



Relational Aggression

Learning Outcomes

- Members will define relational aggression.
- Members will examine relational aggression from early adolescence to college.
- Members will identify qualities of healthy and authentic relationships.
- Members will explore the impact of relational aggression in their personal lives and chapter.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Room Set Up

- The workshop will begin in a large space. The workshop transitions to an activity where a large space with no chairs is needed.

Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the facilitation guide.
- Purchase necessary materials

Officers Responsible

- The member development chair (MDC) and risk management chair (RMC) will work with the vice president/chapter development (VP/CD) to identify which officer(s) should facilitate the workshop. The selected officer(s) should receive the facilitation guide at least two weeks prior to the workshop.

Overview of Lesson [Total Time: 55 minutes]

- Welcome and introduction [5 minutes]
- Relational Aggression [25 minutes]
- Cross the Line [20 minutes]
- Closing [5 minutes]



Exercise & Time	Facilitator Talking Points	Notes
<p>Facilitator note: This module was developed for collegiate chapters to promote dialogue and encourage action in the area of hazing prevention. This module may trigger some members. This may be the first time when anyone has challenged the behaviors of Tri Delta and its members. Be patient with members but challenge the status quo. This module challenges members to think about the relevancy and reality of fraternity/sorority life and their chapter. As members of Tri Delta, we must own our reality and recognize that a number of chapters (both Tri Delta and non-Tri Delta chapters) across the country engage in unhealthy behaviors. As members, we have a responsibility to create an inclusive, engaging and meaningful fraternity experience. Tri Delta aims to help members live, learn and lead with Purpose. This is our reality! This module provides members the opportunity to examine relational aggression and the intersection between bullying and hazing.</p>		
<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>5 minutes</p>	<p><i>The facilitator should introduce himself/herself, welcome and thank everyone for attending the session.</i></p> <p>Talking Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for participating in this activity. Today, we’re going to explore relational aggression and healthy relationships. • This program was created as a resource for National Hazing Prevention Week. Some of the hazing behaviors that Tri Delta and other organizations see across sororities relates to how women treat one another. • According to HazingPrevention.org, there is an intersection between bullying and hazing. They are similar because¹: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The imbalance of power exists. ○ If the behaviors are left unchecked, both bullying and hazing can contribute to an environment where the behavior becomes acceptable. ○ Each can lead to harmful, destructive and hateful behavior. • The power dynamic that exists with hazing and the “earn your letters” mentality does not align with the purpose and values of our organization. • Today, we are going to examine some of the behaviors that exist within our chapter and community. • Tri Delta was founded because Sarah Ida Shaw and Eleanor Dorcas Pond saw a need for a different organization that would “be kind alike to all.” • As college women and Tri Deltas, you may have experienced mean girl 	

¹ Adapted from “Hazing and Bullying” hazingprevention.org.



	<p>behavior or you may have been the one who contributed to mean girl behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is referred to as relational aggression. Relational aggression refers to behaviors, covert and overt, designed to harm others through the exploitation of relationships. • The goal is to damage, harm or manipulate relationships with others. Some examples include gossiping, publicly insinuating comments, sabotage, undermining and divulging secrets. • Research shows that mean girl behavior is often normalized and almost expected of women. Similar to the “boys will be boys” mentality, women receive messages of how we should act and treat one another as well. • What are messages that you have heard about girls and women? Specifically, how are girls and women supposed to act? (<i>wait for answers</i>) • Where do we receive these messages from? (<i>wait for answers</i>) • These messages normalize and reward mean girl behavior. Relational aggression creates a power dynamic between women. Although this may not seem like hazing, it is in a psychological and emotional sense. • The effects of psychological hazing can be depression, suicide, poor grades, withdrawal from activities and shame. Overall, this can affect personal well-being and continue into adulthood. • During this program, we will talk about relational aggression and share ways that we can strengthen our relationships with each other. 	
<p>Relational Aggression² 25 minutes</p>	<p>Talking Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research shows that this behavior begins with young girls and continues into the teenage years and adulthood. • Girls are conditioned to want a leveled playing field at a young age. As a female grows, she realizes the playing field is not always going to be level. • Relational aggression is used to attempt to level the playing field. 	<p>Materials needed: -Flip chart paper and markers</p>

² References for this section include:

Hamilton, R.C. (2010). Relational aggression and the impact it has on female adolescents, *Counselor Education Master's Theses*. Paper 44.

Krueger, K.S., Rao, M., Salzer, J. & Saucerman, J.C. (n.d.) College-age women and relational aggression: prevalence and impact. *Alverno College Research Center for Women and Girls*, 1-8.

Lee, R. M., & Robbins, S. B. (2000). Understanding social connectedness in college women and men. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 78, 484-491.

Long, K.F. (2015). "You Can't Sit with Us: an Examination of the Influence of Forgiveness and Accountability on the Use of Relational Aggression in College-Age Women" (2015). Honor's Theses. Paper 316.

