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Girls and Aggression

Aired: Monday - December 09, 2002

Description:

Meet the subtle new schoolyard bully, with painted nails and the latest clothes. Relational aggression can destroy self-esteem, lead to depression, and even invoke suicidal thoughts. Students discuss cliques and ways to ward off peer pressure.

Guests:

David Schwarz Ph.D. - Clinical child psychologist
Annie Fox M.ed. - Author

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Transcript:

01:19:34 GRAPHICS ON SCREEN

<obscured> contains content which is sexual in nature. It is not intended that any viewer rely on the content of the program for medical advice. If you believe you require medical or psychological advice or treatment, please consult your doctor.
Berman & Berman for Women Only

01:24:34 Laura Berman VO

Right.

01:24:34 Annie Fox VO/OC

And you may get a response like I don't want to talk about it or everything's fine. But if you know your daughter you'll know what fine looks like.

01:24:42 Laura Berman VO

And should a parent intervene?

01:24:44 Annie Fox OC

Absolutely.

01:24:44 Laura Berman VO/OC

What should a, I mean if the daughter's being bullied should she go to the school, should she talk to the parents of the girl?

01:24:48 Annie Fox VO/OC

She should, she should talk to the daughter first...

01:24:50 Laura Berman VO

Right.

01:24:51 Annie Fox OC/VO

01:20:02 Laura Berman OC

That's the thing.

01:20:03 Jennifer Berman OC/VO

Questions & Answers

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Yeah. We're back. Our topic, Girls And Aggression, and now let's turn our focus to real world advice. Joining us is the online Dear Abby for teens and author of...

GRAPHICS ON SCREEN

Berman & Berman

...Can You Relate? Real World Advice for Teens on Guys, Girls, Growing Up, and Getting Along. Please welcome Annie Fox.

01:20:20 **Laura Berman VO**

Thanks for being here.

01:20:21 **Annie Fox OC**

Thank you.

01:20:24 **Laura Berman VO/OC**

So what is considered a healthy relationship and how does it apply to bullying?

01:20:32 **Annie Fox OC**

A healthy relationship...

GRAPHICS ON SCREEN

Annie Fox, M.Ed. Author

...from my perspective has four key components. Trust, respect, honesty and open communication. And, and that really goes for a relationship with a peer, a sibling, believe it or not, a parent, a boyfriend girlfriend relationship. That's the essence...

01:20:49 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Of all relationships.

01:20:50 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

It is, healthy ones.

01:20:51 **Jennifer Berman OC**

Yeah. And how do you identify a bully?

01:20:55 **Annie Fox VO/OC**

A bully is someone who first of all they're not treating you with respect. They certainly wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of what they're dishing out. I also think that you can't trust a bully because sometimes they act like your friend and sometimes they will turn against you in a...

01:21:08 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**

What if it turns into this whole class phenomenon where it's the bully and the

...and say I'm concerned about you and I'm, I'm not willing for you to be unhappy in this way, I want to help. And work with her. Don't do anything that, that she's not, she's not buying into.

01:25:04 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**

Right. We have a couple of actual Hey Terra emails that were hoping you could answer for us today.

01:25:10 **Annie Fox OC**

Okay.

01:25:10 **Jennifer Berman VO**

So we're gonna read those to you. First one...

GRAPHICS ON SCREEN

Viewer e-mail Hey Terra! Some kids are spreading rumors about a friend of mine. I know for a fact they aren't true, what can I do to help? - needs help Berman & Berman

... "Hey Terra! Some kids are spreading rumors about a friend of mine. I know for a fact they aren't true, what can I do to help?"

01:25:21 **Annie Fox OC**

Well, I would say to her that she's got a great opportunity to be a real friend, which is someone who's there to support. And rumors, I think rumors is weapons. They are, they have so much potential to hurt. It's verbal violence.

01:25:34 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Yeah.

01:25:34 **Annie Fox OC**

And they only spread because someone's willing to pass it on and often embellish it. And so if a rumor comes her way about her friend, she should tell the person who's spreading it, "That's not true. I'm not comfortable with you talking to my friend..."

01:25:47 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Right.

01:25:47 **Annie Fox OC**

...about my friend this way." And I want you to stop. And if she gets other people to, to know the truth together they can put an end to the rumor.

01:25:54 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**

All it takes is one person other than the...

whole class?

