

NOTE TO USERS

The original manuscript received by UMI contains broken or light print. All efforts were made to acquire the highest quality manuscript from the author or school. Page(s) were microfilmed as received.

This reproduction is the best copy available

UMI

**GROUP THERAPY WITH PRE-
ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN
SCHOOL SETTINGS:
OBSERVATIONS & ANALYSIS
OF THE "GIRLS RULE CLUB"**

by

Colleen Penner Podaima

A practicum thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Education

University of Manitoba

1998

Approved by Dr. Riva Bartell
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

Program Authorized Educational Psychology
to Offer Degree

Date April 3, 1998



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-32220-3

Canada

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION PAGE**

GROUP THERAPY WITH PRE-ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS:

**OBSERVATIONS & ANALYSIS OF THE
"GIRLS RULE CLUB"**

BY

COLLEEN PENNER PODAIMA

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Colleen Penner Podaima ©1998

**Permission has been granted to the Library of The University of Manitoba to lend or sell
copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis
and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to Dissertations Abstracts International to publish
an abstract of this thesis/practicum.**

**The author reserves other publication rights, and neither this thesis/practicum nor
extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's
written permission.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Developmental Issues of Pre-Adolescent Girls.....	1
Chapter 2: Middle School Philosophy.....	4
Chapter 3: Groups for Pre-Adolescent Girls.....	7
Chapter 4: Group Process: The Data.....	16
Chapter 5: Limitations & Recommendations for Future Groups.....	31
Bibliography.....	36
 Appendix A: List of Topics	 A3
Appendix B: Group Rules.....	A4
Appendix C: Letter of Parental Permission.....	A5
Appendix D: Proposed & Actual Session Outlines.....	A7
Appendix E: Girls Rule Club Evaluation Form Results.....	A29
Appendix F: Interview of Five of the Members of the Girls Rule Club.....	A31
Appendix G: Comments Made by Parents	A49

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to the committee, including Dr. Riva Bartell, advisor, Dr. Glenna Lambert and Dr. Jim Newton for their valuable contributions and suggestions; to Mrs. Merrily Marchessault and Mrs. Lynda Collins for their encouragement and to Clark for his never faltering support and technical wizardry.

University of Manitoba

ABSTRACT

Group Therapy with Pre-Adolescent
Girls in School Settings: Observations
& Analysis of the "Girls Rule Club"

by Colleen Penner Podaima

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Riva Bartell
Department of Educational Psychology

A practicum thesis presented on the implementation of an open discussion group for pre-adolescent middle school girls to prepare them for the anticipated drop in self esteem that occurs as they make the transition from childhood to adolescence.

The transition from elementary to middle school must address the changes that are happening cognitively and developmentally. The basis for understanding this shift cognitively is found in the work of Jean Piaget. The work of Erik Erikson provides an explanation for the change that occurs in going from childhood to pre-adolescence and adolescence. Some knowledge of the middle school philosophy is also integral to understanding the dynamics of this transition.

Recent studies including "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America" (American Association of University Women, 1992) and the A Cappella Report (Canadian Teachers' Foundation, 1990) discuss the developmental transition of

girls to adolescents in the 1990s. Both emphasize the problem of how girls will suffer a deeper and longer lasting drop in self esteem than boys when they go from childhood to adolescence. Not only will this be a longer lasting and more severe drop in self esteem, but boys tend to rebound better from this drop as they go through their teens. Authors such as Brown and Gilligan (1992), Pipher (1994), Orenstein (1994) and Friedman (1994) suggest this is a predictable loss that is strongly influenced by cultural norms that give females conflicting messages about their development. These messages are very different from those given to males; who are encouraged to be assertive and to achieve, and who are taught to celebrate their gender and their development

One method of minimizing or preventing this anticipated drop in self esteem is to offer girls a forum to discuss their concerns. Sandra Friedman's Girls in the 90's (sic) uses a peer group approach to encouraging girls to meet and discuss their issues and concerns.

In this practicum, the Girls in the '90s program is modified to meet the needs of a specific middle school setting and includes adaptations to the time and place of the group's meeting, abbreviated number of sessions and alternative group exercises. The results, based on evaluation forms, interviews with the girls and telephone surveys of their parents suggest the group is perceived as a supportive tool to help facilitate the transition from elementary to middle school. Girls indicate that the opportunity to discuss relationships (with peers, boys and family) and practice assertiveness/anger management techniques were most meaningful. Parents support the group but are not eager to become involved in sessions designed to inform them of the materials and techniques used. Future recommendations include adding more sessions, amending the group selection process and providing an information session for parents to meet before the start of the girls group.

Chapter 1

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES OF PRE-ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Theories of childhood and adolescent development suggest that these two stages of development are distinct and easily recognizable. However, in reality, the transition from childhood through preadolescence to adolescence is not so clearly delineated. Boys are encouraged to enjoy their development; to achieve and to succeed, whereas girls are given conflicting messages:

“Girls struggled with mixed messages: Be beautiful, but beauty is only skin deep. Be sexy, but not sexual. Be honest, but don’t hurt anyone’s feelings. Be independent, but be nice. Be smart, but not so smart that you threaten boys” (Pipher, 1994, 36).

The move toward individualization and independence is supported by our society; girls however, are not given such clear, supportive messages. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why opportunities for girls of this preadolescent age to meet, discuss and validate their experiences and concerns in small group and individual settings are important.

Erik Erikson (in Green, 1989) theorized that individuals go through eight stages of development, each stage affecting the next. Of the eight, the two stages which are most relevant for preadolescent girls include Stage 4: *Industry versus Inferiority* (from age 6 or 7 years to 11 or 12 years) and Stage 5: *Identity versus Role Confusion* (from age 11 or 12 years through 18 years).

Industry versus Inferiority (stage 4) requires the child to learn cooperation and the primary developmental task is to develop a sense of competency and achievement.

It is at this stage that children's self esteem is most decidedly affected by their ability to do things well. Proficiency affirms self esteem and a lack of proficiency, either by virtue of the task being too advanced for the child or their having had too many previous failures, can lead to frustration and lowered self esteem. It is at this stage that a work ethic is established - children learn what is valued by society by being given adult recognition and earning personal satisfaction for what they have accomplished. A strong or well developed work ethic lends itself to a sense of competency and achievement.

Many middle school (i.e. grades 6-8) students would be included in the lower range of *Identity versus Role Confusion* (stage 5) where there is a growing need for independence and search for sense of self - looking for role models and heroes and attempts to integrate these ideals into their own sense of self. Erikson coined the term "the adolescent identity crisis", the theory which states that with the complex biological/hormonal changes of adolescence comes a new sense of self.

"Adolescents gain a fresh awareness of themselves as individuals, as sexual mates, as potential workers and parents, and as new persons occupying what used to be a child's body. New attractions toward the opposite sex awaken, and a search for ideas and people who are trustworthy begins. New expectations for the self are adopted, and these self images tend at first to be very flexible, often changing with time, place, and situation" (Green, 74-5).

Over these more general developmental issues then can be transposed issues specific to females, especially as they relate to the North American culture. The American Association of University Women sponsored a study titled, "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America" (1992), which concludes that both girls' and boys' self confidence and assertiveness tends to decline as they approach adolescence. Of note however is that the girls' decline is significantly greater and longer term than the boys'. Sandra Friedman (Presentation, 1995) details a time line that she indicates is specific to females and reflects their move from vibrant, self assured girls to unassertive, insecure adolescents. Friedman claims that it is as a

result of a male dominated culture that females lose their vibrancy and their ability to speak assuredly about themselves and what they are thinking and feeling. Instead, most females learn to speak what they believe is the right or polite way of expressing themselves. This diminishing voice is silenced to the adolescent female's detriment. Friedman indicates that this process is so pervasive that girls are not even aware they have "lost their voice".

Mary Pipher, in her book Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls (1994), discusses the individual therapeutic interventions she used in her experience in working with girls of this developmental age, who were making the transition to adolescence. Her experiences and characterizations coincide with the work of Brown and Gilligan (1992), and Friedman. Her work also supports Erikson's schema (Stage 4) where children in general need opportunities in which they can have success - to perfect their performance and to work towards strengthened or firmly established self esteem. Erikson's theory suggests that unless this can be done, subsequent stages would be adversely affected. All the aforementioned female authors suggest in their writings that this strengthening and firming of the foundations of self esteem enhance the ability to make a smoother transition to adolescence.

Dr. Lorraine Fox suggests that an effective, empowering approach for adolescents is a 'Youth Developmental Perspective' wherein successful intervention needs to focus on issues the youth deem relevant. Empowerment occurs when individuals, especially of this developmental stage, are given opportunities to reflect and discuss their views, values and beliefs about issues relevant to them (Presentation handouts, 1997). As George and Alexander (1993) suggest, peer groups are not the ultimate controller of the action of adolescents, but more often the sounding board.

Developmental issues need to be a primary consideration not only in how girls are treated, but also in how they are expected to learn, especially in the school setting.

Chapter 2

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

“Human development research and scholarship has increasingly identified the importance of early adolescence as a unique phase of growing up ... early adolescence ‘as a distinct developmental phase that is quantitatively different’ from both earlier and later period,” (George & Alexander, 1993, 3).

The middle school philosophy and its introduction of more complex thinking into the curriculum derives its theoretical support from Piaget’s theory of childhood development (George & Alexander). According to Piaget, children move from the stage of Concrete Operations (from 7-11 years) to Formal Operations (11 years to adulthood). However, more current research suggests that this transition in intellectual maturation, i.e. from more concrete to complex, abstract thinking does not happen as exactly and as early as eleven years, but may, in fact, not occur in many adolescents until the age of fifteen, which is then beyond the middle school period. It is important that not only teaching but any intervention done with students at the middle school level, be sensitive to the possibility that many, if not most, students will lag behind in terms of their ability to think abstractly, and to transfer information to novel situations. There is a need to differentiate instruction, to present multiple and varied modalities of instruction to present and teach concepts by building on the basics. The move toward more complex thinking is achieved by offering opportunities to experiment with translating learning to new situations. This is the first and ultimate goal of the middle school philosophy with respect to learning - that individuals will acquire formal operations, although social influences and individual aptitudes are the determining factors and affect when each person reaches formal operations.

A second goal that a middle school must address is learning to relate to others:

“Middle school students become increasingly aware of their own selves and of relationships with others. Indeed, human beings may be more aware of others during this period than during any other time of life. Not only are “Who am I?” and “Am I normal?” persistent questions, but also “Who do you think I am?” dominates much reflection and many relationships” (George and Alexander, p. 11).

The growth of identity is the main developmental task of adolescence. As children move through preadolescence and adolescence, there is a natural ‘trying on’ of different identities. Whereas children typically are unquestioning in their attitudes toward caregivers and adults in general, adolescents are necessarily more critical and questioning. Middle schools must be prepared to deal with this main developmental task of adolescence (George and Alexander, 1993). Offering opportunities to discuss questions and concerns could be seen as a healthy way of building on the strength of peer groups which are a developmental reality and are naturally more attractive and inviting to this age group. Individuals of this age group could therefore be encouraged (rather than stifled) to develop their sense of self in positive, healthy environments.

“Peer relations allow the early adolescent to redefine sense of self in terms of what is normal in everyday life. Relationships with peers first, and then adults, begin to be reciprocal rather than ‘unilaterally controlled’ by adults” (Schwartz, Merten and Bursik, 1987 in George and Alexander, p. 15).

George Waters Middle School, until September, 1997 was comprised only of grades 7 and 8. When it expanded to include grade 6, there was an avid interest in offering a counselling group to the youngest girls for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there was a small but vocal group of parents concerned and somewhat resentful that the elementary schools their children had attended up to grade 5 were no longer offering a grade 6 program. Secondly, these incoming grade 6 girls were not known to staff at George Waters School and the structuring of a group was viewed as an opportunity to get to know some of the girls in a smaller forum than the

classroom. Thirdly, the results of the group were anticipated as an information gathering exercise, to help prepare for future grade 6 girls. Given the accessibility to the writer and the desire to offer a preventative intervention that might be used to anticipate difficulties in the new middle school, the school administration was eager to support a girls' group.

Moreover, offering a girls' group at this school site is compatible with the philosophy of middle school learning curriculum, and also in providing alternate opportunities to learn how to relate to others.

Chapter 3

GROUPS FOR PRE-ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Brown and Gilligan (1992) chronicle how the intensity of girls' thoughts and feelings weaken as they go from childhood to adolescence; that is, as young girls mature and listen to the voices of others, they respond to the inevitable tension of disagreeing with others by actively resisting the pressure to speak out. They claim that in one sense there is movement forward from childhood to adolescence (i.e. cognitively and physiologically) but in another sense, there is developmental crisis in that females are taught to recognize the importance of feelings (theirs and others) but to stifle the expression of these feelings when they might prompt conflict or disagreement (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p.6). Brown and Gilligan suggest that we need to teach girls to stay connected to their self. Pipher (1993) relates this to her own professional experience:

"I found girls to be obsessed with complicated and intense relationships. They felt obligated and resentful, loving and angry, close and distant all at the same time with the same people. ..Their symptoms seemed connected to their age and their common experiences. Certain themes, such as concern with weight, fear of rejection and the need for perfection, seemed rooted in cultural expectations for women rather than in the 'pathology' of each individual girl" (Pipher, 1994, p. 35).

