Goodwill Girls: Examining the Effectiveness of a Relational Aggression Intervention with Predominantly African American Females

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The study of relational aggression has increased in the past few decades; however, there are a limited number of evidence-based interventions designed to reduce relational aggression. Most interventions address problem behaviors or aggression but very few focus on relational aggression. This is not surprising considering the often covert nature of relational aggression. The Goodwill Girls program is a tertiary prevention program that was developed for use as a small-group intervention for those students who are at-risk for relational aggression and/or peer victimization. The researchers who created the Goodwill Girls intervention have conducted many studies on relational aggression and victimization (e.g., Crothers et al., 2005; Crothers et al., 2007; Field, Crothers, & Kolbert, 2006). They have built a solid foundation in the understanding of the characteristics, assessment, and treatment of relational aggression. This intervention has been published in a book directed towards school counselors; however, the effectiveness of the intervention has not been fully examined.

The purpose of this study was two-fold: to evaluate the Goodwill Girls intervention that targets relational aggression and to examine its effectiveness with predominantly African American females. This study was conducted using an experimental design with the manipulation of a single independent variable on two levels. The effects of this study were measured using a pre-test/post-test control group design
with random assignment of participants to either the experimental or control group. The findings of the current study are consistent with recent research (Scott, 2012). Specifically, the Goodwill Girls curriculum did not significantly decrease self-reported and observed relational aggression in the students who participated in the intervention. Implications of these results are discussed. In addition, possible modifications to the intervention and areas for future research are presented.
Dedication

In dedication to my husband, Jason, who has supported me and been by my side throughout my graduate education. Also, to my daughter, Ruby, whose entrance into my life gave me the push I needed to finish my degree.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Maslow (1943) once stated that for children to be able to concentrate on their academics they must have their basic needs met such as sleep, nutrition, acceptance, and safety. When children do not feel that they are safe within their learning environment, they are unable to focus and be successful in school. One of the biggest negative impacts on student achievement and safety is bullying, especially given that about 160,000 students stay home every day from school for fear of being bullied (NASP, 2010). In addition, reducing violence in schools has become a major concern for parents, educators, and legislators; especially given the increase in media and public interest. When the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) passed it stated that school safety was to remain a top concern for school administrators in the United States and if any school was deemed “persistently dangerous” then students would have the right to transfer to a “safe” school in the same district (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). One danger that students may face that can make a school “persistently dangerous” is the occurrence of bullying and aggression.

Over the past few decades bullying has mainly been thought of as aggressive physical or verbal assaults aimed at a person who is deemed weaker than the bully. This assault on the “weaker” person allows the bully to gain power or social status over their peer. Yet, research has shown that bullying can also be implemented in a more covert
manner in which emotional assaults are the source of causing harm (Archer & Coyne, 2005). These more indirect forms of aggression threaten to cause harm to relationships and allow the perpetrator of the attacks to appear friendly outwardly while secretly causing harm to an individual (Field, Kolbert, Crothers, & Hughes, 2009).

This more indirect form of aggression is most commonly referred to as relational or social aggression, with some researchers referring to it as girl bullying (Field et al., 2009). For the purpose of consistency, girl bullying will be referred to as relational aggression throughout this paper. Though girls are as capable as boys in provoking and being provoked in terms of aggressive behaviors, relational aggression is the most prominent form of aggression experienced among females (Richardson, 2005). Relational aggression differs from physical aggression (e.g., hitting, punching, or pushing) in that relational aggression “involves the hostile manipulation of relationships and use of threats to control or dominate others” (Herrenkohl, McMorris, Catalano, & Abbott, 2007, p. 387). A relationally aggressive youth will try to inflict harm on another through the use of words, manipulation of friendships, or unfriendly, nonphysical behaviors (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006).

One explanation for the predominance of relational aggression in females rather than overt or physical aggression is that girls are socialized to abstain from outwardly expressing their emotions and to refrain from engaging in confrontation and conflict (Putallaz et al., 2007). However, this research is mainly based on white middle class females; thus, it is unclear whether it generalizes to ethnic minority females. Even so, one
study has found that African American females also show a greater tendency towards relational aggression and victimization over physical aggression (Putallaz et al., 2007).

Researchers have not only learned what relational aggression is but also what happens when it is not addressed. When relational aggression is not addressed, students tend to have a disrupted academic and social growth (Field et al., 2009). When looking to address relational aggression the majority of current interventions that take place within the school environment are either primary (e.g., systematic), secondary (e.g., group), or tertiary (e.g., individual) prevention programs implemented to reduce, eliminate, or alleviate relational aggression (Field et al., 2009). Despite the evidence that suggests a significant negative impact for youth when relational aggression is not addressed, there are a limited number of evidence-based interventions designed to reduce relational aggression. Most interventions address problem behaviors or aggression but very few focus on relational aggression. This is not surprising considering the often covert nature of relational aggression. Regardless, as we increase our knowledge about relational aggression we also need to improve interventions to effectively address and reduce the impact of relational aggression.

Purpose of the Study

The study of relational aggression has increased in the past few decades; however, the number of evidence-based interventions to address relational aggression is still lacking. Interventions focused on bullying have been in existence since the 1980s (i.e., Olweus Bullying Prevention Program), but these interventions tend to be supported by few significant studies that demonstrate effectiveness in reducing either physically or
relationally aggressive behaviors or victimization. Furthermore, many of the studies have not included racially diverse populations or different geographical locations. Of the studies that have been conducted on bullying and relational aggression interventions, the interventions have been shown to be effective at reducing aggression in both elementary and middle school students. Bullying interventions have also been shown to increase prosocial behaviors, interpersonal relationship skills, and the awareness of relational aggression and bullying behaviors. However, more studies need to be conducted on the effectiveness of different bullying interventions (e.g., relational aggression) and the effectiveness of those interventions for diverse individuals. Hence, the purpose of this study is two-fold: to evaluate an intervention program that targets relational aggression and to examine the intervention’s effectiveness with predominantly African American females.

First, the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention (Field et al, 2009), a program that was created to reduce relational aggression in middle school and early high school aged females. The intervention has been published in a book directed towards school counselors but the effectiveness of the intervention has not been fully examined. There are currently two doctoral students at Duquesne University who are examining the effectiveness of the intervention, but the data have not been analyzed at this time (L. Crothers, personal communication, June 4, 2015). For the purpose of this study, the Goodwill Girls intervention’s effectiveness was examined in several ways: student self-reports of relational aggression, peer (group member) report of student
engagement in relational aggression, and teacher report of student engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors.

Second, the intervention was conducted with predominantly African American females due to the lack of research on the use of relational aggression interventions with African American females. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by examining the effectiveness of a program that specifically targets relational aggression, the Goodwill Girls program, with predominantly African American female subjects.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is threefold. First, there is a paucity of interventions that specifically target relational aggression; this study contributes by adding to the literature examining interventions that specifically target relational aggression. Second, there is currently only one published study on the effects of the Goodwill Girls intervention to reduce relational aggression in females (Scott, 2012). Lastly, this study purposely evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention with primarily African American females to further the literature demonstrating effectiveness of bullying and aggression interventions among African American girls.

The published study examining the Goodwill Girls program included non-Caucasian youths who had been removed from their home school districts due to aggressive behaviors, including acts of bullying (Scott, 2012). Results of the study indicated that the Goodwill Girls intervention did not significantly decrease relational aggression, but descriptive statistics demonstrated differences in the means showing some improvement (Scott, 2012). Currently, two doctoral students working with the
intervention authors are conducting studies to measure the efficacy of the Goodwill Girls intervention in quasi-experimental multi-site designs, but no results have been published at this time (L. Crothers, personal communication, June 4, 2015). There is limited research on the effects of relational aggression interventions in general. This study contributes to the literature by examining the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention in a school setting for a group of fifth grade females who are predominantly African American. Outcomes contribute to our knowledge about the effectiveness of one intervention targeting relational aggression, supports and barriers to implementing this intervention in a school setting, and the effectiveness of this intervention with a group of African American females. For schools to make the best determination when selecting intervention programs, it is important that programs are research-based and have demonstrated success at addressing the stated objectives. Given the limited time in schools and other challenges (e.g., attendance) that can often disrupt small group interventions, it is important to assess the pros and cons of attempting to implement an intervention in the school setting. Lastly, there is a dearth of literature examining the effectiveness of bullying intervention programs for ethnically diverse individuals, African Americans in particular. This study helps to determine whether Goodwill Girls could be a beneficial intervention to use in schools where the population is predominantly African American. Ultimately, despite research demonstrating the detrimental effects of relational aggression on a student’s well-being and academic achievement, the number of interventions created and studied to alleviate relational aggression is limited.
Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of an intervention that has been created to reduce relational aggression in females and to examine its effectiveness with African American females. This study sought to answer the following questions based on the implementation of this intervention with pre-adolescent females:

Research Question One: Is there a significant effect in the reduction of relational aggression for the students who participate in the Goodwill Girls Intervention?

It was hypothesized that following the implementation of the intervention, the experimental group would show a significant reduction in their self-reporting of relational aggression compared to the control group. It was also hypothesized, based on previous research, that the control group would demonstrate an increase in their self-reporting of relationally aggressive behaviors after the implementation of the intervention with the experimental group (Frey et al., 2005).

Research Question Two: Does participating in the Goodwill Girls intervention significantly impact the participant’s perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression?

It was hypothesized that student perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression would increase following the implementation of the intervention. This is due to their increased awareness of relationally aggressive behaviors. Though their peers may not actually be engaging in more relationally aggressive behaviors, it was believed that students who participate in the intervention will be more aware of the
behaviors associated with relational aggression and therefore, be more able to recognize when they are witnessing it.

**Research Question Three:** Do teacher perceptions of relational aggression in the student participants decrease following the implementation of the intervention?

It was hypothesized that teachers would report lower levels of relational aggression for those students who participate in the Goodwill Girls intervention compared to the control group. It was also predicted that the teachers’ ratings for the control group would increase from before the intervention to after. This is due to the fact that research has shown student involvement in relational aggression tends to increase over the course of a school year (Frey et al., 2005).

**Limitations of the Study**

There were potential limitations of this study. The first potential limitation was the use of a convenience sample. The convenience sample that was used in this study is a threat to external validity even though it is the necessary means of sampling for this study. Convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize the results of the study to the population and instead the results can only be generalized to the sample. To reduce some of the effects of using a convenience sample, random assignment of the students to either the control or experimental group was completed.

Another limitation of the study was the small number of participants used in the study, which can result in nonequivalent pre-test measures for the two groups (Spata, 2003). Fairly large samples of participants are needed to help ensure that the before measures are equivalent for the two groups and with small sample sizes, this is unlikely.
The number of participants in the study was eighteen students with nine students in the control group and nine students in the experimental group. For small-group interventions it has been recommended that no more than twelve students be in a group to ensure that every student has an opportunity to participate in the intervention activities (Field et al., 2009). Given the small sample size, the ability to generalize to the population is limited.

A third limitation of the study is the current lack of research on the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls program. It would be beneficial to determine if the results obtained from the current study are consistent with the findings from other studies on the intervention’s effectiveness. Due to the current lack of published findings, this will be one of three studies completed this year to examine the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls program (L. Crothers, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Therefore, the results will have to be interpreted in the context of existing research conducted on similar interventions.

Next, because the students were asked to self-report their level of relational aggression, it is difficult to ascertain the level of truthfulness or honesty in the participants’ responses. There is a possibility of over- or underreporting the prevalence of engagement in or experience of relational aggression. However, research has demonstrated that, in the case of the bullying variable, social desirability does not wield a major influence (Solberg & Olweus, 2003).

Finally, another concern prior to the intervention was that the teachers may not complete the teacher scales due to time constraints within the school. To help increase teacher participation, teachers were informed that they would receive an incentive at the
completion of the study. As such, each teacher was provided with a gift card when the study was completed. Although many teachers may be overwhelmed with the amount of work they have to accomplish in a school day, each teacher in this study was able to complete the pre-intervention and both post-intervention scales within a couple of days of being provided with the measures.

Definition of Terms

1. Bullying- aggressive physical or verbal assaults on a person who is deemed weaker than the bully. This assault on the “weaker” person allows the bully to gain power or social status over their peers (Field et al., 2009).

2. Aggression- a negative behavior intended to cause discomfort and/or pain to other individuals (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Aggression can be either physical or nonphysical.

3. Overt Aggression- this form of aggression is also referred to as physical aggression. Overt aggression is the means of harming someone through the use of physical damage (e.g., hitting, punching, or pushing) or threatening physical damage (Crick et al., 2006).

4. Relational Aggression- any nonphysical behavior that is intended to exclude someone from a group or damage their relationships with peers with the intent to control or dominate others. The behaviors that are typically associated with relational aggression are sarcastic or hostile verbal comments, exclusion, gossiping, and spreading rumors as a way to destroy a person’s friendships (Crothers et al., 2008). Relational aggression many times is seen as a generic
term and is used interchangeably with indirect and social aggression. This study focused on the overall term of relational aggression and measured all of the categories of relational aggression as one.

5. **Social Aggression** - this is a category of relational aggression. Social aggression utilizes many of the same behaviors as defined in both relational aggression and indirect aggression but it also includes nonverbal behaviors such as eye-rolling or the use of menacing stares (Archer & Coyne, 2005). This term is many times used interchangeably in the literature with relational and indirect aggression.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Aggression has become a prevalent concept in the field of psychology over the past few decades. While the study of aggression has now become widespread in the field of psychology, it has only been within the past couple of decades that researchers have begun to focus on female forms of aggression and in particular, relational aggression. Previously, researchers resisted the idea of females being aggressive; this was most likely because it was inconsistent with people’s preconceptions about femininity and females (Richardson, 2005). It was only within the past few decades that we have begun to accept the idea that females can be aggressors; this factor contributes to a limited body of research.

Not only is the research on relational aggression limited but there is also a dearth of literature examining how to reduce relational aggression. Much of the research has focused on creating and assessing the effectiveness of interventions that primarily address predominantly physical and verbal forms of bullying in schools. Though relational aggression is a form of bullying that females generally use; the interventions for bullying only address relational aggression peripherally or do not address the topic at all. So despite the fact that there are effective programs to prevent more overt forms of aggression, there are few programs created to prevent the more subtle indirect forms of aggression (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Not only are there few programs created to
prevent indirect aggression but the research on the effectiveness of these programs is sparse.

