

# Middle School Guidance

## Dealing with Teen Drama



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Without proper role models for resolving conflicts, teen girls often resort to ineffective ways of solving interpersonal problems. Anyone who works with teen girls knows how difficult it can be to sort out their social problems and get to the root of relationship problems. But why do these problems start in the first place? The Importance of Social Status Girls place a high value on their social relationships, and any threat to their standing in a social group can shake their self-esteem. As a result, they will do almost anything to maintain or increase their status in that group. Sometimes that can mean taking sides, spreading gossip, shutting girls out, or any other behavior that keeps them in a "one-up" position. Social Skills Deficits Drama builds when problems escalate due to the above behaviors. Without the ability to diffuse conflicts and preserve the fabric of the group, girls resort to the responses they are familiar with. They see a conflict, perceive that their status is at risk, panic, and react. Poor Role Models Many girls lack the skills to resolve conflicts in respectful and productive ways. They are often not taught how to do this, and instead must rely on the models of problem-solving that they encounter in their everyday life. Tabloid television shows, gossip magazines, and trashy celebrity behavior also help to normalize the idea that public displays of hyped-up conflict are

acceptable ways of dealing with problems and gain attention at the same time. Unfortunately, girls are watching and not learning. Common Communication Mistakes Many problems occur or escalate because girls base their beliefs solely on rumors, body language, and behavior. They can quickly decide someone is "mad at me" based on a perceived slight or an offhand comment. Or, they may believe that a friend is trash talking them based on a random rumor. Instead of going to the source for verification, they accept their perception as reality and then respond accordingly. Taking Sides Girls often take sides under the pretense of being "supportive," but often they are using someone else's conflict as a chance to exert their own power or retaliate for a perceived past injustice. Problems become harder to solve when whole groups of girls begin taking sides in what originated as a conflict between two people. Side conflicts emerge, misunderstandings are rampant, and it can become difficult to tease out and stay focused on the main issue. Catastrophizing Girls often perceive that problems are worse or more difficult to solve than they really are. Because girls are so emotionally invested in their personal relationships, threats to their status can easily seem like the "end of the world." The tendency

to react disproportionately to the situation also increases the levels of attention and perceived urgency. Impulsive Responses Girls often respond without taking the time to think through their options. Emotional reactions to situations can get in the way of more rational problem-solving. Behaviors such as spreading rumors, making nasty comments, isolating friends, and cutting off friendships escalate problems and heighten the levels of "drama".

<http://www.suite101.com/content/dealing-with-the-drama-a53504>

Quote of the month "I bowed at failure and it granted me success." (unknown)



Happy  
Valentine's Day

### Points of Interest:

- ✓ - Absent from school? Check out the teacher lesson plans by logging into the Logic House Parent Portal.
- ✓ - Excuses are due the day students return to school. A grace period of three days is allowed before becoming illegal.
- ✓ - Bullying information can be found at: <http://www.bbsd.com/bullying>

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## Important Upcoming Events

The following are a listing of important dates to remember:

**February 10, 2011** - Middle School Dance (6:30 - 9:00).

**February 10, 2011** - N.A.E.P. 8th Grade Writing Assessment.

**February 14, 2011** - Happy Valentine's Day.

**March 3, 2011** - Third Nine Week Grading Mid-Term.

**March 14 through March 18, 2011** - P.S.S.A. Mathematics and Reading Assessment (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11).

**March 28 through April 1, 2011** - P.S.S.A. Writing Assessment (Grades 5, 8 and 11).

**April 4 through April 8, 2011** - P.S.S.A. Science Assessment (Grades 4, 8 and 11).

