

# The Blame Game

## RATIONALE

Adolescents often blame other people for their problems and assume that everyone is out to ruin their lives. Most have trouble accepting responsibility for their actions. They often believe that adults should be able to read their minds and have trouble asking for help. Blaming only leads to more conflicts. Statements including the words *always* and *never*, as well as statements like "Nobody understands" and "It is their entire fault," are examples of blaming statements that prevent people from taking responsibility for their actions or seeking help when facing difficulty. In this activity, the girls will play The Blame Game and become aware of the amount of blaming they do.

## MATERIALS

Small ball

Basket or bowl

Copy of The Blame Game Statements (cut into slips and placed in the basket or bowl)

## PROCEDURE

1. Prior to the group meeting, place the slips with the blaming phrases in the bowl or basket.
2. Have the girls sit in a circle or around a table.
3. Begin the group with a discussion about blaming. Ask the girls to give examples of how easy it is to blame other people for our mistakes.
4. Talk about the statement "It's not my fault!" Ask the girls about the last time they said it.
5. Pass the basket or bowl to each girl and instruct her to close her eyes and pick out one of the phrases.
6. Have each girl read aloud the blaming statement she selected and instruct the group to discuss briefly how this statement can be

used to avoid responsibility and how it can result in relationship problems.

7. After each girl has had a turn, give the instructions for The Blame Game:

In this game, a small ball will pass around the circle. As soon as someone receives the ball, she has 10 seconds in which to use a blaming statement. If she repeats a statement that was previously used in the game or takes longer than 10 seconds, she must take part in a “confessional,” in which she has to talk about one of the following: a time that blaming caused her difficulties, ways to prevent blaming, or problems that can result from blaming. When she’s finished, the game resumes by having her pass the ball to the next person.

8. Continue until group time is up.

### CLOSING QUESTIONS

- ✿ What makes it difficult to accept responsibility for your actions?
- ✿ What feelings do people avoid when they constantly blame other people for their actions?
- ✿ How will you use what you have learned today in the future?

# The Blame Game Statements

It's not my fault!	It's your fault we got in trouble!
She started it!	If you listened to me, everything would be fine!
He made me do it!	Why did you make me do that?
I can't help it!	You ruined EVERYTHING!
It's my mom's fault that I am late!	You NEVER listen to me!
How come she got away with it last week?	You are SO lazy!
You don't care about me!	We lost the game because of her!

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# Feeling Blue

## RATIONALE

Feelings are often difficult for adolescents to understand and discuss. Sadness, in particular, can be difficult for adolescents to talk about because of their natural need to protect themselves. This activity provides a safe venue for the girls in the group to discuss their feelings of sadness, the events and circumstances that may provoke sadness in them, and the various techniques they use to process these feelings.

## MATERIALS

Colored markers, paint, markers, and pastels in different shades of blue

Drawing paper

CD player and a CD of soft, mellow music

## PROCEDURE

1. Ask the girls about the feeling of sadness. Encourage them to talk about times when they are sad, how they know others are sad, and what events make people sad.
2. Ask the girls about “feeling blue.” Why do people associate sadness with the color blue?
3. Pass the markers, paint, and pastels around the group. Encourage the girls to talk about what these different shades of blue make them think about and feel.
4. Tell the girls that they will be using these shades of blue to create a picture or design about sadness.
5. Give each girl a piece of blank paper and play the soft, mellow music while the girls work on their pictures.
6. When all the girls are finished with their pictures, invite each one to share her work with the group.

## CLOSING QUESTIONS

- ✿ What are some ways you express yourself when you feel sad? For example, do you get angry? Do you cry? Do you sleep?
- ✿ How will you use what you have learned today in the future?

## Talk about It

### Emotions

1. Talk about a time you recall when a minor situation caused you to lose your temper.
2. Do you consider yourself an emotional person? Why or why not?
3. What are some unhealthy ways that you express your emotions?
4. Why do you think that girls are so emotional?
5. Do you control anger, or does anger control you?
6. Whom do you get angry at the most?
7. Whom do you take your anger out on?
8. Have you ever seen people get violent when they are angry?
9. Talk about a time when you were overemotional and later regretted it.
10. How do your family members express their emotions?
11. Has anyone ever called you a “drama queen?” If so, how did you feel about it?
12. Do you ever feel that your parents ignore your feelings?
13. What are some situations that really make you emotional?
14. Name some of the emotions or feelings that are typical of you every day.
15. When do you feel the most emotional?
16. What is the worst thing you have done while you were angry with someone?
17. Talk about a time when you regretted being overemotional.
18. In what situations do you wish you could be more relaxed?
19. When have you witnessed people out of control when they were angry?
20. What are some healthy ways for you to express your emotions?

## Think about It

### Emotions

*Directions: Think about your anger. What does it look like? How do you express it? Would you be open to changing how you express your anger? Think about it below and honestly finish the statements.*

1. When I get angry, I . . .

Is my reaction healthy? Why or why not?

2. How does my family express their anger? (List each family member who lives in your house and describe what he or she does when angry.)

Are my family's reactions healthy? Why or why not?

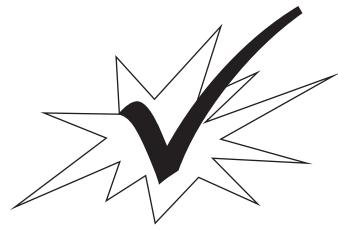
3. Some healthy alternative ways I can handle my anger are . . .

4. The people I can talk to when I get angry are . . .

#### *Optional Journaling Questions*

- ✿ When was the last time you got really mad at someone and directed your anger at him or her?
- ✿ Why do you think it is easier to blame other people than to accept responsibility when you get mad?

## Check It Out



### Emotions

Here are some great books for teens. Check them out!

- ✿ *Respect: A Girl's Guide to Getting Respect and Dealing When Your Line Is Crossed*, by Courtney Macavinta and Andrea Vander Pluym (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2005).
- ✿ *My Feelings Are Like Wild Animals: How Do I Tame Them? A Practical Guide to Help Teens (and Former Teens) Feel and Deal with Painful Emotions*, by Gary Egeberg (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998).
- ✿ *Happiness Is a Choice for Teens*, by Paul Meier (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).
- ✿ *Girl to Girl: Daily Thoughts on Living for Girls Ages 11–15*, by Karen Casey (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2000).
- ✿ *How to Take the GRRRR Out of Anger*, by Elizabeth Verdick and Marjorie Lisovskis (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2002).