This chapter will include relevant literature on the research of relational aggression, aggression in minority females, and interventions to address relational aggression. First, a brief overview on relational aggression in females will be addressed to give an understanding of what research has previously been conducted. This will then lead to a discussion about the limited research that has been conducted on relational aggression with minority females. Once an understanding of relational aggression has been formulated, there will then be an overview of the research on interventions focused on reducing bullying in schools. Finally, a review of the studies on interventions addressing solely relational aggression will be examined to determine what research has previously been conducted.

Overview of Relational Aggression in Females

Within the past few decades researchers have begun to focus more on the study of aggression in children and, in particular, female engagement in aggression. Aggression typically is widespread in middle school for most children though it has been shown to start as early as preschool, especially in regards to females and their interactions with their peers (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997). According to Crick et al. (2006) previous studies on aggressive behavior have been limited in two ways: 1) boys have received most of the attention in studies while aggressive girls have been excluded; and 2) the forms of aggression that are prevalent in females have been neglected while emphasis has been placed on male forms of aggression. Specifically, the literature has focused on more
direct types of aggression (e.g., physical) over more indirect or covert types of aggression (e.g., relational). This is highly problematic as research has demonstrated that females are more likely to engage in relational aggression over physical aggression (e.g., Ostrov, Woods, Jansen, Casas, & Crick, 2004).

Throughout the literature, relational aggression is a generic term that is often used interchangeably with social aggression and indirect aggression to refer to the various covert behaviors utilized by relationally aggressive youths. In general, relational aggression can be defined as any behavior that is intended to exclude someone from a group or damage their relationships with peers (Brown, Arnold, Dobbs, & Doctoroff, 2007). Some examples of relational aggression behaviors include: sarcastic or hostile verbal comments, exclusion (e.g., from a group or activity), gossiping, and spreading rumors as a way to destroy a person’s friendships (Crothers et al., 2008). When covert behaviors are used, such as gossiping, spreading rumors, and attempting to get others to exclude a member of the group, this is commonly referred to as indirect aggression (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006). The emphasis with indirect aggression is that the behaviors are occurring around the individual rather than directly to the individual (e.g., spreading rumors about the person but pretending to be friendly to the person’s face).

Social aggression is typically defined as encompassing all of the same behaviors as relational and indirect aggression but also including nonverbal behaviors, such as eye-rolling or the use of menacing stares (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Some other examples of relationally aggressive behaviors are the withdrawal of friendship to purposely hurt the person, writing nasty notes about a person, destroying friendships, and exclusion (Brown
et al., 2007; Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Within the past decade these behaviors have also moved to online forums with name-calling or insults as the most frequent form of online or in-school bullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). For the purpose of this study, relational aggression is defined as any behavior (e.g., gossiping, spreading rumors) that is intended to exclude someone from a group or damage their relationships with peers with the intent to control or dominate others.

Research has found that the effects of relational aggression can be just as detrimental to a child as more overt and physical aggression. Relational aggression has been associated with academic difficulties and failure; psychosocial problems, such as internalizing disorders; and social problems (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). In addition, externalizing problems including skipping school, avoiding places within the school, running away, and attempting suicide can also occur as a result of the relational bullying (Crothers et al., 2008). Even those children who are the perpetrators of relational aggression have been found to experience both internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Research has determined that the aggressors may experience depression, loneliness, social isolation, peer rejection, and have fewer friends than other children (Crothers et al., 2008). Due to the many internalizing and externalizing problems associated with relational aggression, it is no wonder that studies on relational aggression have increased dramatically over the past 5-10 years.

The use of relational aggression has also been associated with age and gender. Relational aggression is typically seen in children who are in later elementary and middle school. Although research has shown that relationally aggressive behaviors can be
exhibited as early as preschool with students threatening to end a friendship if a peer does not do as they say (Crick et al., 2006). Studies have determined that relational aggression tends to peak around the ninth grade with a decline in behaviors through the remainder of school (Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006). Much of our understanding of relational aggression also stems from the idea that it is a form of aggression that is utilized by females while males engage in more physical forms of aggression. Though research has shown females engage in relational aggression more so than males, it is not exclusive to females. Boys have also been known to engage in relationally aggressive behaviors while girls can also be physically aggressive (Swearer, 2008). This factor needs to be taken into consideration when working with school-age children so that assumptions about aggression and gender are not being made.

The research conducted on relational aggression has occurred predominantly with white, middle-class students (e.g., Crothers, Field, & Kolbert, 2005; Ostrov et al., 2004). By not including research on relational aggression across various ethnic groups, researchers are assuming that all females exhibit aggression similarly. This assumption can deeply skew our understanding of relational aggression overall in adolescents and should not be made without research to support it. Thus, it is unclear whether the results of the studies on relational aggression can be generalized to different ethnic populations. We cannot begin to truly help in the reduction of relational aggression in schools if we do not understand its characteristics and effects with different populations. Once we increase our understanding of relational aggression across multiple settings with varying
populations, we can then begin to build interventions and prevention strategies that will be beneficial to all students.

**Research on Minority Females**

Although research on aggression in females has increased over the past couple of decades, the research is limited in the populations being studied. It is important to study the effects and incidences of relational aggression across ethnic groups to determine if there may be cultural differences associated with relational aggression. In addition, more research is needed to establish whether certain cultural and ethnic groups are particularly vulnerable to higher rates and negative consequences of relational aggression (Storch, Nock, Masia-Warner, & Barlas, 2003). Research in the area of race and relational aggression has focused mainly on different cultural groups’ similarities, rather than differences, in their experiences of relational aggression (Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006). These studies have also focused primarily on Caucasian, middle-class students and any impairments in psychosocial and physical well-being that is associated with relational aggression (both as the perpetrator and the victim) (Williams, Fredland, Han, Campbell, & Kub, 2009). This may be beneficial for those students within the target population; however, we cannot assume that all children will experience the same psychosocial and physical problems.

There are studies examining relational aggression that include European Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic children. Unfortunately, all of the children are generally lumped into one group and individual differences are not examined. Researchers tend to focus on the construct of relational aggression and the effects on
children without regard to potential differences among ethnic groups (see Crothers et al., 2005; Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). Research examining the effects of relational aggression on youth frequently does not take into account the differential impact relational aggression might have across diverse groups. This is important because children of varying ethnic groups may not experience relational aggression the same way or at the same rate and may experience different risk and/or protective factors given their diverse backgrounds. Given the lack of information on relational aggression and victimization in African American and Hispanic students, it is important to provide studies that will contribute to the literature in a way that will increase our knowledge about relational aggression across different ethnic groups. This section will first explore research inclusive of multiple ethnic minority groups and then focus on research comparing African American and European American females.

**Ethnic Differences in Relational Aggression**

With the high prevalence of bullying in the United States many researchers examine the factors that can place an individual at risk for bullying perpetration and victimization. Some of the characteristics that have been found to be associated with bullying behaviors are personality, physical characteristics, family environment, peer relationships, and the school environment (Nansel et al., 2001). Though research has examined the risk and protective factors associated with bullying and victimization there is little known about any racial or ethnic differences in these factors for bullying. Although the majority of the studies on ethnic differences in relational aggression and victimization compare African American youths to European American youths; there
have been some studies on relational aggression with other minority youths. Given the lack of studies with a sizeable representation of Hispanic and African American youths the ability to generalize the results of relational aggression studies to these populations has been limited. The following is a review of the literature that has provided some understanding of relational aggression amongst these populations.

Storch et al. (2003) conducted a study examining relational aggression and victimization in Hispanic and African American children. The study took place in an urban elementary school with fifth and sixth grade students, the majority of whom were Hispanic. The researchers’ goals were to examine the incidence rates of relational aggression, determine the level of victimization, and the effects of relational victimization on social-psychological adjustment (i.e., depression, anxiety, social avoidance). The examiners found a higher incidence of relational victimization in the predominantly Hispanic sample as compared to the rates found by previous researchers with primarily Caucasian populations (see Crick & Bigbee, 1998). It was also found that relational victimization was associated with depressive symptoms, fear of negative evaluation, and social avoidance of general situations in both Hispanic and African American girls. This finding is similar to research examining Caucasian youth. Therefore, Hispanic students reported higher levels of relational victimization but similar negative effects as compared to Caucasian youths.

Studies have also been conducted comparing Latino students and European American students. A study by Brown and colleagues (2007) examined the relationship between parenting practices and relational aggression in Puerto Rican and European
American school-age children. The relationship between parenting practices and physical aggression have already been well established but little is known about parenting practices in regards to relational aggression. The study looked at four areas of maternal parenting: overreactivity, laxness, positive affect, and negative affect. Not only was the sample ethnically diverse but also socioeconomically diverse. Brown et al. found that a negative maternal affect was associated with relational aggression, which is consistent with previous findings that maternal coercion is related to relational aggression (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998). Though coercion is a broader construct that includes physical discipline and negative affect that focuses mainly on displays of emotion, they overlap in areas of yelling and shouting (Brown et al., 2007). Given that relational aggression deals with the manipulation of close interpersonal relationships through mainly verbal confrontation, it is not surprising that negative affect was the most consistent predictor of relational aggression throughout the study. Brown and colleagues reported that positive maternal affect was associated with less relational aggression within the population studied. When overreactivity and laxness were examined they did not predict relational aggression in Puerto Rican children but did with European American children. The study actually reported that none of the parenting variables significantly predicted relation aggression for the Puerto Rican students. This may be due to the fact that parenting constructs may be ethnically specific (Brown et al., 2007). Due to the fact that this is the first study to examine parenting predictors of relational aggression in Puerto Rican families, it would be imperative to conduct further
research to determine if parenting practices in Puerto Rican families has any effect on relational aggression.

Another study examined the potential differences in victimization forms and behaviors across Latino and European American groups. Buhs, McGinley, & Toland (2010) argued that Latino students may display different relational victimization behaviors than European American students due to the Latino culture. There is evidence that Latino youth tend to display higher levels of prosocial behavior than European Americans and would thus display more subtle or less severe victimization behaviors (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007). Given the differences in prosocial behavior in Latinos it is unclear if the rate of victimization within this ethnic group is higher or lower than other groups. Participants in the study were given a questionnaire that self-reported on exclusion and victimization due to overt and relational aggression. The overall results of the study demonstrated an acceptable level of equivalence across groups in regards to victimization. One important finding of this study was that there may be potential socialization differences between Latino youths compared to European Americans. The Latino youths in this study reported feeling more isolated in the rural community than when they lived in a more urban environment. It may be that in rural areas there are smaller Latino communities that may be more interdependent than in a large urban area.

The studies that have been conducted on Black and Hispanic students in regards to bullying and victimization have been inconsistent. One study on sixth through tenth grade students found that Hispanic students were more likely to report being bullies and being victims as compared to African American students (Nansel et al., 2001). Yet,
another study conducted in Los Angeles on middle school students found that bullies and victims were more likely to be Black than Hispanic (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Peskin and colleagues (2006) decried the lack of consistency within the literature examining relational aggression amongst Black and Hispanic youth. As such, they conducted a study also examining bullying and victimization among Black and Hispanic adolescents in grades 6-12. Their study found that although males and females were similar in regards to bullying and victimization, there were significant differences when observing race/ethnicity and grade level. With grade level bullying increased until grade nine when it peaked and then began to decrease. Also, victimization was found to peak around sixth grade before beginning to decrease. Black students in the study, when compared to Hispanic students, were more likely to be classified as bullies, victims, and bully-victims. Black students also reported greater participation in both relational and physical aggression compared to Hispanic students. It was also reported for victimization that Black students were more likely to get picked on, be made fun of, called names, and more than twice as likely to get hit or pushed compared to Hispanic students. This study provides evidence that bullying and victimization are both prevalent among low SES, urban Black and Hispanic adolescents with Black students reporting greater incidences of bullying and victimization in this study. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that interventions need to be developed to help reduce the prevalence of bullying and victimization among urban minority students.

A study by Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, and Haynie (2007) examined through student self-report, potential associations between family, peer, and school relations for
Black, White, and Hispanic youths. The results of the survey found that, overall, 9% of the participants were victims of bullying, 9% were bullies, and 3% were bully-victims. A significantly lower prevalence of victimization was noted by African American adolescents than with Caucasian and Hispanic youths. This is in contrast to the study by Peskin et al. (2006) in which Black students were found to be victimized more so than Hispanic students. The contrast between these two studies may be due to the fact that the study by Spriggs and colleagues (2007) had a national sample of youths instead of only a local sample as in the Peskin and colleagues (2006) study. When the information was stratified across race there were moderate differences between bullying and family, peer, and school factors. Bullying perpetration was linked with family, peer, and school factors more so than being a victim or a bully-victim. The family structure (e.g., living with one or two parents) was related to bullying outcomes for white students only, while living with two parents was seen as a protective factor in reducing bullying perpetration. Parental communication though was associated with all three racial groups where the greater the ease of parental communication, the less likely the child was to engage in bullying behaviors. Also, parental school involvement was associated with bullying involvement for white and black students where less parental school involvement increased the likelihood of engaging in bullying.

School satisfaction and performance were negatively associated with bullying involvement for Caucasian and Hispanic students, though there was no relation between school factors and bullying for Black students. When examining peer relationships and bullying perpetration it was determined that negative peer relations were central to the
problem of bullying in schools. Feeling safe at school was also positively associated with victimization but only for White students (Spriggs et al., 2007). From this study it is important to see that no matter the race, the inclusion of family communication in intervention efforts are important to help decrease bullying behaviors.

