

Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook

Facilitator Reproducible
Self-Assessments, Exercises
& Educational Handouts

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Facilitator Reproducible Self-Assessments,
Exercises & Educational Handouts

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Using This Book *(For the professional)*

Teen aggression and bullying are problems that continue to grow, often disrupting our schools, families, workplaces and communities. Causes of teen aggression and bullying vary from person to person and may include such factors as a teen having been exposed to physical or sexual abuse; violent behavior witnessed in the home or neighborhood; violence in the media; socio-economic issues such as family poverty, need deprivation, unstable family environment, lack of family support and appropriate role models; and exposure to weapons.

Teen aggression can take many forms:

- Bullying
- Fighting
- Gang violence
- Rape and molestation
- Arson
- Destruction of property
- Cruelty to animals
- Homicide
- Indirect aggression, i.e., gossiping or spreading cruel rumors
- Shooting and stabbing
- Internet and cyber-bullying

The *Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook* is designed to help teens engage in self-reflection, examine their thoughts and feelings that lead to feelings of aggression, and learn effective tools and techniques for managing these feelings. This book combines two powerful psychological tools for the management of aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors: self-assessment and journaling. Role-playing exercises are a third component to enhance empathy and allow adolescents to practice assertive bully prevention strategies.

The *Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook* contains six separate sections that will help the participants learn more about themselves as well as how aggression impacts their lives:

Why Choose Violence? Scale helps individuals explore reasons they may act aggressively or violently toward other people.

Environmental Aggression Scale helps individuals identify the extent of their exposure to environmental violence and help them develop strategies to become more resilient.

Being Bullied? Scale helps individuals assess whether or not they are being bullied, and if so, to what extent.

Are You a Bully? Scale helps individuals identify whether they are aggressive and/or if they bully others, and to what extent.

Bystander Behavior Scale helps individuals explore how they react and respond in bullying situations.

Depression and Suicide helps individuals identify teens who may be at risk for depression and/or suicide.

(Continued on the next page)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The Bully, the Target and the Bystander

In the *Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook* book we refer to the following three people who make up a bullying situation: The aggressive person (the bully), the person being bullied (the target) and the people who are near the situation and watch it take place either because they just happen to be there or because they choose to be there (the bystanders).

Prior to beginning each section, you may want to use the educational handouts towards the end of the section, as a review for yourself and/or for the students.

Bullying and Special Needs Students

Throughout the years, education for students with disabilities has gone through many changes, and continues to do so. Historically, students with disabilities were educated separately from their age peers in either different classes or sent to special schools.

As public schools continue to emphasize inclusion of special needs students with disabilities into general education classrooms, educators have been mandated to focus on ways they can achieve academic success. As students with disabilities find themselves in regular classrooms with non-disabled peers, they are subject to a broad range of experiences with which they may not be able to cope. Inclusion, therefore, places special needs students at increased risk for bullying and aggression.

Facilitators need to be vigilant and proactive to protect these teens from bullying and aggression. Facilitators have an opportunity to emphasize compassion and educate the non-disabled students of the specific differences, challenges and difficulties special needs teens face daily.

Students with disabilities, especially mild disabilities, need to be involved in social skills classes and self advocacy groups/classes where they, too, learn how to speak up for themselves and share their feelings in a positive manner.

Use Name Codes for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a term for any action that preserves the privacy of other people. Because teens completing the activities in this workbook might be asked to answer assessment items and to journal about and explore their relationships, you will need to discuss confidentiality before you begin using the materials in this workbook. Maintaining confidentiality is important as it shows respect for others and allows participants to explore their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings or fearing gossip, harm or retribution.

In order to maintain confidentiality, explain to the participants that they need to assign a name code for each person they write about as they complete the various activities in the workbook. For example, a friend named Joey who enjoys going to hockey games might be titled JLHG (Joey Loves Hockey Games) for a particular exercise. In order to protect their friends' identities, do not use people's actual names or initials – just codes.

(Continued on the next page)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

Bullying Box

Facilitators may implement a bullying box to give students a new way to report bullying incidents while remaining completely anonymous. Anonymity provides a way for students to report bullying without the fear of reprisal. Bullying boxes can be placed in many different places.

Students with disabilities need to be given explicit instruction how to use interventions such as these so that their voices can be heard.