Given what we know of the importance of peers for this age group, it makes sense to address this need in a group - specifically a peer group - context. Sandra Friedman believes that an important key to addressing the diminishing assertiveness and the unique, specific concerns of girls of this age group is the use of the peer group context. In a program she developed called Girls in the 90's (sic)

the group is an important vehicle to encouraging girls to explore their development and share their unique experiences.

Girls in the '90s is a voluntary, open discussion group designed for pre-adolescent girls. The focus is on awareness and acknowledgment of feelings that are negative to girls' concept of self and the use of the peer group forum to air these negative feelings. Friedman believes that this intervention addresses and monopolizes on the importance of the peer group to this developmental level while teaching girls how to recognize and strengthen the voices within themselves. The assertiveness that is frequently apparent in childhood is often subject to being progressively subverted as the girls mature and proceed through adolescence. Pipher claims that parents, who during childhood were the major influence in the children's lives are not to blame. Rather, it is our culture that encourages conflicting roles for females, roles that put value on non-assertiveness. Friedman uses a technique at each group session whereby she asks the girls to recall and describe an incident in the preceding week called a 'grungie', a term that has been coined to refer to those negative things that girls tell themselves which make them feel badly about themselves. The most common grungies are "fat", "ugly" and "stupid". "Too tall", "too thin" and "too selfish" rank close behind." (Friedman, 1994, p. 11).

Procedure

Based on the premise of Friedman's Girls in the '90s, the writer approached the administration of George Waters Middle School with a proposal to offer a girls group targeted to the incoming grade 6 female population. Given that it was the first year that grade 6 was to be accommodated in that middle school setting, administration was very receptive to the notion of offering a preventative small group that would place new, at risk students unknown to the George Waters staff, at close proximity to the school's guidance counsellor and school psychologist. Administration's enthusiasm was such that not only were they supportive of the

group and in providing on site resources, such as a meeting room, releasing girls from class to attend, money for snacks, they also allocated additional staffing funds to enable the writer to offer the group and encouraged the guidance counsellor, Ms. Maria Triolo, to attend the sessions to help facilitate the group. The main objective of the proposed girls group was to identify at risk girls new to the school and invite them to attend an all girls group to discuss issues that were relevant to them. Once the girls were selected from 123 grade 6 students (no breakdown available on the basis of gender) arriving at George Waters from primarily three catchment elementary schools, the first session was set for Tuesday, October 7, 1997, which would then allow 8 sessions to be offered (Day 5 of the six day school cycle) to the Christmas break.

Ms. Triolo and the writer met to review the profiles of the grade 6 girls new to the school and to select a group that were considered at risk. These at risk girls were chosen from among those who had been noted by their elementary school counselors who might require some support; girls who seemed not to have good support systems in place or girls who would seem to benefit from a group experience. In other words, the group would include girls who the guidance counsellors felt exhibited low self esteem, who seemed particularly anxious about the move to the middle school or who seemed at risk for future problems such as eating disorders, limited or poor peer relationships or teenage pregnancy. This selection process was conducted in late September, so there was at least some familiarity by the guidance counsellor with the composition of the grade 6 classrooms, which would facilitate selection and structuring of the group.

Six girls were initially selected and the first step was to invite them to a girls group. The guidance counsellor approached each of the girls individually as she was known to them in the school context. The girls had not been referred to the writer

as potential clients of School Psychology but who were not formally referred. Of the 6 girls approached, 5 expressed interest in participating.

At this point, a letter was drafted for the girls to take home to their parents, requesting their permission to allow their daughter to participate in the group. All letters were returned allowing participation.

Description of the Group Sessions

While the original format of the Girls in the '90s program suggested the girls be invited to drop in and out of the group as they desired, at an off school campus location, the girls in the George Waters group were selected, invited and expected to attend all 8 sessions. The group was offered onsite at the school during class time and the participants were encouraged to select the name of their own group early in the course of the sessions. In terms of content, Friedman encourages the concept of discussing "grungies". Instead of highlighting specific things said to oneself, girls were asked to use a glass bear-shaped jar on which they projected the level of how they were feeling at the beginning of each session (note: the use of this demonstration is based on the illustration of a bucket and dipper where how we feel - the level of water in the bucket - is affected by a dipper of water being taken out - negative things that are said or done by us or to us, and a dipper of water being added - positive things that are said or done by us or to us which increase the level of water in our buckets). Each girl then had the option and was encouraged to elaborate on why she was feeling at that level at that time - the writer then used that opportunity to discuss with the girl and with other group members the basis for her feelings and ways of coping with them. For example, when one of the girls related that the level on the bear was low because of a fight with her mother that morning, the group discussed relationships with mothers and how the girl could re-open the discussion with her mother without getting into an argument again.

The objective for the first session was to allow the girls to introduce themselves, to find out more about what the group was about, and to select, as a group, the topics that they would like to discuss over the subsequent seven sessions. This was accomplished by having the girls write on small slips of paper topics that were of interest to them. These were then collected by the writer and the facilitator (Ms. Triolo) and listed on poster paper. Then each of the girls was asked to indicate by raising her hand, a number suggesting the importance of each of the topics when they were announced - the numbers being 1, 3 or 5 - denoting increasing value or importance to them. These numbers were then tallied and became the list of topics that would guide discussion or activity at the subsequent sessions (please see Appendix A). At the initial session, girls were asked to brainstorm and vote on names for the group. The name selected was "The Girls Rule Club". This name would then be used to remind the girls over the public address system, when to assemble.

Specific session objectives for the second to eighth session (see Appendix D for Proposed and Actual session outlines), were then based on these topics or on the girls interests at previous sessions - for example, when the topic of stress dealing with the new middle school and the amount of work now expected of the girls was broached, it was dealt with at more than one session because it recurred in discussion by the girls. Thus, while there was a session objective outlined before each session began, the girls' guided the degree of emphasis and the direction of discussion. At each session then, it was the writer's goal to remind the girls of the topics they had indicated were of importance to them, give them an activity or starting point, to enable the flow and energy of the girls' interest to carry the session however far the girls wanted to go.

Much of the literature on the dynamics of group process breaks the lifespan of a group into phases including the start, early, middle and late with issues for

termination. Yalom (1985) deals with psychotherapeutic groups which tend to be longer term than the eight session format used in the Girls Rule Club with some fluctuation in membership that naturally comes from a longer group lifespan. However, much of the theory is applicable.

In the case of the Girls Rule Club, cohesiveness was promoted by allowing the girls to select their group name and the topics for discussion, introducing themselves and the elementary schools they came from, activities all done at the first session. Another activity meant to strengthen cohesiveness was to have the girls collectively decide their group rules. Normally done at the first session, this was done at the second session because two new members joined at that time (see Appendix B for the group's rules).

In addition to enhancing group cohesion, the selection of the name "Girls Rule Club" seemed to suggest unity and also an action by the girls to retain some of the assertiveness that individuals such as Gilligan, Brown, Friedman and Pipher theorize is being lost. The girls purposely selected a name that gave them an opportunity to use the voice these theorists suggest will otherwise dwindle.

Also of importance in establishing cohesion is supporting a sense of continuity from session to session. One method is to use rituals that become specific to the group. Common rituals include beginning a session by having members 'check in'. The Girls Rule Club used the glass bear jar to indicate how they were feeling at the start of each session and wherever relevant and appropriate the facilitator drew attention to common themes and their relationship to what a particular girl had said in the past or what was on the agenda for the day's discussion. The bear seemed to have particular significance to this age group because of its Teddy Bear connotation - it seemed to provide comfort (the girls often cuddled it and caressed when it was their turn to use it to indicate their feelings). It also seemed to give the girls permission to act younger than they were, sometimes using childish voices and

gestures. Many of the girls openly admitted having teddy bear collections. The glass bear also seemed to provide the girls with an inanimate object onto which they could comfortably verbalize issues that were troubling them - for the girls who were less vocal, the glass bear seemed to encourage them to participate when the regular impetus of peer conversation was not enough to prompt them to offer their experiences. It also gave the writer an opportunity to use the glass bear as the object of discussion when a particular feeling or experience was particularly emotional - reframing the experience as the glass bear's was a way to position observations that were threatening or intrusive to the girl and allowed her to contribute her experience/feelings to the rest of the group.

Another method of enhancing cohesion is to demonstrate the importance of the group to its members. Yalom suggests that this can be facilitated by the group leader by such actions as arriving punctually for meetings, informing the group as far in advance as possible about changes, sharing with the group if you thought about any of the group activities between sessions, bridging sessions by referring to topics discussed at previous sessions, summarizing meetings and using group members to help each other (Yalom, 131).

Another ritual that was particularly significant was the snack brought by the writer for the group members. Friedman, in her description of the Girls in the '90s group, suggests allowing the girls to bring money to purchase a snack. Her observations were that this typically meant the girls would select junk foods. However, due to the fact that the Girls Rule Club met during school hours on site, there was no opportunity for the girls to go anywhere to purchase their snack. Additionally and more importantly, some of the girls in the group were less advantaged and to request them to bring money to buy a snack would place hardship on them and their parents and would be counterproductive to group cohesion. Therefore, snack was provided by the writer and was at the end of each session and was anxiously

awaited by the girls. It was particularly illuminating to the writer because it gave clues to the personalities of the individual girls and offered some information about how treats might be viewed in their lives outside the group. As importantly, it provided them unstructured time to socialize and be observed in a social context. Snack time provided a sense of continuity and predictability to the group and seemed to give the girls a sense of privilege over other students who were not in the group.

Cohesion was also established beyond the initial sessions by reinforcing the group rules, which invariably encouraged them to listen to one another. A ritual that was begun with the group as an effort to encourage listening was to use a "talking stick" - an object that was passed to each girl when it was her turn to speak to the group. Once the talking stick was passed to a girl, she had the floor so to speak, and could opt to speak or pass the stick on. Cohesion was also promoted by reminding the girls when that the group was a source of support for them and that when they were in a session and using the glass bear to relate their feelings, it was up to other girls listening to give their attention. They were also reminded that the group was one place they should be able to come to be supported, even if they felt that others in the school were making them feel less than supported. The group's rule of confidentiality - or keeping things said in the group to those in the group - seemed to enhance this feeling of cohesion.

One of the reasons for cohesion is to establish within the group a sense of trust, that the group is a safe place to disclose one's thoughts and feelings. While it could be argued that trust is a precursor to cohesion, ensuring that the mechanics of a group or encouraging it as a united cluster of individuals with similar reasons for being there, with consistent rules, paves the way for trust to develop. At the first and second sessions, there were members of the group who were quiet and opted not to use the glass bear jar to indicate their feelings. Keeping in mind that there

were two new members at the second session, the fact that by the third session, all girls were sharing and disclosing their feelings using the glass bear jar suggests not only cohesiveness, but also that there was some trust.

Cohesion in the final stages of the group was relatively well established, however the goal was to encourage girls to maintain some of this connection beyond the ending of the group. Reminders of the termination of the group and to stay connected to other members were made. However due to the fact the girls were not followed up with, this is an unknown. Cohesion or at least connection to the group leaders was established however, in that each of the girls continues to acknowledge the presence of the group facilitators whenever they meet in the hallways at school.

The focus of the group was easily maintained in that the topics for discussion were reviewed at each session. As the group progressed, issues that had been relevant in earlier sessions were recalled and options discussed.

Termination of the Girls Rule Club was addressed starting at the sixth session, where the girls were reminded that the group had only two sessions left. This was to ensure that topics they wanted to discuss were on the agenda and that they would not be surprised at the seventh session. Likewise at the seventh session, the girls were reminded of this and a discussion following of how to celebrate their efforts in completing the eight sessions.

Chapter 4

GROUP PROCESS: THE DATA

1. Session Outlines

As previously indicated, each session was loosely outlined prior to its commencement, by the writer, based on the Topic List and also on the previous sessions discussion. Girls were then asked, at each session, if the topic for the subsequent session was still appropriate. Activities, such as role playing, viewing videos, and demonstrative examples were employed by the writer to illustrate concepts that were connected to the topics of interest.

Thus, each 50 minute session began with an outline, but did not necessarily follow or conclude with that outline. The 'Actual session' sometimes did not look very much like the 'Proposed session' - it was the writer's experience that the proposed session was too ambitious and included too many activities or structured lesson components. Invariably, the girls needed time to process what was being proposed, usually by talking amongst themselves and in the larger group. The writer found it most helpful then to detail a second, more chronological outline that journalized what the group actually did during each session. The eight Proposed session outlines as well as the eight Actual session outlines follow. Anecdotal comments about each of the sessions are included on the Actual session outlines (refer to Appendix D) and reflect the processing of material by the girls and by the writer.

Themes of the Individual Sessions

The Girls Rule Club capitalizes on the strength of girls in a group to support one another and to have some opportunities to use and have their voices heard.

