

Creating Schools and Communities of Dignity

Want to reach me?

RPW, Inc.
3604 14th St., NW
2nd floor
Washington, DC 20010
202.545.0633
www.rosalindwiseman.com

Rosalind Wiseman: rosalind@rosalindwiseman.com

Candace Nuzzo: candace@rosalindwiseman.com

Facebook: Search “Rosalind Wiseman” and join my Page

YouTube: Search “Rosalind Wiseman” and subscribe to RPW Channel

Twitter: www.twitter.com/rosalindwiseman

Have you heard a parent say...

- You know they don't act like that at home...
- I know my child isn't perfect but...
- Please don't mention where this information is coming from.
- If you mess with my kid you mess with me....
- I've talked to the other parents and...
- How dare you...

Do people at your school say?

- They're in denial.
- They won't be parents. They want the school to fix everything.
- They're too involved and micromanaging.
- They have way too much time on their hands.

Dear Mrs. Clarke,

I'm an advocate for inclusion as well, a belief I've reinforced with my children incessantly since they were babies. While I cannot control or speak to their every move when they are at school, I have never had reason to believe that Christina has been anything less than typical in her treatment of her classmates. Not one teacher, administrator or parent has ever hinted at anything less than positive.

If we need to clarify the definition of "inclusion," then let's do it, and by all means, let's get the other parents and teachers involved. There seems to be a lot of confusion on this point. A group of friends CHOOSING to play together does not equal exclusionary behavior. If girls outside that group are not comfortable inserting themselves into the group, this is not exclusionary behavior. In fact, in the case of the skits, all the other girls in the class were invited to participate. If the others don't FEEL welcome, I'm not sure this is the responsibility of the leaders. And – for those whose antennae are in the air looking for a hive of bees – a group of girl friends does not equal a clique does not equal a hive.

But the most troubling part of this whole thing is that Christina was singled out and humiliated while her friends watched. Regardless of what was actually said – and I know there are many versions floating around the other girls present all agree that Christina “got it the worst.” This is shocking to me. If she was such a huge social problem, why didn’t you or someone else contact me? This is alarming to me because I didn’t expect that teachers at THIS SCHOOL practiced this form of discipline – regardless of the crime. And finally – NO TEACHER should dispense advice to children about who they should be friends with. I’m the mom, and I don’t. And trust me, I have some strong opinions about these things.

Christina is shattered. I feel betrayed. But please, no apologies to me. You need to apologize to Christina. I have rarely seen her as distraught. She idolized you. Your treatment of her has crushed her – especially because she is not sure what she did wrong. She really feels she and her friends (yes, there were more involved than just Christina) did everything they could to involve others. The punishment did not fit the crime, and the accusations don’t hold water.

As for me, honestly, it’s going to take a while for me to calm down.
So start with Christina, and we’ll take it from there.

Kathy Green

Dignity vs. Respect

Dignitas = worthy

People inherently should be treated with dignity;
the right to have their voice heard.

Respectus = to look back at; regard

Respect is a feeling of deep admiration for
someone based on their abilities, qualities, or
achievements.

The Research

Research shows that repeated bullying is associated with negative school outcomes such as absenteeism and poor academic performance. *Prevention Researcher* Volume 11 #3 2004

Aggressive victims will internalize the continuous victimization until they can no longer cope. Once they have reached their limit they resort to violence i.e. Shooting a gun, starting a fire, or becoming bullies themselves. Others may choose smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and using drugs. Olweaus 1993.

The most recent and compelling research on bullying indicates we need to intervene on many levels simultaneously. Bullies, victims, bystanders, school personnel, and parents. ASCA, 2008 “*The Buzz on Bullying*”

The Terms

Relational Aggression: The intent to harm others through purposeful manipulation or damage to peer relationships (Crick 1995).

Direct aggression (hands over ears, calling names etc.)

Indirect aggression (exclusion, rumor spreading)

Why do they do it?

Alleviating boredom/creating excitement (giving people something to talk about)

Friendship and group processes (attention seeking, inclusion in the group/who's in and who's out, self-protection, and revenge/retaliation)

Understands group dynamics and has larger social networks than targets.

Refrains from self-disclosure but invites self-disclosure (Grotperter and Crick 1996).

School and the Family

While children first learn about social hierarchies and develop social skills within a family, it is the school setting that provides the first significant experience for most children with respect to negotiating social rules, expectations, hierarchies, and conflicts in large groups. (Relational Aggression in Children and Adolescence, Univ. of Oregon, 2006)

When Does it Start?

