 25-27), followed by the “Walkin’ in Her Shoes” Activity (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pg. 64), followed by the “Handling It” Activity (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pg. 51), and closing with “Thunder and Lighting” (Randall and Bowen, 2008, pg. 37).

The program then came to a close with the principal research sharing websites and books for the young women as resources for more information, as well as giving them the contact information to reach her and the school’s counseling staff. An opportunity for questions was then presented.

**Post-Assessment and Spring Intervention**

At the end of the day, students in both groups completed the post-assessment materials which include: all sections the RAS, comparative media literacy/eating disorder
assessments, and a brief program evaluation. See Appendix C for the post-assessment instruments.

In the spring semester, students participated in the opposite programming they participated in during the fall. Students who focused on relational aggression in the fall focused on media literacy in the spring (and vice versa). Prior to beginning the programming in the spring students completed the pre-assessment measures including: the Relational Aggression Checklist of the RAS, the Knowledge Questionnaire of the RAS, and comparative media literacy/eating disorder assessments. In addition the Peer Nomination Instrument of Social Behavior (PNISB) was included. See Appendix D for the spring pre-assessment instruments. At the end of the day, students completed the post-assessments which included: a brief program evaluation and some comparative media literacy assessments and. See Appendix E for the spring post-assessment instruments.

**Data Analysis**

The Knowledge Questionnaire and the Relational Aggression Checklist (i.e., relationally aggressive behaviors and pro-social behaviors), from fall pre-assessment, were used to confirm no existing pre-intervention group differences. The Knowledge Questionnaire from the fall post-assessment and the spring pre-assessment in the morning of the program, as well as the Relational Aggression Checklist (i.e., relationally aggressive behaviors and pro-social behaviors) from the morning assessment in the spring were used for data analysis.
The results of the Relational Aggression Checklist of the RAS and the Knowledge Questionnaire of the RAS were compiled using the IBM computer statistics program named the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used for a preliminary analysis and the experimental data analysis.

**The Multivariate Analysis of Variance**

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used for both the preliminary and experimental data analysis. A MANOVA tests whether the mean differences between the groups on a combination of dependent variables was likely to have happened by chance. A Multivariate ANOVA is similar to an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in that it assesses the group means by comparing the their variances. The difference between an ANOVA and a MANOVA is that an ANOVA assess the independent variable in terms of one dependent variable, while a MANOVA allows for the independent variable to be assessed in terms of multiple dependent variables (Braunstein, 2007). Therefore, using a MANOVA allowed for analysis of each of the criterion variables while controlling the significance level at p < .05. By allowing this it provided a better opportunity of identifying what it is that changed as the independent variable changed. Secondly, using a Multivariate ANOVA was statistically stronger than using a series of ANOVAs in that it protected against a higher likelihood of committing a Type I error (Braunstein, 2007).

**Preliminary MANOVA**

A preliminary MANOVA was first completed to insure there were no significant differences between the groups prior to the intervention. The fall pre-assessment measures of the Knowledge Questionnaire and the aggressive behaviors and pro-social behaviors of the
Relational Aggression Checklists were complied in the MANOVA to assess for potential differences.

**Experimental MANOVA**

After completion of the preliminary MANOVA, the experimental MANOVA was utilized to examine the independent variable (the one day relational aggression program), in relation to the three criterion variables (the program goals): (a) increased knowledge acquired through the program (i.e., measured by the Knowledge Questionnaire (KQ), (b) decrease in the prevalence of relational aggression (i.e., measured by the aggressive behaviors on the Relational Aggression Checklist), and (c) increase in pro-social skills (i.e., measured by the pro-social behaviors on the Relational Aggression Checklist). The measure used for each program goal and how the measure was quantified for input into the Multivariate MANOVA is described below (See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the information).

*Program Goal A: Increase in Knowledge of Relational Aggression.* To examine if the program increased the participant’s knowledge of relational aggression, the subject knowledge of the experimental group and the delayed-control group were compared. The Knowledge Questionnaire of the fall post-assessment and the morning spring assessment was used to examine if the experimental group displayed more knowledge of relational aggression in comparison to the delayed-control group. The results of the questions on the Knowledge Questionnaire were examined and quantified. The number of correct responses was tallied for each participant and these results were imported into the MANOVA.

*Program Goal B: Decrease in Relational Aggression.* To examine if the program had an impact on the prevalence of relationally aggressive behaviors used by the participants, the
relationally aggressive behaviors of the experimental group and the delayed-control group were compared. The Relational Aggression Checklist of the fall post-assessment and of the morning spring assessment was used to examine if the experimental group had participated in less relationally aggressive behaviors in comparison to the delayed-control group. The relationally aggressive behaviors indicated on the Relational Aggression Checklist were tallied for each participant and these results were imported into the MANOVA.

*Program Goal C: Increase in Pro-Social Behaviors.* To examine if the program had an impact on pro-social skills used by the participants, the pro-social behaviors of the experimental group and the delayed-control group were assessed. The Relational Aggression Checklist of the fall post-assessment and the morning spring assessment was used to examine if the experimental group had participated in more pro-social behaviors in comparison to the delayed-control group. The pro-social behaviors indicated on the Relational Aggression Checklist were tallied for each participant and these results were imported into the MANOVA.
Figure 1.

Flowchart of Measures Included in Experimental MANOVA
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to examine the effect of the independent variable (the one day relational aggression program) on the three criterion variables (the program goals): (a) increased knowledge acquired through the program (i.e., measured by the Knowledge Questionnaire (KQ)), (b) decrease in the prevalence of relational aggression (i.e., measured by the aggressive behaviors on the Relational Aggression Checklist), and (c) increase in pro-social skills (i.e., measured by the pro-social behaviors on the Relational Aggression Checklist).

Data Cleaning

The analysis process began with data cleaning, starting with the removal of incomplete, blank, or missing data sets. A total of ten data sets were removed from the analysis, leaving $n=22$ for the experimental group and $n=23$ for the delayed-control group, for a total sample size of $n=45$. Inferential and descriptive statistics were then computed to assess for the assumptions of a MANOVA. The data was found to be non-normal so further data cleaning was carried out. Outliers were assessed and a total of eight outliers were present, leaving the final sample size $n=36$, with $n=18$ for the experimental group and $n=18$ for the delayed-control group. Inferential and descriptive statistics were then re-computed to re-assess for normality. All variables, with the exception of the relationally aggressive and pro-social behaviors on the Relational Aggression Checklist for the fall pre-assessment, were found to be non-normal and thus log transformations were completed with all variables with the exception of the two normal variables mentioned. Upon completion of the log
transformation of the variables inferential and descriptive statistics were then re-computed to re-assess for normality. Assumptions of a MANOVA were met.