The most important element of an effective group is cohesion and its development starts when the group first convenes. The start of the group is dependent on the leader, who determines the criteria for inclusion and who clarifies the focus of the group - even if the subsequent session topics are self directed. The group leader has the task of creating a physical entity - the group (Yalom, 1985, 114). Group members are taught aspects of cohesive behaviour by establishing the rules of the group - what is allowed and what is not. Regardless of how open and self directed the group is designed to be, it must be acknowledged that the group leader affects cohesion by modeling behaviour that it is hoped the girls will try on in this safe environment and by reinforcing behaviours, through subtleties like nodding, agreeing, leaning forward or requests for more information. Yalom suggests that the ideal effect is that the group members will have their more mature patterns of behaviour reinforced rather than their less mature behaviour (Yalom, 120). This was clearly demonstrated in the first session (see Session #1:Actual) when certain behaviours were ignored by the writer (e.g. poking, giggling) and others given more attention (e.g. praise given to the girls for their concern over inviting classmates who they thought appropriate for the group). Not allowing behaviours such as interrupting or name calling clearly delineated the rules of the group. Similarly, actively listening (i.e. leaning forward, smiling, nodding) encouraged the girls to speak and expand on their thoughts.

The theme of the first session was to attend to the details of establishing the group and to reinforce to the girls the fact that they were in control of determining the direction of the group and would each be respected for their contributions and opinions. Proposed activities to achieve this were drafting a list of the girls topics of interest, and giving them as much information as possible about the group and the decisions to be made by them. What became apparent in the actual session was the girls' embracing of this respect and desire to talk with each other. They grasped the opportunity to assert themselves as a group and further, their desire to include

others whom they felt would also benefit from being a part of this group. Some of the girls, at least the ones more vocal at this session, quickly adapted to the level of tolerance displayed by the group facilitators. After initial behaviours such as talking out of turn or name calling were responded to by the facilitators, the girls would use frowns or body language such as shaking their heads, amongst themselves to discourage their peers from continuing the same negative behaviours.

In the second session, the proposed outline included an activity to stimulate some thought about how the girls' sense of effectiveness and their goals and to get them recognizing how their sense of self was affected by others, illustrated by the glass bear jar example. Their indicated topic of interest related to staying focused at school and dealing with the busy schedules of the new middle school environment. Interestingly, the girls were not so much interested in finding techniques that would assist them with their busy schedules, as just the opportunity to check out their impressions that the volume and difficulty of the work now being assigned to them in middle school was so different than that of elementary school. Thus for the girls, checking the reality of their peers was an important theme. Even the glass bear jar was quickly adapted as a way of expressing feelings and making others aware of how they were each feeling. For example, there was a lot of discussion about the limited time there now was to do things such as play outside with friends and watch television. Not only did this observation by the girls serve to vent their resentment at not being able to do, as frequently, the things they did previously, it also seemed to generate some discussion and some consensus sharing about what the girls did in their leisure time. Again, this checking with peers seemed to validate how each of the girls spent her time away from school.

At the third session, an activity selected by the writer to again, have the girls address their sense of self and who they are met with some interesting results. Whereas it might have been predicted, based on the literature, that the girls would submit self

statements that were less than positive, two of the girls were quick to announce very positive self statements, such as “I am special” and “I am smart” (see Session #3: Actual). They recognized a stress as coping with the workload, again, the theme from previous sessions. Again, the opportunity to address the current status of one’s feelings was seized by all the girls, even those who were previously quiet and preferred not to participate. This was used as an opportunity to process some of the feelings and strategies. The writer made the observation that there are ways of preventing your level of self esteem from being made less by others, some of the girls responded with appropriate strategies (e.g. ignoring comments, recalling areas of strength) while another girl offered that she could make others think she was feeling one way (i.e. positive, smiling) when in fact she was feeling quite different (i.e. sad, unhappy). The value of this observation was announced to the group and could be viewed as one of the first times in this group experience that the theory of Pipher, Friedman and others is demonstrated. It serves to illustrate how girls feel they must appear a certain way, despite incongruent feelings.

As well, the stress the girls were feeling was a persistent theme - even so far as understanding the term peer pressure, which the girls believed to reflect the difficulty they were having coping with the workload in this middle school setting rather than the effect peers might be having on them. This also seemed to indicate their need to continue to address and discuss with each other this aspect of the new school environment and demands they felt being imposed on them. Friends were recognized as having therapeutic value - it was good to talk with them. All the girls present discussed parents as good alternatives to talk with about problems.

The themes of Session #4 were to be anger and peer relationships, with the writer giving some examples as to how anger is often expressed. The girls were eager to discuss their relationships with friends and each was readily able to provide the group with qualities they found important in friends, though their examples were

usually about specific situations where they felt justified in their actions. While the theme was relevant to the girls, the discussion reflected their developmental needs - very concrete, experiential understanding of their relationships. Even the one girl who attempted to dominate and re-direct her peers and their experiences and provide suggestions appeared to be trying to gain recognition for the very attribute this developmental level is striving to display - a sense of achievement and competency when it came to relationships and understanding them (see notes re: Girl #3 in Session #4: Actual). Of course, this may also reflect an individual personality trait in the context of the group dynamic wherein the participant is attempting to establish some control within the group. However, the fact that this was the first session where the girls aired, within the group session, some grievances amongst themselves suggests that their comfort level was rising and/or that the topic of anger and how to deal with it was appropriate and timely.

In Session #5, an effort was made to introduce the theme of assertiveness, both as a technique and topic for discussion, with the girls focus on peer relationships - both male and female - in mind. Assertiveness was addressed via discussion and viewing a video. The girls were open to this more guided learning experience and in fact, were more receptive to the video medium than the discussion component where they were noticeably more unsettled and rambunctious. This did not follow the pattern of previous sessions, where the girls seemed to truly enjoy and maximize the opportunity to talk with one another. This may have been due to the presence of a spectator to the group who may have inhibited the girls and made them uncomfortable and less willing to share their insights in the group (please see Session #5: Actual) perhaps more indicative of an earlier stage of the group. This may also account for the eagerness with which the girls gravitated to using their journals and writing down some of their feelings and plans to try some of the techniques covered.

All the girls continue to contribute to discussion and overall, the quality of their contributions is becoming richer and more reflective of their experiences and who they are. In some contacts with parents at this stage in the group's timeline, all comments are positive and include girls being less angry, more settled and happier/doing better at school.

Continuing with the assertiveness theme, Session #6 was geared to completing the video of the demonstrated assertiveness techniques and giving the girls the opportunity to role play and discuss their understanding of these techniques. Again perhaps as reflective of the intellectual maturity of the girls, they are eager to prove their knowledge of what they have learned of the techniques, eager to get opportunities to tell the group what each of the techniques are. Likewise they continue to have difficulty understanding the application of these principles though they are eager to use the opportunity to try via the role plays for example, one of the girls relates how she did not use a discussed technique to deal with intimidation by a cousin, even though she knew how to use it (see Session #6: Actual). A key issue during this session is an altercation that took place outside the group during the week preceding this session. One of the group members hit another and was suspended. The girls demand time to discuss the morality of the issue, seeing as the "victim" was not, in their estimation, blameless. They also feel very compelled to intervene during the session, to sit between the 2 girls to prevent a further altercation. This incident was framed by the writer as an example of how the group can be a place to feel supported by being able to give voice to how we are feeling.

In Session #7, there arises situation where there is a need to clarify the group's direction, exemplified by the girls all individually doing what they wanted at the start of the session, i.e. talking amongst themselves, throwing pencils and writing on chalkboards/poster paper (see the start of Session #7: Actual). Once the girls are reminded of their stake in this endeavor as a group and their need to show the

direction they want to take, the girls are quick to respond and resume the thread of their interests and without exception, all cooperate and request the opportunity to practice the role playing, which they do with eagerly, even with suggested corrections. This was a strong example of how committed the girls appear to feel about the group. There was no threat of dissolution or return to the classroom, simply a statement of what they appeared to need and want - a chance to voice the direction they wanted to take. Once they did this and the facilitator asked how she could help them do this, they quickly gained momentum in the direction they announced - doing role plays and discussing them.

In the final session, the girls once again capitalize on the theme of self expression - they are eager to explain their individual Treasure Chests, which they have developed with momentos and objects meaningful to them. They seem to value the additional time to allow all the girls an opportunity to share each others (see Session #8: Actual) and are able to remain fairly attentive to each others' description of the Treasure Chests, asking questions and requesting that items be passed around. They are also quite eager to claim their journals to take home, even though they have spent proportionately little time completing them during the sessions. They seem to want to take the exercises about themselves and their goals with them, almost as a work in progress. There is an air of celebration and the girls find a way to express themselves and the completion of the group, by all finding a place at the chalk and dry erase boards to leave messages of farewell from the group and individual girls.

2. Parent Session

In an effort to enhance the cohesiveness of the group and to develop a sense of community outside the group, the writer originally proposed a session for mothers (or the parent/guardian who had signed the permission form) to attend to find out more about the group. The intention was to foster in mothers/parents a

sense of empathy for their daughters and some of the issues that were relevant for them. The video, "Slim Hopes" (Kilbourne, 1995) was originally felt to be an excellent ice breaker for parents to view and be re-introduced to issues that might be relevant for the group and their daughters that they themselves may have had to deal with as teenagers.

The parent session was offered to the participating girls' parents and was scheduled for Wednesday, November 5, 1997. The goal of this session was to show parents of girls participating in the group some of the relevant literature on the group itself, available community and school resources and to answer any of their questions. Some of the information made available to them on girls of this age group included a display of some of the more popular non fiction currently available (e.g. Reviving Ophelia, School Girls, When Girls Feel Fat) Additionally, the writer had available some relevant articles (please see "Dying to Be Thin", Hittner, 1997) and a list of available subject related books at the local library. As well, the manual for the Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (1984) was available for their perusal.

When the parents were initially contacted by telephone and polled for a preferred time, some preferred a scheduled meeting time during the day while some preferred after school hours. For the one parent who indicated both times as problematic, the writer offered to individually schedule a time to meet convenient to her, but the parent did not follow up. Thus, a middle of the week appointment time was scheduled that was at the end of the afternoon (3:00 - 6:00) so that parents could attend either during the regular school day or after work. Despite four girls' parents indicating they would be attending, only one parent attended. The video was not shown due to the parents non-attendance and the fact that the only parent who arrived did so very close to 6:00 and declined the offer to view it.

It is the impression of the writer that the parents were generally supportive of the girls' group concept but preferred that it be conducted as a responsibility of the school and in a general format that did not have to involve them. It is unclear why some of the parents would not allow their daughters to complete the self concept scale or to participate in the interview. There was even more hesitation or disinterest in attending the parent session. Perhaps this reflects a desire to have the concerns addressed at arm's length; to not have to be a part of what they perceive is not a problem at this point. Nonetheless, in this example, parent involvement was minimal.

The original intention and proposal for offering the girls group was to evaluate the effect of the group using an evaluation form given to the girls as well as to administer the Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, an 80 item self report questionnaire in first person singular statements, to which respondents indicate yes or no. This instrument is designed to assess how children and adolescents feel about themselves and can be administered in groups. The plan had been to administer the Piers Harris at the second and eighth sessions, to gauge change, if any, among the girls as a group, with respect to their self concept.

However, there emerged the unforeseen problem of hesitancy among some parents (specifically two) to allow their daughters to be administered the self concept scale, despite assurances of anonymity and report of scores as an aggregate. While the Parent Session may have eliminated some of the reservations, the session was not offered until after the third session of the group (in order that all of the participants could be invited), though personal telephone contacts were made by the writer in addition a letter sent to parents. The concerned parents did not get an opportunity to view the literature on the Piers Harris because they did not attend the Parent Session. However, it is unclear if this would have affected changed their

decision not to allow their daughters to be given the measure, since they were contacted by telephone and offered individual interviews.

Of the remaining 5 girls, 4 of the parental forms were returned late (i.e. after the third session). The decision was therefore made to eliminate the Piers Harris and instead utilize a 10 minute taped interview with the girls in conjunction with their completed evaluation forms. In addition, each parent was contacted following the termination of the group and given an opportunity to offer comments, suggestions and impressions of the group.

The information gleaned from these 3 sources was hoped to be an indicator of the value, if any of the group process for the girls involved. Additionally, this information was anticipated to be useful for planning future groups for girls of this age.

Evaluation Forms Completed by the Girls

The girls were asked to complete an evaluation form at the final or eighth session in an effort to determine which parts of the eight session group were most meaningful for them. Permission had been granted by parents via the letter of permission (see Appendix C).

Summary of Results of Evaluation Forms (see Appendix F: Girls Rule Club Evaluation Form Results)

Overall, it appears the girls in the group indicated they learned more about themselves and getting along with others from their experience in the group process. The group also seemed to positive with respect to peer relationships and making connections to peers. Most of what they indicated they learned

however, seems to be techniques or skills that were introduced and modeled in the group. These girls did not believe that the group made them more confident (see question #5) though perhaps there needed to be some examples indicated of how this confidence might be observed. The girls indicated that there was not enough time for discussion (ie. 4 indicated yes enough discussion, 3 indicated not enough discussion) whether this was due to the fact that sessions were not long enough is unclear - the majority of girls indicated they would prefer more sessions. It would seem then that from these written evaluations, the group was effective in creating an atmosphere where the girls were comfortable discussing amongst themselves and the facilitators, issues that were relevant to them. The fact that they wanted more time to discuss fits the profile of this developmental age - the need to use peers as sounding boards in the maturation process. The fact that specific skills were what the girls indicated were what they took away from the group, fits the developmental stage these girls are at - that of mastering particular skills. It also supports why and how the role playing was effective for the girls. It could also be theorized that the girls are unable to envision how this transfer of skill to self understanding will be of help to them because this requires more abstract, transfer of skills to insightful self knowledge and awareness; ie. "how this will change how I feel about myself" is a developmental milestone that the girls have not yet the intellectual capacity or maturity to do.