The ability to generalize the results of relational aggression studies with ethnic minorities has been limited due to the lack of studies with a sizeable representation of minority youths. The studies that have been conducted have demonstrated inconsistencies across findings. One study found that Hispanic students were more likely to report being bullies and being victims as compared to African American students (Nansel et al., 2001). Yet, another study found that bullies and victims were more likely to be Black than Hispanic (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Peskin and colleagues (2006) found that Black students were more likely to be classified as bullies, victims, and bully-victims, as compared to Hispanic students. Additionally, studies determined there were differences when comparing family, school, and peer factors with relational aggression in African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian youth. School factors were negatively associated with bullying behaviors for Hispanic and Caucasian students but not for African American students. Feeling safe at school was only seen as a protective factor for white students. Overreactivity and laxness in parenting were predictors of relational aggression in European American students but not in Puerto Rican students (Brown et al., 2007). Due to the inconsistencies between some of the studies, additional research needs to be conducted.
Relational Aggression in African American and European American Females

The few studies that examine ethnic differences in aggression and victimization primarily examined African American students compared to European American students. Osterman et al. (1994) conducted a study with 8-year-old boys and girls from Finland, Illinois (Chicago), and Poland (Warsaw). They found that African American students were found to be higher on peer nominations of physical and relational aggression compared to European American students but there were no significant differences for student self-reports of aggression. A study by Prinstein, Boergers, and Vernberg (2001) also found no differences in self-reports on physical and relational aggression by ethnically diverse adolescent students from a small city in southern New England. In regards to victimization African American youth reported being bullied more often than European Americans based on a comprehensive national survey (Putallaz et al., 2007). However, it should be noted that the majority of these studies did not control for socioeconomic status (SES) and contained students in different grade levels when they were examining race differences in relational aggression. Not controlling for SES or grade level limits the ability to interpret the results because other factors may be impacting the reports of aggression and victimization.

The study by Putallaz et al. (2007) did examine the differences in relational aggression between European American and African American females while controlling for SES. The researchers hypothesized that African American females would display both physical and relational aggression equally while European American girls would utilize mainly relational aggression. This hypothesis was consistent with prior researcher that
proposed that African American families socialize their children in a more gender neutral and less sex-specific way than European American families. It has also been proposed that African American females are taught to be more assertive, independent, and strong just like males (Hill & Sprague, 1999). An equal number of African American and European American students from two successive cohorts of 4th grade students were recruited to participate in the study by Putallaz and colleagues. The researchers tried to ensure that the students were distributed equally among rejected, average, and popular student categories while controlling for SES.

The African American children in the study were seen by their peers, through peer nominations, to engage in more aggressive behaviors compared to European American students though there was no perceived difference in victimization based on both participants self-reports and peer nominations. Peers in the study also found European American and African American girls to be higher in the use of relational aggression over physical aggression. European American females were also seen by their teachers as engaging in more relational aggression compared to physical aggression. African American girls in the study though were seen by their teachers as being higher in both physical and relational aggression along with being victimized more when compared to their European American classmates. It is important to note the differences in teacher perceptions of student behavior for African American and European American students. If teachers are viewing African American students in a more negative light than their European American students, this could explain why African American students tend to have less supportive student-teacher relationships compared to their Caucasian peers.
(Ladd & Burgess, 2001) and are viewed as having higher levels of physical aggression by their peers (Putallaz et al., 2007). The main difference found from Putallaz et al. (2007) was that African American students were viewed by their teachers, though not their peers or themselves, as being victimized more so than their European American peers. Overall, it was determined in the study that females, regardless of ethnicity, showed a preference for relational over overt aggression.

Not only is there a growing body of literature in regards to the study of relational aggression but there is also an increase in the literature on the impact of relational aggression on psychosocial outcomes. Similar to the broader body of literature, there is a lack of information on the impact of relational aggression and psychosocial outcomes in minority students. Studies have shown that perpetrators and victims of relational aggression are more likely to experience internalizing behaviors, such as depression, withdrawal, anxiety, loneliness, somatic complaints, and social avoidance. They are also shown to experience externalizing behaviors, including delinquency, substance use, disruptive behaviors, and more aggressive behaviors (Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006). It is assumed that bullied and victimized minority youth are at risk for internalizing disorders also but this assumption is based off of predominantly White samples (see Espelage & Holt, 2001). Although effects may be similar across different ethnic groups, it is important to conduct research to determine whether any differences exist and the impact that has on different ethnic groups.

One study by Williams et al. (2009) examined relational aggression and psychosocial and health problems among urban African American middle-school
students. The researchers recruited males and females from seventh-grade classrooms in four different urban, public schools with the majority of students being African American (95.1%). The participants were asked to self-report on relational aggression, victimization, and psychosocial difficulties. The results of the study showed several important findings in regards to relational aggression in minority students compared to white students. One of the first findings revealed that the perpetration of relational aggression was slightly higher in the sample of minority urban youths than in previous studies with a majority white sample (see Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Crick et al., 2006). While perpetration rates were only slightly higher for this study, the rate of victimization was considerably higher. This study reported rates of 16.8% for perpetration and 18.4% for victimization compared to previous studies that found perpetration rates ranging from 8.7% to 16% and victimization rates at 8% (e.g., Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Crick et al., 2006). The results of this study also reported more adverse health symptoms for both perpetrators and victims of relational aggression compared to nonperpetrators and nonvictims. It should be noted though that boys who were victimized were more likely to experience adverse symptoms compared to the girls in the study (Williams et al., 2009). This suggests that future research needs to explore gender differences in the relationship between relational aggression and psychosocial symptoms. In particular, why are boys who are victimized by relational aggression more likely to experience psychosocial and physical symptoms compared to females who are victimized by relational aggression (Williams et al., 2009).
A study similar to the study by Williams et al. (2009) was conducted to examine bullying and victimization in conjunction with internalizing symptoms in low-income Black and Hispanic students (Peskin et al., 2006). Students grades 6 to 12 at eight predominantly Black and Hispanic secondary schools in a large urban school district with the majority of students from a low SES were sampled. Participants were asked to complete measures on bullying, victimization, internalizing symptoms, and simple demographic information. The results of the study indicated an association between bullying, victimization, and internalizing symptoms consistent with the studies previously conducted with predominantly White samples. There was no association found between being a bully and experiencing internalizing symptoms which is consistent with previous findings. However, it was noted that when examining school-level of the students there were some differences. Findings showed that victims were more likely to experience internalizing symptoms in middle and high school but bully-victims only experienced such symptoms in middle school (Peskin et al., 2006). This suggests that more research needs to be conducted looking at aggression and victimization at different grade levels.

Another study examined the effects of a cultural intervention not only on increasing cultural values and beliefs but also on decreasing relational aggression in a sample of African American females. Previous research has shown that having high ethnic identity has been linked to higher achievement, self-esteem, increased prosocial behaviors, and a decreased use of violence in African American youth (Belgrave et al., 2004). Therefore, the use of a cultural intervention can act as a protective factor for minority youths who are trying to navigate through sometimes difficult adolescent years.
There has been limited research conducted on examining the effects of gender and culturally specific interventions to reduce relational aggression in adolescent females. The Sisters of Nia program is a small group intervention that exposes African American females to a curriculum in which the girls learn to develop positive interpersonal relationships with each other and learn to work together through the role modeling of an African American female staff. The intervention includes lessons where the girls discuss being female and of African descent through group support, cohesiveness, and mentoring (Young et al., 2006). Belgrave et al. (2004) evaluated the effects of the intervention at not only increasing ethnic identity but also decreasing relational aggression. The results of the study showed a borderline significant delay or decrease in relational aggression for those girls who participated in the intervention while those girls in the comparison group actually increased in relational aggression. It has been postulated by previous researchers that relational aggression may be used by adolescent females to cope with threats to self-esteem and may explain the increase shown by the comparison group (Sumrall, Ray, & Tidwell, 2000). This study is important for the literature on relational aggression in minority females because it demonstrates that a strong ethnic identity may have a positive impact on reducing relational aggression. In addition, the study shows the positive effects of an intervention that was created for African American females. This is one of the first interventions developed specifically for an African American population instead of being created with a majority European American population.
Summary of Research on Minority Females

The results of the studies that have been conducted on relational aggression in minority students has provided inconsistent results along with similarities and differences when compared to white students. When asked to complete peer nominations, African American students are rated higher in both physical and relational aggression. Yet, when completing self-reports there were no ethnic differences between relational and physical aggression. It was also observed that African American students reported higher rates of peer victimization and being bullied compared to European American students (Osterman et al., 1994; Prinstein et al., 2001). Another study also reported that African American students were seen by their peers to engage in more aggressive behaviors compared to their European American classmates. Although there were no differences reported for the prevalence of victimization. It was also within this study that teachers reported African American students higher in overt and relational aggression, along with victimization (Putallaz et al., 2007). Finally, there were differences noted when comparing family, school, and peer factors with relational aggression in African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian youth. School factors were negatively associated with bullying behaviors for Hispanic and Caucasian students but not for African American students. Feeling safe at school was only seen as a protective factor for white students. Overreactivity and laxness in parenting were predictors of relational aggression in European American students but not in Puerto Rican students (Brown et al., 2007).

There were similarities reported in relational aggression for minority students and white students. It has been shown through research that regardless of race, females prefer
to engage in relationally aggressive behaviors over physical aggression. In addition the same internalizing and externalizing symptoms associated with relational aggression are observed in both minority and white youths (Williams et al., 2009). It appears that the negative effects associated with engaging in and being the victim of relational aggression are the same regardless of racial or ethnic groups. The similarities between racial groups on relational aggression are sparse and this increases the need to include more studies on relational aggression in minority studies.

Overall the study of bullying and relational aggression in minority youths is limited. Researchers are developing interventions and trying to find ways to reducing bullying and aggression in the schools without having a full understanding of how the behaviors present in different populations of children. It is important to understand that various racial and ethnic groups may experience relational aggression differently from white students. If one group of children is exhibiting less preference for relational aggression than physical aggression, interventions focused solely on relational aggression may not be as beneficial. Also, if one group is being victimized more so than another group then they may experience more psychosocial issues that would need to be addressed within an intervention. Finally, different cultures might respond to interventions differently. Ultimately, more research needs to be conducted on diverse racial and ethnic groups and the similarities or differences that they may experience with relational aggression. This will allow for better interventions to be created targeting relational aggression within various ethnic groups and reduce the victimization within these groups.
Interventions Targeting Bullying

With the recognition that bullying and aggression can lead to numerous social-emotional, academic, and behavioral consequences, there have been several programs developed in the last twenty-five years (Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007). Though there has been an increase in the development of school-based interventions to address bullying, there is a lack of salient research on the effectiveness of these anti-bullying programs. In addition, findings on the effectiveness of the various programs have been inconsistent (Mishna, 2008). This section will explore bullying interventions from the first program created to the inclusion of relational aggression in bullying interventions.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The first whole-school anti-bullying program was developed by Dan Olweus in the early 1980s in Norway. The program was created in response to three children committing suicide in which bullying was considered to be a main factor (Mishna, 2008). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) uses a whole-school approach for children from kindergarten through twelfth-grade. The intervention was designed to reduce bullying by strengthening the supervision of students who bully, decreasing the social isolation of children who are victimized through building a sense of community among students and adults, and helping student and adult bystanders to be able to confront bullying when it is occurring. Though the program has been created to be used at a school-wide level, it can also be implemented within the community, classroom, or even individually (Olweus & Limber, 2010a). There are three main goals of the OBPP: to reduce existing bullying problems at school, prevent the development of new bullying
problems, and achieve better peer relations among students (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). Since the implementation of the OBPP the program has been adapted for use throughout Europe, the United States, and Australia (Olweus & Limber, 2010a).

Aside from the three main goals of the OBPP, there are four principles that are upheld no matter in which country the intervention is being utilized. The four main principles of the OBPP are that adults at home and in the school should: show warmth, positive regard, and be involved in student lives; set firm limits for unacceptable behaviors; consistently use nonphysical and nonhostile negative consequences for broken rules; and function as authorities and positive role models (Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

Taking the main principles of the OBPP into consideration it can be suggested that adults (e.g., teachers, parents, or administrators) play a large role in the implementation of the OBPP.

In view of the fact that the OBPP is the first whole-school bullying program and has been around for over twenty-five years, there have been numerous evaluations of the program based in both Norway and other countries. The first evaluation of the OBPP took place in Norway in the 1980s with elementary and junior high students. It was determined through the study that the OBPP showed significant reductions in self-reported bullying and bully-victimization (50% or more for the majority of comparisons by age and grade). There was also a significant improvement in the social climate of classrooms along with a reduction in classroom bully/victim problems (Hazelden Foundation, 2010). Further evaluations conducted in Norway during the late 1990s also revealed similar results to the prior research of the 1980s. These studies revealed an
overall reduction in victimization by 42% and bullying by 52% (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). When examining the research conducted in Norway it is important to point out one study conducted in the 80s in Rogaland. This study claimed to have paralleled a previous study done in Bergen but with differing results. At the end of the three year study, primarily negative results were found for the effectiveness of the OBPP in bullying and victimization. Olweus and Limber (2010b) have stated though that the results of the Rogaland study are “grossly misleading” due to the fact that Bergen and Rogaland were actually two very different projects and were not conducted parallel to each other. It would need to be determined what aspects of the Rogaland study were different from the Bergen. If the Rogaland study altered the intervention, then those alterations may have led to the negative results. Therefore, the Rogaland study should be further examined to determine if it actually is an unsuccessful evaluation of the OBPP.

Finally, numerous studies have been conducted on the OBPP in regards to its effectiveness in the United States with diverse elementary and middle school populations. Studies as cited by Olweus & Limber, 2010b have been conducted in South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington, and California. One study conducted in the mid-1990s noted a significant decrease in boys’ and girls’ reports of bullying others and boys’ reports of being bullied and social isolation. Another study maintaining moderate fidelity to the program found reductions in self-reported bullying, victimization, and adult observations of bullying (Hazelden Foundation, 2010). A recent study conducted throughout 49 counties in Pennsylvania with over 56,000 students found that after one to two years of program implementation there was a reduction in student self-reports of bullying others,
and improvements in student perceptions' of adult responsiveness, and students' attitudes about bullying (Schroeder et al., 2012). Though there are some findings consistent with studies done in Norway it should be noted that this is not always the case. For example, a study by Bauer, Lozano, and Rivara (2007) using the OBPP with seven middle schools in Seattle found significant program effects when the intervention was used with White students but was unable to find positive results when implemented with other races. The United States along with other countries have had to modify the original OBPP in terms of program components and implementation to meet the needs of the various cultures and diversity in schools and communities (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Since countries have had to modify the program to address cultural needs it is important for more studies to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the modified OBPP in diverse cultures and for careful documentation of modifications. This will allow for the determination of what modifications may be necessary to increase the effectiveness of the program with different populations, geographical locations, or cultures.

**Bullying Interventions**

Following the creation of the OBPP, other interventions were created to address bullying and victimization within the United States. The research on these interventions is sparse but they pave the way for the creation of interventions that focus on relational aggression.

