

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

This program was produced for use in classrooms, libraries, community centers, social service agencies, youth organizations, camps, teen groups, and parent education centers, or for viewing by parents and teens together at home. Although its target audience is teenagers, anyone who has regular contact with and a commitment to young people can benefit from this video as well. It is meant to be used as a part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program and extends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions and follow-up activities are intended to enhance this learning experience. Educators and counselors planning to show *Hating Tami* to teens may want to view the video in advance so that they can adapt their program follow-up to best suit the needs of their group. It is suggested that teens view the video under adult supervision.

OBJECTIVES

- * To explore the dynamic of relational aggression among teenage girls (its roots and oft-times tragic aftermath).
- * To spotlight & better recognize the sometimes subtle signs of female bullying and cyberbullying in order to better guard against them.
- * To examine what peers and educators can do to reach out to someone they feel may be the victim or the victimizer in a case of relational aggression.

SYNOPSIS

Angela and her friends take every opportunity to make Tami's life miserable, even going so far as to pose as a boy interested in Tami on a social networking site. During the film, we are also introduced to Tami and Angela's respective parents, ultimately providing clues to their behavior and various life stressors. While Tami's hyper-competitive parents continually pressure their 'A' student daughter to be the best at everything, Angela's single Mom appears more interested in being her daughter's best friend than her parent. All the while, sympathetic teacher Ms. Hutchinson has been attempting to reach out to Tami but finds her reluctant to open up. In a dramatic turn of events, Angela's cruel prank is uncovered - but is it too late?

FILM'S INSPIRATION

Exclusion, malicious gossiping, name-calling, withholding affection and friendship; these are the hallmarks of female relational aggression, and in our Internet/Technology age, sadly, such insidious bullying only appears to be growing. With studies showing that cyberbullying has more devastating, long-term effects on its victims than traditional bullying, it's clear that relational aggression is rapidly expanding - particularly among young girls. In fact, a recent American Educational Research Association study shows that female bullies actually prefer the use of text messaging harassment versus face-to-face bullying 2 to 1. Armed with such alarming statistics and hours of related teen interviews, OutreachArts' Writer-Filmmaker, Richard Wilson developed 'Hating Tami', the fifth installment in his award-winning teen-family drama series, 'Maple Ave'. Learning the intricacies of cyberbullying among girls was "like learning another language," Wilson has said. "However, it's really all about about relationships and their intricacies at the end of the day." The film's plot was partly inspired by the story of Megan Meier, a Missouri teen who committed suicide in 2006 after receiving online messages from an adult posing as a teenage male admirer. However, it was the stories Wilson heard first-hand from bullied teens that most informed the final script.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR TEENS & PARENTS

1. Do you know or know of anyone who has ever been the victim of relational aggression and/or cyberbullying?
2. Imagine what Angela & Tami's relationship may have been like before Angela turned against her. Were there any early indicators that Angela was prone to bullying? If so, what were they?
3. How would you react if, like Ann, you thought your friend might be the unsuspecting victim of a cyberbully? How far would you go to help her?
4. Did Tami bring any of this on herself or was she simply an innocent victim?
5. If you were Tami's teacher, Ms. Hutchinson what would you have

done to help her?

6. What do you think happens after the film ends? Does Ms. Hutchinson step in and contact Tami and Angela's parents? Does Angela's Mom continue to hold her daughter accountable? How does the rest of the story play out...?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Invite a local mental health professional to talk to your group about the long term psychological impact bullying has on its victims; how its scars haunt them throughout their lives.
2. Role play a scene where two female students are directing cruel but subtle barbs at another female student (perhaps at a lunch table or near the lockers). For each female actress have a 'shadow actress', who represents their inner selves, standing next to them. These shadow actresses do not interact with one another, they simply express the true and sometimes surprising motivations of each of the three 'real world actresses' involved in the scene.
3. Write and perform a short sequel to 'Hating Tami', creating at least three alternate endings. Afterwards, discuss these same endings in the classroom and then have students vote for the 'best ending'. On their (secret?) ballot, each student must write a short paragraph explaining why they chose a particular ending. After the results are tallied, a follow-up discussion is recommended.