Interviews with the Girls

As an adjunct to the written evaluation and with the success and relevance of Brown and Gilligan's work with adolescent females in an interview type setting, the writer felt that an interview with each of the girls might be helpful in eliciting which components of the girls group was most helpful to the individual girls. While questions were drafted, the idea was to allow the girls to expand and elaborate upon topics raised through their answers. However, if there was hesitation upon the part of parents to have their daughters complete the Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, there continued to be some reservations about their being interviewed by the writer. Of the 7 girls in the group, 2 parents refused permission to have their daughters interviewed. Transcripts of the interviews with 5 of the girls are included in Appendix F.

Summary of Results of Interviews

The interview was an excellent means of terminating the group - by giving each individual girl (or at least 5 of the 7) an opportunity to elaborate on her thoughts and feelings about the group there was a deliberate sense of closure. The interview was also as a means of gaining some impromptu thoughts on what the girls anticipated for their adolescence and what their current areas of concern were.

Impressions from the interviews suggest the importance of friends for these 5 girls and also the impact of peer pressure, whereas earlier in the course of the group it had been a more vague concept among the girls. Relationships with boys were mentioned by a few of the girls as areas of concern or anticipation during adolescence but most seemed to envision adolescence as a time that had some positives - it appeared responsibilities and the rewards/privileges of adolescence were the most anticipated (e.g. dating,

driving , a job etc.). As in the written evaluation, when asked what the girls learned in the group, all indicated the assertiveness strategies. Many indicated that the discussion component of the group was the best thing about the group.

Like the findings of Friedman, the girls in the Girls Rule Club did not indicate that body image or self esteem was an area of concern for them. In fact, as suggested by Friedman, Gilligan and Brown and Pipher, relationships and getting along with others, especially peers is particularly meaningful at this stage of the girls' development. Some of the girls indicated that the assertiveness strategies would be helpful in dealing with others - hopefully the transfer of knowledge and skill will occur to situations outside of the group. It would seem that the girls at this point in their development, and without the benefit of experience, have little context within which to say their self concept is poor and as was earlier described, some of the exercises and discussion suggested positive and realistic self concept by some of the girls (see Session #3: Actual, Appendix D). Without the benefit of having administered a self concept scale, it is at best, speculation as to whether these girls have self concept that is the same as or better than peers in the normative sample. And without this comparative knowledge base, it is difficult to say if their aspirations and their areas of concern are the same and how much of a problem this is for them.

Parent Comments

Following the termination of the group in December, parents were contacted in January and February 1998 to obtain their comments or suggestions about their daughters' involvement in the Girls Rule Club. Only

one parent of the 6 was not contacted. The parents comments are detailed in Appendix G. Overall, parent comments were favorable and suggest support for the type of group offered. While the concept of the group was deemed valuable by most of the parents, there remained concern expressed by some parents their daughters were absent from a particular course which might impact their overall grades. While parents indicated some curiosity in the topics addressed in the group and wanted to know how to support their daughters in the transition to the middle school setting, the attendance at the Parent Session suggests that offering an information session as a late afternoon - early evening option was not convenient or desirable to parents of the girls. Individual appointments to review relevant materials were also not selected by parents. Follow up was also viewed positively by the parents - the majority seemed to indicate that the sessions were good while they lasted but what would happen for their daughters now that the group had concluded? Parents seemed to view the group as an ongoing coping mechanism in the new middle school environment, rather than a resource that would be accessed and terminated.

Conclusion: An integrative view of the evaluations

It appears then that while the girls wanted more sessions, they enjoyed the discussion segments. Likewise, parents were overall, pleased with the concept of the Girls Rule Club, though there was some concern that their daughters might be missing some important, core subject area material. With respect to what the girls feel they gained from the Girls Rule Club, they report retaining some of the techniques learned, though whether the transfer of these learned skills was successful would need to be followed up. It is also interesting that the literature emphasizes the therapeutic value of discussion for these girls but does

not as strongly emphasize skill development - these girls seem to indicate that both are of equal importance to what valued from the group experience.

Overall from the evaluations of the girls and their parents, the goal of offering a group that addressed pre-adolescent concerns seems to have been met. Both the girls and their parents for the most part, felt the experience a valuable one - as long as it did not impact subject material at school. As anticipated, the girls were primarily concerned with relationships - to peers both male and female. There was considerable anxiety about being new to the middle school environment and the girls seem to indicate that an opportunity to discuss issues relevant to them was helpful, though on reflection, most participants recounted skills or techniques as the most valuable part of the group, rather than the insight as to how this may have changed their view of self and the confidence with which they approach adolescence.

Chapter 5

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE GROUPS

In conclusion, the Girls Rule Club was developed by examining an intervention that appears to have some positive potential in working with young pre-adolescent females new to the middle school environment. While the merits of traditional one on one opportunities for individuals to discuss their anxieties and anticipation are obvious, group opportunities have greater potential and work in concert with the developmental concerns and needs of girls of this age. Thus, the group at George Waters Middle School was an attempt to modify and adapt the Friedman's Girls in the '90s program to an in school, selected participant group. Some of the limitations of the design of the Girls Rule Club include:

Selection of girls - the current design delayed the start of the group until early October of the school year. This was due to the girls being screened by the school guidance counsellor, which entailed obtaining some background information from files and observations of them in their grade 6 placements. An alternative might be to obtain detailed information from their elementary schools which could be done in June of the preceding school year, when student profiles and at risk students are normally discussed between the schools' counsellors.

Start date and number of group sessions - as described previously, sessions began in October and, due to the school calendar, meant that the group went until Christmas break. By beginning earlier, there would be an opportunity to offer more sessions before the Christmas break. As well, by beginning earlier,

there would be an opportunity to more closely match the point at which the girls are most anxious about beginning the middle school experience. Another consideration might be to lengthen the sessions to allow more time for discussion, however the time slots are pre-determined by the school's schedule and this would necessitate using another class period.

Availability of co-facilitator - while the co-facilitator for the Girls Rule Club was theoretically made available by administration for the period when the girls met, the reality of her workload often precluded her attending so that she might deal with more emergent school counselling related issues. The girls seemed to react to her absences; and from the point of view of group cohesion and establishing a supportive network for the girls that would go beyond the group, it would be more advantageous to have her attend consistently. As well, from the management side of a group that is larger than four girls, a co-facilitator is preferable.

Offering a parent session - a distinct limitation to the current design was the point at which the parent session was offered and the poor attendance. Due to the timeline of the school's support of this project, and with a view to enhancing group cohesion and ensure trust by the girls of the facilitator, the parent session was offered after the girls had had an opportunity to meet and become comfortable. However, in hindsight such a parental session might be best offered before the girls convened as a group, thereby ensuring that the girls felt that no trust had been breached, but allowing parents access to information. This might best be done very early in September before the start of a girls group and could include invitation of the girls with their parents. An effective way of increasing attendance might be to offer an informal 'pizza dinner' where girls and parents are invited, with displays and a brief

introduction to the group and its philosophy. A similar strategy was used quite successfully with other groups at the high school level.

Evaluation of the girls using a self concept scale - while the original intention had been to evaluate self concept for the purpose of research and this would not as necessary for the group to function in any other context, the level of hesitancy on the part of parents was not anticipated. Perhaps by offering the parent session earlier there may have been less resistance to the idea, but that is speculative. However in this design, by obtaining a very early indication of support for the idea, plans to address evaluation could have been announced to the girls and the parents at the point of their decision to join the group or earlier in the group sessions.

Use of the talking stick - the talking stick was used as a visual, tangible reminder to the group that enable each girl to take turns speaking and being heard. However, the stick used for this purpose was constructed of two pieces and quickly became an object which distracted the girls. Encouraging the girls to listen to others and positive reinforcement for such actions worked as effectively.

Use of the treasure box activity - due to the success of this activity and the relative lateness of introducing it to the girls (ie. At the seventh session), an alternative might be to offer the boxes and their description at a much earlier stage, so that the girls could be “adding to it” , with respect to how they saw themselves, as the group was progressing. More time would be built into the final session where the girls share their treasure boxes through discussion and display.

Include some provision for follow up - in the present design, there is no provision for follow up. Once the sessions are terminated at the Christmas

break, there is no formal follow up by the facilitators with the group participants. Some parents and their daughters indicated a desire for contact, if not more sessions, following the break.

Aspects of the current group that worked particularly well and would definitely be continued in future girls groups include:

Offering the group during class time - while there was some concern about girls missing core subject material, future groups would entail earlier selection of participants, which would mean time tabling their involvement in the group, as opposed to finding classes the girls could be pulled from. An idea might be to have girls leave a common optional course, such as Health, or alternate absence from a few courses, as was done in the Girls Rule Club, so that they are not missing large amounts of any one subject area. However, unlike Friedman who only offers the group off site, attendance was fixed and was excellent.

Offering the group to new grade 6 students - all indications seem to be that offering the group to this age group is very appropriate and effective - parents and their daughters indicate that beginning middle school is difficult and stressful. The group is seen as a way to cope with this anxiety, to cultivate a support system and to develop some techniques to deal with relationships.

Variability in the membership of the group - the girls who were selected represented a range of abilities and backgrounds within this middle school setting. As importantly, the 7 girls in the group came from the three primary feeder schools. This appeared to be helpful in establishing cohesion among the girls in the group. As well, their range in ability meant that while some girls had their academic programs modified, others were strong students who were in an accelerated academic program. The group served to reinforce their

commonality - the fact that they were grade 6 girls, new to a middle school who had very similar interests and concerns and need for an opportunity to discuss them.

Other aspects of the Girls Rule Club that were developed with the group and setting in mind, but which seemed to work well and would be considered for future girls groups would be providing the snack, meeting on site, use of the journal, and role playing. Another opportunity for further development is using some of the 'graduates' of the group as peer mentors for incoming grade 6 girls the following year.

The success of the group is demonstrated on an ongoing basis; the 7 girls are very comfortable approaching the facilitator and the guidance counsellor in the halls and for support as they require it. The fact they ask to reconvene is an indication of possible benefit, but more importantly, these girls had 8 purposeful opportunities to flex their assertiveness muscles, which many of their peers do not have. The ideal scenario would be to follow up with the members of the Girls Rule Club on a long term basis, to observe if their incidence of things such as teen pregnancy, smoking, drug use, and eating disorders are less than comparable peers who did not have an opportunity to feel connected to peers and supports within their school setting. A realistic follow up would be to observe these girls' use of assertiveness and anger management skills learned in the group and their ability to cope with many of the situations they will be presented with in middle and high school.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Association of University Women Educational Foundation. How Schools Shortchange Girls: Action Guide. Strategies for Improving Gender Equity in Schools. Washington, D.C. 1992.

Brown, Lyn Mikel and Carol Gilligan. Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Canadian Teachers' Foundation. A Cappella: A Report on the Realities, Concerns, Expectations and Barriers Experienced by Adolescent Women in Canada. Ottawa, November, 1990.

Fox, Lorraine E. "Understanding and Intervening with Youth at Risk", (Presentation), Winnipeg: October 1, 1997.

Friedman, Sandra Susan. Girls in the 90's: Facilitator's Manual. Vancouver, Salal Books. 1994.

Friedman, Sandra Susan. When Girls Feel Fat: Helping Girls Through Adolescence. Vancouver, Salal Books. 1997.

Friedman, Sandra Susan. Girls in the 90's. Presentation. Winnipeg, February 14, 1995.

George, Paul S. and William M. Alexander. The Exemplary Middle School, 2nd Edition. Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993.

Green, Michael. Theories of Human Development: A Comparative Approach.

New Jersey. Prentice Hall, 1989.

Hittner, Patricia. "Dying to be Thin". Better Homes and Gardens. August, 1997.

Kilbourne, Jean. Slim Hopes (Video). 1995.

Orenstein, Peggy. SchoolGirls: Young Women, Self Esteem and the Confidence Gap. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Piers, Ellen V. Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (Revised). Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services, 1984.

Pipher, Mary. Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls. New York: Ballantine Books. 1994.

Yalom, Irvin D. The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy. 3rd Edition. New York: Basic Books Inc. 1985.

Leaf blank to correct
numbering

Leaf blank to correct
numbering

APPENDIX

Appendix A List of Topics:

Issues in Order of Importance:	Voted value by girls:
Staying focused/busy schedules - homework, math	23
Peer Pressure	21
Life - everything	19
Family problems	19
Rules, rules, rules	19
Boys teasing	18
Making and keeping friends	15
Dealing with teachers	15
Smoking	13
Boyfriends	11
Being the new kid at school	9
Writing (journals)	9
Friends/classmates teasing	7

Appendix B: Group Rules

Keep it in the group (ie. Confidentiality)

No swearing

Don't interrupt

Settle down and don't be hyperactive

Be respectful - no teasing

Be nice

Appendix C: Letter of Parental Permission

Dear _____,

We have begun our Girls group at George Waters Middle School.

As part of completing my second Masters degree in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, I am researching how girls involve themselves in a group such as the one we are offering at George Waters. My intention is to identify and improve ways to help girls maintain self esteem through involvement in a group.