In 1994 the Bully-Proofing Your School (BPYS) program was developed as a bullying prevention program for elementary and middle school students. The program is a school-wide initiative developed for the reduction and prevention of bullying, as well as
providing materials for parents to help with effective parent training to reduce bullying (Horne et al., 2007). The focus of the program is on creating caring students who will take the lead in helping to establish and maintain a safe school. To complete this goal the program creates an awareness of bullying problems, teaches protective skills to help students learn bullying policies, and enhances school climate through teaching students to stand up for the victims of bullying (Jimerson & Huai, 2010). The students who partake in the program are ultimately empowered with the ability to stand up against bullying within the school.

The creation of BPYS was done with a solid research foundation based on components that were consistently identified in bullying intervention research. In addition to the foundation in research on effective implementation of a bullying intervention, there have been two preliminary studies conducted to determine its effectiveness (Porter, Plog, Jens, Garrity, & Sager, 2010). A four-year longitudinal study was conducted by Epstein, Plog, and Porter in 2002 examining the impact of BPYS in a suburban elementary school. Their study found a significant decrease in bullying behaviors and an improved perception of safety in the schools examined. Another initial study by Beran and Tutty (2002) found decreased witnessing of bullying in the intervention school, though it was not stated if bullying itself had been decreased. A recent study by Menard and Grotpeter (2014) was conducted over a five year span. Results of the study suggest that BPYS led to reduced bullying and related behaviors, student recognition that bullying was being discouraged, and perceptions of increased
safety at school. It was noted though that the results of the study were weaker after schools began implementing the program without assistance from the program staff. These studies have shown the effectiveness of BPYS thus far but additional studies need to be conducted to show that the intervention is effective over time and across settings.

In the early 2000s Bully Busters was designed for elementary and middle school children, with a parent version created in 2008. A high school version was recently developed in 2012. The program uses an ecological model in which the risk and protective factors of the child, school, community, family, and society are all seen to impact bullying behaviors in children (Horne, Swearer, Givens, & Meints, 2010). The focus of the program is on building student-teacher relationships in a way that will enable teachers to intervene when bullying is occurring in the schools. The program centers on facilitating teachers’ skills and techniques in intervention and prevention strategies for bullying and victimization, while increasing their self-efficacy to be able to confront bullying in the school (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Though the program focuses on teachers, students also learn how to confront bullying and victimization, along with the effects of bullying and bullying misconceptions (Horne et al., 2010).

To determine the effectiveness of the Bully Busters program Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) conducted a study with 15 middle school teachers (grades 6-8). The results of the study found that teachers who participated in the program had increased knowledge pertaining to bullying intervention, prevention, awareness, and aiding the victim. However, the program was not effective at impacting the teachers’ beliefs that they can bring about change when the students behavior is being affected by external
factors (i.e., home life). Findings from the study also showed a significant decrease in the amount of bullying behaviors exhibited in those classrooms taught by teachers who partook in the program. The importance of this study in regards to the Bully Busters program is that it demonstrates that a whole-school approach (i.e., Olweus) is not the only means to which bullying behaviors can be reduced. They can also be reduced through the use of a classroom approach.

Another study conducted by Orpinas, Horne, and Staniszewski (2003) trained teachers in bullying and aggression prevention using both the Bully Busters and Bully Proofing Your Schools program. The results of this study found a 40% reduction in mean self-reported aggression and a 19% reduction in mean self-reported victimization for students in grades K-2. For children grades 3-5 there was a 23% reduction in mean self-reported victimization but no statistically significant reduction in mean self-reported aggression. Though the results of this study are not indicative of only utilizing Bully Busters to reduce bullying behaviors in school, it does help to show the effectiveness of incorporating a teacher-training curriculum. It should also be noted that this study was done with elementary aged students and it did not determine the effectiveness of the program with older children. This curriculum though has been shown to demonstrate an ability to educate teachers on bullying awareness, prevention, and intervention. Through teacher education, one can begin to see a reduction in bullying and victimization within the classroom.

Steps to Respect and Student Success Through Prevention (Second Step) are both related programs that were created through the Committee for Children which works to
help prevent bullying, violence, and child abuse (Committee for Children, 2010). The Steps to Respect program is a universal, multi-level program that focuses on reducing bullying problems in elementary school children through the utilization of a school-wide environmental intervention, a cognitive-behavioral class curriculum, and a selective intervention for those involved in bullying (Frey, Edstrom, & Hirschstein, 2010). The program is designed for children in grades 3 through 6 and it looks to target their beliefs about bullying, improve their social-emotional skills to enable them to counteract bullying, and promote healthy relationships (Jimerson & Huai, 2010). One study conducted on the Steps to Respect program examined the effects of an initial implementation of the program on aggression and playground behavior. Observations on playground activities revealed a decline in bullying and argumentative behaviors in the intervention group and an increase in agreeable behaviors compared to the control group. It was also noted that children in the intervention group reported an increase in bystander responsibility along with greater perceptions of adult responsiveness and an overall reduced acceptance of bullying and aggressive behaviors (24.6% fewer incidences of bystanders watching or instigating bullying behaviors). It should be noted though that self-reports of aggression did not differ between the intervention and control group (Frey et al., 2005). Both children in the intervention and control group are reporting the same percentage of bullying perpetration. Studies conducted by Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, and MacKenzie (2007) and Brown, Low, Smith, and Haggerty (2011) also examined the effects of the program through self-reports and teacher observations. The
outcome of this study found similar results to the study done by Frey et al. (2005) where there was a reported reduction in bullying behaviors and victimization.

The program Second Step was originally created as a classroom-based program to help with social-emotional skills development and violence prevention but was recently revised to also address bullying and substance abuse prevention (Jimerson & Huai, 2010). One thing that sets the Second Step program apart from other bullying prevention programs is that it also spends time focusing on reducing relational aggression. Though the program does address relational aggression, no studies have been conducted to examine whether it brings about a change in a student’s relationally aggressive behavior (Nixon & Werner, 2010). A study conducted by Edstrom, Frey, & Beland (2002) assessed the Second Step Program’s effect on changing middle school student attitudes regarding relational and physical aggression. The results of the study showed that the program was effective at changing student attitudes about physical and verbal aggression while increasing their prosocial behaviors. In addition, results demonstrated that those students who received the intervention in their second year of middle school were less tolerant of relational aggression compared to the control group. It will be important over time to assess the effectiveness of the program at not only reducing tolerance of relational aggression but also decreasing the aggressive behaviors themselves.

**Interventions Addressing Relational Aggression**

Many of the above interventions to address bullying also address areas of relational aggression such as teasing, social isolation, or calling someone a bad name but none of them, aside from the Second Step Program, focus on relational aggression as its
own problem separate from the encompassing term “bullying”. Relational aggression is a form of bullying that is more covert and many times goes unnoticed by adults when they are attempting to reduce school aggression. It is important to address relational aggression along with physical and more overt forms of aggression that have received most of the focus since the 1980s. Researchers have recently started developing interventions that focus on decreasing relational aggression in students, and in particular, female students. Even though the interventions below are shown to be effective in reducing relational aggression and victimization overall, the limited amount of research on the effects of the programs reduce the likelihood of implementation within schools. More research needs to be conducted on the interventions to show that they can be effective across time, setting, and context. This section will examine some of the more common interventions that have been created to address relational aggression, along with the research conducted on their effectiveness.

**Creating a Safe School/Ophelia Project**

Creating A Safe School (CASS; The Ophelia Project) is a comprehensive, school-based intervention program that was designed to help reduce relational aggression and victimization (Nixon & Werner, 2010). This program focuses on relational aggression and victimization in middle school children which is important given that the majority of studies on bullying interventions have focused on elementary school children (see Capella & Weinstein, 2006; Frey et al, 2005). The CASS program, also known as The Ophelia Project, includes three major components: raising awareness and increasing knowledge of relational aggression, building empathy, and addressing existing normative
beliefs about relational aggression (Nixon & Werner, 2010). A rigorous model for the various components of the CASS model has been created to ensure accurate implementation of in schools.

The CASS model works to ensure a standard for implementation along with in-depth training of facilitators and mentors. When a district decides to utilize the CASS model within their schools they are assigned two CASS consultants, one lead and one mentor consultant. These consultants have been trained by the Ophelia Project staff and receive a minimum of 16 hours of training on relational aggression and adolescent development. The teachers, administrators, and staff also undergo a seven hour in-service training provided by The Ophelia Project. The adult facilitators also provide a one-day training session for high school mentors who will later work with the middle school girls. In addition, a task force of key stakeholders in the school community (i.e., administrators, teachers, and staff) is developed to review school policies and enhance accountability based on the standards set forth in the CASS manual. Finally, 10-12 scripted lessons are implemented by the high school mentors to ensure standardization of content (Nixon & Werner, 2010). Given all of the time and resources that go into implementing the intervention, it is important to determine if it will be effective.

The school-based intervention can be implemented in two-days or as a ten-week program. In the ten-week program the girls within the intervention engage in role plays, interactive games, small group discussions, and develop behavioral contracts (Nixon, 2005). The Ophelia Project also utilizes a high school female mentor who is trained to work with middle school girls. In addition to the school-based intervention programs, an
arts-based curriculum camp was developed in 2001. This one-week camp for girls in grades sixth through eight helps to educate the students about relational aggression, relate the new information, and integrate it into their lives (Dellasega, 2005). The effectiveness of each program will be discussed further.

Studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the CASS model along with The Ophelia Project and Camp Ophelia. Though they are all ultimately the same overall intervention, each program has slight modifications and therefore, may show varying results in effectiveness. Nixon & Werner (2010) conducted a study on the CASS model exploring its effects on reducing relationally aggressive behaviors and victimization. Results of the study showed decreases in self-reported aggression and victimization for those children who initially had reported high levels of relational aggression and/or victimization. Other students who did not initially report high levels of aggression or victimization reported small, but significant increases in both areas. It could be postulated that the intervention increased awareness in these areas and therefore, increased student self-report. Overall, the study showed that the CASS model was effective at reducing relationally aggressive behaviors in those children who are high-risk. Though further research should be conducted to determine if those children who are high-risk are reporting lower levels of relational aggression because the intervention was effective or that the intervention made the students more aware of their behaviors, thus, leading to underreporting.

Another study by Nixon (2005), examined the CASS model through The Ophelia Project. This study looked at the utilization of mentors in a two-day intervention (with
high-school mentors) and a ten-week intervention (with college mentors). The effects of the intervention showed no significant differences in relational aggression before and after the two-day intervention. There was an initial impact two weeks following the intervention before showing an increase to approximate the original pretest scores. The ten-week program measured relational aggression one week prior to the intervention and again twelve weeks after the pretest. The results demonstrated a decrease in relational aggression and normative beliefs from the pretest to the posttest. Girls who participated in the ten-week program were less tolerant of relationally aggressive behavior and supported fewer aggressive beliefs. An evaluation of the Camp Ophelia project was also conducted to determine its effectiveness in altering girls’ relationship skills. Results of the study showed a sensitization towards relational aggression and improved relationship skills after involvement in the one week program (Dellasega, 2005). An overall finding from these studies is that the use of a mentoring program with older girls with increased time and exposure to the intervention can be effective at reducing relational aggression and victimization and may increase relationship skills for middle school females.

**Social Aggression Prevention Program**

The Social Aggression Prevention Program (SAPP) is a school-based, small group program that was designed to decrease social aggression while increasing empathy, social problem-solving, and prosocial behaviors (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). The program was piloted in 1999 in an elementary school in northern California (see Cappella, 2000) with the goal of increasing knowledge of social aggression, building emotional understanding, promoting positive communication and behavior, practicing
social skills, and teaching social problem-solving to fifth-grade girls. The program focuses on fifth grade girls because to prevent social aggression it has been found that the target population has to have had prior experience with and understanding of the behavior (Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995). Not only do fifth graders tend to have prior experience with social aggression but they can also carry the positive effects of the intervention into middle school with them where relational aggression tends to be the most prevalent.

The SAPP is a 10-week program that is utilized in a small-group format with about four to seven students and one group leader. The group meets for about 40 minutes a week during the school day but usually outside of the classroom. The key components of the program are: (1) universal involvement of fifth-grade girls in a small group format; (2) a scripted and flexible curriculum that helps to impart the essential components of the program while allowing the group leader to respond to any social aggression within the group and (3) an emphasis on the varied roles of peers within conflicts. The program addresses the key components through the use of role playing, discussions, modeling, and games (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006).

Cappella and Weinstein (2006) evaluated the SAPP to determine if there was a decrease in social aggression and an increase in positive leadership skills in a sample of fifth-grade girls. Results of the study determined that the SAPP demonstrated a positive impact on social problem-solving for all children in the study. Teachers also were noted as observing a behavior change in those students who participated in the SAPP. It was reported that those students who were identified as socially aggressive before the intervention were more likely to show empathy and be less socially aggressive than the
control group after the intervention. Overall, the program appeared to have the most impact on students who were at-risk for social problems at the beginning of the intervention, though the program had positive effects for all students participating. Unfortunately, given the lack of research, aside from this study, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the intervention over time and within other contexts. More research needs to be conducted to determine if this program would continue to be an effective intervention to address social aggression.

**Making Choices: Social Problem Skills for Children**

The Making Choices: Social Problem Skills for Children program is designed to help promote social competence and reduce aggression by improving social information processing and increasing emotion regulation (Field et al., 2009). The program is designed to provide children with alternatives on how to perceive social situations and how to formulate social responses. An important aim of the program is to teach children ways in which they can interact in a collaborative manner with their peers (Fraser, Day, Galinsky, Hodges, & Smokowski, 2004). Making Choices also works to help children master six skills of social information processing: encoding, interpretation, goal formation, response formulation, decision-making, and enactment (Smokowski, Fraser, Day, Galinsky, & Bacallao, 2004). Through mastery of these skills children are able to improve their ability to traverse social situations. Not only will children’s ability to navigate social situations be improved but the program works to decrease peer rejection, increase contact with prosocial peers, and increase social competence (Fraser et al., 2005).
The Making Choices curriculum, developed in 2001, describes a series of 31 lessons that helps guide instructors through the different skills associated with social information processing. Each lesson and activity is driven by a particular goal that relies on group activity and discussion. The program is appropriate for use within a classroom or small group setting. Each session is led by an adult within the school system such as a teacher, school psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Facilitators of the program require minimum training because each lesson is fully detailed in the manuals. In addition to explicit instructions, the manuals also contain reproducible materials for each activity which helps to reduce cost for the intervention. Finally, the program is adaptable for use with elementary through early middle school children (Smokowski et al., 2004).