01:21:13 **Laura Berman OC/VO**

Like a mass madness.

01:21:15 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

Yeah. A friend is someone you can count on to, you know to be there for you. You can trust that, that your well-being is foremost in her mind, and if people turn on you they are not your friends. If they're allowing themselves to be manipulated by someone very strong and powerful then...

01:21:30 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Then the whole class is...

01:21:32 **Annie Fox OC**

They're not your enemy. You, you may find yourself having to looking elsewhere for support.

01:21:36 **Laura Berman OC**

What motivates a bully?

01:21:40 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

I, I think I agree with what David Schwartz said, it works. If you look at a two-year old at a checkout counter, the supermarket and there's all that candy right there and they throw a fit, and they want it, and the volume goes up, and mom says no you can't have it, but the volume goes higher, "Okay here but be good." The message is it works.

01:22:02 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:22:02 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**

Right. So are we enabling our children to be bullies?

01:22:06 **Annie Fox VO/OC**

Yes. Yeah we are, we are. And the targets, I don't like to use the word victim, but the target to the extent that she may not be saying, I don't like this...

01:22:16 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:22:17 **Annie Fox OC**

...is also giving power to the bully.

01:22:18 **Laura Berman VO/OC**

So what should someone do if it's, especially in a case where it really, I mean it's one person and you can have an ally or

01:25:56 **Laura Berman OC**

Right.

01:25:57 **Annie Fox VO**

Exactly.

01:25:57 **Jennifer Berman OC**

...other than the person the rumor is about to say it's not true.

01:26:00 **Annie Fox VO**

It's not true.

01:26:00 **Jennifer Berman OC/VO**

...and that will discredit itself. That's a good, that's good advice.

01:26:02 **Annie Fox OC**

Thanks.

01:26:02 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Second one is...

01:26:03 **GRAPHICS ON SCREEN**

Viewer e-mail

Hey Terra! A nerdy girl was bothering me and my friends so we decided to get back at her.. We put mean signs on her locker and stuff... now I feel guilty and want to stop, but my friends say that if I do they'll drop me. - feeling guilty Berman & Berman

01:26:03 **Laura Berman VO**

"Hey Terra! A nerdy girl was bothering me and my friends so we decided to get back at her. We put mean signs on her locker and stuff, now I feel guilty and want to stop, but my friends say that if I do they'll drop me."

01:26:16 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

I would acknowledge her for wanting to do the right thing, belated as it is. She participated in something that didn't make her feel good, and now she says, you know this isn't who I am. She needs to tell the friends, "I'm not playing this game anymore."

01:26:27 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:26:28 **Annie Fox OC**

"If you want to continue doing it, it's gonna have to be without me." And then may well have to choose.

01:26:32 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**

Thanks. Good advice. I want to ask Alicia or Lorna or any of the other girls up there if

a healthy relationship friend...

01:22:26 **Annie Fox VO**

Yes.

01:22:27 **Laura Berman OC/VO**

...that can help you that's one thing, but what should these girls do when the whole class turns against them like we were hearing before?

01:22:34 **Annie Fox VO/OC**

There's no one way to handle it. You know, the person who may be the bully may be a violent person. I would never advise anyone to go up to someone and say, "I don't like what you're doing."

01:22:42 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:22:43 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

That may put them in harm's way. But I think it is reasonable to go and find an adult who can be your ally, and, and be honest with them and say I'm feeling miserable about what's going on here. And, and teachers, their priorities should be to make the school a safe place for all the students.

01:23:02 **Jennifer Berman OC/VO**

What should they do? What should teachers' roles be?

01:23:05 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

This should be a curriculum, a bully-proof curriculum in every school.

01:23:09 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:23:10 **Annie Fox VO/OC**

They're not getting the, the, the point of view of what it feels like to be on the receiving end of this. And I really believe that unless you're some kind of sociopath and you don't know that what you're doing is hurtful...

01:23:22 **Laura Berman VO**

Right.

01:23:22 **Annie Fox OC/VO**

...or you don't care then anyone who's confronted, if I said to you what, what you said to me hurt me so much I cried myself to sleep last night. Unless you've got a heart of stone, you, it's gonna...

they can relate to these emails?

01:26:37 **Laura Berman OC**

Can any of you guys relate to what we're talking about? How about you, Alicia?