Upon completion of data cleaning, demographic statistics were calculated for the participants using SPSS. The age range of the participants ranged from 13-15 years old (M=14.24). The self-identifying racial make-up of the participants constituted 75% White Americans, 11% Biracial Americans, 8% African-American, and 6% Asian. Participants identified their hometown locations as the South Eastern United States (94%, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia) and Korea (6%) Of the participants in the study 64% were day students, while 36% were boarding students.

**Preliminary Analysis**

The preliminary MANOVA completed to assess for potential differences between the experimental group and the delayed-control group confirmed that there were no significant differences between the groups, Pillai’s Trace = .14, \( F = 1.78, df = (32) \), \( p = .72 \). The results of the preliminary MANOVA therefore indicate the random assignment process lead to the creation of two equivalent groups (see Table 1.1).
Table 1.1

*Results of the Preliminary MANOVA Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Experimental (n=18)</th>
<th>Delayed-Control (n=18)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive Behaviors</td>
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<td>3.08</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Social Behaviors</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Questionnaire</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experimental Analysis

Results of the Experimental MANOVA indicated significant differences between the experimental and treatment-delayed groups after the intervention, Pillai’s Trace = .51, $F = 8.20, df = (31), p = .001$. The univariate $F$ tests showed there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the delayed-control group for the fall Knowledge Questionnaire, $F = 31.49, df = (1), p = .001$, and for the spring Knowledge Questionnaire, $F = 14.58, df = (1), p = .001$.

While the univariate $F$ tests showed significance for the both the fall and spring Knowledge Questionnaires, the univariate $F$ tests showed there was not a significant difference between the experimental group and the delayed-control group for the aggressive behaviors on the spring Relational Aggression Checklist, $F = .18, df = (1), p = .69$, or the pro-social behaviors on the spring Relational Aggression Checklist, $F = .30, df = (1), p = .60$. (See Table 1.2).
Table 1.2.

Results of the Experimental MANOVA Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Experimental (n=18)</th>
<th>Delayed-Control (n=18)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Fall Post-Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge Questionnaire</td>
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<td>1.28 1.53</td>
<td>31.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Morning Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACL Aggressive Behaviors</td>
<td>5.72 4.50</td>
<td>5.56 4.64</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACL Pro-Social Behaviors</td>
<td>5.56 2.09</td>
<td>5.06 2.31</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Questionnaire</td>
<td>4.67 3.29</td>
<td>1.44 1.38</td>
<td>14.58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

In this chapter a summary of the results of the Experimental ANOVA are reviewed individually by program goal and then summarized as a whole. The meaning of these results is then discussed. Implications for both Easton Academy and future research are also addressed in this chapter, as well as limitations of the study and the program. A conclusion is then presented at the end of the chapter.

Summary of Results

Program Goal A: Increase Participant’s Knowledge of Relational Aggression

The results of the Experimental MANOVA indicated a significant difference between the experimental group and the delayed-control group both at the post-assessment in the fall and the morning assessment in the spring for the Knowledge Questionnaire. The significance found indicates the program successfully increased the participant’s knowledge of relational aggression, both immediately following the program in the fall and after a ten week period of time passing when assessed in the morning of the spring programming.

Program Goal B: Decrease Relationally Aggressive Behaviors

The results of the Experimental MANOVA did not indicate a significant difference between the experimental group and the delayed-control group at the post-assessment in the morning assessment in the spring for a decrease in relationally aggressive behaviors. The lack of significance found indicates the program did not successfully decrease the participant’s use of relationally aggressive behaviors upon assessment in the morning of the spring programming.
Program Goal C: Increase Pro-Social Behaviors

The results of the Experimental MANOVA did not indicate a significant difference between the experimental group and the delayed-control group at the post-assessment in the morning assessment in the spring for an increase in pro-social behaviors. The lack of significance found indicates the program did not successfully increase the participant’s use of pro-social behaviors upon assessment in the morning of the spring programming.

The results of the Experimental MANOVA therefore indicated that while the program successfully increased the experimental group’s knowledge of relational aggression, the program did not have a significant impact on decreasing relationally aggressive behaviors or increasing the pro-social behaviors of the participants. These findings indicate that the one day relational aggression workshop was effective at increasing the participants knowledge; however was not effective at decreasing the relationally aggressive behaviors of the participants, or increasing the pro-social behaviors of the participants.

Implications for Easton Academy

Easton Academy self-reportedly shared that relational aggression was a problem within their school, and therefore a relational aggression program was implemented as part of the school’s Life Skills programming. While the program showed that it was effective in increasing the participants’ knowledge of relational aggression, the program did not prove to be effective in decreasing the participants’ relationally aggressive behavior, or increasing the pro-social skills of the participants. It is therefore imperative for Easton Academy to discuss possible options for improvement on the present programming.
An option for Easton Academy’s relational aggression programming is to continue to utilize the literature to create the most effect programming possible at their institution. As relational aggression programming is still new, there is still developing literature that may be able to provide additional resources for school-based programming. One such example of developing literature that may prove useful is Leadbeater (2010). In Leadbeater (2010) a review of community-university research prevention efforts were addressed lending important information for school based relational aggression programming.

The programs identified in the article: (a) WITS, Walk Way, Ignore, Talk, Seek Help), (b) WITS LEADs (WITS Leadership Program-Look and Listen, Explore Points of View, Act, Did it work? Seek Help, and (c) PRASIE (Preventing Relational Aggression in Schools Everyday), focus on the students’ exposure to learning about relational aggression and strategies to combat it, while also emphasizing that there is a more contextual focus in combating relational aggression. Prior to these programs, the effects of prevention programs on other contextual influences were rarely assessed including family, school, classroom, or neighborhood characteristics that support bullying (Hoglund & Leadbeater, 2004). In more recent prevention programs, however, it has been shown that addressing relational aggression from a contextual perspective has a greater impact on addressing relationally aggressive behaviors and pro-social skills (Leadbeater, 2010).