Various studies have been conducted on the Making Choices program looking at the program not only by itself but also pairing it with parent training and teacher enhancement. One study on the Making Choices program evaluated the effect of the intervention in conjunction with the Strong Families Program that promotes parent training. The study was conducted with children between the ages of 6-12 (Fraser et al., 2004). With the combination of these two programs it appeared that the children’s social skills were strengthened, along with increasing social involvement and social competence. The intervention was also seen to help improve classroom behavior along with academic achievement and decreased relational aggression. At the completion of the intervention, teachers rated those children involved in the intervention as more socially competent (i.e., appropriate expression of feelings, controlled temper, resolution of peer problems) (Fraser et al., 2004).
Another study conducted as a pilot study was used to evaluate the use of the Making Choices program with a group of third grade children as part of a Health curriculum. The purpose of the study was to provide an initial evaluation of the program as a means to help decrease conduct problems while enhancing social skills and prosocial behaviors. Following the implementation of the intervention it was determined that those children receiving the intervention had significantly higher scores in social contact, peer acceptance, and decreased scores in overt aggression; particularly for those children seen as high risk (Smokowski et al., 2004).

Finally, a study by Fraser et al. (2005) examined the effect of the program with three consecutive cohorts of third grade students. One year of students was the control group, the next year received the Making Choices program, and in the third year, another group received the Making Choices program supplemented with teacher and parent activities. Overall, the study determined that children in both intervention groups had increased social competence and decreased social and overt aggression compared to the control group. All three studies were consistent in the finding that the Making Choices program was effective in increasing social competence while decreasing relational and physical aggression. More studies need to be conducted though examining the program in different settings and with diverse populations.

Friend to Friend Program

The first known empirically-based intervention to address relational aggression in urban African American girls is the Friend to Friend (F2F) program. This program is a comprehensive, school-based intervention that targets small groups of relationally
aggressive girls in third to fifth grade (Leff et al., 2009; Ostrov et al., 2009). This program was created to help address relational and physical aggression problems among urban African American girls of lower socioeconomic status (Leff et al., 2009). The program works to decrease aggressive behaviors while increasing prosocial and social competence skills within the context of small friendship groups (Ostrov et al., 2009). F2F was designed to be able to help girls recognize various forms of aggression, be able to use problem solving, and find alternative methods to handling conflict (Leff et al., 2009).

The program works with small groups of 6-10 girls whom are a mix of relational aggressors and positive role models. The groups meet biweekly for 30 minutes in a pull-out lunch format over the course of 20 sessions. The program is divided into 5 main components: (1) the types and locations of friendship making problems; (2) physiological arousal and calming strategies; (3) evaluating intentions and responses; (4) applying strategies to gossip and peer entry situations; and (e) review of lessons learned (Leff et al., 2009). Culturally specific illustrations, videos, and role plays are used to help portray appropriate strategies and behaviors for dealing with aggressive behaviors (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2010). In addition to the pull-out group format, an eight-session classroom component is included in which F2F participants facilitate a similar program in their classrooms. This allows participants to gain leadership skills, introduce F2F to more students than just the initial small group, and provide teachers an opportunity to learn how to cue F2F participants to utilize new strategies against aggressive behaviors (Leff et al., 2009).
Research is currently being conducted through the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) of the effectiveness of the F2F program in reducing relational and physical aggression among urban African American females. The study, which began in April 2007, is estimated to be completed in May 2015 (NIMH, 2014). This multi-phase research project is a form of best practices in helping to determine the effectiveness of the intervention with its target population. At the completion of the research trials, the F2F program will hopefully have enough information to establish itself as an evidence-based relational aggression intervention and can then be effectively put into use in urban school environments. Results of the research conducted thus far suggests that the F2F program is highly acceptable to teachers and students and has the potential to be effective in reducing relational and physical aggression among elementary-aged, urban, African American girls with high rates of relational aggression (Leff et al., 2009; Ostrov et al., 2009).

**Goodwill Girls**

The Goodwill Girls program is a tertiary prevention program that was developed for use as a small-group intervention for those students who are at-risk for relational aggression and/or peer victimization. The program was developed for females, age 10 to 16. The program lasts 10 sessions over approximately 10 weeks with each session lasting about 40 minutes. The intervention can last longer than 10 weeks or be completed prior to 10 weeks depending on the school schedule. Therefore, more than one topic can be covered in a session if it appears that the students have an understanding of the subject being discussed. Also, if the students are having difficulty understanding one of the
session topics or more discussion needs to be conducted, the topic can be extended to cover more than one session and extend the program beyond 10 weeks. It is predicted that it would be beneficial to try to run the program for at least 10 weeks. This is due to research previously conducted on another 10 week long intervention where long-term effects were able to be maintained compared to a shorter 2-day intervention (see Nixon, 2005). It is also recommended that the group is a “closed” session and contains no more than twelve members to ensure that everyone involved will have an opportunity to participate regularly. A “closed” group is one in which the group does not change over the course of the intervention and no new members join the group. Having a “closed” group helps to ensure a sense of safety, security, and confidentiality amongst group members (Field et al., 2009).

The researchers who created the Goodwill Girls intervention have conducted many studies on relational aggression and victimization (e.g., Crothers et al., 2005; Crothers et al., 2007; Field, Crothers, & Kolbert, 2006). They have built a solid foundation in the understanding of the characteristics, assessment, and treatment of relational aggression. The authors of the intervention ultimately want to provide students with the tools to be able to solve social problems in a more thoughtful and constructive manner.

A pilot study for the Goodwill Girls program was conducted in 2007 with twelve eighth- and ninth-grade girls in a rural school. Eleven of the group members were Caucasian and only one member was African American (Field et al., 2009). Though the facilitator was able to make notes in regards to the curriculum in each session, the
effectiveness that the intervention had on the students was not determined. Some might assume that the intervention was effective though due to the inclusion of the curriculum in a book for use by professionals. Since one may make the assumption that the intervention has had some success with predominantly white females in a rural environment, it would be important to examine if the intervention can be used in other settings with various populations of students in different geographical locations.

A dissertation study conducted in 2012 examined the differences in relational and social aggression for at-risk non-Caucasian adolescent females. Students who self-identified as Caucasian or Asian were not included in the study. The study did not report the ethnicity of the participants other than stating they were non-Caucasian. The purpose of the study was to determine if the Goodwill Girls curriculum decreased relational and social aggression and increased conflict resolution skills in youths who were removed from their home school district due to aggressive behaviors (Scott, 2012). The study examined pre-test and post-test data collected from two school districts that implemented the Goodwill Girls curriculum and one school district that gathered pre-test data but did not implement the curriculum. Results of the study determined that the Goodwill Girls curriculum did not significantly decrease relational or social aggression. However, differences in the means demonstrated some improvement. Overall, the results of the study supported previous research that indicated that relational and social aggression are two separate constructs.

Currently no additional literature can be found on the effects of Goodwill Girls in reducing relational aggression in adolescent females or improving social skills. The
creators of the intervention have recently conducted a study using the intervention with African American females but the data have not been analyzed yet to determine effectiveness (Crothers, Albright, Fenclau, Kolbert, & Hughes, 2012). Currently, there are two doctoral students at Duquesne University who are examining the effectiveness of the intervention but their data has not been analyzed at this time (L. Crothers, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Literature needs to be built determining if the intervention is effective at reducing relational aggression before it is regularly implemented in schools.

**Conclusion and Purpose of the Study**

Although the study of relational aggression has increased in the past couple of decades, evidence-based interventions are still lacking. Even interventions focused on bullying in general tend to not have a significant number of studies to demonstrate whether they are effective in reducing aggressive behaviors and victimization. Moreover, many of the interventions have not been studied with racially diverse populations or within various settings. Of the studies that have been conducted on interventions for bullying and relational aggression, the interventions have been shown to be effective at reducing aggression in elementary and middle school students. Few studies have been done with high school children but this may be due to the fact that bullying is most prevalent during middle school (Nansel et al., 2001) and then decreases throughout the remainder of school (Peskin et al., 2006). Bullying interventions have also increased prosocial behaviors, interpersonal relationship skills, and the awareness of relational aggression and bullying behaviors (Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006). More studies need to
be conducted on the effectiveness of bullying interventions and, in particular, on interventions for relational aggression.

This study examined the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention in reducing relational aggression with fifth grade, predominantly African American females. The goal of the study was first to determine if there was a significant effect in the reduction of relational aggression in the students who participated in the intervention. Next, it was examined whether participating in the Goodwill Girls significantly impacted the participant’s perception of their peers’ engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors. Finally, the study explored if teacher perception of relational aggression decreased for those students who participated in the intervention.
Chapter 3: Methods

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of an intervention that had been created to reduce relational aggression in females and to examine its effectiveness with predominantly African American females. This study sought to answer the following questions based on the implementation of this intervention with pre-adolescent females:

**Research Question One:** Is there a significant effect in the reduction of relational aggression for the students who participate in the Goodwill Girls Intervention?

It was hypothesized that following the implementation of the intervention, the experimental group would show a significant reduction in their self-reporting of relational aggression compared to the control group. It was also hypothesized, based on the research, that the control group would show an increase in their self-reporting of relationally aggressive behaviors following the implementation of the intervention with the experimental group (Frey et al., 2005).

**Research Question Two:** Does participating in the Goodwill Girls intervention significantly impact the participant’s perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression?
It was hypothesized that student perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression would increase following the implementation of the intervention. This is due to their increased awareness of relationally aggressive behaviors. Though their peers may not actually be engaging in more relationally aggressive behaviors, it was believed that students who participated in the intervention would be more aware of the behaviors associated with relational aggression and therefore, be more able to recognize when they are witnessing it.

**Research Question Three:** Will teacher perceptions of relational aggression in the student participants decrease following the implementation of the intervention?

It was hypothesized that teachers would report lower levels of relational aggression in those students who participated in the Goodwill Girls intervention compared to the control group. It was also predicted that the teachers’ ratings for the control group would increase from before the intervention to after. This is due to the fact that research has shown student involvement in relational aggression tends to increase over the course of a school year (Frey et al., 2005).

**Research Design**

This study was conducted using an experimental design with the manipulation of a single independent variable on two levels. With this type of design the experimental group experiences the treatment, while the control group receives no treatment (Spata, 2003). The effects of this study were measured using a pre-test/post-test control group design with random assignment of participants to either the experimental or control group. A small sample of participants was used within the study and, therefore, the use of
random sampling was only able to reduce individual participant variation slightly, not completely cancel it (Crano & Brewer, 1986). The use of this design was the most beneficial for this study because the goal was to determine if the intervention was effective at reducing relational aggression in adolescents. Therefore, it was important to have an assessment tool prior to and following the intervention. Additionally, because the researcher was looking at the use of just one intervention, the experimental group received the intervention while the other group received no treatment (a true control group) (Ary, Jacobs, Razavich, & Sorenson, 2006).

Sample

A convenience sample was recruited from a public school in Columbus, Ohio. Eligible participants were female students enrolled in the fifth grade. Consent forms were sent home with 52 students. Twenty forms were returned to the researcher prior to the start of the study. Parents for eighteen of the students provided consent to participate in the study but parents of two of the students did not give consent. Eighteen students initially participated in the study; however, one student in the control group dropped out of the study prior to the first posttest collection. Therefore, a total of seventeen students completed the study. After the study had started and pre-test data were collected, two students returned their consent forms to the researcher. Those two students were allowed to participate in the intervention with the control group but they were not included in the study. The sample consisted of fourteen students who were 10 years old and three students who were eleven years old. Additionally, thirteen of the students were African American (76.5%) and four were Caucasian (23.5%). The students’ years of enrollment
at the elementary school ranged from <1 year to 7 years (M = 3.5). The researcher attempted to collect information on the number and age of the participants’ siblings. Due to the students’ difficulty with reporting the age and number of siblings they have, this information was not included in the study. In addition to the seventeen student participants, three out of the four fifth grade teachers participated in the study. The fourth teacher did not have any students participating in the study and therefore, did not need to participate in the study.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of sample

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<td>11</td>
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<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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</table>

**Sampling Procedure**

The sample used for this study was a convenience sample with random assignment to the two groups. The school that was used for the study was one of the
schools that the researcher was assigned to for work. At the start of the school year contact was made with both the principal and the teachers to determine the acceptability of the intervention. After the principal and teachers gave consent for the intervention to take place, ethical approval to implement the intervention was obtained. Once the school year commenced the researcher went into each of the fifth grade classrooms to recruit participants. The research study and intervention were explained to all of the fifth grade female students. The students were then given consent forms describing the intervention and the research study for their parents to complete. Eligible participants were female students, in grade 5, who were enrolled at the public school where the intervention took place.

**Study Variables**

**Demographic Variables**

Given that only female students in the fifth grade were used in the study, little demographic information was collected from the students. The demographic information that was collected in this study was age, race, years they had attended the school, and number/age of siblings. This information was collected by asking the participants to indicate the demographics on a form (see Appendix A). Length of time attending the school was a ratio scale and was asked as an open-ended question for which the students were asked to input the number of years they had attended the school building. Age was also a ratio scale and was asked as an open-ended question for which they were asked to input their age. Race was nominal with six levels used for this study. The races included in the study were African American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander,
American Indian, and Multiracial. Students were asked to choose the race that they identify with the most. Participants were asked a yes/no question in regards to whether they had any siblings. If a participant reported “yes”, she was asked to indicate the ages of her brothers and sisters. Age of siblings is on the ratio scale as each participant was asked to input the ages of all of their siblings to help determine how many siblings each student has and if the siblings were older or younger than the student.

**Dependent Variables**

The dependent variables were the observed and measured variables that were affected by the manipulation of the independent variable (Ary et al., 2006). The measurement of the effectiveness of the intervention, the dependent variables, were examined through the perceived level of relational aggression of a student based on self-report, the perceived level of relational aggression of a student based on teacher report, and the perceived level of relational aggression in peers as reported by the student participants. Student self-report of relational aggression was measured using the *Children’s Social Behavior Scale- Self Report*. The student participants measured their perception of their peers’ engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors with the *Peers Belief Inventory*. Finally, the teacher’s perception of each student’s level of relational aggression was measured using the *Children’s Social Behavior Scale- Teacher Report*. Each of the instruments used to measure the dependent variables are described later.