- Studies indicate children at four and five years of age can associate purposeful manipulation and damage to relationships with social prominence.
- They are “controversial” children. They are perceived by their peers as more sociable and more aggressive. “They are good resource controllers, socially skilled, popular, conscientious, and socially integrated and yet are among the most aggressive, dominant, arrogant, children in the peer group. This bi-strategic mix of positive and negative behavior allows them to maintain their standing in the social hierarchy.”

*Early Education and Development, 2005

Recent Questions from an assembly

- If you were from another country and kids were making fun of you, what would you do?
- What happens when boys on your bus keep doing things that hurt my feelings and I tell the bus driver but he doesn't do anything?
- If someone was mean to you earlier in the year and you see them getting made fun of now, what should you do?
- When is the right time to tell on a bully and who do you talk to?
- If I were a by-stander and the bully told me not to or else I would get beat up, what should I do?
- What if your best friend is the bully and they don't even know it?
- What do you do when your mom throws up everyday after school?
- Will I always be the loser reject?

Fag

**Tries too hard to
impress others**

Weak

**Uptight/
Can't take
a joke**

**Strong/Tough
Takes Risks Funny
Right Style/Gear**

Tall

Money

Girls

Athletic

No gear

Backs down

Whipped

**Nothing is serious except
challenges to masculinity**

**Passionate about non-
culturally cool things**

**Like a
girl/baby**

No gear

Fat

*Bitch

Right style/gear	Pretty
Thin	Good Hair
Popular	Confident
Good grades*	
Athletic*	
Verbally Intimidating	
Able/willing to fight	

Uptight

Backs down

Tries too hard

Slut

Inexperienced

Dyke

Poor Passionate Baby

The Secret Language

Katie: Did you see Jade trying to guess what we were talking about? She's so stupid, she totally copies everything I do!

Sara: I know. She's so annoying!

Katie: During recess, let's just pretend she doesn't exist. Like she's invisible.

Sara: I guess.

Katie: It'll be funny! And she'll finally get the message that we don't want to be friends with her!

SEAL

- **STOP:** Breathe, listen, and think when and where, now or later?
- **EXPLAIN:** What happened that you don't like and what you want.
- **AFFIRM:** Affirm and acknowledge.
- **LOCK:** In the friendship, take a vacation or lock it out.

Anti-Apologies

- **Apologizes in a condescending or insincere tone of voice**
- **Refuses to take responsibility**
- **Dismisses the hurtful behavior “She took it the wrong way. Things got out of hand”.**
- **Include justifications and/or additional put downs.**
- **Doubles as a request.**
- **Done only to please someone.**
- **Expects a return apology.**

True Apologies

- ◆ Genuine tone of voice
- ◆ Clearly states what is wrong and takes responsibility for actions
- ◆ Offers to make it right

Accepting Apologies

- “It’s ok”, “whatever”, “Don’t worry about it.”
destroy your credibility.
- “Thank you for the apology” treats you and the
other person with dignity.

SEAL

Stop: Put your bad feelings to words. Choose time (before recess).

Explain: I don't want to do the secret language now or pretend Sara is invisible. It looks like a game but it's not.

Affirm: You don't have to be friends with Jade but we can't be mean to her.

Lock: This was really hard but you're my friend and I wanted to tell you.

Want to Push Parents' Buttons?

- ◆ A meeting isn't necessary at this time.
- ◆ X isn't the right fit for your child.
- ◆ Really? I've never heard that happening before.
- ◆ I can hear you are really angry with me.

Talking to the Parents

- **You:** *Thanks Ms. Smith for coming to see me so soon. Please sit where you would like. (If possible, sit across from the parent not behind your desk.)*
- **You:** *First I want you to know that calling you wasn't easy. I know no parent wants to get a call like that.*
- **Ms. Smith:** *Exactly she is a great kid. I know this school wants the children to treat each other with respect and I have always taught Katie that. Up to this moment, not one person at this school has told me one negative thing about her and now people have singled her out as being mean.*
- **You:** *There're a couple of reasons why I thought it was important enough to ask you to come in. The secret language was really hurtful and directed at individual children.*
- *I'm sorry but I'm having a really hard time believing your bringing me in for a game. Kids are going to be kids. It's ridiculous to control how kids play!*

Talking to Parents con't.

