

Friends

IIE 366: Developmental Psychology
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Lecture 35

Friends and best friends

- 2-3 friends form a friendship clique
- Provide more dependable companionship
 - ♦ Assure a backup in case of conflict
- But...one best friendship
- Adults differentiate more among relationships



How Stable Are Friendships?

- less stable at first than fourth grade
- approximately equal in stability from fourth to twelfth grade
- depends on stability in the social environment



Features of Friendship

- Companionship
- Social and cognitive skills
- prosocial behavior
- (relative) absence of conflicts



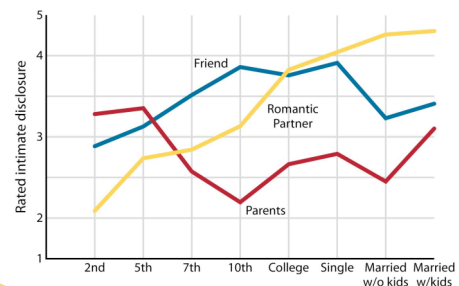
Intimacy

- Usually does not appear until adolescence because
 - ♦ children prefer parents
 - ♦ intimate self-disclosure is psychologically complex



Intimacy

- Sources of intimacy change over lifespan



Boys' and Girls' Friendships Differ....

- girls' friendships are more intimate and because of this...
- girls interact more often with a single friend
- girls are more concerned about rejection/unfaithfulness



Boys' and Girls' Friendships Are Alike ...

- little difference in number of best friends
- little difference in friendship stability
- little difference in most friendship features



Peers in Groups: Young Children's Groups

- Dominance patterns emerge among very young children in small groups.
- By preschool age, there is a clear dominance hierarchy.
 - ♦ dominance reduces aggression

Cliques in Childhood and Early Adolescence

- Friendship groups formed by children
- 3-9 children, usually same sex and race
- By 11, many social interactions occur within the clique
- Similar in interests and academic motivation
- Leaders of cliques are popular, athletic, cooperative, and studious relative to peers

Cliques in Adolescence

- Ties to multiple cliques
- Cliques become less stable
- Early adolescence
 - ♦ emphasis on conforming to clique norms
- Later adolescence
 - ♦ reduced importance of clique membership
 - ♦ individual relationships more important

Conflict

- When conflict occurs, friends make up with several methods
 - ♦ forget about conflict
 - ♦ renew friendship
 - ♦ apologize
 - ♦ rarely "talk it out"



Benefits of friendship

- Hodges et al. (1999): youths with a mutual best friendship (both are each other's best friend) are somewhat protected from victimization
 - Less likely to occur
 - Has smaller impact on victim
- Ladd et al. (1996): kindergarten students with high-quality friendships in fall (supportive, little conflict) like school more in the spring

Crowds

- May enhance or hurt reputation
- Members of one crowd may be ridiculed or excluded by members of other crowds
- May "channel" into patterns of behavior
 - positive influence (good academic performance if a "brain")
 - negative influence (drug use if a "druggie").

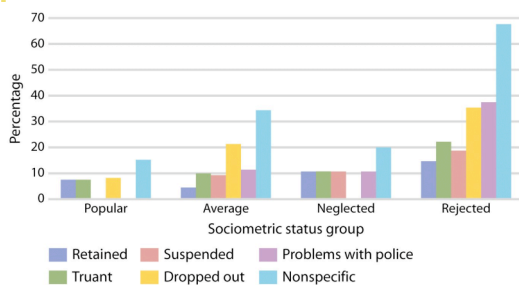
Negative Influence of Cliques

- Worst potential: gang membership
 - loosely organized groups that engage in illegal activities, such as selling drugs, stealing cars, or fighting.
- Gang members more involved than others in illegal behavior

Negative Influence of Cliques

- Authoritative, involved parents can reduce negative influences of peer pressure (e.g., using drugs).
- Negative peer-group influence varies across cultures, related to the role of the family relative to that of the peer group.

Peer Status and Academic and Behavioral Problems



Role of Parents in Children's Peer Relationships: Attachment

- Securely attached children are more competent with peers.
 - react positively and are empathic with others; good social skills.
- Bidirectionality is a factor. Children's characteristics affect the quality of their attachment, which in turn affects their peer relations.

Parent-Child Interactions and Peer Relationships

- Popular children: warm and authoritative mothers
- Unpopular children: harsh, authoritarian discipline
- Boys whose fathers play with them are better liked by their peers

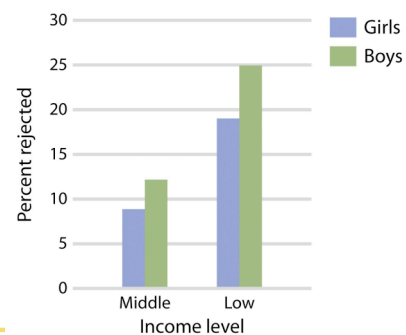
Parental Beliefs and Behaviors

- Parents of socially competent children tend to believe maladaptive behavior results from specific situations.
- Parents of less socially competent children believe that the child's nature is determinative and cannot be changed—the child was “born that way.”

Long-Term Effects of Being Socially Withdrawn as a Child

- Withdrawn boys:
 - Start careers later
 - Less success at job
 - Twice the rate of divorce and separation by midlife
- Withdrawn girls:
 - More likely to marry, have children
 - Less likely to work outside the home

Peer Rejection as a Function of Gender and Family Income



Next time

- Review for Exam 3
- Exam 3
- Finish up with a bit of advice about further studies in psychology