Due to the research supporting a more contextual approach to relational aggression prevention it would likely be valuable for Easton Academy, and other schools wanting to combat relational aggression, to incorporate this strategy into their approach to prevention. Addressing relational aggression programming from a more contextual perspective includes
prevention and education for students, school, parents, and the community alike. Some information on how to approach relational aggression programming from a more contextual perspective is provided by Leadbeater (2010):

*Personal targets* for the prevention of aggression and victimization need to take into account the sensitivities of young adolescents to the regard of their peers. The developmental advances in their social and cognitive sophistication can help children to understand others’ internal worlds and the personal and the negative interpersonal consequences of relational aggression, but only in contexts that also promote pro-social (socially responsible) norms. Information about relational aggression also needs to focus on the prevention of social aggression in cyber-bullying. *Peer targets* include the need to identify and influence peer beliefs and values about all types of interpersonal aggression; foster bystanders’ roles that reduce rather than support aggression; and bring socially competent and less competent children together in cooperative, meaningful, and overt social actions. Parents and nonparent adults need to be involved in positive ways in young peoples’ peer networks to promote pro-social norms. *Contextual targets* also include broadening meaningful opportunities for youth to interact in activities that reach across boundaries created by school-based or classroom cliques. These activities can foster social responsibility, nonaggressive norms, opportunities for pro-social leadership, and opportunities for participation with adults in improving their schools, neighborhoods, and communities. (pp. 591)

Included in this contextual approach would be continued programming for the students within Easton Academy and other schools in need. Based on the present program
the students showed a great degree of engagement with the program and connected with the information during the program. Upon completion of the one day program, both in the fall and in the spring, the young women and faculty facilitators shared positive feedback with the principal researcher. Both the students and facilitators shared verbally that they felt the program was well executed, important, and enjoyable. Many of the young women provided positive feedback on their program evaluations, as well sharing that they enjoyed the program and were interested in the possibility of getting involved with the topic themselves in a school based group. For these reasons it could potentially benefit Easton Academy to continue the present programming within the contextual model in an effort to reach the students.

There are, however some modifications of the present program that could potentially serve as more of a benefit to the students. One modification is to reduce the amount of lecture time in the educational piece of the program and to include more interactive skill building activities. Many of the women stated this on their program evaluation sheets and it is important that their voices be heard. As the program showed a significant difference between the groups for increasing the knowledge, but not for any change of the student’s behaviors, it would be important to try to increase the skill building set. The effort would therefore be to have an impact on the young women’s behaviors, while keeping their level knowledge increased.

In addition it may be important for Easton Academy to review the program goals and create possible modifications to the goals. While the contextual approach empirically has shown to be most effective at reducing relationally aggressive behaviors and increasing pro-
social behaviors it may be more effective to assess the changing of the student’s behaviors as a result of the combination of the contextual programming, rather than the one day programming. The one day program goals may therefore be modified to be inclusive of a different set of goals. Much of the program materials aim towards educating the young women to assist them in identifying relational aggression, understanding what relational aggression is and looks like in their lives, allow targets to identify, understand and evaluate their experience, to begin to teach empathy and bystander intervention, and to teach the young women to learn to take responsibility for their actions. The program goals of the one day program may therefore need to be modified to better fit what the aim of the programming resources are.

In addition, although many scholars may doubt the efficacy of a one day program it is imperative to see the benefits of a one day program. Although quantitatively there may not have been significance in the behaviors of the young women, they individually may have experienced something significant within the program. It may therefore be pertinent for Easton Academy, and other schools involved in relational aggression programming and assessment, to include a qualitative piece to the study in order to gain a richer understanding of the young women’s qualitative experience of the programming.

Beyond the modifications to the student’s programming at Easton Academy, in co-ordinance with the contextual model put forth by Leadbeater (2010), adding programming for the faculty and staff would create a stronger relational aggression program. While working with Easton Academy it became clear that many of the faculty, staff and parents were uneducated in relational aggression and therefore there was no open discussion of the
topic, no rules in place regarding relational aggression, and therefore no clear consequences or interventions from teachers in place. It is therefore imperative to have the faculty and administration of the school trained in relational aggression prevention and intervention. Within the literature it has been found that teachers’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors can be vital to limiting relational aggression in school settings (Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010), and that training for the teachers and administration of the school could reduce relational victimization, as more knowledgeable teachers may be better equipped to stop victimization (Verlaan and Termel, 2010). In relation to the contextual targets of combating relational aggression, particularly important to Easton Academy and other school based programming, is creating a safe school climate that does not tolerate relationally aggressive behaviors. The relational aggression programming designed to reduce the relationally aggressive behaviors of the students and increase the pro-social skills of the students, therefore, relies upon the training and knowledge of school faculty and administration, as well as the students.

Even stretching the scope further would be educating the parents on relational aggression and providing them information and resources on ways in which they may help. In an effort to bring the parents into the process, Easton Academy could have a parent program on relational aggression in which the information and resources are shared with the parents. Take home parent information packets could also be included as part of the student or faculty programming, informing the parents of what the school is doing in an effort to combat relational aggression, and providing information to educate parents on how they could assist with the process.
In conclusion, including the parents, faculty, and staff in addition to the students will provide a potentially more effective means of reducing the relational aggressive behaviors present in their school, as well as increasing the pro-social skills of their students. While Easton Academy is taking steps to provide programming to their student’s on relational aggression, integrating this more contextual perspective on the relational aggression programming may provide a more effective means for the combating the relational aggression within their school. Application of the contextual model, assessment, and literature of contextual programming to the school’s efforts would be pertinent next steps for Easton Academy’s efforts to reduce the problem of relational aggression within their school.

**Implications for Additional Future Research**

While more recent research provides support for the efficacy of contextual approaches to relational aggression programming and intervention, assessment and enhancement of these programs are necessary. Continuous assessment is important to provide consistent feedback and reform the program when necessary. In addition, contexts may also vary by culture and the cultural sensitivity of programs for children from immigrant or aboriginal groups, or from rural or inner city locations, needs to be assessed (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2010). As Easton Academy was overall a homogenous population, extending the program evaluation to different cultures and different settings may provide more insight on the efficacy of the program across diverse populations and contexts.

An additional implication for future research stems from the lack of empirical validity of the measures utilized in the data analysis of the study. The first implication of this that while there is the Peer Nomination Instrument (PNI) for younger children (grades 3rd-6th) and
the Peer Nomination Instrument of Social Behavior (PSNB) for older adolescents (college) there are no measures for adolescents between the grades of 7th -12th. In relation, there is vastly limited research on these ages within the literature of relational aggression. An empirically validated measure of relational aggression is needed for these adolescents and more research needs to be completed for adolescents in these grades.

