

Sharing – Gossip – Rumor Continuum

Sharing	Gossip	Rumors
No intent to harm.	Passive aggressive attempt to cause harm to a person or persons relationships	Malicious intent.
Used to update friends about mutual acquaintances.	Telling secrets the person promised not to tell with the intent to harm the person, relationships or social status.	Exaggerating the truth about a situation to make the other person look bad.
Intended to maintain friendships.	Intended to destroy relationships and social standing.	Spreading lies about others intended to destroy relationships and social standing as a means of retaliation.
Mutual sharing of information.	Telling secrets about others that are not meant to be shared, in order to get attention.	Telling as many people as possible so rumor can spread and cause harm by destroying reputation.
Intention to help friends who are dealing with a difficult situation or person.	Intended by bully to climb the social hierarchy.	Intended by bully to climb the social hierarchy.

* The Ophelia Project, Karmyn Strama

Source: Girl Scouts – Mile Hi Council



Normal Conflict vs. Bullying/Relational Aggression

Normal Conflict	Bullying/Relational Aggression
Equal power	Imbalance of power
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative actions Repeated covert actions
Accidental	Purposeful
Not serious	Serious with threats of physical or emotional harm Attempts to hurt through humiliation and/or exclusion that affect social status and relationships of victim
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction from victim; little or no reaction from bully
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power and control
Not trying to get something	Attempt to gain power, material things or gain popularity
Remorse – takes responsibility	No remorse – blames victim May or may not show remorse Manipulative approach may try to make victim believe what they are feeling is not real
Effort to solve problem	No effort to solve problem may deny there is a problem May challenge by asking for specific examples of their behavior Victim may not be able to articulate because of complex social dynamics

Larry Epstein, Karrmyn Strama

Source: Girl Scouts – Mile Hi Council

