

and control over others. Girls may use manipulative, covert expressions of anger, conflict resolution, and dominance by using the traditional female desire for connectedness as leverage against others (Crick & Rose, 2000), such as when girls know each other's secrets and divulge them in moments of anger.

Another factor related to interpersonal relationship expectations involves girls' tendencies to be attuned to others' needs and desires and maintaining relationships with high levels of interpersonal sensitivity, intimacy, and intensity (Rudolph, 2002). In conjunction is the normal adolescent developmental task of moving away from parents toward independence during which peer relationships and influence are very strong and girls especially, rely on peer feedback and approval for measures of self-worth, attractiveness, and self-esteem (Gilligan, 1982). Thus, development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships become central to girls' psychosocial development and well-being, but may also predispose girls to participating in and being victimized by relational aggression (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001). Although research indicates that being a victim of overt or covert peer harassment may be particularly harmful to the individual, engaging in peer harassment also may be a way to be popular and fit in with peers (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Despite its form, the overall effects of relational aggression affect three developmental areas for adolescent females: personal and social development, academic development and success, and career development.

***Negative Effects on Personal and Social Development.*** The negative effects of female bullying upon the personal and social development of bullies and victims are profound. Adolescence is a period of rapid and intense physiological changes involving social, moral and emotional development (Nurmi, Poole & Kalakoski, 1994) that often

are resolved in unique, gender-specific ways. For girls, many changes occur in tandem with relational development among family and peers (Fiering & Lewis, 1991; Gilligan, 1991). Often, adolescence is a more vulnerable time for girls than boys (Rudolph, 2002) because of socialization variables that affect psychosocial female development, such as social and personal victimization and socialized norms of power and control (Acoca, 1998). Consequently, many adolescent girls experience negative events apart from being bullied such as increased stress, eating disorders, and even sexual abuse (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Thus, when a girl is bullied, the social and emotional effects are especially hurtful because of the importance females place on interpersonal relationships (Paquette & Underwood, 1999). Psychological disturbances that result from being bullied include lower self-esteem and attentiveness, and greater social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, suicidality (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001; Grills & Ollendick, 2002), and even self-destructive behaviors to cope with internalized distress (Olafsen & Viemero, 2000). Bullying also impacts a victim's social adjustment, and both psychological and physical wellness (Fekkes et al. 2005). Victims are not the only individuals who suffer; perpetrators of relational aggression have greater incidences of oppositional defiant and conduct disorders (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001).

*Negative Effects on Academic Development and Success.* The consequences to victims of female bullying in academic development and success are numerous, particularly since female relational aggression usually occurs in schools. In addition to being a very painful experience, effects of relational aggression include negative feelings toward the school environment (Eisenberg et al., 2003). Bullying victims often suffer from lower self-esteem and higher rates of school absenteeism (Casey-Cannon

et al., 2001; Grills & Ollendick, 2002). Within the ranks of bullying victims, Euro American, Native American, middle school age, and female students report more harassment than others (Eisenberg et al.). Students who blend in well and who are not remarkable in any way, such as “B” students who are considered average by their peers, report being victimized at a lower rate than students who stand out from the crowd. In contrast, individuals who like school the least experience the highest rates of victimization, possibly because they already experience higher school absenteeism and decreased academic development and success. Indeed, Fekkes et al. (2005) found that victims of relational aggression tend to have lower grades. Finally, the negative effects upon bullying victims include a lack connection to their schools and decreased self-efficacy in relation to academic performance and planning for the future. These risk factors have a long-lasting impact, increasing the individuals' risk of social and health problems in the future (Eisenberg et al.).

*Negative Effects on Career Development.* The negative effects of female bullying also include potential career development problems for victims. Patton, Bartrum, and Creed (2004) found that self-esteem acts as a buffer for high anxiety situations, especially among adolescents. High self-esteem assists the adolescent in managing and adapting to career development and decision-making processes; consequently, students with high optimism levels score higher in career development, planning, and exploration. Conversely, students who score high in pessimism were found to have fewer career goals and lower levels of career development and exploration (Creed, Patton, & Bartrum, 2002). In sum, because bullying victims demonstrate lower self-esteem (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001) it appears possible that victims' career planning

may be delayed compared to non-victimized students, thus affecting their overall personal and social development.

Female-to-female relational aggression is a growing problem. Girls, who most often are the perpetrators and victims of relational aggression, experience a myriad of detrimental effects upon their personal and social development, academic development, and career planning. Given the serious effects of female bullying, educators need to understand what has been done and what remains to be done to address this problem.