I would like to request your permission to involve your daughter in the collection of data for my research by having her complete an evaluation form as well as a questionnaire that evaluates her self esteem both as the second session of our meeting and at the eighth session or final session to see if involvement in the group has affected her self esteem. Each of these will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

I would like to interview each participant for a brief 10 minute period after the completion of the group to find out her opinions on some of the topics we have covered. I would like to tape this interview. No names would be used on either of the questionnaires or in transcribing the taped interviews. All results of both these types of data would be reported as a group and no names or identifying features would be used. Yours daughter's participation in completing the questionnaires, evaluation and interview will be voluntary, and she can decline involvement in either or both of them. There is no penalty if she chooses not to participate or withdraw from research activities or the group. This data would then be compiled into a paper/thesis that I am presenting to the University. The audio tapes would be erased once they have been transcribed.

You and your daughter would be welcome to review the results of the report and as I indicated in both the initial consent form and in my telephone conversation, I am available to answer any of your questions or concerns at 885-1334, voice mail #136. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my faculty advisor, Dr. Riva Bartell, Educational Administration, Foundations & Psychology, 474-9048 if you require more information.

Sincerely,

Colleen Penner Podaima
M.Ed. (O.I.S.E.)
School Psychologist

I hereby give / do not give (please circle) permission for
_____ to participate in all aspects of this study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Appendix D: Session Outlines

SESSION #1: Proposed

Introduce self and Maria

Have the girls introduce themselves

Discuss what the group is about

- invited because we believed that for your own reasons you might enjoy the group and hopefully benefit from it
- only for grade 6 girls
- only took a few because we want you to be comfortable in the group where we want to discuss things important to you

- meet on day 5's, from 10:35 - 11:25
- meet at the office and go to the conference room in the Senior High
- start today and meet until December 16 (8 weeks)

- there will be a questionnaire to complete next session

What do the girls want the group to be about?

What do they want to call the group?

Your group, your name

- use it to remind you of it in daily announcements

What will the group rules be?

Only mention it if you can live by it

- * use of a talking stick

Write some topics/problems that are important to you

- write problems on flip chart
- any others that are missing that need to be added
- vote on these

- use these topics in this order as the things we are going to discuss
- Snack

SESSION #1: Actual

- girls eager to meet; as we're walking to meeting room asking why they can't meet more often than just Day 5

Introductions

- who are the facilitators
- who the girls are, what schools are they from

What the group is about

- girls determine the topics - we'll provide the information and give opportunity to discuss/ask questions

Review the mechanics of where we meet, how we'll all go over to the high school together, what time we'll meet

Brainstorm on small pieces of paper areas of concern, problems, things you want more information on

- list these on chart
- vote 1-3-5 on each item and rank order the most popular ones

Food surfaces, so serve donuts

- jokingly, hungry (saw the pack of donuts)
- assured them that each time there would be food so stroked it off the list, asked them if I were to serve food, would we still need to vote on it or stroke it out? They said stroke it off, but perhaps need to stimulate some discussion next session about reasons why food would be on the list (ic. go further than , 'is it because you are hungry right now?')
- *address next session

Need to find group name

- Brainstorm some ideas
- have the girls vote on each name: Girls Rule Club wins

Need to determine rules for this group

I suggest - confidentiality - nothing to go outside the group
- use of the talking stick

- one of the girls suggest inviting a particularly unhappy girl in class who appears very insecure. Others agree, especially vocal is Girl #3 , who the counsellor later relates is bullying the suggested girl, who prompts her tears. Indicate that 2 girls will be asked but they and parents have the final say.

Impressions:

- the one girl who starts off very active, loud (Girl #5) seems to become more quiet and cooperative, less immature as the session goes on
why? ignored immaturity, praise, give more attention/greater leeway when appropriate

- unofficial leaders emerging: Girl #1 (when suggests other girl, also seems to vote without worrying about how others vote) and Girl #3 . who seems to take the lead from that end of the table, tries to dominate by suggesting how girls should vote (eg. on name of group, though girls other than Girl #5 don't really pay attention to her)

- Girl #6 is responsive non verbally and seems ready to verbally respond when asked, though doesn't offer much on her own

- Girl #4 seems pleasant but swayed by what Girl #3 and Girl #5 say

Principal pops in to help with a stuck door and says he has noticed an inequity in both the middle and high schools where boys are more visible/participative, girls less so. Girls don't say much then, but Girl #3 says out loud as she leaves that she heard on TV that girls who do bad things are called bad names, but boys are called heroes. When asked what she thinks of this, says thinks its unfair.

Dismiss group at 11:20

SESSION #2: Proposed

* Not able to administer the Piers Harris as planned - 2 new girls to the group and parental permission forms not returned

Welcome to Girls Rule Club

Start Journal - Write down 10 things you would like to do in your lifetime
- leave a few pages

Selected Topic: **Staying Focused/Busy Schedules**
 -math
 -homework

Review what the remaining topics were and how they will be addressed in subsequent sessions

Open up for discussion:

- tell me what it is like to be new to this middle school
- what are some of your experiences
- what's good and what's bad about being in this middle school

Tell me a little more about this topic that you all voted on as being your number one concern.

Discuss some strategies that work for each other coping

Suggest some strategies that might work:

SQ3R

use of agenda books

Swiss Cheese method of approaching assignments

Resources available at the school for assistance

How to best do homework

*Write down one thing you would like to try today from all the strategies we talked about

Do Glass Bear example as an introduction to next session "Peer Pressure"

Snack

SESSION #2 : Actual

- 2 new girls to this session one (Girl #7) who had not brought in her permission form the last session, the second was the girl (Girl #2) recommended to the group by the girls

Start Journal

- girls wrote down 10 things they wanted to do in their lifetime at the back of their journal
- use of talking stick
- girls use it well with the exception of Girl #5 who is so impulsive that she has a hard time. She also comes across as immature and needy, very demanding of attention

- Ask the girls about need for group rules, they agree and are eager to name some. Go around the table to contribute

Rules suggested and agreed on by the girls:

- Keep it in the Group (ie. confidentiality) - my initiative
- No swearing (Girl #5)
- Don't interrupt (Girl #5 - interestingly, the one who has the most difficulty with this)
- Settle down don't be hyperactive (Girl #3 - said directly to Girl #5)
- Be respectful - no teasing (Girl #1)
- Be nice

Discussion re: topic "staying focused"

- girls talk about how much more work there is , the expectations are higher, no time for other activities outside homework eg. playing with friends, family , just to watch TV

- discuss how to cope with homework
- ask girls how they cope
- make a time to do homework and do it (Girl #3)
- do your homework at the beginning of the weekend so you have time to enjoy the rest of your weekend (Girl #3)

my suggestion re: Swiss Cheese - not appropriate because assignments are given for the next day, not long to prepare

Glass Bear Jar

- analogy of dipper and water
 - girls really seem to relate and start to discuss example
 - one of the girls, Girl #7 starts to ask if we can use the glass bear jar to talk about how we feel.
 - send the jar around, all the girls are eager to show where they are at, all except Girl #6 and Girl #4 indicate why they are at that level
 - suggest to them that at previous groups we have done this, agree that they would like to do this as part of their ritual of checking in

	Girl #2	Girl #6	Girl #4	Maria
Girl #1				Girl #3
	Colleen	Girl #5	Girl #7	

SESSION #3: Proposed

* Can not administer Piers Harris - not enough permission

Do glass bear jar check in

Discussion re: Peer Pressure

Questions to discuss - what are the things you feel the most peer pressure about?

what are some of the things you do to deal with peer pressure

- go back over the list to determine which are positive and which are negative ways of dealing with peer pressure

- find materials on Assertiveness Training

- role play how to do each of these

Journal activity -

“Who am I?”

- list 10 things I am (front of the book)

of these - do you ever feel pressure to be/not to be any things?

Snack

* suggest to the girls that we spend the next session practicing assertiveness skills (eg. role playing, understanding some of these strategies) - especially since the next session's topic is "Life-everything"

SESSION #3: Actual

Present:

Girl #1
Girl #7
Girl #6
Girl #4
Girl #5

Absent:

Girl #3
Girl #2

- Original idea was to have the girls complete the Piers Harris, but forms not returned, parents did not see form approved by the Ethics Committee so do at next session or before the 4th session

Girls grabbed their journals from the box so asked them to do the exercise which was to write down "Who am I? I a...."

- asked them to do 10 statements, all were able to find 10 things
- asked them if they would like to share with the group
- discussion focused on 2 of the girls statements (Girl #1 "I am smart" and Girl #7 "I am special" which are contradictory to what is expected at this age. Both girls in their admission to the group appeared very positive about these statements and not intimidated or self conscious about these remarks. In the discussion that ensued regarding these comments, the girls indicated repeated a similar theme to previous sessions that the stress of increased workload at school was stressing them.

- Girl #5 responded "I am hungry" which is consistent with previous sessions where she indicates that. She also made comments later when the discussion turned to Peer Pressure that she had no friends and when asked

why, responded that she was hyper and requested that the guidance counsellor not tell the girls anything more about that.

- the girls were asked if they would like to pass the glass bear around to tell us how they were feeling today. Debate about where to start.

- all the girls shared where they were at today, both the level and why. Without fail, when a girl indicated a lower mark on the jar and when asked why it was lower, the girl responded that it was due to remarks made to her by others, in two cases, by one of the girls present (Girl #5). When one girl was asked how she could prevent water from being taken from the jar, she responded that she would cover up the top of the jar though she couldn't independently describe what that would actually mean. The writer asked if that meant she could ignore the comments and she agreed, though it was not clear if she really understood that as a legitimate strategy. One of the girls (Girl #6) who tends to be very quiet during the group and is reported by her mother to retreat to her room and not discuss at home what is troubling her, admitted to the group that even if her level on the bear jar is low, she will appear smiling to those around her. She admitted when asked that she likes to go to her room and get away from others when not happy or if others are teasing her or saying hurtful things.

When the next topic was introduced by the writer about peer pressure, none of the girls present was able to define the term though it was suggested by one of them and voted on at the first session (was this topic suggested by one of the girls who was absent today?) All the girls present today seemed to indicate that they understood the term to mean pressure or stress rather than the term peer. When the writer gave them the definition of the term as occasions when kids the same age as you pressure you or try to encourage or make you do something they are doing, the girls as a group were not able to come up with any examples and instead kept referring to the pressure of trying to keep up with the workload and find time to maintain friendships. this is the point at which Girl #5 announced she had no friends. The writer suggested what the importance of friends was to the girls and some discussion started re: the need to talk things over with friends. When the writer asked who else the girls could talk to, all the girls agreed parents, though in telephone discussion with the parents (at least one of the girls present, Girl #6) indicated that discussion with their teen girls was difficult (the other girl was Girl #3 and she was not present to voice what her opinion of dialogue with her mother was like).

Snack

- Girl #7 took the cookies and began to share with others, Girl #5 was asked to undo the drinks and began handing them out without asking what kind the girls wanted which resulted in the girls becoming very vocal and argumentative.

SESSION #4: Proposed

Bring:

Talking stick
journals
pencils
bear jar
snack

Do glass bear jar check in

- need to discuss some of the feelings you tell us about when we do the bear. Some of the feelings I hear you talk about are happy, sad or down. What about anger? What can you tell me about anger? Is it OK to be angry? Do you ever feel angry or do you feel sad and then angry that you are feeling sad or bad?

I think it is important to talk about anger because I think it's a part of how everyone feels. I think though that we get some different messages about feeling angry. For example, everytime we have met and used the Bear to talk about how we feel, every one of you has indicated that others have been able to bring the level of your Bear down in some way. Does that make you feel any anger? Sometimes sadness can be anger, but because we are told anger isn't always good, we feel it is better to be sad. Is that true for any of you?

Anger

All feelings are energy. Anger is a form of energy. Where can you feel anger in your body? What happens to energy when you can't let it out? What are some ways that we can let out the angry energy without hurting someone else?

Sometimes we don't know we are angry. We find out from some of the things that we tell ourselves. Let's look at some of the clues. (How do we look when we are angry? How can you tell others are angry by how they look?)

Sometimes we are angry but don't know how to express it effectively. Let's look at some ways people express their anger badly and why these ways don't work.

Some times we are angry but it is too scary to tell someone directly. How can we tell someone symbolically? (eg. Talking to a chair or to a pillow, talking out loud without the person being there, writing a letter) (from Girls in the '90s manual, p. 24)

Topic from vote list: "Life - Everything"

- know we're behind but I think it's worth talking about a little longer
- some of you have told me, both in the group and outside that friends are a big problem, and while I think its part of the *Everything in Life* that you said was a problem, it is also a little further down the list
- what are some of the friend problems you have?
- it's important for us to remember in all our friendships that we each have our own feelings. That's one of the reasons I talked a little about anger. It's important for us to remember that each of us has our own feelings, and we need to be able to seperate our feelings from our friends.

What's the best part of having a best friend? What is the hardest part?
Who is your best friend?
What are the similarities between you? What are the differences?
What interests do you share? What are the things you disagree about?
What are the qualities that drew you to her?
What are the things that bug you?
What are some of the problems you have with your friend? How do you resolve them?

* It is important to focus on qualities and not on "good or bad" things. The qualities that bug one person may attract another.

- any two people that are close are bound to fight
- an important part of friendship is knowing that you can fight and let out angry feelings and still be friends without having to worry that the friendship is over. Sometimes having a problem or fight helps you feel closer. But it is awfully scary to go through this process. (From Girls in the '90s manual, p. 33).

