

## MEET THE FACILITATOR



Melissa Bricka, LCSW, earned her Master's degree from the reputable Social Work program at Loyola University Chicago where she specialized in treating children and families. Melissa has previously worked in a therapeutic day school setting where she provided individual therapy and group social skills therapy to children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Cognitive impairments, ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorder and trauma-related issues.

### Areas of Specialization and Experience:

- Child, Adolescent, Adult and Family Therapy
- Behavioral Challenges in Children and Adolescents
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- Behavioral Intervention Strategies and Support for Parents

## JOIN OUR GROUPS!

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## SOCIALITES SOCIAL SKILLS AND SELF-ESTEEM GROUPS FOR GIRLS



- 6th - 8th Grade Girls
- High School Girls
- Social Thinking Curriculum



# GROUP APPROACH

The ability to understand and use age-appropriate social skills is vital to social and academic success. Social behavior and academic behavior are highly correlated. Though we learn academics in a highly structured, goal-oriented format, social skills are frequently not systematically taught. Consequently, some adolescents don't develop social competency at the same pace as their peers. This is especially true for those that have ADHD/ADD, Anxiety, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Social Communication Disorder, Learning Disabilities and other problems. Difficulties with peer socialization can lead to bullying, low self-esteem, depression, social isolation and avoidance. The Socialites Social Skills and Self-Esteem Groups for Girls help members navigate the social challenges of adolescence in a safe, supportive and psycho-educational setting where group members benefit from structured lessons, exercises, and discussions on developmentally specific social skills. The group also provides opportunities to share, explore and process some of the emotional or behavioral impacts of the members' social challenges with a focus on coping skills for increasing emotional regulation, distress tolerance and assertive communication.

# GROUP FORMAT

- Role-playing to practice skills taught
- Discussion of Performance
- Practice in peer setting
- Modeling Appropriate Behaviors, Actions, and Responses
- Giving and Receiving Feedback - from facilitators and peers

**“The goal is to take complicated social learning processes and teach them in a way that social learners of all ages can understand.”**

- Michelle Garcia Winner



# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The Social Skills Curriculum is designed to teach social behaviors in a safe and friendly environment. Each lesson provides a model for children to imitate and activities to practice the skills. The approach is based on Structured Learning, a holistic teaching method that provides a framework for systematic teaching of a skill in a way that is similar to academics. The emphasis is to provide alternative behavioral options to increase effective social interactions.

The curriculum is based on "Think Social: A Social Thinking Curriculum for School-Age Students" by Michelle Garcia Winner and includes structured activities to address real life social situations.

# AGE RANGE

6th grade through high school age groups are offered.

# GROUP GOALS

- Making and keeping friends and the changing dynamics of friendship through adolescent development
- Managing peer pressure and recognizing manipulation or malicious intent from peers
- Recognizing and managing gossip, rumors or bullying
- Improving self-image and self-esteem
- Understanding social boundaries
- Accepting social rules or expectations and their consequences
- Increase effective and assertive communication
- Managing negative emotions, depression or anxiety
- Understanding social expectations in situations/settings common during adolescence
- Perspective taking, empathy for others and helping behaviors
- Internet safety and the appropriate use of social media



**Most insurance providers reimburse for the groups. Pathways Psychology also provides sliding scale fee rates.**