Another implication from the lack of empirically validated measures is that the peer nomination measures are the only empirically valid measures in the field of relational aggression research. The lack of valid measures is a limitation for all relational aggression research. All of the information in the field is therefore reliant on the peer nomination of the children and adolescents. In terms of limitations of the research in the field this creates a mono-method bias. It is therefore is necessary to develop additional empirically valid measures within the field. In order to properly assess the efficacy of programs, empirically validated measures are needed to ensure the validity of the results of the evaluation.

**Limitations of the Study**

As stated prior, a limitation to the present study was the unreliability of the measures. Of the measures used, the Peer Nomination of Social Behavior (PNSB) was the only valid and reliable measure found in the literature for relational aggression research; however the majority of the students did not properly the complete PNSB. The lack of proper competition of the measure therefore led to its removal from the data analysis of the study. Removal of the PSNB is a limitation to the results of the study as it was the only empirically valid measure in the study.
In addition, as there is no peer nomination measure in existence for the age range of the adolescents in the study, the principal researcher chose to utilize the Peer Nomination of Social Behavior (18-23 yr olds) as opposed to the Peer Nomination Instrument (9-11yr olds). The decision on which measure to utilize was based upon the language utilized in the measures. Using the PSNB instead of the PNI may have served as a limitation to the present study; however as addressed in implications for future research the true limitation is the lack of existence of a measure for the age range of the participants in the present study.

As there are no other existing measures presently used in relational aggression research, other resources were needed to be able to assess the goals of the present study, resulting in the use of measures that had not undergone empirical validation. Although some of the measures were previously used by the school for assessment, the lack of empirical validation of the measures questions the validity of the results of the study in itself.

In addition, generalizability may serve as a threat to external validity of the present study. As the goals of the present study were based on the goals for the specific population at Easton Academy, due to the homogenous nature of the population (predominantly white females ages 13-15 years old from the Southeastern part of the United States attending a private school), the result of the present study may be challenging to generalize to additional populations.

**Limitations of the Program**

One of the most limiting aspects of the program was the time of the week and year the program was delivered. All of the Life skills Programming for the school took place on Fridays. Offering the programming on Fridays is already a limitation, as many students
would either be absent due to the weekend, or not fully present due to it being the end of the week. In addition, the fall programming fell on a day that a popular movie came out in which many of the participants had attended the midnight showing. The participants that attended the movie where therefore already fatigued, and some absent during the morning programming. In the spring the programming fell on the Friday prior to the school’s Spring Break. Due to this timing many students were absent, or left early, due to the upcoming vacation.

**Conclusion**

The one day relational aggression program proved to be effective in increasing the participant’s knowledge of relational aggression. It did not prove effective, however, at changing the participant’s behaviors (i.e., decreasing the participant’s relationally aggressive behaviors and/or increasing the participant’s pro-social skills). As more recent research has found that addressing relational aggression from a contextual perspective proves to be a more effective means of combating relational aggression, this contextual perspective should be implemented at Easton Academy, and other schools in need of relational aggression programming.

In addition, as with any study limitations were present, with the major limitation to the study being the lack of empirically validated measures used to assess the present program. Future research should attempt to create valid measures for use in assessing relational aggression programming. Such measures are vital to implementing and assessing contextual relational aggression programming.
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Appendix A: Consent Form
North Carolina State University

INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: Relational Aggression and Media Literacy: Examinations of Life Skills Programming for Young Women.

Co-Principal Investigators: Kasi Lynch, Counselor Education Student
Millie Maxwell, PhD

Faculty Sponsor: Marc Grimmett, PhD, Associate Professor of Counseling, NCSU

Dear Ninth Grade Students:

As you know, you have 3 more COMPASS days this school year. All students will participate in them as usual; however, we are asking for permission to use the information that we gain from your participation in the program to guide research at North Carolina State University and UNC-Chapel Hill. The purpose of the research is to gain a better understanding about the concerns and relationships of ninth grade female adolescents, to measure the impact of the COMPASS educational opportunities, and to determine the effects that the media and other social pressures may have on students.

INFORMATION

In agreeing to participate, you will not be asked to do anything that exceeds the normal expectations of the COMPASS program. The only differences are:

1. The class will be divided on COMPASS days in November and March. Some students will take part in the relationship programs and some students will take part in the media literacy programs. This will be determined randomly (kind of like the flip of a coin) and groups cannot be changed. You will get to cover the same material, just on different COMPASS days. In other words, if you cover relationships in November, you will cover media literacy in March (or vice versa).

2. On November 20, you will be asked to complete a few short questionnaires at the beginning of the day. This is very much like many COMPASS days when you are asked by the school to complete some surveys before and after session. This will be done during your regular COMPASS session, and the questions take about 10-20 minutes. These are completely confidential.

As usual, the COMPASS days will take approximately 4 ½ hours. The total amount of time students will devote to the programs is identical to the other COMPASS days and to the
amount of time all students in the school devote to these days. Our involvement will be on November 20, 2009 and March 12, 2010.

3. On March 12, 2010, we will begin the day with a few short questionnaires again, just like in November.

All students will have the same time commitment and requirements regardless of whether or not they allow the use of their data.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks of participating and allowing the use of the data collected. Very similar groups and survey procedures have been conducted at SMS with success in the past. The data (information gathered) are confidential. Only codes will be used on the questionnaires. Any code linking you to your responses will be kept in a locked file, off-campus. Some of the questions may be personal and private, and you will have the option not to answer any question that you choose. Sometimes we will be talking about sensitive topics like body image, friendships, and media pressures. We are aware that these topics can stir up emotions and concerns, so support staff at SMS will be on hand to help any students who may be struggling with the content and need to talk with a counselor. Additionally, the researchers named above will be available to talk with you on the COMPASS days as well.

You are also welcome to withdraw your consent to participate by allowing the use your data for this research at any time.

BENEFITS

There may be important benefits to this study. You may learn about yourself, media literacy, and forming relationships. It is also possible that you may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge that may help other people in the future. Indirectly, your participation may help researchers to understand the needs of young women like you. From the information learned, we may be able to help improve or create meaningful programs for health, relationships, and well-being.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Again, the information from the study and any records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a password protected file, on an encrypted server off-campus. Your name or other identifying information will only be known to the researchers listed on this document and will not be known to anyone at SMS. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.
CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact either of the researchers listed below.