Snack

SESSION #4: Actual

Bring:

Talking stick
journals
pencils
bear jar
snack

- do journals (suggested by Girl #1)
“things that make you angry”

Do glass bear jar check in

- need to discuss some of the feelings you tell us about when we do the bear. Some of the feelings I hear you talk about are happy, sad or down. What about anger? What can you tell me about anger? Is it OK to be angry? Do you ever feel angry or do you feel sad and then angry that you are feeling sad or bad?

I think it is important to talk about anger because I think it's a part of how everyone feels. I think though that we get some different messages about feeling angry. For example, everytime we have met and used the Bear to talk about how we feel, every one of you has indicated that others have been able to bring the level of your Bear down in some way. Does that make you feel any anger? Sometimes sadness can be anger, but because we are told anger isn't always good, we feel it is better to be sad. Is that true for any of you?

Anger

All feelings are energy. Anger is a form of energy. Where can you feel anger in your body? What happens to energy when you can't let it out? What are some ways that we can let out the angry energy without hurting someone else?

Sometimes we don't know we are angry. We find out from some of the things that we tell ourselves. Let's look at some of the clues. (How do we look when we are angry? How can you tell others are angry by how they look?)

Sometimes we are angry but don't know how to express it effectively. Let's look at some ways people express their anger badly and why these ways don't work.

Some times we are angry but it is too scary to tell someone directly. How can we tell someone symbolically? (eg. Talking to a chair or to a pillow, talking out loud without the person being there, writing a letter) (from Girls in the '90s manual, p. 24)

Topic from vote list: "Life - Everything"

- know we're behind but I think it's worth talking about a little longer
- some of you have told me, both in the group and outside that friends are a big problem, and while I think its part of the *Everything in Life* that you said was a problem, it is also a little further down the list
- what are some of the friend problems you have?

- it's important for us to remember in all our friendships that we each have our own feelings. That's one of the reasons I talked a little about anger. It's important for us to remember that each of us has our own feelings, and we need to be able to separate our feelings from our friends.

What are the qualities that drew you to her?

What are the things that bug you?

What are some of the problems you have with your friend? How do you resolve them?

* It is important to focus on qualities and not on "good or bad" things. The qualities that bug one person may attract another.

- any two people that are close are bound to fight
- an important part of friendship is knowing that you can fight and let out angry feelings and still be friends without having to worry that the friendship is over. Sometimes having a problem or fight helps you feel closer. But it is awfully scary to go through this process. (From Girls in the '90s manual, p. 33).

Snack

Notes:

- all the girls attended

- Girl #3 very directive; takes care of others, notices imbalances and quickly moves to correct/appease
- Girl #6 and Girl #4 are participating more
- grievances are being aired in the group for the first time
- co-facilitator not present
- food continues to be very important

SESSION #5: Proposed

To address:

Peer Pressure
Life (everything)
Boys Teasing
Making and Keeping Friends
Dealing with Teachers

- do glass bear jar check in
- any questions concerns from last week
- what do you remember from our last session where we talked about anger and friendships?

Anger (some of the ways people cope with anger, some of the things that make us angry (journals)

Friendships (qualities of friends that we like or that we don't like)

This week - discuss **Assertiveness**

What is it?

- way to appropriately ask for what you want
- way to say no to something

- way to deal with anger
- one of the ways within your friendships, and also in other relationships to let people know how you feel or what you want or believe

Ways to be Assertive

Show video : "Learning to Be Assertive: The Basic Skills"

- review the ways to be Assertive
- role play using the ways

Snack

SESSION #5: Actual

Present: All 7 girls

- Candace present to evaluate

(Session time changed to one period earlier on Day 5, so that girls aren't missing Math)

Glass Bear Jar

- more of the girls comment that the level in their bear is the result of events in their day, rather than just interactions with others
 - is this a result of my observation out loud last session that only one of the girls related her level to events in her day? (At least 4 of the girls commented that their level was the result of doing well on tests etc.)
 - how does this correspond with the literature on Groups about the maturity of the group (ie. trying to please the facilitator?)

Pass out the books (girls do this on their own accord, without there being a request to or to do an exercise). Girls are told they can put anything they like into their books.

- the one girl, Girl #2 who brings her own book, has once again brought her book

Review what we discussed last time

- Anger

- how to manage, techniques, what makes each of us angry

Introduce the Assertiveness techniques

- Broken record
- Fogging
- Negative Assertion
- Compromise

- give brief descriptions of each, 3 of the girls independently write down some of the descriptions

show video (first half of Basic video)

Girls remain seated and very attentive, without commenting, even Girl #5 who tends to be very restless and impulsive, throughout the 15 minutes used to show the first 4 techniques

Discussion about the video

- go around the circle as we're handing out the snack and as each girl which technique they liked/thought they would like to try out in the next week and then role play next session. Each girl responded with one, some wrote down in their book which one, others indicated they would remember

Impressions:

Very rambunctious this session

- Why? Maria not present - her presence helps to calm the girls, she is able to intervene and respond to queries as they arise

- Candace present - attention seeking?

- good to have a variety of media during the session, attention seemed to be held versus the last session where the girls seemed irritated/antsy with more dialogue, especially comments by the facilitator

No altercations between girls, there is an impersonal edge to this session similar to when the group first started.

(relate this to the Group theory literature - at what stage is this group, how does influence of Candace alter the natural progression of the group?)

- * remember to note the Mothers comments on changes they see in their girls
 - Girl #1 - less angry at home
 - Girl #3 - more settled at home
 - Girl #6 - happier, doing better at school and following through
- at home
- on contract

In group:

- Girl #1 - continues to be most mature, offer suggestions, correct the girls
- Girl #2 - offering more of own experiences
- Girl #6 - contributing each time asked, though does not offer (did not go into as much detail this session as previous re: feelings, because of Candace's presence?)
- Girl #4 - offering comments more now
- Girl #3 - seems to have regressed, more disruptive attention seeking by throwing things and laughing loudly, whereas in earlier sessions, she was more mature, helpful, attempting to intervene between others in the group
- Girl #7 - continues to rush to see me in the halls greeting me with hugs, in group was not as prominent
- Girl #5 - continues to have great difficulty with impulsivity, interrupts, does not sit still, very demanding of attention

- girls voice their disapproval that their seating arrangement was disrupted by Candace's presence. They really seem to like the predictability of knowing where they sit. Suggestive of pecking order?

- snack continues to be very rambunctious, girls clamoring for drinks and demanding that cookies/doughnuts be divided equally, always hungry and wanting more

SESSION #6: Proposed

Glass bear jar introduction

Review definitions of assertiveness strategies

- Broken Record
- Fogging
- Negative Assertion

Did anyone try any of these over the past week?

Role Play each of the above

View remaining portion of Assertiveness: Basic

Snack

SESSION #6: Actual

-Girls in conflict - Girl #7 and Girl #5 have been fighting - result is that Girl #7 has hit Girl #5 and been given an in-school suspension, but has been allowed to come to group

- immediately the girls clamor to relate the story and to agonize over how the girls should sit in the group, insisting that they must sit between the girls to separate them

- the group is obviously aligned against Girl #5, hurriedly trying to indicate that though Girl #7 had hit Girl #5, Girl #5 had been agitating Girl #7 for some time prior

- Girl #3 is very vocal in telling Girl #5 what she repeatedly does to get others irritated with her and seems to rally the girls against Girl #5, so much so that her comments are hurtful but agreed to by others

- I interject and remind the girls that this is the place that we come for support and to be sure that we can be heard by others and to have a chance to tell our side

- the girls want Miss Triolo in group, wonder where she is

- no talking stick today - we try session without it since we have the bear and because during the last 2 sessions, Girl #3 has thrown it to get attention and it could jeopardize our using this room

Glass Bear Jar

- each of the girls use glass bear jar, but again, most of the levels indicated are the result of what others have said (ie. at least 3 of the girls indicate that their bear level is where it is at because of the fight between Girl #7 and Girl #5) even Girl #1 relates that her jar is improved because of what Girl #3 indicates - that she is concerned for her and hates to see Girl #1 sad and hopes that she will feel better.

- I Introduce the concept of responsibility for our own feelings about situations - how could we change how we feel, even if what others did affected our bear level?

- Girl #3 suggests by thinking of the good things in our own lives, the things we do well or are looking forward to

Review of the terms discussed last week

Broken record (repeating)

Fogging (agreeing in part)

Negative Assertion (accepting responsibility)

Compromise

- discussion - did anyone try any of these?

One offers that she did - discussion by group

One offers she thought about it but it wasn't the time to try (indicates that intimidation by an older bigger cousin was the route she chose to deal with teasing)

- introduce idea of how the girls could use any of the techniques in session today in their conflicts

Introduce new techniques that will be in video:

Negative inquiry (asking what's so bad about...)

Positive inquiry (asking what's so good about...)

Show last portion of Basic techniques video while having snack

- few more comments than last week regarding the film but basically still good attention

Note....Girl #6 very vocal today - offering suggestions without prompting and asking questions

SESSION #7: Proposed

- Be sure to remind girls that this is the second last session

Review the techniques from last week:

Broken record (repeating)

Fogging (admitting some of the things said are so)

Negative assertion (accepting responsibility)
Compromise
Negative Inquiry (what's so bad about...")
Positive Inquiry (what's so good about...")

Role Play scenarios

Divide girls into pairs
Girl #3 and Girl #6
Girl #4 and Girl #7
Girl #1 and Girl #5
Girl #2

Give each pair the sheet to select a scenario to role play

If time Permits, show Advanced video

Give each of the girls their box and the assignment that they should bring next week

Snack

SESSION #7: Actual

Remind girls of last session - they express disappointment and ask if it could continue after Christmas

- they question me as to whether they can have a party for their last session and will I be bringing a special treat for them; one of them announces that she believes I will because it is our last session

-they ask where Maria is - told that if she was able to get someone to cover she would be here with us

- ask what the snack is

- as I begin to review the assertiveness techniques, 3 of the 7 girls are doing things independently and vying for attention (ie. one is writing a message on the poster paper, another is writing (at my request) the techniques, but is also drawing as well, and the third is throwing pencils

- I stop and there is silence. I comment to the girls that with so much else going on I must not be focusing on what they want to discuss. I ask if there is something they want to discuss, they immediately become quiet , one

apologizes and sits down. This is a very obvious departure, for they are being reminded that this is their group and they decide how it should proceed. They seem confused - unsure whether to attend because I am the adult and supposedly expect it, or because it is what they want to do. I ask what they would like to do now and they say they want to do skits (perfect - that was what I had hoped would be on the agenda so that we could practice the assertiveness techniques)

- I explain that my idea had been to break them into pairs and give them a choice of scenarios to do a skit about, they agree and seem rather relieved and very pleased and I announce the pairs because I have some concerns that based on the alignments of last week, Girl #5 or Girl #7 may be ostracized based on goings on outside of the group). I have been very careful to pair together girls who might otherwise have not been with one another. I go with Girl #2 who is very quiet but who could easily go with any of the girls in the group.

- I ask if they would like to do the glass bear jar today and they are eager to - I give the option of before or after the skits - they ask if they could split into their pairs and do the bear jar, then do the skits

- they begin the glass bear jar and relate mostly incidents about home that are affecting their levels - Girl #7 announces that her level is due to her and her mother fighting, but that they are getting along better now.

Note - today it seems that the comments of the first girl influence the nature of the following girls ie. they talk of home things that are influencing them e.g. other influences include the death of a pet (which sparks four of the other girls to relate their experiences with pets that have died and new pets they have brought into their families), an injury to dad at work, the death of one of dad's friends and the funeral, the experiences of a birthday party

- Girls are given the 7 options for a skit - they break into their pairs to review and practice

- we allow 2 of the pairs to do their skit, make comments and they ask to re-do their skits with the suggested comments

- with only 10 minutes left, we return to the table and as is customary, Girl #5 begs to be able to hand out the drinks to the others, I ask Girl #2 to hand out the cookies

- while they are having snack I give them the treasure boxes - Unfortunately I forgot mine at home to show them so I explain what the boxes are about, to place in them things that are important to them or that symbolize people or things meaningful to who they are. The girls joke about the placing things in

the room in the boxes and things that are too big to put in the boxes. Girl #6 asks how she could put her family into the box, they're too big and I explain they could use pictures etc. I ask them to do this for our last session together

SESSION #8: Proposed

Glass Bear Jar

Finish role plays

- do the girls recognize the techniques used in the scenarios?
- what are the 5 techniques (review for Maria)

Review Treasure Chests

- give the girls their journals to keep

Evaluation form

Open discussion

- review what the topics were at the start - do the girls think we addressed them?