- **You:** *This situation is hard. According to our school contract, if we believe the problem is small we will try to resolve it within the school. Now we believe we need to bring you in so you can help us teach Katie the difference between playing and using games to exclude or humiliate people.*
- **Ms. Smith:** *I'm sorry but I'm teaching my child to handle disappointment and that she can't be friends with everyone. And it's not her fault if kids can't take being included in every game my daughter is a part of. Second, Katie has the right to have her own friends. Not every group of girls is a mean clique.*
- **You:** *Just as I need to make sure Sara can function in school comfortably, Katie also has that right. If Katie wants to talk to me my door is always open, but that fact doesn't take away from the reason why are here. Make your request: When secret languages and games are used to humiliate other people, we will stop that on the playground*
- **Affirmation:** *If you would like to meet with me again I would be happy to set up another time to meet. Thanks for coming in.*

No offense...

sxydiva: hey, there r some things i thnk u should kno

surfergirl: what r u talking about?

sxydiva: well, no offense, but every1 thinks ur totally throwing urself on Derek.. and that skirt u were wearing... sorry, but that just shouldn't happen again

surfergirl: why can't you just leave me alone?

sxydiva: im just doing this for ur own good. id wanna know if ppl were talking behind my back

sufergirl: whatever, I could tell you things too

sxydiva: Really? what could a fat, ugly loser like u possibly tell me that id care about?

sufergirl: im not going to say.....

sxydiva: exactly. why do u even value ur life? its not like anyone would care if u killed urself

Using SEAL

- Amanda: Can I talk to you for a second?
- Megan: (*Pretending she has no idea.*) Sure, what's up?
- Amanda: You said a lot of mean things to me last night, like I was fat, ugly, and I should kill myself. I want you to stop.
- Megan: What? I have no idea what you're talking about.
- Amanda: You're telling me that you didn't send me any instant messages last night?
- Megan: Seriously.
- Amanda: Well, whether you did or someone else did with your account, I'm asking you to stop. If you're mad at me, then don't attack me online. Tell me to my face and we'll work it out. But no matter what, I have the right to not have people telling me I should kill myself.
- Megan: Sure. Whatever you say. (*Rolls her eyes.*).

Should Schools Intervene?

All bullying behaviors that occur in or out of school that affect the school community should be addressed by the school.

Bullying often occurs outside of the school's physical grounds yet these actions impact the safety of our students as though they have occurred on school grounds. Any bullying behavior demonstrated at school or outside of school that affects our school community will be addressed by the school.

- Some situations including less severe first offenses may be handled by the school through student conferences, mediation and other interventions without a phone call home. If more serious behavior has occurred, possible consequences are...
- If any of these consequences become a likely outcome, we will notify you.

Stop: Focus. What about this situation can push your buttons? What are your gifts and liabilities?

Explain: Why do you think you are here? It has been brought to my attention or evidence was presented to me that you communicated XX to ...what you wrote was against the school contract and school policy. I expect you to apologize with me and in person. So I would like us to think about what you need to say and when and where it will take place.

Acknowledge: Is there something that you want to tell me that prompted you to say these things? Is there something I need to know about that would make me understand the situation better?

Lock: I know we can move on from this and understand that I would do the exact same thing for you if you came to me with a similar situation. Now that we have had this conversation, please go home and tell your parents. You can also tell them that I will be contacting them soon.

Stop: *Thanks Ms. Smith for coming to see me so soon. Please sit where you would like. First I want you to know that calling you wasn't easy. Megan's a great kid and I know no parent wants to get a call like that.*

Ms. Smith: *Exactly she is a great kid. I know this school wants the children to treat each other with respect and I have always taught her that. Up to this moment, not one person at this school has told me one negative thing about her.*

Explain: *here're a couple of reasons why I thought it was important enough to ask you to come in. While I understand that children say things they may not mean, Megan's instant messages are in direct conflict with the school's rules that any form of electronic communication can't be used to demean or threaten another person in the community.*

Acknowledge: *This situation is hard. As you know from our school contract, if we believe the problem is small we will try to resolve it within the school. Now we believe that Megan's actions are going against what we need from her as a member of this community.*

Ms. Smith: *Two things, I admit what Megan did wasn't perfect but all the kids in school are doing this so I don't see why you are only blaming her. Last month she came home crying after school for a whole week and I didn't go running to the school. Second, you shouldn't be punishing her for something she did at home. If she did it at school or used the school's email that's one thing but I really think this is my business not yours to discipline my kid.*

LOCK: *Let me be clear, if someone was cruel to Megan than I would advocate for her in the same way I am doing here. However, we need to teach Megan that her use of technology is tied to her character and values. But the reality of technology today is that what happens at home impacts the school and people within the school. Because of this, we believe it is critical to work with parents. If you would like to meet with me again I would be happy to set up another time to meet. Thanks for coming in.*

Playing video games in Mark's room:

Mark: Andy, we need to talk.