**Independent Variables**

The independent variable in this study was an intervention that was implemented to reduce relational aggression in primarily African American females. The intervention
used in the study is called Goodwill Girls and was created in 2007 by Field and colleagues (See Appendix B for curriculum summary). The intervention was developed based on research conducted by the creators on relational aggression. Goodwill Girls is a small-group intervention for girls ages 10-16 lasting about 10 sessions over a 10 week period (Field et al., 2009). Each session lasts approximately 40 minutes when following the published curriculum. The curriculum for Goodwill Girls addresses various topics: keeping and losing friends, definition of relational aggression, different approaches to addressing conflict, weighing the pros and cons of approaches to conflict, assertiveness, how words can hurt or heal, reflecting on approaches to conflict, and friendship behaviors. The creators of the intervention recently conducted a study of the intervention with African American females but the data on its effectiveness has not yet been analyzed. A pilot study for the Goodwill Girls program was conducted in 2007 with twelve eighth- and ninth-grade girls in a rural school. Eleven of the group members were Caucasian and only one member was African American (Field et al., 2009). Though the facilitator was able to make notes in regards to the curriculum in each session, the effects the intervention had on the students was not reported.

**Instruments**

The students who participated in the study were asked to complete two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was a self-report on the student’s perceived level of relational aggression. The second questionnaire examined the student’s perceptions of their peers’ levels of relational aggression. The students’ teachers were also asked to
complete a questionnaire measuring how the teacher perceived each student’s level of relational aggression. These instruments are outlined below.

Children’s Social Behavior Scale: Self Report

The Children’s Social Behavior Scale- Self Report (CSBS-S) was created based on the Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Peer Nominations by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) to provide students with a self-report measure that enables children to report on their own behaviors. It is a 15-item measure with six subscales that assess the relative frequency of relational and overt aggression, prosocial behaviors, verbal aggression, inclusion, and loneliness. Five of the questions refer to relational aggression, two on physical aggression, four on prosocial behaviors, one on verbal aggression, two on inclusion, and one on loneliness. The CSBS-S provides students with a Likert scale to rate how often they engage in a particular behavior while at school. The Likert scale responses range from 1 (Never) to 5 (All of the Time). Prior to calculating the mean score for the CSBS-S, negative items were reversed scored so that higher scores would indicate more prosocial or positive beliefs about their behaviors. The CSBS-S scales have been reported to have an internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha ranging from .82 to .89 for relational aggression, .94 to .97 for overt aggression, .91 for prosocial behavior, and .92 for loneliness. There has also been a high test-retest reliability for both relational and overt aggression ($r = .82$ for relational aggression; $r = .90$ for overt aggression) (Crick & Werner, 1998).
Peer Beliefs Inventory

The Peer Beliefs Inventory (PBI) is a measure designed to examine students’ beliefs about their peers. The measure contains 12 questions, six addressing prosocial characteristics and six addressing antisocial characteristics (Rabiner, Keane, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 1993). Students are asked to respond on how often kids within their classroom engage in the various behaviors. Each response is measured using a Likert scale with the responses ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (Very Much). When calculating the results the antisocial questions are reversed scored so that higher scores indicate more prosocial or positive beliefs about peers (Field et al., 2009). Mean scores were calculated with higher scores indicating more positive beliefs about peers. This measure is helpful in determining how a student views their peers in general. It has been reported that the PBI has adequate internal consistency reliability (i.e., $\alpha = .80$) and construct validity and ratings were found to be moderately stable over time (Field et al., 2009).

Children’s Social Behavior Scale: Teacher Form

A teacher rating scale that was developed specifically to evaluate relational aggression is the Children's Social Behavior Scale-Teacher Form (CSBS-T; Crick, 1996). The items in the CSBS-T were created based on items that were previously developed in a peer nomination measure created by Crick and Grotpeter (1996). It is a 15-item rating scale for teachers to help them assess relational and overt aggression, along with prosocial behaviors. The scale contains seven questions related to relational aggression, four addressing overt aggression, and four examining prosocial behaviors. The CSBS-T is heavy on items related to relational aggression because prior to the
creation of this measure there were no teacher assessments of relational aggression and more items were added in case some proved to be unreliable (Crick, 1996). The response items are answered using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (this is never true of this child) to 5 (this is almost always true of this child) (Merrell et al., 2006). Prior to calculating the mean score for the CSBS-T, negative items were reversed scored so that higher scores would indicate more prosocial or positive beliefs about the student’s behaviors. The CSBS-T has been shown to be internally consistent across all three factors in the scale with alphas of .93 and .94 and has satisfactory psychometric properties (Crick, 1996).

Data Collection Procedures

The procedures for this study were similar to the procedures completed by other researchers studying the effects of an intervention (See Cappella & Weinstein, 2006; Nixon & Werner, 2010). A relationship was formed by the researcher with a public school in Columbus, Ohio. Contact with the school was established at the beginning of the school year to ensure that the principal and teachers were accepting of the implementation of the intervention. Approval from the school and the university’s internal review board were obtained prior to conducting the intervention in the school. Once permission had been obtained from the school administrator and the university’s review board, the researcher again met with the teachers in the fifth grade classrooms at the school. This was done to better establish a working relationship with the teachers considering the fact that the students were removed from class activities (i.e., recess) twice a week for about 30–40 minutes to conduct the intervention. The researcher went into the classrooms to briefly explain the project to the female students in the class. It was
explained that the study looked at building healthy peer relationships through a ten session program. Consent forms were sent home with the girls who were in the classroom at that time to explain the intervention to their parents and obtain parental consent for their daughters to participate in the intervention. The students were also provided with an assent form to fill out to state that they were interested in participating in the intervention.

Once the consent forms were collected from the students, the students were randomly assigned to either the control group or the experimental group. Then the researcher met with both the control group and the experimental group separately to administer the CSBS-S and PBI. At this time the teachers were also provided with the CSBS-T to be completed. Following the administration of these measurements the control group was sent back to their classrooms and told that they would meet with the researcher again in five weeks. The experimental group was also sent back to their classrooms but told that they would meet with the researcher the next week. For the following five weeks the experimental group took part in the Goodwill Girls intervention where they learned prosocial behaviors and how to develop strong and healthy relationships. The intervention lasted for about 30-40 minutes, two times a week and took place during recess time. Following the last session, the experimental group and the control group were given the CSBS-S and PBI again to complete. The teachers were also given the CSBS-T again to complete.

Following the completion of the intervention with the experimental group, the control group was then given the opportunity to participate in the intervention. For the control group the first post-test measures served as their pre-test prior to intervention. At
the end of the five week intervention with the control group, the experimental and control groups were again administered the CSBS-S and PBI to complete. Also, the teachers were provided with the CSBS-T to complete again. This was done in case one of the groups contained more relationally aggressive participants than the other group. This allowed for more data to better determine the effectiveness of the intervention regardless of whether or not one group was more relationally aggressive than the other. Also, it provided an opportunity to examine the stability of the intervention over time by comparing the experimental group’s scores directly following the intervention and five weeks after finishing the intervention (see Table 2).

Table 2

Timeline for intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early January</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-January to Late February</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>No Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early March</td>
<td>Posttest 1</td>
<td>Posttest1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-March to Mid-April</td>
<td>Post Intervention/ No Services</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late April</td>
<td>Posttest2</td>
<td>Posttest2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The surveys were coded to ensure confidentiality for both the student and teacher reports. Each student’s name was included in an excel sheet where a code was assigned to that student (e.g., 101C, 102E, etc.). The code was placed on each form used so that the
student’s name was not included on any of the forms. To ensure that the teacher knew which form correlated with which student, a cover sheet with the student’s name was attached to the top of each form. There was no identifying information on the actual teacher report forms. When the teachers completed the forms for all of the participants they sealed the forms with the cover sheets still intact in a packet that was returned to the researcher. The researcher then placed the student’s code onto the teacher report form and destroyed the cover sheet with the student’s name. The researcher was the only person who had full access to the list of student names and codes to help ensure confidentiality of student and teacher reports.

**Issues with Validity**

Internal validity is the inference that the changes observed in the dependent variable can be attributed to or caused by the independent variable (Ary et al., 2006). There are many different possible threats to internal validity that would cause outside forces to affect the changes within the independent variable. When doing a two-group pre-test post-test design the threats to internal validity are reduced but this design does not control for pretest sensitization (Spata, 2003). The use of a pre-test can lead participants to be more aware of their behaviors, causing a change in their behaviors that is not related to the treatment. Another threat to internal validity is in instrumentation. The participants are asked to self-report on their engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors. The participants may lie or provide responses that they think are socially desirable instead of responding about whether or not they truly do engage in the behaviors.
External validity can be defined as whether the cause-effect relationship being studied is able to be seen with other subjects, settings, or using different measurements (Ary et al., 2006). Ultimately, it is asking to what populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables can the effect of the study be generalized (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The threats to external validity that are found within this study are due to the selection process used to obtain the sample. Since the study was done with three grade-equivalent, predetermined classrooms in a public elementary school the use of convenience sampling was utilized. Random assignment of students to the control or experimental group occurred but we were unable to have a random sampling of students who participated in the study. The selection process affects the generalizability of the study such that the results can only be generalized to the sample. It is possible to compare the characteristics of the sample to the characteristics of the population to determine how representative the sample is of the population and counter the threats to generalizability. Ultimately, the best evidence for the generalizability of the research findings is replication with different populations, settings, and times (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2009).

Data Analysis

To address the research questions for this study, various statistical procedures were utilized and are outlined below. All data analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
**Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the general characteristics of the students who participated in the study. The frequency and percentage for student age and race were calculated. The mean and range were also reported for the length of time the students have been enrolled in the school. Additionally, the mean scores and standard deviations for the pretests and posttests scores of the PBI, CSBS-T, and CSBS-S were examined.

**Independent Samples T-Test**

To address the three research questions in this study, independent samples $t$-test were conducted. The independent samples $t$-test was used to confirm that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control group prior to the intervention. Additionally, the independent samples $t$-test was used to see if there was a change in relational aggression with the experimental group after receiving the intervention compared to the control group. The independent samples $t$-test also allowed the examiner to determine if there was a change in the control group after the students received the intervention.

To ensure that the data was appropriate for the analysis, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence were examined (Lomax, 2007). The assumption of normality states that the population follows a normal distribution. To test this assumption, a normal probability plot was developed. The assumption of homogeneity of variance is that the variances of the dependent variable in the two populations are equal. This assumption was tested by running Levene’s Test for Equality
of Variance in SPSS. If the test results were not significant, then the null hypothesis that the variances are equal was retained. In this case, the SPSS results for “equal variances assumed” were interpreted. If the test results were significant, then the null hypothesis was rejected and unequal variances were assumed. In this case, the SPSS results for “equal variances not assumed” were interpreted. Lastly, the assumption of independence states that the data is independent of each other and that the scores of one participant are not systematically related to scores of the other participants. Due to the design of this study, scores were independent of each other.

The independent sample $t$-test is denoted by the following equation:

$$ t = \frac{\bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2}{s_{\bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2}} $$

Where $\bar{y}_1$ and $\bar{y}_2$ are the means for sample 1 and sample 2, and $s_{\bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2}$ is the standard error of the difference between two means (Lomax, 2007). The null hypothesis was that there was no difference between the two means. If the $t$-statistic exceeded the critical value (.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and there was a significant difference between the two means. If the $t$-statistic was less than the critical value (.05), then the null hypothesis was retained and there was no significant difference between the means.

**Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (RM ANOVA)**

A repeated measures analysis of variance (RM ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the long-term effect of the Goodwill Girls intervention on the experimental group using their pretest, posttest, and second posttest scores. When utilizing the RM ANOVA, it is important to investigate the three major assumptions: normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance (Lomax, 2007). Additionally, for RM
ANOVA, there is an additional assumption of sphericity that needs to be met. The assumption of normality is that each of the populations follows a normal distribution. Then the assumption of independence is that individuals in the sample are randomly assigned to each group and that the observations are independent of one another. The assumption of homogeneity of variance states that the variance of each population is the same. To test for the homogeneity of variance the Levene’s test was utilized given the sample sizes were equal. Finally, the assumption of sphericity assumes that the levels of the within subject variables are equally related to each other.

The repeated measures ANOVA is denoted by the following equation:

\[ F = \frac{MS_{Treatment}}{MS_{Error}} \]

Using SPSS a RM ANOVA summary table was developed from the data. The first column of the summary table is the following sources: individuals, occasions, residual (error), and total variation. The second column shows the sum of squares terms for each source. The third column displays the number of degrees of freedom for each source of variation. The fourth column gives the mean squares for each source of variation. Finally, the fifth column shows the F-value. There is no appropriate error term for testing the effect of differences among individuals and therefore, there is no F-ratio calculated for the individuals. Below is a RM ANOVA summary table:
The null hypothesis in each case was rejected if the $F$ test statistic exceeded the $F$ critical value. Rejecting the null hypothesis meant that the population means for the test occasions were not equal. When the null hypothesis is rejected, it is necessary to conduct a post hoc multiple comparison analysis in order to determine which pairs’ means differed. If the $F$ test statistic does exceed the $F$ critical value then the null hypothesis was true meaning the population means were equivalent (Howell, 2007).
Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, results of the quantitative analyses are presented. First, descriptive statistics were used to illustrate general characteristics of the research participants. Then, to answer the three research questions, independent samples’ t-tests were conducted to explore if the means of the experimental group were significantly different from the means of the control group following the implementation of the intervention. Finally, the use of repeated measures ANOVA was examined to provide additional information about any potentially significant longevity effect of the intervention.

Descriptive Statistics

The frequency and percentage for student age and race were calculated, along with the mean and range for the length of time the students have been enrolled in the school (see Table 1, page 59). Additionally, the mean scores and standard deviations for the pretests and posttests of the PBI, CSBS-T, and CSBS-S were examined for the experimental and control group and are presented in Table 4. Given that both positive and negative statements were included on the three measures; the negatively-keyed items were reverse scored before computing individuals’ total scores and before conducting psychometric analyses. The mean scores for the three measures showed little difference between the experimental and control group.
Table 4

*Means (M) and standard deviation (SD) for the pretest and two posttest measures of the PBI, CSBS-S, and CSBS-T for the experimental and control group.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PrePBI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1PBI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2PBI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreCSBS-S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1CSBS-S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2CSBS-S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreCSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1CSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2CSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PBI, CSBS-S, and CSBS-T were administered on three separate occasions to examine the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention. Overall, the means of the measures for the experimental and control groups across the three administrations indicate little change. Additionally, in Table 4, it can be seen that data is missing from the
control group. For the Post1PBI, Post2 PBI, Post1CSBS-S, Post2CSBS-S, Post1CSBS-T, and Post2CSBS-T a questionnaire is missing from the control group due to a student opting out of the research study following the first administration of the questionnaires. For the PreCSBS-S, a questionnaire is missing due to a student not completing the scale.

