



## **NOBODY LOVES ME--- EVERYONE HATES ME SYNDROME**

Every month we seem to get cries for help from Leaders concerning youth members who are 'rejected' by their parents. The majority of these are usually female, however the same comments apply to males.

We hear statements such as.

1. Says she/he is having a tough time at home
2. That it would appear that her/his parents are too busy with their new relationships and in her/his words 'No one wants her'.
3. The Leaders had offered to have a chat with her/him sometimes as "a friend she/he can confide in"
4. That one night recently she sought him out, wanting to talk, but he could only speak briefly."  
*[remember NEVER alone have a witness – in sight but out of hearing?]*
5. The leader is happy to provide some help but not cross the line.
6. The leader asks should the school counsellor be involved.

**My comments on this matter are:**

**The simple answer is that there is NO simple answer.**

However my immediate suggestion is that the parents have custody of their child and (*except if there is claims of physical abuse against the parents*) they have a right to natural justice and being informed so that they have the opportunity to take corrective action to help their child. Action by others is often resented and lays ones motives exposed to criticism and insinuation, the first question people would ask is "why didn't you tell us".

The way to approach them is in a non accusatorial way, making it easier to talk about a joint effort and thus making sure you don't have to deal with them in a defensive mode.

**NOT:.**

"Your daughter/son is feeling unloved/ unwanted because... "

**BUT MORE ALONG THE LINES OF:.**

"Your daughter (son) seems to be going through the phase most young girls (boys) go through of 'no body loves me everybody hates me' and I was wondering if we can help you in overcoming this?"

**However if the parents, after being approached, seem unsympathetic then:**

The idea would be to try and get her to relate to your wife or some other female. These girls often respond to a 'big sister' some 5 to 10 years older. (*This is also true of boys and 'Big Brothers'*)

With boys it is to focus on them doing things with a number of older boys. Again not too much one on one.

One ploy is to suggest there are things that girls know about girls, and can confide in each other and they have often been through SIMILAR problems. That you're not running away, you just want what's best, and at 16 she would understand if you were a little frank. Even the best of motives can be open to gossip.

I wouldn't mention 'if that doesn't work out we will try something etc etc' as that is often the recipe for failure.

They have to learn to cope and with the support your suggesting it should work. This becomes a valuable life lesson when in later years they are faced with life's difficulties.

Don't carry their bags for them, let them learn techniques for dealing with things themselves, albeit with support.

### **JUST A FEW OF THE ISSUES TO CONSIDER , AS I SEE THEM:**

There is insufficient information to come to any real conclusions. In cases like this, which are far too frequent, I tend to think of the following issues when it comes to teenagers.

- a. It is VERY common to go through this right of passage "nobody loves me everybody hates me"
- b. Girls in particular, gravitate to older males, especially if the father daughter involvement isn't strong, this is not an uncommon side effect for fathers that work. Or where fathers aren't around for other reasons.
- c. **The adults (especially male adults) that teenagers gravitate to are:**
  - i. **Involved in things with them that they enjoy doing**
  - ii. **Offer them plenty of praise and encouragement**
  - iii. **Appear very interested in them as a person, and has time to listen.**
- d. That at the time of hormones coming into play there can be confused desires in the girl.,
  - i. A strong crush, that can be misinterpreted by others. If rejected, leads to greater feeling of rejection.
  - ii. Misunderstanding gestures of friendship for something else.
  - iii. The unconscious question "prove it to me you care for not my body" (By making passes)
  - iv. I want to please you as best I can.
  - v. I want to marry you, or run away and live with you.
  - vi. There will never be anyone else in my life but you.
- e. That no matter how innocent it all is, they usually try to have a times of contact **alone** with the person.
- f. The leader's own family reaction, especially if he has teenagers and a wife. "More interested in them than us"
- g. The gossip that **will** come.
- h. When one gets 'burnt fingers' from being involved they take a long time to heal, sometimes never.

In closing I empathise with this leader and hundreds of other who find themselves in similar situations. I can only reiterate that going to the parents, in some cases, is not necessarily the ideal solution but the most effective and productive for the family..

In my professional life this was a fairly common problem, and we charge a fee just so we can call it all by it becoming the diagnostic term 'transference'. It became even more of a problem with girls who are already sexually active as they were skilled in turning on the charm, and harder to get them to apply themselves to therapy or confronting the reality of the situation that faces them..

Dr Warwick Bateman OAM  
State Commissioner  
Members Support.