Kasi Lynch
chiotimhiphop@hotmail.com
973-534-7838

Millie Maxwell, PhD
Millie_maxwell@med.unc.edu
919-966-6662

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB), Ms. Debra Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, Raleigh, NC 27695, or via phone at (919) 515-4514, and via e-mail at debra_paxton@ncsu.edu.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in the COMPASS Life Skills program is determined by SMS. Your allowing us to use the information generated from the program it is voluntary. If you decide to participate by letting use use the data, you may withdraw your permission at any time.

CONSENT

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Participant’s signature ________________________________Date __________________
Parent or Guardian signature____________________________Date____________________

Investigator's signature____________________________Date ____________

THANK YOU for your consideration in allowing us this opportunity.
Appendix B: Pre-Assessment Instruments (Experimental)
Demographics Questionnaire (DQ)

Please tell us about yourself. This information will be kept confidential. Please fill in the blanks or circle your answer.

1. What is your age? ______________

2. Which of these groups would you say best represents your race? (Circle one)
   a. White
   b. Black or African American
   c. Asian
   d. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   e. American Indian or Alaska Native
   f. If you primarily identify as a race not listed, please specify it here_______________

3. Please circle one: Day student Boarding student

4. Approximate Height: ____ feet ____ inches

5. Approximate Weight: ________ lbs.

6. Have you ever had a time when you weighed much more than other people thought you should weigh?
   If so, how old were you ______?

7. Have you ever had a time when you weighed much less than other people thought you should weigh?
   If so, how old were you ______?

8. What is the state and country of your hometown?__________________
Think about your behavior in the past three months. Check off each time you have done the following:

_____ Called other kids names or made fun of them?
_____ Said something about someone else that you knew was not nice?
_____ Laughed when someone else made fun of another girl?
_____ Written a note about someone else that was not nice?
_____ Felt put down by someone but not spoken up about it?
_____ Asked your friends to stop talking about another friend who wasn’t there?
_____ Let someone else talk you into doing something you did not really want to do?
_____ Refused to talk to someone so it would upset her?
_____ Repeated a rumor you heard about a friend?
_____ Started a rumor about a girl who was mean to someone else?
_____ Made fun of another girl’s clothing, hair, or appearance?
_____ Stood up for another girl your friends were making fun of?
_____ Sent an e-mail to someone that said something negative you wouldn’t say in person?
_____ Been the target of a rumor?
_____ Threatened someone because she made you mad?
_____ Gone to sit with someone who was by herself and sad?
_____ Threatened to gossip about another girl?
_____ Received messages in a chat room that hurt your feelings?
_____ Tried to sit with a group of girls at lunch and been told you couldn’t?
_____ Excluded someone to make her feel bad?
____ Cried or felt sad because of something mean another girl did to you?
____ Helped another girl with her homework, even though your friends say she is stupid and will never be able to understand the assignment?
____ Made a new friend?
____ Been part of a crowd of girls who watched as your leader made fun of another girl?
____ Deliberately done something you know would hurt someone?
____ Took something that belonged to someone else just to bother her?
____ Wanted to speak up and defend another girl, but didn’t because you were afraid?
____ Had to sit by yourself in class because your friends decided to move away from you?
____ Complimented a girl you didn’t know very well on her outfit?
____ Tried to convince others to be mean to someone or ignore her?
____ Does something to embarrass a girl you don’t like?
____ Threatened not to be friends with someone if she didn’t do what you wanted her to do?
____ Stayed and watched one girl be mean to another?
____ Dared someone to do something she didn’t want to?
____ Insulted someone verbally because she looked at you the wrong way?
____ Wrote something unkind about a girl you don’t like in a public place, without signing your name?
____ Called a girl you don’t like an unkind name when she could hear you?
____ Listened in when a friend called another girl and tried to get her to talk to you?
____ Made up something to get a former friend in trouble?
____ Given a friend a compliment?
____ Teased a girl you know but not very well

____ Deliberately ignored a girl you don’t like when she said hi to you?

____ Stayed friends with someone because you were afraid of what she would do if you didn’t?

____ Been teased by someone else about the way you look?

____ Excluded someone from your group because your friends told you to?

____ Looked or gestured at someone in a mean way meant to hurt or insult her?

____ Been in a chat room but not participated when a girl you know got flamed by your friends?

____ Forgiven a friend that hurt your feelings?
Please answer the following based on the knowledge you have in the subject area:

What is relational aggression?

What are the different players in relational aggression and can you describe each one?

Why do females tend to use relational aggression more than males?

What are some of the negative effects of relational aggression?

What are some relationally aggressive behaviors?

What makes a good friendship?

What is it called when you step in and stop relational aggression? Can you give an example of this?
Appendix C: Post-Assessment Instruments (Experimental)
RAS

Section I. Please put a mark next to the answers that best apply.

1. Have you ever participated in relational aggression?
   ____ No, I have never participated in relational aggression
   ____ Yes, I have participated in relational aggression
   ____ If yes, then how often have you participated in RA
     _____ Daily _____ Weekly _____ Monthly

2. Have you participated in relational aggression in the past three months?
   ____ No, I have not participated in relational aggression in the past three months
   ____ Yes, I have participated in relational aggression in the past three months.
     If yes, then how often have you participated in RA in the past three months
     _____ Daily _____ Weekly _____ Monthly

3. What role have you ever played in RA?
   ____ I have never been involved in RA
   ____ Instigator
   ____ Participant
   ____ Observer/Bystander

4. What role have you played in RA in the past three months?
   ____ I have not been involved in RA in the past three months
   ____ Instigator
   ____ Participant
   ____ Observer/Bystander
5. Have you ever been the target of RA?