Snack

SESSION #8: Actual

- all girls in attendance, Maria also attends

Glass Bear Jar

- responses focusing on Christmas

Finish role plays

- girls are eager to complete this section and remind me who needs to do their skit
- we review the techniques so that Maria knows what we have been doing and as a way to refresh the girls memory

* girls, at Maria's prompting, sign a sheet thanking me for facilitating the group

(girls become noticeably annoyed at Girl #5 for being obvious in her signing of the card and the need to keep it secret from me)

Give the girls their journals to keep

Evaluation form

- remind the girls that this is what we had discussed with them and their parents at the beginning of the sessions, to help plan future sessions, don't have to complete but would like their input, all girls agree to complete them
- ask the girls to complete them confidentially
- seem to take it seriously - Girl #6 takes a long time, Girl #3 starts one and then asks for a new one, Girl #5 is very brief and hurriedly finishes, being the first one done

Treasure Chests

- girls very eager to do
- even girls who didn't have their chests with them were invited to tell the group what they had put in them
 - Girl #5 - couldn't find hers
 - Girl #3 - forgot
 - Girl #6 - forgot

- each girl took so much time, the group session was extended by 20 minutes so that each girl could have a turn

Snack

- brought a Christmas decorated cake with "girls rule club" on it
- girls very excited, usual chaos in cutting and distributing it
- ate snack while finishing treasure chests
- no overt fighting between the girls as in some other sessions, though there is definite air against Girl #5 - all are impatient with her and unite in their comments against her when she says anything, girls purposely refuse to pass her pictures to view from other girls Treasure chests.
- last few minutes of clean up - the girls each take a position at the chalkboards and presentation boards to write messages and decorate their messages, putting their names and messages from individuals as well as the group

Girl #4 brings me a wrapped gift with a card. The other girls become very verbal and demand I open it. When I ask Girl #4 what she would prefer I do, she asks me to wait and open it.

Appendix E

GIRLS RULE CLUB

Evaluation Form Results

1. Do you think you learned new things about yourself in this group?

Yes 5

No 2

2. If your answer is yes, what did you learn?

“That I could use some of these teniks like broken records. I used that 1 or 2 twice”

“I learned to use stratagys like broken record, negative assertion, positive assertion, compromis, ect.”

“I learned that you can’t always keep all your feelings inside of you.”

“I learned how to work out a problem. The other thing his the different things to solve the problem.”

“I learned that instead of yelling when I have a problem I can compromise.”

3. Did you learn some new things about getting along with others?

Yes 5

No 2

4. If your answer is yes, what did you learn?

“to try to get along with others is hard but there’s some tequnecs to use”

“I learned how to stop arguing when it gets wors”

“I learned that you can talk to others about your problems.”

“I think that solving your problem will get you more friends.”

“-that when friends are mad at you there not, not your friends.”

5. Do you think what you learned will help you to feel more confident (that is, less fearful, more able to face problems when they arise) in middle school?

Yes 3
No 4

6. What was the most important thing you learned in this group?

“That getting along isn’t difficult.”

“to stop arguing to much”

“Friends are important!”

7. Did you think the group allowed enough time for discussion?

Yes 4

No 3

8. Did you think the group allowed enough time for participation by group members?

Yes 6

No -

*1 replied “Yes no kind of”

9. Do you think this program should (check one only):

a) remain eight sessions long? -

b) be longer than eight sessions? 6

c) be shorter than eight sessions? 1

10. What suggestions do you have to improve this program, that is, to make it a better program?

“Discuss more things because we didn’t have a enough time to discus things”

“have a longer amount of time for the program”

“None”

“try having more discussion about a cirtin topic more!”

11. Would you recommend this program to other girls?

Yes 6

No

1 with no answer indicated.

Appendix F

**INTERVIEWS OF FIVE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
GIRLS RULE CLUB
COMPLETED DECEMBER, 1997
INTERVIEWED BY COLLEEN PODAIMA**

NOTE: Girls responses are noted with quotation marks, Interviewer comments are italicized.

GIRL#1

Like I mentioned to you before GIRL#1, I'm just going to ask you a few questions about the group. And it will only take us a few minutes. Umm, I want to tape record it if that's okay, just so that I can write down the answers afterwards, and umm, I just want to know if that's okay with you?

"Yep"

Okay, great. The first question is:

What was the best part of the Girls Rule Club?

"Learning all the different ways to handle a certain situation."

Okay, okay.

Which topic that we discussed did you find the most interesting? It can be any part of it, because we met for eight sessions. That's a long time. Anything that you found was interesting?

"I think how to live with peer pressure."

What did you learn in the girls rule club? Name one thing that comes to mind that you learned.

"How to deal with all the different situations."

Do you think that there's anything that you learned now that you might use later? And what would that be?

"Um, broken records and fogging."

Okay. So you think you'd be able to use those later on?

"Yes"

When other girls ask what you do in the Girls Rule Club, because I know you guys told me that other people ask you when we call over the announcements for you to come down. What do you tell them the group is about?

"When they ask what we do I just say we do stuff, I don't really...."

You don't really talk too much about it?

"No"

Okay. What kinds of questions do they ask you about it?

"What do you do there, um, why do you go and stuff."

Now that you're looking at being in a middle school and finishing grade six and going into grade 7. What are your biggest concerns about getting older and being a teenager?

"I don't have no real concerns."

Nothing comes to mind right now? Let me ask this. What are your biggest fears about being a teenager? Being in high school, being in middle school? Do you have any big fears?

"Not really."

What is the thing you're looking most forward to?

"I'm gonna have my own car."

Abhh! Getting your own car would be the best thing about getting older.

"MmHm"

Now I want to give you a chance. Do you have any questions or concerns about the group? Things that you would like to have talked about that we didn't.

"There was one thing but I can't remember what it was."

Okay. Was it something that we listed in our concerns. Remember when we talked right at the beginning about issues? Was it something that was on there that we didn't cover?

"Yeah"

Okay. Okay. You don't remember what it was, eh ?

"No"

I didn't bring my list with me so I can't show it to you. I'd be really curious what it was because that's helpful for me to know what kinds of things to prepare for other girls. So if you think of it, GIRL#1, it would be great if you could remind me in the hallway. If you see me let me know about that. I could also bring my list and show it to you and you could kind of look through it and see if anything comes to your memory. Okay?

"Okay"

Because I'd be really curious. How could I help you remember that, hmm. Is it more about peers and about relationships? Was it more about home?

"I can't remember."

Can't remember. Okay. What I'll do then GIRL#1 is if it comes to your mind by all means stop me in the hallway and let me know. Okay, and what I'll try and do is I may not get back here before Christmas, but what I'll do is maybe after Christmas I'll bring the list and if I see you I'll show you the list so you can kind of run down it and tell me what it was. Okay?

"MmHm"

Great! I don't have any other questions to ask you . If there's anything else you'd like to mention to me or ... anything else?

"No, nothing."

Okay, great. Well thank you so much for taking the time. I hope this wasn't too uncomfortable for you. I'm so glad that you were part of the group and I really enjoyed having you as part of the group. And I'll still be around the school so if you ever need to talk or anything. Just let me know.

"Okay."

Okay, great. Thank you.

GIRL#2

All right, we talked a little bit about doing some, a short interview with you so that I could ask you some questions about the group. Okay, are you still okay with that?

"Yes"

Okay, umh, these are just a few of the questions that I have, doesn't take us very long as you know after coming out just after a couple of minutes. Is it okay if I keep this on tape or would you prefer that I don't?

"It's okay if you keep it on."

Great, okay. All right my first question to you, Girl#2, is what was the best part of the Girls Rule Club? What did you think was the best part?

"Some of it was learning to stop an argument."

Learning strategies to stop an argument. Okay. Great, anything else.

"How about when we had a snack"

The snack, okay. You guys needed to snack right about that time of the morning, didn't you?

"Yeh. I needed that."

Okay. What topic that we discussed in the group did you find the most interesting?

"Most of it that I was there for was the argument stuff."

The argument stuff. Okay. And what did you learn in the Girls Rule Club?

"I learned how to umh, stop arguing and that will help me later in life."

Uhhh, so that scenario that you & I did together, the one about using broken records to stop an argument against your brother. That one really applied for you, didn't it?

"Yeh, It did....argue so much. Most of the times we just argue all the time."

(Laugh) Do you have lots of arguments with your brother? Yeh, okay. Do you think that there's anything that you learned and you mentioned the stuff about stopping the arguments, that you might use now that the group is finished? Do you think that you will use that stuff?

"Yah"

Okay, and when other girls ask you what you do in the Girls group, what do you tell them?

"I just tell them that it's just like how to solve problems.

So problem solving, that's what we do in the group. Do lots of people ask you when you get called down to the office? What's it about? No they don't heh? Okay. Because I have had people come up to me and ask me what's it all about so I wondered if you guys get asked a lot about it.

"I have never been asked."

Yeh?

"Maybe just one person but she was just all confused....."

Okay, and my last question is, well there is a couple of parts to this question. I want to know what your biggest concerns are, as you get older and you get to be a teenager? What are some of your biggest concerns?

"I have no idea."

No idea? Okay; let me ask it to you this way. What is your biggest fear as you get closer to being a teenager?

"Probably having no friends."

Not having any friends?

"Just not as much."

Not as much. So you have more friends when you were younger and you are scared you might not have more.

“Well actually, I don’t have lots of friends now.”

Oh, really.

“Kids would just pick on me, they just come over and pick on me and stuff

.....

UmmHmm.

“I was glad that we moved.”

Oh, so moving helped, helped that? Moving from where?

“Germany”

So in Germany you had lots of people picking on you?

“Yeah. That’s where it all began, the people were from and then all of a sudden it just showed up here.”

You mean they were picking on...

“Yeah they did the same thing to me, I don’t know, it sort of starts here.

And when was that? How old were you when that was happening?

“Around Grade 1.”

Grade 1, okay. So now that you’re older and in middle school is it better? Do you have more friends now?

“Yeah, there’s people in my room.”

Why do you think that’s changed? What do you think has changed?

“Probably because they found somebody else to pick on.”

Oh, okay so it’s not really anything that you’ve done....

“No. They still pick on me.”

You feel that

"I've been picked on pretty bad. I almost got hurt."

Really?

"Yeah.

Do you think the group has helped at all with being picked on or not really?

"Yeah. Its helped a bit."

How so? What do you think was helpful?

"Probably just the argument stuff, because I missed the rest."

Okay, okay. Yeah because you missed the first session and then came on the second session, right?

"Yeah, and then I missed another one cause I was away sick."

That's right, yeah. I think you came for one and then you were away one. Right; okay. As you get older, what do you most look forward to in being a teenager?

"I would be happy being taller."

Being taller? You want to be taller?

"I can't reach many things."

Ohh, okay. So being taller would be a good thing about being a teenager.

"Yeah"

Okay, anything else you look forward to in being a teenager?

"Not really"

Not really, okay. That's all the questions I have for you, Girl#2. I want to give you a chance too, is there anything that you feel you would like to ask, wonder about, about the group?

"No."

Anything we didn't cover that you would like to?

"No,peer pressure or something like that."

Okay, so you feel we didn't talk enough about peer pressure?

"I just wasn't there, that's all."

Okay, so that would have been something helpful for you, was to have a little bit more time on peer pressure?

"Yes"

Even if we did a couple more sessions.

"Yeh"

Okay, right, that's helpful to me. Well thank you. Thank you so much for letting me ask you all these questions.

GIRL#3

All right, Girl#3, I have in front of me the questions that I was telling you about that I want to ask you. Okay and if it is still all right with you, it will just take a few minutes and we can just whip through them. Okay. You and I will meet a little bit after anyway. Okay, regarding some other stuff. All right; my first question to you is, what was the best part of the Girls Rule Club?

"Having friends in the Club."

Oh, so friends that you made or...

"Friends that I have."

Friends that you have already.

"Yeh, so I, like, wouldn't be alone."

Okay.

"I knew somebody there".....Girl#4 I have known since grade one."

So, that was good. Okay. That was the best part. All right. Which topic that we talked about did you find the most interesting in the group? What was the best thing we talked about?

"I don't know, like"

-Anyone thing that sticks out in your mind that you thought was really good that we talked about?

"The movie"

-Ahh, the movie.

"Like the role playing that we did."

So the role playing and the video that we saw?"

"Yep"

Why do you think that was so helpful for you?

"um...I don't know."

You just found it interesting? 'Ya", Sometimes to see someone else doing it rather than just reading about it is helpful. Okay. What did you learn in the Girls Rule Club? Anything in particular?

"To be more thoughtful for my friends, cause now I know the way they feel, 'cause of the other girls in the Club."

Okay, so, how to think of their feelings?

"Ya"

All right, and do you think that there is anything that you learned in the group that you might use, now that the group is finished?

"All of it."

All of it? Like what? Tell me a couple of things that you think you might use?

"The fogging."

Okay.

"Peer pressure stuff that we did, that we talked about."

Okay, all right.

"I've got a cold"

Oh, I hope you don't have it for Christmas. I hope it is all gone by then. When other girls ask what you do in the Girls Rule Club, what do you tell them?

"We just, I say, we just talk about life, pretty much."

Mmm, and they are satisfied with that, they don't ask anymore about it?

"Yup"

All right, and my last question is, there are a couple of parts to it. As you get to be a teenager, and you get to be a little bit older, what are your biggest concerns?

"The peer pressure."

How so? Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

"I don't know, it's just like, I don't know."

Just other people and how they are going to..

".....after" (not heard)

Okay, all right. Now the other part to this question is what's your biggest fear about being a teenager? Being older, being in middle school and then in high school? What do you think your biggest fear is right now?

"Don't know"

Don't know? Okay, that's fair enough. I just want to make sure I ask the question. What's the thing that you look most forward to?

"More responsibility. Like I could babysit."

How old are you now?

"Eleven".

You're eleven, so you still When do you turn twelve?

"February."

February. Okay.

"Somebody has already asked me to baby sit."

