

Dealing with Authority Figures

Theme: Dealing with Authority Figures

Through physical sculpting, group discussion, and role-playing, girls will begin to explore how to communicate and relate to the authority figures in their lives and increase their understanding of the differences between assertive behavior, passive behavior, and aggressive behavior.

Activity: Physical Sculpting, Discussion, and Role-plays

Materials: Three cardboard signs labeled "Assertive," "Passive" and "Aggressive," paper and pens, "Characteristics of Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive People" worksheet (provided at the end of this week's unit), blank pieces of paper cut in half.

- Purpose:**
- To define the authority figures in their lives and the nature of their relationships
 - To explore the impact that an authority figures has in their lives – what's good about these people and what's not so good
 - To develop healthy methods of communication with authority figures and explore how these relationships can be helpful in the short and long term

PROCESS –

Facilitator Preparation

1. Make three cardboard signs (8 ½ x 11). Writing in large print, label one sign as "AGGRESSIVE," the second sign as "ASSERTIVE," and the third sign as "PASSIVE" Make enough copies of the "Characteristics Worksheet" for each participant.

→ Opening Ritual, Theme Intro. and Check-in

Activity 1: Physical Sculpting

This activity will involve having the girls physically “sculpt” what their relationship looks like with an authority figure in their lives.

1. Ask the girls to think about a main authority figure in their lives with whom they have a relationship. Ask, “What does that relationship look like?”
2. Decide who will go first and have them pick one girl from the group who will be part of their sculpture along with themselves, OR they can pick two girls from the group if they themselves do not want to be part of the sculpture.
3. Have each girl, one at a time, go up and sculpt a “pose” of herself and the authority figure. Suggest that they do this with the least amount of talking. They can first experiment with different poses and once the pose feels right, have them freeze it (as a frozen sculpture) and allow the group to observe. *(For example, one girl might pose herself in the squatting position with her hand over her ears and sculpt the authority figure standing over her with her hands on her hips.)*
4. Encourage the girls to play around with the sculpture until it feels right to the “sculptress.” Allow them to sculpt themselves as the authority figure if they like.
5. After the sculpture is complete and frozen and the group has observed it, move on to the rest of the group so each girl gets an opportunity to create her own sculpture.
6. Debrief the experience. Ask:
 - ✓ What was that like?
 - ✓ How was it to be part of the sculpture?
 - ✓ What was it like observing the sculptures? Any surprises?
 - ✓ What did you notice?

Activity 2: Discussion

Topic: “Dealing with Authority Figures”

Introductory Remarks: *(To be made by the facilitator to begin the discussion)*

- Many girls are angry at the authority figures in their lives, don’t feel connected to them or feel they can’t relate to them or trust in them.
- These relationships can be confusing because on one hand the authority figures in their lives can help them, and on the other hand, they can hurt them.
- Sometimes adolescents don’t tell the truth to authority figures because they’re scared of the consequences – whether they are immediate or long-term.
- Because authority figures have power, relationships with them can affect girls’ lives – positive and negative. It is beneficial for girls to learn how to interact with them to get what they need in the short and the long term.