___ No, I have never been the target of RA

___ Yes, I have been the target of RA

If yes, what kind of RA was it? (check all that apply)

___ I have never experienced RA

___ Name Calling

___ Excluded or left out by others

___ Teased

___ Gossip

___ Threatened

___ Text messages, Emails, or Instant Messages

___ Picked on me because of my looks

___ Harassed because of my race or religion

___ Comments or verbal taunts related to homosexuality

___ Rumors spread about me

___ Three way calls

___ Other (explain) : _______________________________________________________

______________________________

6. Have you been the target of RA in the past three months?

___ No, I have not been the target of RA in the past three months

___ Yes, I have not been the target of RA in the past three months
If yes, what kind of RA was it? (check all that apply)

____ I have never experienced RA

____ Name Calling

____ Excluded or left out by others

____ Teased

____ Gossip

____ Threatened

____ Text messages, Emails, or Instant Messages

____ Picked on me because of my looks

____ Harassed because of my race or religion

____ Comments or verbal taunts related to homosexuality

____ Rumors spread about me

____ Three way calls

____ Other (explain) : ___________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

7. Have you done anything to intervene and try and stop RA (i.e. bystander intervention)?

____ No, I have not done anything to intervene and try and stop RA

____ Yes, I have done something to intervene and try and stop RA

    If yes, what did you do? __________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

8. Have you done anything to intervene and try and stop RA (i.e. bystander intervention) in the past three months?
No, I have not done anything to intervene and try and stop RA in the past three months

Yes, I have done something to intervene and try and stop RA in the past three months

If yes, what did you do? __________________________________________

Section II. Please answer the following using the following scale:

1 = strongly agree with the statement

2 = agree with the statement

3 = disagree with the statement

4 = strongly disagree with the statement

I feel I know a lot about relational aggression

Technology has been used against me (i.e. cyber-bullying)

I am an aggressor of relational aggression (Queen Bee)

I am a target of relational aggression

I take part in many pro-social behaviors (i.e. helping others, treating others with respect, etc.)

I am a bystander of relational aggression

I am a good friend

Relational Aggression is a problem in our school

I feel that I cope with issues related to relational aggression well

My life has negatively been affected by relational aggression

I stand up for myself and others

It is hard to go to school sometimes because of relational aggression

Girls in my school are mean
Many other girls in my school take part in pro-social behaviors

I use technology to be mean to others (i.e. cyber-bullying)

**Section III. Please circle a response for each of the following questions:**

You notice a girl sitting alone, you…

a. think “oh what a loser”

b. feel sorry for her, but your friends will be mad if you ask her to sit with you

c. ask her to sit with you and your friends

You like an outfit a girl has on, you…

a. think to yourself “oh she thinks she looks” so good and roll your eyes

b. make a negative comment to your friends just to make you look good

c. compliment her outfit

You see a girl crying in the bathroom, you…

a. laugh with your friends because her eyes are red and her face is all puffy

b. feel sorry for her, but are afraid to reach out to her because of what your friends might say

  c. ask her what is wrong and if there is anything you can do for her

You know there is always one girl that is picked on and teased, you…

a. think “She’s so weird no wonder people pick on her”

b. laugh with your friends, thankful it is not you
c. stand up for her when you see this happening

A new girl arrives at your school and she is beautiful and wealthy, you…

a. think “I cannot afford for her to take my place at the top”

b. think “It won’t take long for her to become popular”

c. think “Wow, she is really pretty, I know she is new, I wonder if she would like to hang out with me and my friends”

You are on the Internet IM’ing with your friends and they suggest you send a message you know is not true about a girl, you…

a. think “Great idea, she deserves it”

b. add your own twist to the message even though you don’t agree with what they are saying

c. tell them you will not send the message because you know it is not true

Your school counselor has asked you to be part of a student team that will be trained to help girls that have been hurt by relational aggression, you…

a. tell him/her that you are too busy to be part of a group but hope they succeed at helping all those poor girls

b. wish you could be part of the group, but your friends would totally ostracize you

c. tell him/her that you would love to be a part of the group

Your school starts an Anti-Relational Aggression program, you…
a.  thinks it’s stupid and lame
b.  think it’s a good idea, but would never admit it to your friends
c.  think it is about time, there are too many mean girls at our school

Section IV. Think about your behavior in the past three months. Check off each time you have done the following:

___ Called other kids names or made fun of them?
___ Said something about someone else that you knew was not nice?
___ Laughed when someone else made fun of another girl?
___ Written a note about someone else that was not nice?
___ Felt put down by someone but not spoken up about it?
___ Asked your friends to stop talking about another friend who wasn’t there?
___ Let someone else talk you into doing something you did not really want to do?
___ Refused to talk to someone so it would upset her?
___ Repeated a rumor you heard about a friend?
___ Started a rumor about a girl who was mean to someone else?
___ Made fun of another girl’s clothing, hair, or appearance?
___ Stood up for another girl your friends were making fun of?
___ Sent an e-mail to someone that said something negative you wouldn’t say in person?
___ Been the target of a rumor?
___ Threatened someone because she made you mad?
___ Gone to sit with someone who was by herself and sad?
___ Threatened to gossip about another girl?
_____ Received messages in a chat room that hurt your feelings?

_____ Tried to sit with a group of girls at lunch and been told you couldn’t?

_____ Excluded someone to make her feel bad?

_____ Cried or felt sad because of something mean another girl did to you?

_____ Helped another girl with her homework, even though your friends say she is stupid and will never be able to understand the assignment?

_____ Made a new friend?

_____ Been part of a crowd of girls who watched as your leader made fun of another girl?

_____ Deliberately done something you know would hurt someone?

_____ Took something that belonged to someone else just to bother her?

_____ Wanted to speak up and defend another girl, but didn’t because you were afraid?

_____ Had to sit by yourself in class because your friends decided to move away from you?

_____ Complimented a girl you didn’t know very well on her outfit?

_____ Tried to convince others to be mean to someone or ignore her?

_____ Does something to embarrass a girl you don’t like?

_____ Threatened not to be friends with someone if she didn’t do what you wanted her to do?

_____ Stayed and watched one girl be mean to another?

_____ Dared someone to do something she didn’t want to?

_____ Insulted someone verbally because she looked at you the wrong way?

_____ Wrote something unkind about a girl you don’t like in a public place, without signing your name?

_____ Called a girl you don’t like an unkind name when she could hear you?
____ Listened in when a friend called another girl and tried to get her to talk to you?
____ Made up something to get a former friend in trouble?
____ Given a friend a compliment?
____ Teased a girl you know but not very well
____ Deliberately ignored a girl you don’t like when she said hi to you?
____ Stayed friends with someone because you were afraid of what she would do if you didn’t?
____ Been teased by someone else about the way you look?
____ Excluded someone from your group because your friends told you to?
____ Looked or gestured at someone in a mean way meant to hurt or insult her?
____ Been in a chat room but not participated when a girl you know got flamed by your friends?
____ Forgiven a friend that hurt your feelings?
Section V. Please answer the following based on the knowledge you have in the subject area:

What is relational aggression?

What are the different players in relational aggression and can you describe each one?

Why do females tend to use relational aggression more than males?