Depression and Suicide

The Depression and Suicide eight-page section of this book is crucial for today's young people. No scales are included. A detailed questionnaire, idea-prompting lists, and relevant journal questions are designed to lead to productive in-depth discussions of how problems arise and how they can be solved.

As you utilize the handouts in this workbook, keep in mind that depression is a potentially life-threatening mood disorder that has been found to affect approximately one person in six each year. According to the American Psychological Association, approximately two-thirds of the people with depression do not even realize that they have a treatable illness and do not seek treatment. Research also indicates that about half of the people who have suicidal ideation report that they have not received care or even realized that they need help.

Given this information about depression and suicidal ideation, it is important to be aware of participants who might be at risk for depression and/or suicide. If you believe, suspect, think or know that you are working with teens who might need professional medical and/or psychiatric assistance, please support them and their families in seeking help and assistance.

The section on depression and suicide includes a variety of handouts that will help you, as well as the teen, identify those who might be at risk for depression and/or suicide.

Please preview all materials before you use them.

Teen aggression and bullying also can lead to the abuse of substances and becoming part of a cult or gang. Become aware of the warning signs for this type of behavior, and refer at-risk teens to professionals qualified to deal with these issues. The following web sites may help you in your work with aggressive teens:

<http://www.afterschool.gov/> — Federal website for teen issues providing information about teen safety, health issues, and substance abuse.

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm> — Information about federal efforts to stop teen aggression and school violence.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html> — Information about youth violence and suicide.

Layout of the Book

The *Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook* is designed to be used either independently or as part of an integrated curriculum. You may administer one of the assessments and the journaling exercises to an individual or a group with whom you are working, or you may administer a number of the assessments over one or more days.

This Book Includes the Following Reproducible Pages in the First Five Sections:

- ❑ **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- ❑ **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- ❑ **Quotations** – Quotations are used in each section to provide insight and promote reflection. Participants will be asked to select one or more of the quotations and journal about what the quotations mean to them.
- ❑ **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- ❑ **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to enhance instruction can be used individually or in groups to promote a positive understanding of aggression and bullying and to provide positive reinforcement for bullies, targets and bystanders. They can be distributed, scanned and converted into masters for overheads or transparencies, projected or written on boards and/or discussed.

Who Should Use This Program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool for helping professionals, such as therapists, counselors, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using the *Teen Aggression and Bullying Workbook* and the specific group's needs, these sections can be used individually or combined for a more comprehensive approach.

Why Use Self-Assessments?

- Self-assessments are important in teaching various anger management skills because they help participants to engage in these ways:
- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide their behavior
- Explore and learn to “let go” of troublesome habits and behavioral patterns learned in childhood
- Explore the effects of unconscious childhood messages
- Gain insight and “a wake-up call” for behavioral change
- Focus their thinking on behavioral goals for change
- Uncover resources they possess that can help them to cope better with problems and difficulties
- Explore their personal characteristics without judgment
- Be fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses

Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score and interpret each assessment at their own pace.

About the Assessments, Journaling Activities and Educational Handouts

Materials in the Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts sections in this book are reproducible and can be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported data and thus are similar to ones used by psychologists, counselors, therapists and career consultants. The accuracy and usefulness of the information provided is dependent on the truthful information that each participant provides. By being honest, participants help themselves to learn about unproductive and ineffective patterns in their lives, and to uncover information that might be keeping them from being as happy or as successful as they might be.

An assessment instrument can provide participants with valuable information about themselves; however, these assessments cannot measure or identify everything. The assessments' purpose is not to pigeonhole certain characteristics, but rather to allow participants to explore all of their characteristics. This book contains self-assessments, not tests. Tests measure knowledge or whether something is right or wrong. For the assessments in this book, there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask for personal opinions or attitudes about a topic of importance in the participant's life.

When administering the assessments in this workbook, remember that the items are generically written so that they will be applicable to a wide variety of people but will not account for every possible variable for every person. No assessments are specifically tailored to one person, so use the assessments to help participants identify negative themes in their lives and find ways to break the hold of these patterns and their effects.

Advise teen participants taking the assessments that they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; they should think about the questions in general and then spontaneously report how they feel about each one. Whatever the results of the assessment, encourage participants to talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what have they discovered about themselves. Talking about issues such as aggression and bullying can be therapeutic and beneficial.