**Independent Samples t-tests**

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to ascertain whether the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group differed from the control group. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to further investigate the relationships between the experimental and control group (independent variables) with the following dependent variables: Peers Belief Inventory; Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Student; and Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Teacher. The results from these analyses were outlined in this section.

There are three assumptions for the independent samples t-test that need to be met: normality, homogeneity, and independence. The normality assumption was evaluated by looking at a normal probability plot. Based on the data being normally distributed, the normality assumption was not violated. The homogeneity (equality of variances) assumption was tested using Levene’s test for equality of variances. The two variances are approximately equal and the assumption is not violated if Levene’s test is greater than .05. If Levene’s test is less than .05 then the assumption is rejected and “Equal variances not assumed” or Welch’s t is interpreted. Finally, when utilizing an independent samples t-test, the two groups need to be independent of one another. Due to the design of this study, scores were independent of each other.
Research Question 1: Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Student. Levene’s test for the pretest and posttest 1 measures of the Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Student (CSBS-S) were insignificant (see Table 5). Therefore, the “Equal variances assumed” was interpreted as the assumption that the variances were homogenous was not rejected. Levene’s test for the posttest 2 measure of the CSBS-S was significant and thus the “Equal variances not assumed” was interpreted. The independent samples $t$-test indicated that the means for the CSBS-S pretest were not significantly different by group ($t = -1.585$, $df = 1$, $p = .134$). Additionally, the independent samples $t$-test indicated that the means for the posttest 1 of the CSBS-S ($t = -.507$, $df = 15$, $p = .620$) and the posttest 2 of the CSBS-S ($t = .674$, $df = 10.219$, $p = .515$) were not significantly different.
Table 5

*Independent samples t-test for Children's Social Behavior Scale-Student by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreCSBS-S</td>
<td>1.585</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1CSBS-S</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2CSBS-S</td>
<td>8.105</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The equal variances assumed row was interpreted when Levene’s test was insignificant. In this case, the independent t-test was conducted. Otherwise, the equal variances not assumed row was interpreted, in which the Welch t’ test was conducted.
**Research Question 2: Peers Belief Inventory.** To test for homogeneity of variance, Levene’s test was conducted and was significant for the pretest measure of the Peers Belief Inventory (PBI) (see Table 6). Therefore, the assumption that the variances were homogenous was rejected and the results of the “Equal variances not assumed” was interpreted. The Levene’s test was not significant for the posttest measures of the PBI resulting in the “Equal variances assumed” being interpreted. The independent samples t-test indicated that the means for the PBI pretest were not significantly different by group ($t = 0.868, df = 14.020, p = .400$). Additionally, the independent samples t-test indicated that the means for the PBI posttests were not significantly different (Posttest 1 PBI: $t = 0.850, df = 15, p = .409$; Posttest 2 PBI: $t = 1.056, df = 15, p = .307$).
Table 6

*Independent samples t-test for Peers Belief Inventory by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrePBI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>4.965</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1PBI</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2PBI</td>
<td>1.053</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The equal variances assumed row was interpreted when Levene’s test was insignificant. In this case, the independent *t*-test was conducted. Otherwise, the equal variances not assumed row was interpreted, in which the Welch *t*’ test was conducted.
Research Question 3: Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Teacher. Tests for homogeneity of variance were insignificant for the pretest and posttest measures of the Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Teacher (CSBS-T) (see Table 7). The “Equal variances assumed” was interpreted for the pretest and posttest measures. Independent samples t-test indicated that the measure for the pretest measure of the CSBS-T were not significantly different by group ($t = -0.388, df = 16, p = .703$). In addition, the independent samples t-test indicated that the means for the posttest 1 of the CSBS-T ($t = -0.286, df = 15, p = .779$) and the posttest 2 of the CSBS-T ($t = -0.873, df = 15, p = .397$) were not significantly different.
### Table 7

**Independent samples t-test for Children's Social Behavior Scale-Teacher by Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>$t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreCSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>-.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post1CSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td>-.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post2CSBS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td>-.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The equal variances assumed row was interpreted when Levene’s test was insignificant. In this case, the independent t-test was conducted. Otherwise, the equal variances not assumed row was interpreted, in which the Welch t’ test was conducted.
Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance

To examine whether there was a long-term impact from the Goodwill Girls intervention on relational aggression the pretest, posttest, and second posttest scores from the PBI, CSBS-S, and CSBS-T were analyzed for the experimental group across time using a repeated measures analysis of variance (repeated measures ANOVA).

When utilizing the repeated measures ANOVA, it is important to investigate the three major assumptions of normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance. Additionally, for a repeated measures ANOVA, there is an additional assumption of sphericity that needs to be met. The assumption of sphericity is determined by examining Mauchly’s test of Sphericity. The assumption is not violated if Mauchly’s test is greater than .05. If Mauchly’s test is less than .05 then the assumption is rejected and the F-test is inaccurate. If the assumption is violated then the degrees of freedom can be corrected to make the F-test accurate. The results from the repeated measures ANOVA were outlined in this section.

Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Student. Mauchly’s test of Sphericity for the CSBS-S was insignificant and therefore, the assumption of sphericity was not violated ($W = .663, p = .237$). The repeated measures ANOVA results (see Table 8) indicate that there was no significant difference between the pretest CSBS-S and two posttest CSBS-S measures before and after completion of the Goodwill Girls curriculum, $F(2,16) = 1.713, p = .212$. Therefore, there is no difference between pretest and posttest scores on student self-report of their engagement in relational aggression.
Table 8
Repeate Measures ANOVA for Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Student across time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>1.713</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.204</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Computed using alpha = .05

**Peers Belief Inventory.** When examining the PBI for the experimental group across time, the Mauchly’s Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity was not violated ($W = .943, p = .813$). The repeated measures ANOVA results (see Table 9) indicate that there was no significant difference between the pretest PBI and two posttest PBI measures before and after completion of the Goodwill Girls curriculum, $F(2,16) = 0.876, p = .435$. Therefore, there is no difference between pretest and posttest scores on participant’s views of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression.

Table 9
Repeate Measures ANOVA for Peers Belief Inventory across time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.766</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Computed using alpha = .05

**Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Teacher.** Tests for sphericity were insignificant for the pretest and posttest measures of the CSBS-T ($W = .790, p = .438$).
The repeated measures ANOVA results (see Table 10) indicate that there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest measures of the CSBS-T before and after completion of the Goodwill Girls curriculum, $F(2,16) = 0.617, p = .552$.

Therefore, there is no difference between pretest and posttest scores on teacher reports of the student participants’ engagement in relational aggression.

Table 10

*Repeated Measures ANOVA for Children’s Social Behavior Scale-Teacher across time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Computed using alpha = .05
Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention with predominantly African American females. Research on the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention is scarce. There is currently only one published study that was conducted with non-Caucasian youths who had been removed from their home school districts due to aggressive behaviors (Scott, 2012). Research is currently being conducted by two doctoral students to examine the efficacy of the Goodwill Girls intervention (L. Crothers, personal communication, June 4, 2015); however, the population under study was not indicated.

The current study was one of the first to examine the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention with predominantly African American pre-adolescent females. Eighteen students, 13 of which were African American and four were Caucasian, provided consent to participate in the study. The students were split into two groups, the control group and the experimental group. Each group completed two pre-intervention surveys which examined how they perceived their peer’s engagement in relational aggression and their perceptions of their own engagement in relational aggression. Additionally, the homeroom teachers for each student completed a survey on their perceptions of the student’s engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors. The experimental group then received the intervention. Following the experimental groups’
completion of the Goodwill Girls intervention, all students and their teachers completed a second set of the same surveys as a post-test measure. The control group also received the intervention. After their completion of the intervention, all students and their teachers were asked to complete a final set of surveys as a second post-test measure. Throughout the course of the intervention, one student withdrew from the control group. Therefore, a total of 17 students completed the study, along with three classroom teachers.

**Research Question One: Is there a significant effect in the reduction of relational aggression for the students who partake in the Goodwill Girls Intervention?**

The first purpose of this study was to examine if the implementation of the Goodwill Girls intervention would contribute to a significant reduction in the self-reporting of relational aggression within the experimental group as compared to the control group. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test measure on student self-reports of relational aggression for the experimental group. Additionally, since the control group also received the intervention after the experimental group the examiner was able to determine if there was a significant reduction in self-reported relational aggression for the control as well. The control group also did not have a significant difference in their self-reporting of relational aggression after receiving the intervention. Overall, results of the study showed that there was no significant effect in the reduction of self-reported relational aggression following the implementation of the Goodwill Girls intervention. One reason may be that the students self-selected to participate in the intervention and those students who choose to participate in the study may not have exhibited high levels of relationally aggressive
behaviors prior to the intervention. Alternatively, the students may be more aware of their behaviors and, as such, are providing accurate ratings. Lastly, it could be that the program, as it was delivered, did not have an effect for these students.

**Research Question Two: Does participating in the Goodwill Girls intervention significantly impact the participant’s perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression?**

The second purpose of this study was to examine if the Goodwill Girls intervention had an impact on how the participants perceived their peers’ engagement in relational aggression. It was postulated that the participant’s perception of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression would increase following the implementation of the intervention due to their increased awareness of relationally aggressive behaviors. This hypothesis was based on previous studies of relational aggression interventions that saw an increase in self-reporting of victimization (Nixon & Werner, 2010). The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test measure on student reports of peer engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors for the experimental group. In addition, the control group also received the intervention following the experimental group which allowed the examiner to determine if there was a significant reduction in reports of peer engagement in relational aggression for the control as well. There was not a significant difference for the control group in their reporting of their peers’ engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors. Overall, results of the study showed that there was no significant effect in participant’s views of their peers’ engagement in relational aggression prior to and following the intervention.
Research Question Three: Will teacher perceptions of relational aggression in the student participants decrease following the implementation of the intervention?

The third purpose of this study was to examine if teacher perceptions of student involvement in relationally aggressive behaviors would decrease following the implementation of the Goodwill Girls intervention. The results of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test measure of teacher report of relational aggression for the students who participated in the experimental group. Additionally, given that the control group also received the intervention after the experimental group, the examiner was able to examine if teacher reports were significant for the control group. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in teacher perceptions for the control group following their participation in the Goodwill Girls intervention. Overall, results of the study showed that there was no significant effect in the reduction of teacher perceptions of student engagement in relationally aggressive behaviors following their participation in the Goodwill Girls intervention.

Conclusion and Limitations

Aggression has become a prevalent concept in the field of psychology over the past few decades but it has only been within the past couple of decades that researchers have begun to focus on female forms of aggression and in particular, relational aggression. This has led to a limited body of research in the field of relational aggression. Not only is the research on relational aggression limited but there is also a shortage of literature on how to reduce relational aggression. Much of the research has focused on creating and assessing the effectiveness of interventions that primarily address physical
and verbal forms of bullying in schools. Although there are effective programs to prevent more overt forms of aggression, there are few programs created to prevent more indirect forms of aggression (Cappella & Weinstein, 2006). Not only are there few programs created to prevent indirect aggression but the research on the effectiveness of these programs is sparse.

The Goodwill Girls intervention was created by researchers who have conducted extensive studies in the field of relational aggression (e.g., Crothers et al., 2005; Crothers et al., 2007; Field, Crothers, & Kolbert, 2006). It is a small-group intervention developed for use with those students who are at-risk for relational aggression and/or peer victimization. Although the intervention was created by researchers who have conducted a vast number of studies in regards to relational aggression, the intervention itself is limited in studies on its effectiveness. Only one study has been published examining the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls intervention to date. Results of the study determined that the Goodwill Girls curriculum did not significantly decrease relational or social aggression; however, differences in the means demonstrated some improvement (Scott, 2012). The current study is consistent with recent research (Scott, 2012) that the Goodwill Girls curriculum did not significantly decrease self-reported and observed relational aggression in the students who participated in the intervention. The results of the current study and Scott’s (2012) study suggest that, in general, the Goodwill Girls program is not effective at decreasing relational aggression. It is important for additional studies to examine the effectiveness of the Goodwill Girls program before the intervention is implemented regularly in schools.
One reason that the study may not have demonstrated significant results is due to the limitations of implementing the study within the school environment. Currently schools are implementing Response to Intervention (RtI), which is a multi-tiered approach to early identification and support of students with learning and behavioral needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Although RtI is meant to address both learning and behavioral needs, much of the focus in schools is on academics. This may be due to the increased focus on standardized assessments and teacher evaluations. Given the increased focus on academic interventions, little time is left for the implementation of behavioral interventions. For this study the researcher was unable to conduct the intervention during instructional time and had to find an alternate time during the day (i.e., before school, after school, lunch/recess) to the conduct the intervention. Therefore, the intervention was conducted during the students’ recess time. The experimental group received the intervention during the winter when the students were having indoor recess and were more likely to want to come to the group sessions. Whereas when the control group began receiving the intervention, the weather was getting warmer and the students were going outside for recess. This led to multiple absences when the control group received the intervention. Having the group sessions during recess time can have an impact on student participation as many of the students showed a preference for choosing recess over group when they were having outdoor recess.

Another limitation to doing the intervention within the school environment was the amount of time that could be spent doing the intervention. The Goodwill Girls intervention is a 10 session intervention that is typically conducted over 10 weeks and
last around 40 minutes. The curriculum for the intervention states that the intervention can be conducted over a shorter or longer period of time if needed. However, to be able to conduct the intervention for both the experimental and control group the intervention had to be conducted with each group over a five week period with sessions two times a week. The researcher was unable to conduct each intervention over a ten week period due to having to factor in holidays, school breaks, and statewide testing. Additionally, since the intervention was conducted during recess time, each session had to be conducted within 30 minutes. By only having 30 minutes for each session, this forced the discussions and activities to be shortened. Although having two sessions a week allowed for the participants to be able to recall previous sessions easier, it did not give the participants a lot of time to complete the session’s homework or to practice what they had just learned. These are not only limitations to conducting the Goodwill Girls intervention but also evidence of the real challenges in conducting school bullying interventions in schools (Coyle, 2008).