- This is referred to as “mean girl behavior.”
- We are now going to break into small groups and think about interpersonal relationships.
- Each small group will be assigned to an age group:
 - Group 1 – Early Adolescence (pre-school)
 - Group 2 – Adolescence (elementary school)
 - Group 3 – Late Adolescence (middle school)
 - Group 4 – High School
 - Group 5 – College
- In your groups, consider the age group you are assigned and discuss the following:
 - How did your peers treat one another?
 - What did you notice about the relationship between girls and girls? Girls and boys? Boys and boys?

Provide each group with flip chart paper and markers. Each group should record their conversations on flip chart paper. Allow members about 15 minutes to talk. Bring the group back together to share what their group experienced at each level.

Facilitator note:

Below are some themes you may hear about the various age groups. You do not need to read these verbatim but can pull from the notes to further facilitate dialogue.

Adolescence:

- Transition from childhood to adolescence
 - Decrease in bullying and physical aggression
 - Prosocial acts increase
 - Ability to resolve conflict and compromise increases
 - Right vs. wrong
- Transition from elementary school to high school
 - Increase in aggressive behaviors
 - Desire for peer approval and status
 - Complex understanding of social worlds

Late Adolescence:

- Importance of social status
- Peer popularity is replaced by an emphasis on closer, more intimate relationships with a few peers
- Sense of self

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fragile self-esteem ○ Greater emphasis on perceptions from others ○ Need for peer approval ○ Conformity ● Research indicates that men are more likely to engage in physical aggression where women engage in relational aggression. <p>College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● College women seek out intimacy through social connections ● Importance on interdependence ● Cohesion, competition and social exclusion <p>Talking Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unfortunately, relational aggression does not end once you graduate college. ● It will be a part of your entire life – in the workplace, friend groups, social clubs, etc. ● In your small groups, discuss some ways you can address relational aggression as it happens to you or as you witness it happening to other people – both now in college and in life after college. 	
<p>Cross the Line</p> <p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Talking Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Now we're going to talk more about your experiences with relationships and relational aggression. ● This activity might make you feel slightly uncomfortable. I ask that you participate truthfully but also do what feels comfortable to you. ● I am going to read a series of statements that will start with, "Cross the line..." ● If you feel the statement applies to you, I will ask that you step over the line. We will take a moment, pause and then I will ask you to return to the group. ● You are the only person who can determine whether or not a statement is true for you. There are no right or wrong answers, it is up to you. ● Please remain silent throughout the activity and please do not snicker, giggle or talk. Please be respectful. ● It is important that we respect the dignity and experience of each person in the room. ● Please nod if you understand and agree to these terms. ● Let's begin with a simple statement: Cross the line if you take night classes. 	<p>Facilitator note:</p> <p>Prior to the activity, the facilitator will need to designate a center line.</p> <p><u>Prior</u> to the module, review the Cross the Line statements and select 8-10 for the activity.</p>

- Pause and allow members who have night classes to cross the line.

- Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Read the following statements by starting, “Cross the line if..”

- You feel supported by your sisters.
- You don't like to share personal feelings with your sisters.
- You have heard sisters gossiping about one another.
- You have to be perfect.
- You feel comfortable being vulnerable with your sisters.
- You have witnessed relational aggression in your chapter.
- You avoid conflict with your sisters.
- You actively find ways to make your chapter a place of acceptance.
- You have personally rewarded mean girl behaviors.
- You have felt left out by your sisters.
- You have purposefully left a sister out of an activity.
- You prefer to just let things happen rather than take an active role.
- You have insulted someone else on social media.
- You have body shamed other women.
- You have used the term “bitch” to talk about another woman's leadership style.
- You would feel disappointed if a PNM found out how some sisters treat each other.
- You have stopped someone from gossiping about one of your sisters.
- You think TSM tweets about mean girls are funny.
- You feel betrayed when you hear that other chapters bash your chapter during recruitment.
- You would rather be liked than do the right thing.
- You have given up leadership opportunities because you didn't believe your sisters would support you.
- Your sisters encourage you to live, learn and lead with Purpose.
- You have developed healthy and authentic relationships with members of your chapter.
- You feel like you can bring your authentic self to Tri Delta.

Pause and ask members if they have any statements they would like to ask the group. The statement a member asks should apply to them as well.

Processing Questions

- What kind of emotions came up for you during the activity?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role did judgment play? Courage? • How do your relationships with sisters influence your experience in Tri Delta? • How does relational aggression impact our chapter and our ability to grow? • What do healthy, authentic relationships look like to you? • What can we take away from this activity? • How do you know when a relationship is authentic or not? • What is one thing you promise to do to be a better sister? 	
<p>Closing 5 minutes</p>	<p>Talking Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for participating in this workshop. • Thank you for committing to the Purpose of Tri Delta to establish a perpetual bond of friendship. Remember, that we are stronger together than we are alone. • When one member of Tri Delta does something good, it reflects on all of us. • The same as when one member of Tri Delta makes a bad choice. It is important to support each other. • Tri Delta connects us to one another and positive change needs collective action. • Let us be mindful of our opportunity to live out the vision of our founders by being kind alike to all. 	