

# Rejected by peers

## Concern

Rejection by peers, characterized by being ignored, ridiculed, picked on, intentionally excluded or shunned.

## Description

Peer rejection is a strong risk factor for school failure, anti-social behavior, substance abuse and depression. Thus it is a concern that needs to be addressed, whether or not it leads immediately to observable behavior problems.

The dynamics of cliques, a bully's conduct, scapegoating, retaliation for perceived slights, prejudice based on race, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity all may contribute toward rejection of a student by peers. The rejected student's own temperament, learning style, harsh judgements of others, shyness, aggressiveness, neediness, mental or physical disability, and/or lack of social skills and undeveloped emotional awareness may also cause or contribute to the problem.

Often these students have a damaged sense of self, even before they experience peer rejection. They may have been abused or neglected at home. They may have been subjected to systematic discrimination based on a personal characteristic not under their control. They may simply not have seen positive social behavior being modeled.

Students who are extroverts by temperament crave the attention and approval of others and will often go to great lengths to get it. Ironically, those "over the top" actions precipitate a negative response. It can also make them especially vulnerable to gang recruitment.

On the other hand, students who are introverts by nature may not even be aware that their interior orientation may cause them to appear unfriendly or "stuck up" to others. Thus understanding personal temperament and how they engage in the learning environment is a first step for these students in learning how to connect more closely to their peers.

## Goals of intervention - students will:

- Understand their temperament and how it affects relations with others
- Understand how they learn and how that affects relationships
- Understand that their worth is independent of others
- Master the social skills to make positive connections with their peers
- Understand the dynamics of cliques and exclusion
- Name prejudice and discrimination when they encounter it
- Learn to manage feelings of loneliness, anger and sadness
- Develop social skills to bond more easily with their peers

## A suggested scope and sequence - Teens

### Self-understanding

Temperament  
Learning styles  
Shyness  
Self-worth  
Self-efficacy

### Assertiveness

Asserting yourself

### Managing feelings

Alone  
Sad  
Anger  
Frustration  
Managing feelings  
Depression

### Problem solving

Problem solving  
Ignored  
Left out  
Cliques  
Discrimination  
Disability  
Prejudice  
Picked on by peers

### Connectedness

Joining a group  
Making friends  
Conversations  
Communication skills  
Communicating feelings  
Giving compliments  
Asking questions  
Giving help  
Telling  
Connected  
Gossip  
Making space  
Community  
Curiosity

## A suggested scope and sequence - Kids

### Self-understanding

Learning styles  
Shy  
Self-esteem  
Self-awareness  
Liking yourself

### Assertiveness

Assertiveness

### Managing feelings

Lonely  
Sad  
Anger  
Frustrated  
Managing feelings

### Problem solving

Problem solving  
Left out  
Discrimination  
Disabilities  
Prejudice  
Gossiping

### Connectedness

Group - joining  
Making friends  
Conversations  
Communicating feelings  
Connecting with others  
Compliments  
Asking questions  
Help - giving it  
Telling  
Picked on by peers