**Final Conclusions and Directions for Future Research**

Given the limitations to conducting the intervention within the school environment, this may have had an impact of the lack of significant findings; though it is important to consider that the Scott (2012) study was not conducted in a school setting and did not find significant effects either. There are some considerations for implementing this program within the school setting. First, the intervention might not have been effective at showing a reduction in relational aggression due to having to alter the intervention to be able to conduct it within the school environment. The intervention
often had to be conducted over 30 minutes instead of 40 minutes and over a five week period. Second, by doing the intervention over a five week period, this may not have allowed enough time for the students to demonstrate reduced relationally aggressive behaviors or for them to have truly gained an understanding of what is relational aggression and how to not engage in the behaviors (Nixon, 2005). The inability to gain an understanding of the concepts may have also been due to the young age of the participants. For example, during the experimental group, students would demonstrate an understanding of the concepts when talking about them in the sessions but they struggled to maintain that understanding from session to session and following the implementation of the intervention. A few weeks after the intervention one of the participants who had demonstrated an understanding of the concepts during the sessions was in the office for engaging in relationally aggressive behaviors at recess. When asked, she was able to recall some of the concepts that were discussed in the intervention; however, that did not change her engaging in relational aggression. Fifth grade girls may require more time or the full 40 minutes to help reinforce the concepts discussed in the intervention; whereas, sessions may be able to shortened for late middle to high school girls (Field et al., 2009).

Although the intervention was conducted by the researcher, the researcher was in the schools practicing as a school psychologist. As such, some of these limitations are a reality of conducting a behavioral intervention within the school setting. This is important to understand as the curriculum is promoted to school personnel (i.e., counselors, school psychologist) for use in the school setting. If these limitations for conducting behavioral interventions are consistent within school environments, then the Goodwill Girls
curriculum may need to be modified to increase the efficacy of using the intervention within the school environment. The findings for this study suggest that this program, as implemented within the school setting, is not effective. This is consistent with the results from the Scott (2012) study. As such, one should be cautious when using this intervention in schools as these two studies strongly suggest a lack of support for its efficacy in schools. It may be that the intervention is not effective as a group intervention. At this time we cannot support the use of the intervention in schools the way that it was designed to be implemented.

Despite similar findings between this study and the Scott (2012) study, it is important to note that the two studies used different populations. The study conducted by Scott in 2012 was implemented with youths who were removed from their home school district due to aggressive behaviors, whereas the current study was implemented in a public school with youths in the general education population who self-selected to participate. Additional studies need to be conducted with diverse populations (i.e., at-risk youth, self-selected students) to help determine if the intervention is effective across different populations, along with the validity of the studies currently conducted on the intervention.

Further studies also need to be conducted on the use of the intervention within the school population. The curriculum for the Goodwill Girls intervention is currently published and geared towards school counselors. This implies that the intervention is for use with students within the school setting. Given the limitations within this study in conducting the intervention in a school setting, it is imperative to examine if the same
limitations apply within other school buildings/districts. Further, researchers should examine challenges with administrating the intervention as it is designed and determine if modifications are necessary for effective implementation into the school setting. A comprehensive review of the literature examining the effectiveness of small group interventions could potentially provide information as to common challenges for implementation in the schools. This might also shed light on modifications (e.g., length of time, teacher prompts to support small group session) that might be necessary to increase effectiveness within various school settings.

As a final point, the Goodwill Girls intervention is a program that was developed based on findings within relational aggression research and targets constructs that are also addressed across other bullying programs. However, the format or delivery of the intervention may not be effective for use in schools, particularly with this age group (i.e., 10-11 year olds). During the study, the students were more engaged in the hands-on activities (i.e., role-playing, games) than in the discussions. Given that the dialogue and discussions were more difficult for these students to engage in, it might be beneficial to consider having the dialogue incorporated into the classroom environment, at least for younger ages. Future research may want to consider incorporating the intervention itself within the school curriculum. This would provide teachers and students (both male and female) with consistent language/terms and definitions for discussing relational aggression. In addition, teachers would be able to provide prompts, direct modeling, and examples of relationally aggressive behaviors or positive interactions as they occur. By incorporating the intervention within the school curriculum, this would allow for
increased generalizability outside of the small-group setting. Additionally, the students would be taught the skills for dealing with relationally aggressive behaviors prior to middle school when research shows that they are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors. Overall, given the increased focus on addressing bullying within the schools, it is important that we find effective interventions that specifically target relational aggression. It is critical that we have programs that are not only research-based, but that are also found to be evidence-based and effective for use across diverse populations.
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Appendix A: Demographic Information

Name: _____________________________________________

Age: ____________

Ethnicity:
___ African American   ___ Hispanic
___ American Indian    ___ Multiracial
___ Asian/Pacific Islander  ___ White/Caucasian

How many years have you attended this school? ______

Do you have any brothers or sisters? ______

    Ages of brothers? _____________  Ages of sisters? _____________
### Appendix B: Goodwill Girls Curriculum Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Session Goals</th>
<th>Intervention/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1. Develop healthy</td>
<td><strong>Group introductions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group norms</td>
<td>- Each group member will introduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>themselves by selecting a word that describes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Build rapport</td>
<td>them that starts with the first letter of their name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and trust among</td>
<td>(e.g. “Smart Sally).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group members</td>
<td><strong>Defining a group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Discuss what a group is and how it differs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Set the stage for</td>
<td>from a classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>future group</td>
<td><strong>Go Around</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discussions</td>
<td>- Go around the group and tell one thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>about yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Developing Group Rules</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Work as a team to brainstorm and develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>group rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Icebreaker</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- “I Treasure” worksheet: girls will share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>their top 5 with the group and similarities amongst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Keeping and Losing Friends</td>
<td>1. Examine behaviors used to make friends, keep friends, and lose friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Each group member will introduce themselves and name one thing they remember form the previous session.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- One group member will read the group rules which are displayed in the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <strong>Brainstorming activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Brainstorm and write down in two columns on paper or a white board what the students do to make and keep friends and what they do to lose friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Group facilitator will then ask questions to facilitate discussion. See printout.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <strong>“Unhealthy Friends” handout</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have the students put a star in the box that reflects a behavior that a friend has done to them and a checkmark in the box for each behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they have demonstrated. Discuss these behaviors and why they may be unhealthy to do to one another.

**-Processing/Closing**
- Assign “homework” where each girl will “catch” themselves engaging in behaviors that help them keep or lose friendships.
- Have each girl respond to the prompt “One thing I learned in group today is…”

| 3. Naming   | 1. Learn what is relational aggression | - **Beginning Activities**
|            | 2. Learn various approaches to conflict |   - One group member will read the group rules
   |            |                                    |   - Ask the girls to discuss their homework from last session.

**- Defining Relational Aggression**
- Facilitator will explain to the group that they will be learning about relational aggression and different approaches to conflict today.
- Distribute the “Relational Aggression Organizational Map” and have one group member read through the examples of how a person can display relational aggression.
- Group discussion about how relational
aggression fits in with keeping or losing friendships

- Facilitator will then briefly explain how relational aggression is a way that girls try to address problems or conflicts that they are having with each other.

- **Maria and Tara Worksheet**
  - Distribute the worksheet and have one student read the scenario out loud to the group.
  - Have the group members respond to questions 1, 2, and 3.
  - Have the group discuss what they think Tara should do.
  - Ask four different group members to read the definitions for *aggressive, passive, passive-aggressive, and assertive*.

- **Processing**
  - Have each group member state what they would do if they were Tara in the scenario.
  - Collect the worksheets before the students leave.

| 4. Pros and Cons | 1. Gain an...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome Back</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cons understanding of the four approaches to conflict | - Ask the girls to name one thing they remember from the previous group session.  
- Ask the group members if they have any questions about the group rules

- **Group Activity**
  - Split the girls into four groups and hand each group an index card with either the term *aggressive, passive, passive-aggressive,* or *assertive* on it.
  - Have each group (1) define the term in their own words and (2) list the pros and cons of each approach to conflict
  - Reassemble into a larger group and have each group present their definition and pros and cons list

- **Maria and Tara worksheet**
  - Redistribute the “Maria and Tara” worksheet and discuss the four prompts at the bottom of the worksheet that apply to the new terms.
  - Have the group discuss which approaches they use when they are in conflict with another |
| 5. Weighing the Pros and Cons | 1. Examining the various approaches to conflict | - **Welcome Back**  
- Each group member will go around and report on their homework (approach to conflict)  
- Facilitator will ask the group if they have any questions about the group rules. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | 2. Gaining an understanding of the potential consequences of each approach to conflict | - **Role Play**  
- Have two volunteers role-play four different scenarios involving “LeShauna” and “Chrissy” (may want to put name tags on the two students to identify each role).  
- Provide the two students with the scripts and give them 3-5 minutes outside the room to... |
prepare.

- Discuss four approaches to conflict during this time.
- Provide the group with scripts and the “LeShauna and Chrissy” Worksheet to record the term that best describes the scenario they witness.
- After all four scenarios are completed, have the group discuss which approach matches each scenario.

**- Relational Aggression Organizational Map**
- Redistribute the Organizational Map and discuss the potential consequences of each approach.
- Examine if there are any potential connections between the characteristics on the handout and potential connections revealed during the discussion.

**-Processing**
- Have each group member state what they would have done if they were LeShauna and why.
| 6. Assertiveness Revisited | 1. Gain an understanding of what is assertiveness and how to be assertive | - **Welcome Back**  
- Each group member will go around and report on what they remember from the previous session  
- Facilitator will ask the group if they have any questions about the group rules.  
- Inform the group that there are only 5 sessions remaining (including this one) before termination  
- **Assertiveness revisited worksheet/discussion**  
  - Distribute and have each girl complete the worksheet independently.  
  - Then pair up the group members and have them label each item on the worksheet as assertive, aggressive, passive, and passive-aggressive.  
  - The facilitator will go through each item and have the girls report how they labeled it  
  - Have each group member respond to the stem “It is hard to be assertive sometimes because…”  
  - Then discuss what the girls heard from each |
- Discuss how they are learning to be assertive and identify women they know who they believe demonstrate assertiveness.

**Processing**

- Have each member name someone they would like to be assertive with before the next group session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. How Words Can Hurt or Heal</th>
<th>1. Gain an understanding of how words can hurt and the lasting effect of these words</th>
<th>2. Learn “healing words” they can use with others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Welcome Back**

- Each group member will go around and report on who they were assertive with since the last session.

- Facilitator will ask the group if they have any questions about the group rules.

- Inform the group that there are only 4 sessions remaining (including this one) before termination

**Paper Doll Activity**

- Introduce the paper doll (already taped up on the wall) as someone who is not liked very much at school

- Ask the group what some popular put-
downs are that are used toward someone they do not like

- Have a group member write the insults on the paper person.

- Then have two group members stand up and verbalize the insults toward the paper person as if they do not like the person. After each insult the group member will rip off a piece of the paper person.

- After the paper person is completely ripped down, ask the members to reassemble the paper person using transparent tape.

- Draw three columns on the board and label them think, feel, and behave. Have the group consider what paper person might think, feel, or do after being “torn down” by the others’ words. Also have them think about if the person’s “scars” are symbolic of the scars that real people might have when they are abused by others.

- Encourage the group to talk about what they would say to paper person if she were someone they cared about and have them
| 8. Reflecting on Approaches to Conflict | 1. Demonstrate an understanding of how to respond to conflict | - **Welcome Back**  
- Each group member will go around and report on what they remember from the previous session  
- Facilitator will ask the group if they have any questions about the group rules.  
- Inform the group that there are only 3 sessions remaining (including this one) before termination and invite those members who have been quiet during sessions to take a risk and be more active during the game.  

consider these words as healing words that they can use with others.  
- Have the group members write a letter to themselves, reminding them of the types of words they want to use with their friends and classmates and have a few members share their letters if time permits.

- **Processing**  
- Have each member name someone that they would like to use healing words with prior to the next group session.
**- Goodwill Game**

- Show the students a bowl filled with sentence stems and scenarios and hand out an index card with a large question mark on it to each group member.

- Pass the bowl around to each member and have them pull out an item from the bowl. Then have them read aloud the item and respond to the prompt.

- If group members have a question about the group member’s response, they are to raise the index card in the air, and the group member will call on those members who have questions.

- Continue to pass the bowl around as long as time permits.

**-Processing**

- Have each member tell one group member something that she learned from her during the game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Keep and Toss</th>
<th>1. Examine wanted and unwanted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Welcome Back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Each group member will go around and report on one way that being in the group has
behaviors in their friendships helped them.

- As the group members to talk about their thoughts and feelings related to the group ending after the next week’s session.

- **Keep and Toss Activity**

  - Distribute a sheet of paper and markers to the girls and have them make two columns. At the top of the left-hand column, have them write *keep* and at the top of the right-hand column, have them write *toss*.

  - Have the members write down friendship behaviors that they do or are learning about in group that they want to keep and behaviors consistent with relational and social aggression that they would like to toss/not do anymore. Challenge them to come up with at least 3 ideas for each column.

  - Then have the girls cut off the toss column and cut the items into individual strips that they will read aloud to the group.

  - Then have each girl go around and read her toss items out loud and then toss them into a
After the last student has gone, the facilitator will self-disclose one example of change she has made regarding how she negotiates or solves problems with her friends. They may also talk about one obstacle that she faced in making this change permanent.

- Have each member talk about challenges they face in making these changes.

**-Processing**

- Have each member name one person they will go to for help or support if they are having difficulty with their new changes.

| 10. Termination | 1. Determining what they have learned in group | - **Welcome Back**
|                 | 2. Celebrating the positive changes they have made | - Ask the girls if they have any thoughts or feelings about last week’s “keep and toss” activity

|                | - Ask the girls to talk about what it feels like to participate in the last group session. | - **Letter Writing Activity**
|                | - Ask the members to write a letter or draw a picture to the group that they will share with the |
group. This may include what they want the group to know, what the group meant to them, etc.

- Have the members take turns sharing their letter or picture with the group

- The facilitator then talks to the group about the positive changes she has observed, including how the group as a whole has learned to listen to one another and work together on various tasks.

-Celebration

- Celebrate the remaining time with food and drinks.