01:26:41 **Alicia OC/VO**

This one girl I knew, well actually I still know her now, nobody liked her because she was really hyper. And nobody like wanted to ever hang out with her for that, and she was also a tomboy. And I too was mean to her, and all my friends were mean to her. And one day she came up to me and said something that made me feel bad about what I was doing, and I wanted to be her friend like know who she really is, and my friends said that they wouldn't hang out with me anymore if they did that, if I did that.

01:27:21 **Laura Berman VO**

So what'd you do?

01:27:22 **Alicia OC/VO**

I still started being her friend and now we're still friends. We're almost best friends now.

01:27:27 **Jennifer Berman OC**

And are you, do you still have the other friends?

01:27:29 **Alicia OC**

Uh, huh.

01:27:30 **Jennifer Berman VO**

No?

01:27:30 **Alicia OC**

Only one of them.

01:27:31 **Laura Berman OC**

Do you feel okay about the decision you made?

01:27:33 **Alicia OC**

Hmm, hmm.

01:27:34 **Laura Berman VO**

Yeah?

01:27:34 **Jennifer Berman VO**

Yeah.

01:27:34 **Annie Fox VO**

Good for you.

01:27:35 **Laura Berman VO**

Yeah, absolutely. You deserve a round of support.

01:23:34 **Laura Berman OC**
Right.

01:23:34 **Annie Fox VO/OC**
...you're gonna wake up and go, oh. No one wants to be thought of as a mean person.

01:23:38 **Jennifer Berman VO**
Right.

01:23:39 **Annie Fox VO**
So the message is, this is not acceptable.

01:23:41 **Jennifer Berman OC**
Right.

01:23:42 **Annie Fox OC**
I'd rather bring the school together and say, okay as a community we've got a problem here.

01:23:46 **Laura Berman VO**
Right.

01:23:46 **Annie Fox OC**
Be it the classroom or the big community of the school.

01:23:48 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**
Right. And maybe work together to, to resolve this.

01:23:51 **Annie Fox VO**
Yes.

01:23:51 **Laura Berman OC/VO**
My son's school actually has what's called a Safe School Program. And he's been in preschool and they have speakers, you know come in and speak to them and they have all of these mechanisms for you know, stop when somebody's doing something wrong, and they sit down and they work it out and have to discuss it. And I think if you, don't you think if you learn those skills early and it's supported and encouraged...?

01:24:12 **Annie Fox VO**
And reinforced at home.

01:24:13 **Laura Berman OC/VO**
...and reinforced at home.

01:24:14 **Jennifer Berman VO/OC**
What is the parent's role, now that you bring that up, in this whole thing?

01:27:37 **Annie Fox OC**
Yeah.

01:27:41 **Laura Berman OC/VO**
I think more kids need to stand up for each other. I mean that, that statistic that we said earlier in the show that only 11 percent of kids will stand up for another kid that they see being bullied.

01:27:53 **Jennifer Berman OC/VO**
What about Lauren? Lauren do you, can you relate to either of those emails?

01:27:56 **Lauren OC/VO**
Yes, the first one. A lot of rumors have been spread about a lot of my friends, and some have been spread about me too. And I have lost friends and boyfriends from the rumors that some, the more popular girls have spread about me and stuff like that.

01:28:13 **Laura Berman VO/OC**
Yeah. And what do you do when you hear a rumor yourself now?

01:28:17 **Lauren OC**
Well my closest friends they know it's not true so I try and ignore it now because I don't want it to affect me.

01:28:21 **Laura Berman VO/OC**
Yeah. and when someone says a rumor about them do you say something to stop it?

01:28:25 **Lauren OC**
Yeah.

01:28:25 **Laura Berman VO/OC**
So you stand up for each other.

01:28:27 **Jennifer Berman OC**
Girls Inc. Good

01:28:28 **Laura Berman OC**
Girls helping girls.

01:28:33 **Jennifer Berman OC**
Thanks girls, and thank you Annie Fox. Up next a girl's organization attempts to make a difference. We're Berman and Berman and we'll be right back.

01:28:43 **GRAPHICS ON SCREEN**
Next Making a difference Questions and answers

01:28:53 **FADE TO BLACK**

01:24:17 Annie Fox VO/OC

I think parents need to have their antenna up, especially in middle school. If they overhear conversations, one end of a phone conversation and their daughter is miserable, or on the other side of it, screaming orders at someone, "Honey, what's going on?"

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