That makes you feel pretty good eh. Like you are getting more responsibility. Okay, alright. Anything else that you look forward to as you get to be a teenager?

"More friends as I grow older."

Okay, so friends are pretty important. Now that is all the questions that I have for you but I want to give you an opportunity, is there anything that we didn't talk about that you think we should have in the group? Do you have any questions or concerns about the group, that you didn't have a chance to talk about.

"Not that I can think of."

Okay. All right. That's helpful. I want to make sure that I give you an opportunity. Is there any other questions you would like to ask me about this?

"Not really."

Okay. Good. Well that is all the questions I have for you.

GIRL#4

Okay, Girl#4, I am glad you could make it and I really appreciate the time that we are going to take to answer these few questions. It shouldn't take us longer than about 5 or 10 minutes. All right. I want to ask you what was the best part of the Girls Rule Club?

"Well I liked when we had to discuss other things, like we discussed our problems and all our feelings and all that."

Oh, okay, you found that really helpful?

"Yeah."

Good, okay. And which topic that we discussed, did you find the most interesting?

"Broken records."

Oh, you found that pretty helpful. Very interesting. All right. What did you learn in the Girls Rule Club?

"That if someone is teasing you, you can just walk away or just stick up for yourself, from broken records, just be yourself and walk away."

Okay. Do you think that there is anything that you learned that you might use now that the group is finished?

"Broken records and fogging"

Those two techniques were really helpful for you. I am glad. Good. When other girls ask what you do in the Girls Rule Club, what do you tell them?

"I just say we do special stuff and they can't say anything about it."

Okay, so you are remembering the rule that we had about confidentiality and stuff, about not taking stuff outside the group. Do lots of people ask you about.....

"Yeh, lots of people go, why do you go, why we talk about stuff and we can't tell you anything."

Do you think it was good the way we gave the group a name and then we called other people in the group, better than saying the names individually?

"Yeh"

Okay. Good. What are, now this is the kind of question I want you to think about as you are getting older, as you are getting to be a teenager. Because you are eleven now?

"Yeh"

Okay, when are you going to be twelve?

"On March 31st."

Okay, alright. Umm, as you get to be a teenager, what are your biggest concerns?

"Like when I get teased or if the boys keep on teasing me. I don't want that to happen because I don't do anything to them."

Okay. So that sort of bothers you, the teasing.

"Yeh"

Especially from the boys?

"Yeh"

Okay, that's alright. So if I were to ask you, what is your biggest fear about being a teenager, what would you say?

"The boys teasing me."

Okay, and how to handle that the best way.

"Yeh"

Alright. Now on the better side of it. What is it that you look forward to about being a teenager.

"Well, my mom says that I could date when I get a teenager. That's okay, and then I get to have boy/girl parties when I get there."

Okay. So how old would you have to be then to be able to date and to have the boy/girl parties.

"When I'm a teenager my mom said at thirteen."

Okay, okay. So you're looking forward to that?

"Yeh"

Okay. So that's sort of kind of interesting to me because, umm, on the one hand you say that the worst part about being a teenager is having boys tease you, but the best part is being able to see boys and go out on dates and have parties and stuff. So I guess you kind of want to be able to interact with boys in a good way.

"UmmHm"

Okay, alright. Anything else that you look forward to?

"No"

Alright. Now, I want to give you a chance. Is there anything that we didn't talk about in the group that you think we should have?

"Not that I know. But we didn't get to talk about most of like, the problems and like, our things that we put on the paper. We didn't get to talk about that stuff."

Yeah. Well we sort of, you're right, moved through the list and then we talked about techniques to sort of handle those problems. But you're saying we didn't have enough time to talk about the problems themselves?

"Yeh"

Okay. Alright. I can understand that. Yeah, it would be nice if our group was a little bit longer.

"UmmHm"

We didn't have very long sessions did we?

"Yeh"

Okay. Is there any other questions or concerns that you had about the group?

"Nope"

Okay. Alright. Umm, anything else you want to add?

"No"

Okay. Great. Alright, well thank you.

GIRL#5

For agreeing to answer these questions for me Girl#5, and also umm, for allowing me to tape them because that will be very helpful when I have to write out everybody's answers. I'm not going to put your names on the answers or anything. Okay? Alright. My first question is to ask you what was the best part of the Girls Rule Club?

"Umm, uh, to the jar?"

The jar. Ohh, you liked the bear jar. Why did you like that?

"Because you always got to tell how your feelings were."

Do you sometimes not get to tell people what your feelings are? Okay. So that was a good thing to do every week. Okay. Do you think that's something you could do outside of the group.

"UmmHmm."

How? How could you do that? Have you thought about that?

"No"

Okay. Which topic that we talked about in the group did you find most interesting?

"Broken records."

Ohhh, okay. You found that the most interesting. Okay. Great. How so?

"I don't know how."

You just found it kind of neat to talk about that.

"Yeh"

Alright. What did you learn in the Girls Club?

"Umm...."

Anything that comes to mind that you felt you learned in the Group?

“Umm, to just ignore the boys that tease you.”

Okay. Is that easy to do or is that hard to do?

“It’s hard for me to do.”

UmmHmm, okay. Did any of the techniques help that we talked about?

“A little.”

Yeah. Will you be able to use any of them?

“Mmmhmm.” (nods head)

Okay. Do you think there is anything that you learned in the Group that you might use now that the Group is finished?

“Yeh. Broken records.”

Okay. So that one you think you’re gonna use. Broken records. Okay, and when other girls ask you what you do in the Girls Rule Club, what do you tell them?

“Nothing. I just say nothing. I don’t say anything to them.”

Oh, okay. Do lots of people ask you, like I’m wondering because you know we always have this mysterious.....

“No.”

“What’s that all about? What’s that group all about”. So I was wondering if you guys got asked a lot? No? Nobody asks you about it? Ohh, okay I thought maybe because sometimes people ask me

“Except for Ms. Triolo.”

Oh, okay, alright. And my last question, and its got a couple of parts to it Girl#5. What are your biggest concerns as you get to be a teenager?

“I don’t know (laugh).”

Okay. Alright, let me ask you this. What’s your biggest fear as you get to be a teenager? What are you most afraid of in becoming a teenager?

"What like almost everybody does, which is drugs. I don't like that."

You don't like drugs and so that kind of scares you?

"Mmmhmm." (nods head)

That other people do drugs? Okay. Do you feel that they might make you do drugs? Is that what you're fear is?

"Yeh"

Okay. Alright. Umm, what do you look most forward to.....

"Of what?"

When you get to be a teenager. What's a good part about getting to be a teenager? Once you get a little older.

"Umm..."

Because you're what, eleven now?

"Yeh."

Okay.

"When you're like nineteen or eighteen, you move out of the house with your boyfriend."

Abhh. So that sounds good to you?

"Well, you get a car." (laugh)

Oh you get a car. Okay. So moving out with your boyfriend or getting a car, those are the best things?Okay. What do you want to do when you're all finished at school?

"Get a job."

Oh, so getting a job is an important thing.

"Yeh"

Okay. That's alright. Now Girl#5 thank you for answering all my questions. And I have, the last thing I want to give you a chance is to ask me any questions. Do you have anything that you wondered about in the Group? Anything we didn't cover that you thought we should have?

"No."

No? Okay. Alright. We'll thank you very much.

Appendix G

COMMENTS MADE BY PARENTS AS TO WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF THE GROUP & DID THEY HAVE ANY COMMENTS - POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE - OR CONCERNS?

Contacted by telephone on January 30, 1998:

Parent (Mother):

“(My daughter’s) grade went down in the classes she was pulled out of to attend the group”

- did not see any changes in her daughter positive or negative

Parent (Mother):

“(My daughter) quieted down when others were talking to her”

“her marks were up before the break” (ie. January 30 and since Christmas)

“she’s sad to be out of the group”

Contacted by telephone on February 6, 1998:

Parent (Mother):

Mother struck by daughter’s reference to the confidentiality of the group
“very loyal - if you told her the group was confidential, that’s what she would do”

“She misses group”

“It helped her, but she still needs some connection”

Mother refers to how stressed daughter gets, pressure to remain in the accelerated program, needs help to complete the work

Contacted by telephone on February 8, 1998:

Parent (Mother):

“definitely enjoyed being in the group - it was always a positive experience”

“it was an important thing to do (the group), self esteem is a very important issue for girls especially at this age”

Contacted by telephone on February 19, 1998:

Parent (Mother):

“(daughter) really liked it”

“relatively short program, I would like more sessions”

“should be some follow up - not such an abrupt ending to the sessions; girls need to feel like they have some support”

“daughter didn’t mind being pulled from Phys Ed. But didn’t like being pulled from Math - felt stressed at missing the work”

“perhaps lunch hour would be a good time to offer the sessions”

“if there were more sessions, could address new concerns that weren’t there before Christmas - like the older kids using words make the middle school kids feel badly”

Parent (Mother):

“nothing negative (to say)about the group”

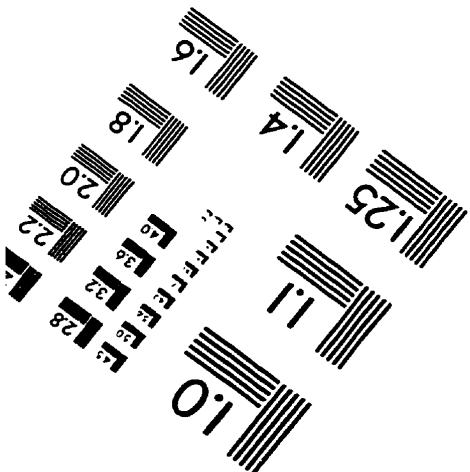
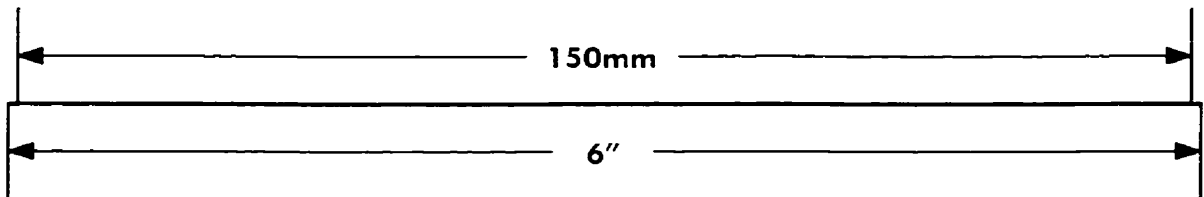
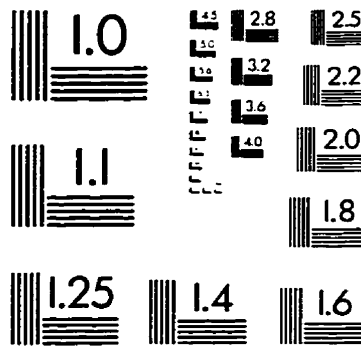
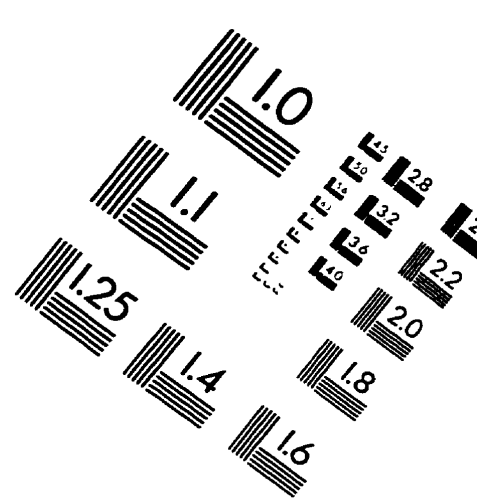
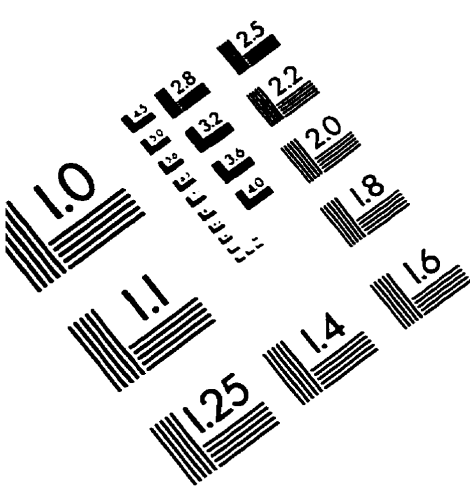
“she enjoyed it and I think it will assist her in the classroom and in situations with girls and with boys”

“she would have come even if it had been during the lunch hour”.

Personal Epilogue

“Observations and Analysis of a Girls Rule Club” is an effort to take a strategy, Girls in the ‘90s and adapt it to a setting where it will benefit the little corner of the world where I can make a difference . When these girls feel that they are making the journey without much support or with little understanding of the adolescence they are about to embark upon, my goal as a School Psychologist is to find strategies that work to make them feel more empowered and better able to cope with what has traditionally been such a traumatic transition. Research finally proved what has been painfully observed - the strength and confidence of childhood takes some tempering as it goes through adolescence. Boys and girls suffer the same decline, but girls will suffer it longer and with greater consequence. Using peer groups to understand and better deal with this developmental step (or step backward?) seems such a respectful, empowering way to help girls understand and ‘try on’ their independence by recognizing and addressing their vulnerability.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

