

How Communities Can Help:

- Create community strategies to promote cooperation and confront bullying among girls.
- Educate parents.
- Provide comprehensive training for school caregivers in dealing with girls relational aggression, starting in preschool.
- Increase academic support for struggling students and parents.
- Encourage and model emotional maturity.
- Advocate for clear expectations and consequences for aggression among girls.
- Encourage older girls to mentor younger girls who fall into these self destructive behaviors.

How to Fund Programs to Prevent, Educate and Solve Girl to Girl Violence?

Tax entertainment industries that make money off violence in music, films and on television.



For Further Help and Information

Call HopeWorks at (860) 561-1175, ext. 0
or e-mail us at hopeworks@snet.net.

or

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### Contributions to HopeWorks

HopeWorks is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are very gratefully accepted.

## **Harm2Harmony:** Intervening in Middle School Girls' Relational Aggression

*"Creating opportunities for girls to move from harmful to harmonious relationships"*



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*Providing hope and help to young people and their families through counseling, education and community outreach*



## Relational Violence Defined

1. Spreading rumors about each other
2. Verbal aggression and threats
3. Shaming messages posted on the Internet
4. Creating intentional problems in close relationships
5. Isolating others
6. Making fun of others because of physical characteristics, clothing or background
7. Enjoying other girls' misery
8. Encouraging girls to fight against each other
9. Physical assault



## Resulting Damage

1. Diminished school focus
2. Loss of trust in friendship and family can lead to isolation and depression
3. Aggressive responses become habitual and destructive.
4. Violence can cause:
  - a. Expulsion from school
  - b. Injury and arrest

## Why Does This Happen?

Adults often minimize early symptoms of relational bullying.

Girls who have witnessed or experienced abusive relationships are susceptible to withdrawal, rejection or have unpredictable outbursts of rage.

Academic difficulties can increase a girl's feelings of isolation, rage and worthlessness.

Hormonal imbalances in early puberty can contribute to the sense of high drama that feeds gossiping.

Early exposure to violence and overly sexualized imagery in media, video games and advertising often confuses and negatively influences girls.

## Proven Research Methods to Intervene in Middle School

Collaborate with elementary schools to know which girls may be at risk for girl-to-girl aggression.

Provide easily accessible crisis mediation when conflicts arise.

Help girls learn negotiation and de-escalation skills in conflict situations with other girls.

Provide supervised constructive activities and safe spaces for girls.

Empower girls to make decisions and take actions on their own behalf.

Give girls an active role in developing their own programs with supportive adults.

Enhance same-age peer friendships

Empower girls to respect themselves, their bodies and their sexuality to prevent the risks of early sexual activity.

Clarify healthy limits for dating among middle school students.