Andy: Huh (video game, eyes glued to screen)?

Mark: Look, I know Gabby sent you that picture but sending it around to everyone...

Andy: I know! So sweet!

Mark: Seriously. She's really embarrassed about it.

Andy: Laughing...Oh my God, you're such a fag (etc)! And anyway, you were laughing just as much as I was.

Mark: Well, I'm not proud of this but I laughed because I didn't know what else to do.

Andy: Whatever man (still laughing). She sent it to me. She knew what she was doing. She wanted the attention.

Mark: I'm not saying what she did was a good idea but I still think showing it to everyone was wrong. Look, it'd a lot easier if I said nothing. But I'm saying this because I am your friend. I shouldn't have laughed and let you do it without saying anything about it. I think we should make it right, how to do you want to do that?

Reporting vs. Snitching

- Snitching means all you want is for the person to get in trouble.
- Reporting has the best interests of others in mind and involves telling a trusted adult so they can help solve a problem that is bigger than you. Its goal is to right a wrong.
- A person reports a problem with the intention of making the problem go away while a person snitches with the intention of making the problem bigger or more public.

I know what Megan did was wrong but you know it's happening so much now a days. She can't be the only one guilty.

Stop: Breath deeply and remember why

Explain: I reported that...(Keep it general and brief. You don't owe them details).

Request: If you disagree with me, fine. But that doesn't give you the right to dismiss, question my competence, or threaten me. I know I can't control that but I am asking you not to.

Affirm: Megan didn't get in trouble because the child reported it. She got in trouble because she did it.

I can't believe you reported them...

Stop: Breath deeply and remember why

Explain: I reported that...(Keep it general and brief. You don't owe them details).

Request: If you disagree with me, fine. But that doesn't give you the right to dismiss, ridicule, or threaten me. I know I can't control that but I am asking you not to.

Affirm: They didn't get in trouble because I reported it. They got in trouble because they did it.

Upcoming Educator Trainings

Owning Up™ Training Institute

July 9 - 10, 2009

Washington, DC

Register Online at www.rosalindwiseman.com/owning-up/

Or call Candace Nuzzo at 202-545-0633 for information

****Special Discount for IYI Webinar Participants!****

Just mention your participant in this seminar on your application to receive \$100 OFF the training fee!

Owning Up™ Curriculum

The ***Owning Up™ Curriculum*** provides a structured program for teaching students to own up and take responsibility—as perpetrators, bystanders, and targets—for unethical behavior. Separate sessions for girls and for boys combine group discussions, games, role-playing, and other activities to engage students in understanding the complexities of adolescent social culture. The curriculum is designed for adolescent groups in schools and other settings.

How to Order

To purchase a copy of the ***Owning Up™ Curriculum*** or for more information regarding placing an order, please visit our publisher, Research Press, at <http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5530/>.

****Special Discount for IYI Webinar Participants!****

When placing your order, reference your participation in this seminar with ROSALIND WISEMAN to receive a 25% discount on the curriculum.

Want to reach me?

RPW, Inc.
3604 14th St., NW
2nd floor
Washington, DC 20010
202.545.0633
www.rosalindwiseman.com

Rosalind Wiseman: rosalind@rosalindwiseman.com

Candace Nuzzo: candace@rosalindwiseman.com

Facebook: Search “Rosalind Wiseman” and join my Page

YouTube: Search “Rosalind Wiseman” and subscribe to RPW Channel

Twitter: www.twitter.com/rosalindwiseman

Tyranny of Pleasing

- Self-esteem: “confidence, competence, and connectedness in fairly equal measure”.
- In pleasers, the “connectedness” dominates confidence and competence
- Behavior is reinforced because it is socially condoned. Consequences slip under everyone’s radar.
- Self-esteem is low because they sacrifice needs and judgment.
- Avoids conflicts. “Whatever you want. ”Doesn’t matter to me.” “It’ll just make the problem worse.”
- Incorrectly assumes that the more they please the more liked they will be or positively recognized for their actions.

If they deny or lie

- Speak it back to them. I want to make sure I am getting this right. I am hearing you say...
- There are consequences for cruel behavior but there are more consequences for lying.
- You can choose to lie and I may never find out about it. But there is a possibility I will find out about it. Is that a chance you are willing to take?
- Let them walk out of your office