What are some of the negative effects of relational aggression?

What are some relationally aggressive behaviors?

What makes a good friendship?

What is it called when you step in and stop relational aggression? Can you give an example of this?
Program Evaluation

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your feedback is very helpful to us.

1. Please describe what you liked best about the program today.

2. Which activity or discussion did you like least or seemed least applicable to you?

3. Summarize in a few sentences what you learned today.

4. Do you think this same material should be covered with 9th grade students next year? Why or why not?

5. Overall, my leaders were knowledgeable about the subject matter.

   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Not much  Very Much

6. Overall, I enjoyed today’s workshop:

   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Not much  Very Much

7. Would you be interested in being trained to co-lead similar groups with middle or elementary school students?

   Thanks so much😊!
Appendix D: Pre-Assessment Instruments (Delayed Control)
Instructions: Below are 34 descriptions of social behavior. For each description, please choose five individuals from your list who best fit each description. Using the group roster, write the ID number of each individual in the lines provided after each item. You cannot nominate yourself—do not use your own number for any answer!! Find the numbers of 5 people who fit a particular description, and fill in only as many ID numbers as there are people who fit the description. Remember that your answers are confidential, so please answer honestly.

1. Find the numbers of 5 people who are very dependable—they follow through with their promises and commitments.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

2. Find the numbers of 5 people who threaten to break up with their romantic partner in order to get them to do what they want.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

3. Find the numbers of 5 people who insult other people’s intelligence or physical appearance when they are angry or upset at them.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

4. Find the numbers of 5 people who try to get their own way through physical domination.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

5. Find the numbers of 5 people who are willing to lend money to other people if they have a good reason for needing it.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

6. Find the numbers of 5 people who make it clear to their friends that they will think less of them unless the friends do what they want.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

7. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when they are not invited to do something with a group of people, they retaliate by excluding those people from future activities.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

8. Find the numbers of 5 people who are generally kind to other people.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

9. Find the numbers of 5 people who give other people dirty looks when they are angry at those individuals.
   
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

10. Find the numbers of 5 people who act “cold” towards individuals they are mad at.
    
    _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
11. Find the numbers of 5 people who make sure that other people get invited to participate in group activities.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

12. Find the numbers of 5 people who push and shove other people who have angered them in some way.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

13. Find the numbers of 5 people who try to damage the reputation of people they are mad at by passing on negative information about them to others.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

14. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when mad at a person, say things to make that person feel stupid or inferior.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

15. Find the numbers of 5 people who are willing to give advice when asked for it.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

16. Find the numbers of 5 people who display intense feelings of happiness or excitement.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

17. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when mad at someone, they try to steal that person’s romantic partner in order to get even with them.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

18. Find the numbers of 5 people who make an effort to include other people in their conversations.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

19. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when provoked by something a person has done or said, retaliate by threatening to physically harm them.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

20. Find the numbers of 5 people who make others feel welcome.

   _____ _____ _____ _____

21. Find the numbers of 5 people who intentionally ignore other people until they agree to do something for them (e.g., loaning them their car) or to give them something they want (e.g., money, tickets to a game or show).

   _____ _____ _____ _____

22. Find the numbers of 5 people who seem sad or depressed a lot of the time.

   _____ _____ _____ _____
23. Find the numbers of 5 people who threaten to share private information about their friends with other people in order to get them to comply with their wishes.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

24. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when angered or provoked by someone, react by hitting the person.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

25. Find the numbers of 5 people who are usually willing to lend their belongings (car, clothes, etc.) to other people.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

26. Find the numbers of 5 people who threaten to physically harm other people in order to control them.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

27. Find the numbers of 5 people who frequently express feelings of guilt.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

28. Find the numbers of 5 people who are good listeners when someone has a problem to deal with.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

29. Find the numbers of 5 people who seem to be lonely a lot of the time.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

30. Find the numbers of 5 people who react with intense anger or sadness when they are upset.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

31. Find the numbers of 5 people who, when angered or provoked by another person, react by ignoring that person or giving them the “silent treatment.”
   _____ _____ _____ _____

32. Find the numbers of 5 people who push and shove others around in order to get things they want from those people.
   _____ _____ _____ _____

33. List the numbers of those people you like to spend them most time with in your organization. Below are spaces for 10 numbers, but please list as many or as few people as you like.
   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

34. List the numbers of those people you like to spend them least time with in your organization. Once again, list as many or as few numbers as you like.
Think about your behavior in the past three months. Check off each time you have
done the following:

____ Called other kids names or made fun of them?
____ Said something about someone else that you knew was not nice?
____ Laughed when someone else made fun of another girl?
____ Written a note about someone else that was not nice?
____ Felt put down by someone but not spoken up about it?
____ Asked your friends to stop talking about another friend who wasn’t there?
____ Let someone else talk you into doing something you did not really want to do?
____ Refused to talk to someone so it would upset her?
____ Repeated a rumor you heard about a friend?
____ Started a rumor about a girl who was mean to someone else?
____ Made fun of another girl’s clothing, hair, or appearance?
____ Stood up for another girl your friends were making fun of?
____ Sent an e-mail to someone that said something negative you wouldn’t say in person?
____ Been the target of a rumor?
____ Threatened someone because she made you mad?
____ Gone to sit with someone who was by herself and sad?
____ Threatened to gossip about another girl?
____ Received messages in a chat room that hurt your feelings?
____ Tried to sit with a group of girls at lunch and been told you couldn’t?
____ Excluded someone to make her feel bad?
_____ Cried or felt sad because of something mean another girl did to you?

_____ Helped another girl with her homework, even though your friends say she is stupid and will never be able to understand the assignment?

_____ Made a new friend?

_____ Been part of a crowd of girls who watched as your leader made fun of another girl?

_____ Deliberately done something you know would hurt someone?

_____ Took something that belonged to someone else just to bother her?

_____ Wanted to speak up and defend another girl, but didn’t because you were afraid?

_____ Had to sit by yourself in class because your friends decided to move away from you?

_____ Complimented a girl you didn’t know very well on her outfit?

_____ Tried to convince others to be mean to someone or ignore her?

_____ Does something to embarrass a girl you don’t like?

_____ Threatened not to be friends with someone if she didn’t do what you wanted her to do?

_____ Stayed and watched one girl be mean to another?

_____ Dared someone to do something she didn’t want to?

_____ Insulted someone verbally because she looked at you the wrong way?

_____ Wrote something unkind about a girl you don’t like in a public place, without signing your name?

_____ Called a girl you don’t like an unkind name when she could hear you?

_____ Listened in when a friend called another girl and tried to get her to talk to you?

_____ Made up something to get a former friend in trouble?

_____ Given a friend a compliment?
____ Teased a girl you know but not very well

____ Deliberately ignored a girl you don’t like when she said hi to you?

____ Stayed friends with someone because you were afraid of what she would do if you didn’t?

____ Been teased by someone else about the way you look?

____ Excluded someone from your group because your friends told you to?

____ Looked or gestured at someone in a mean way meant to hurt or insult her?

____ Been in a chat room but not participated when a girl you know got flamed by your friends?

____ Forgiven a friend that hurt your feelings?
Please answer the following based on the knowledge you have in the subject area:

What is relational aggression?