The *Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook* sections serve as an avenue for individual self-reflection, as well as group experiences revolving around identified topics of importance. Each assessment includes directions for easy administration, scoring and interpretation. In addition, each section includes exploratory activities, reflective journaling activities, insightful quotations and educational handouts to help participants to discover the extent of their aggressive behavior and explore their habitual, ineffective methods of managing their aggression, and to explore new ways for managing that aggression.

(Continued on the next page)

About the Assessments, Journaling Activities and Educational Handouts *(Continued)*

The art of self-reflection goes back many centuries and is rooted in many of the world's greatest spiritual and philosophical traditions. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, was known to walk the streets engaging the people he met in philosophical reflection and dialogue. He felt that this type of activity was so important in life that he proclaimed, "The unexamined life is not worth living!" The unexamined life is one in which the same routine is continually repeated without ever thinking about its meaning to one's life and how this life really could be lived. However, a structured reflection and examination of beliefs, assumptions, characteristics and patterns can provide a better understanding which can lead to a more satisfying life and career. A greater level of self-understanding about important life skills is often necessary to make positive, self-directed changes in the negative patterns that keep repeating throughout life. The assessments and exercises in this book can help promote this self-understanding. Through involvement in the in-depth activities, the participant claims ownership in the development of positive patterns.

Journaling is an extremely powerful tool for enhancing self-discovery, learning, transcending traditional problems, breaking ineffective life and career habits, and helping people to heal from psychological traumas of the past. From a physical point of view, writing reduces stress and lowers muscle tension, blood pressure and heart rate levels. Psychologically, writing reduces feelings of sadness, depression and general anxiety, and leads to a greater level of life satisfaction and optimism. Behaviorally, writing leads to enhanced social skills, emotional intelligence and creativity.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, your participants will engage in a powerful method for reducing and managing their aggressive behavior.

Thanks to the following professionals whose input in this book has been invaluable!

| | |
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Introduction for the Participant

It is vital to assume responsibility for your own behaviors, whether you have been bullied, or if you bully others, or if you are or have been a bystander to bullying. Frustration and confusion can lead to intimidating and jealous emotions, and these reactions are normal. When these emotions turn to aggression and bullying, they need to be managed and controlled. Aggressive behavior can take many different forms.

EXAMPLES

- **Physical Aggression** – pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, pulling hair, kicking, vandalism, theft, physical bullying.
- **Verbal Aggression** – threatening others, intimidating others, getting others to do things they do not want to do, teasing, taunting, humiliating, name-calling.
- **Social Aggression** – gossiping about others, spreading cruel rumors, excluding others from activities.
- **Cyber Aggression** – using technology and the Internet to spread rumors about others, post negative pictures, taunt others.

The *Teen Aggression and Bullying Workbook* is designed to help you learn about your aggressive behavior toward others and others' aggressive behavior toward you.

In this book we refer to the following three people who make up a bullying situation: The aggressive person (bully), the person being bullied (the target) and the people who are near the situation and watch it take place either because they just happen to be there or because they choose to be there (the bystanders).

You will be asked to respond to assessments and exercises, and to journal about some experiences in your relationships. Everyone has the right to confidentiality, and you need to honor the right of their privacy. Think about it this way – you would not want someone writing things about you that other people could read. Your friends feel this way also.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of your friends, assign people name codes based on things you know about them. For example, a friend named Sherry who loves to wear purple might be coded as *SWP* (Sherry Wears Purple). Do not use any person's actual name when you are listing people.

Teen Aggression & Bullying Workbook

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Frustrating People

Your feelings of frustration can be the source of your anger and aggression toward other people. Complete the following exercise to explore the frustrating feelings you have about other people in your life. To protect the identity of the people you are referring to, use their name codes (not initials).

Example: ABC = Always Buys Cookies.

| People Who Frustrate Me | What They Do to Frustrate Me | How I Could Have Thought About It |
|--|--|--|
| Friends (name code) Ex: ABC | <i>She's friendly with people who don't like me.</i> | <i>I don't need to be friends with everyone she is friends with. She can be friends with anyone and still be my good friend.</i> |
| Friends | | |
| Parents / Caregivers | | |
| Relatives | | |
| Boyfriend / Girlfriend | | |
| Teachers / School Personnel | | |
| Others | | |