



Promoting Leadership, Empathy, Accountability, and Discussion

Summary of Research on Relational Aggression

- According to Dr. Charisse Nixon out of Penn State University, there are no longer any gender effects in the research on R. A.; BOTH boys and girls use relational aggression equally.
- Relational aggression is as harmful as physical aggression: studies show that your body reacts physiologically the same to R.A. as it does to a physical blow.
- According to Rigby and Johnson, students who felt that their peers expected them to stand up for others were much more likely to do so. (*The same expectations from their teachers meant little to them.*)
- Multiple studies have shown that when the BYSTANDER intervenes in aggressive situations, the aggression stops in the vast majority of cases.
- Kids who use high levels of aggression against others tend to perceive hostility in their social environments even when none exists.
- Girls who are considered aggressors or “Queen Bees” by their peers tend to have higher rates of sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and depression than their peers. (Dr. Charisse Nixon, 2005)
- A large percentage of boys who were recognized as “bullies” during middle school and high school years end up incarcerated by the time they are 25.
- Kids who use higher levels of RA tend to have a more negative view of themselves and believe that peers view them negatively relative to kids who use less aggression.
- Not only targets experience negative effects from aggression; bystanders have also been proven to experience negative effects and show lasting effects of the cycle of aggression.
- Relational aggression tends to peak in seventh grade, but it starts as early as preschool and can be seen in both women and men of all ages. (Dr. Charisse Nixon, The Ophelia Project)