What are the different players in relational aggression and can you describe each one?

Why do females tend to use relational aggression more than males?

What are some of the negative effects of relational aggression?

What are some relationally aggressive behaviors?

What makes a good friendship?

What is it called when you step in and stop relational aggression? Can you give an example of this?
Appendix E: Post-Assessment Instruments (Delayed Control)
Program Evaluation

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your feedback is very helpful to us.

1. Please describe what you liked best about the program today.

2. Which activity or discussion did you like least or seemed least applicable to you?

3. Summarize in a few sentences what you learned today.

4. Do you think this same material should be covered with 9th grade students next year? Why or why not?

5. Overall, my leaders were knowledgeable about the subject matter.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not much Very Much

6. Overall, I enjoyed today’s workshop:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not much Very Much

7. Would you be interested in being trained to co-lead similar groups with middle or elementary school students?
Appendix F: Information Packet
Program Agenda

8:30-9am Welcome and assessments

9-9:35am Introduction through scenario picking out players/discussion

9:35-10:10am Education

10:10-10:50am Normative Beliefs

10:50-1pm Lunch Break

1-1:40pm Friendship Poster Activity

1:40-2:10pm Storytellin’ Activity

2:10-2:25pm Walk A Mile in Her Shoes, Handling It, Hippopotamus in a Tutu, Closer

2:25-3:00pm Assessments
Girls... Girls... Girls...

- Girls are...
- Girls can be...
- Girls should be...

- I am...
- I can be...
- I should be...
Normative Beliefs Sheet 1

You are walking with a group of friends (some close friends, others not) on your way to a school sporting event. As you walk along, Lisa starts teasing Anna and tries to crowd her out so she has to walk in the street. Lisa is clearly doing this to be hurtful. Anna obviously doesn’t like it, but doesn’t do anything or say anything in her own defense. How would you react if…

1. Anna was a close friend?

2. Anna was not a close friend, but someone you felt neutral about?

3. Anna was someone you disliked?
Normative Beliefs Worksheet

Norm #1

It’s okay to go along with the group if they are being mean to someone you don’t know or don’t like.
Write an ending to the story about Anna using this Normative Belief. How does Anna feel when she is pushed away from the group?

Norm #2

It’s never okay to go along with the group and to be mean to someone, even if the person isn’t your friend.
Write an ending to the story about Anna using this normative belief. How would you feel if someone included or welcomed you into a group? How would it feel to be included instead of excluded?

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Healthy Norms

Aggression is everyone’s problem

   If there is peer aggression in our group, we all have responsibility to deal with it
   All forms of aggression are hurtful
   Aggression prevents us in forming healthy peer relationships

We treat everyone with respect and civility
   We pay compliments, not put-downs
   Everyone has a voice during group meetings, and can express their opinions and ideas
   We are not abusive, in anyway, to anyone
   We treat people this way regardless of our relationship to them (friend or not)

We are accountable for our actions
   When we see peer aggression, we want the aggressor to know she/he is being hurtful
   If our friend is the aggressor, we call her/him on it
   When we are bystanders, we do all we can to help the target
   If we are the aggressor, we recognize that we have hurt someone

After we make a mistake, we make it right
   We learn to take responsibility for our actions
   If we offend or hurt someone, we apologize
   We don’t repeat actions of aggression

Adults help us deal with aggression
   We identify the adults in our family and in our community who can help us address
   peer aggression
   When we see something wrong, we tell someone

We protect each other
   We examine our roles as bystanders and ask ourselves how our actions might change
   the outcome of peer aggression
Our List of Healthy Norms

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
Normative Beliefs Sheet 1 (Post Discussion)

You are walking with a group of friends (some close friends, others not) on your way to a school sporting event. As you walk along, Lisa starts teasing Anna and tries to crowd her out so she has to walk in the street. Lisa is clearly doing this to be hurtful. Anna obviously doesn’t like it, but doesn’t do anything or say anything in her own defense. NOW how would you react if…

1. Anna was a close friend?

2. Anna was not a close friend, but someone you felt neutral about?

3. Anna was someone you disliked?
Role Play Scenarios

Scenario #1:

Jenna, Carrie, Emma, and Brandie have been friends since first grade. This year they started high school. Over the summer they made a pact to stay friends forever. They went shopping for school clothes and bought all the same outfits and same purses— in different colors. They decided that the only new girls they would be friends with had to buy the same type of clothes.

Scenario #2:

There were four girls who lived on the same street and had been friends all through elementary school. They all had pretty different personalities, but had always hung out because they loved nearby and their families all knew each other well. When they started high school, they group didn’t have any classes together and each of them made new friends. Jen, who had always been the “leader” of the group, was planning a barbeque. Each member of the group decided to invite one of their new friends to Jen’s barbeque.

Scenario #3:

Alisha and Yolanda had been best friends since pre-school. They did everything together. Everyone was a little jealous of their friendship because they had so much fun together. When they walked down the halls at school they talked to each other, but always made a point to smile at other people. At lunch, they always sat next to each other, but talked to everyone else at the table too. Alisha was an athlete and Yolanda spent all her extra time playing the violin, so the met lots of other people involved in those activities.
Storytellin’

- **Intro:** Her story

- **Chapter 1:** What do you think of her?

- **Chapter 2:** Why do you think she is a victim?

- **Chapter 3:** If nothing changes how will her story end?

- **Chapter 4:** What could you do to help her? How could you contribute to her situation in a positive way?

- **Chapter 5:** After your bystander intervention, how will her story end?
Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

- What does the statement “Walk a mile in another person’s shoes” mean to you?

- How would you feel if you were the character in your story?
“Hand” ling It
Hippopotamus in a Tutu