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## Adolescent Intimacy Revisited

Shmuel Shulman [Associate Professor]<sup>1</sup>, Brett Laursen [Associate Professor]<sup>2</sup>, Zwi Kalman [Graduate student]<sup>3</sup>, and Sigal Karpovsky [Graduate student]<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 52900, Israel. Received Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan University. Research interests include close relationships in adolescence in normal and pathological samples

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Florida Atlantic University. Received Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Research interests include adolescent friendships and conflict in close relationships

<sup>3</sup>Tel-Aviv University, Israel

<sup>4</sup>Tel-Aviv University, Israel

### Abstract

Two studies examined intimacy in adolescent friendships. In the first, 7th-, 9th-, and 11th-grade students completed a questionnaire assessing perceived friendship intimacy. Age and sex differences were identified in emotional closeness, self-disclosure, emphasis on individuality, control, and conformity. Across ages, emphasis on individuality increased, whereas control and conformity declined. There were no age differences in emotional closeness and self-disclosure. Females reported more emotional closeness and self-disclosure than males. In the second study, individual differences in friendship intimacy were examined in a sample of 9th-grade adolescents. A joint problem solving task identified interdependent and disengaged friends. Perceived intimacy among interdependent and disengaged friends was contrasted with that in a control group of subjects without friends. Adolescents with friends reported more closeness than those without friends. Interdependent friends reported greater levels of respect for individuality than disengaged friends. The results underscore the salience of intimacy for peer relationships during the adolescent years and suggest that intimacy may be an important construct distinguishing between different types of close friendships.

## INTRODUCTION

Intimate close friendships, found across the life span, first appear during early adolescence. Developmental studies of friendship intimacy emphasize the increasing significance of self-disclosure, closeness, and mutual assistance during the adolescent years (e.g., Jones and Dembo, 1989; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). According to Selman (1990), the ability to balance closeness and individuality heralds a mature form of friendship intimacy that typically does not emerge until adolescence. Building on this empirical and theoretical foundation, two studies of adolescent friendship intimacy are described. The first examines age and sex differences in intimacy across adolescence. The second explores differences between types of adolescent friendships in expressions of intimacy. Together, the studies provide support for a model of intimacy that emphasizes dyadic closeness and individuality. Furthermore, they suggest that intimacy may be critical in differentiating friendship types.

Several features of intimacy characterize adolescent friendships: Adolescents emphasize mutual trust, loyalty, and exclusivity as central to friendship (Berndt, 1983; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). Friends know one another's feelings and preferences, and support each other emotionally and materially. They discuss secrets, exchange ideas, and share feelings in a secure and accepting environment (Bigelow, 1977; Furman and Bierman, 1983; Oden *et al.*, 1984). Across adolescence, these characteristics of intimacy emerge as increasingly important constructs around which close friendships are organized (Hartup, 1993; Jones and Dembo, 1989).

Conceptually, adolescent friendship intimacy has converged on two themes: closeness and individuality. Closeness describes mutual empathy, love, and felt security (Sullivan, 1953). This closeness provides the impetus for self-disclosure, prompting discussions of personal matters such as sexuality, family problems, and money. Thus, closeness captures the interpersonal processes whereby friends share important feelings and information (Reis and Shaver, 1988). The need for a close friend is especially strong during early adolescence. Studies have shown how this need for affiliation can be manifested in an increase of willingness to be similar to the other and in conformity to peer pressure (Berndt, 1979; Brown, *et al.*, 1986). In addition, through rewarding exchanges, friends strongly influence the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of one another (Kelly *et al.*, 1983; Laursen, 1993). In sum, the penchant for closeness between friends may be accompanied by conformity to or control of the friend.

Individuality, in contrast, describes the development of separate and distinct identities. Erickson (1963) elaborated on the interplay between intimacy and identity. He claimed that a successful intimacy requires feelings of power and control allowing "fusion without fear of ego toss" (p. 264). In such a relationship intimate partners are confident to express their own views. In addition, partners are respected by each other. Though the need for close friends has been described as a hallmark of the developing adolescent (Sullivan, 1953), individuation also emerges gradually during adolescence, as children strive to distinguish themselves from both parents and peers (Grotevant and Cooper, 1985). Through individuation, adolescents express personal styles and create unique selves to be shared in intimate relationships.

In a recent discussion of the nature of friendships across adolescence, Selman (1990) suggested that the maturity of a relationship is evident in the interplay between intimacy and autonomy. At the lowest levels of intimacy, partners have a sense of shared experience where the feelings and actions of one are imitated by the other. Though such partners have a strong sense of closeness, the capacity to negotiate individual preferences is lacking. At the next higher level of intimacy, friends appear to share activities and preferences; still, one partner tends to impose on or control the other. At the highest level, friends negotiate and integrate their needs, carefully balancing closeness and individuality.

Taken together, a new conceptualization of adolescent intimacy is suggested. Intimacy entails closeness, affection, disclosure, and commitment between friends. In addition, partners may tend to control or conform to the other in order to enhance the sense of closeness. Yet intimacy also concerns balancing needs and respecting individuality as well as different views. The manner in which this tension is resolved reflects the maturity of a relationship. Thus, balanced relationships and respect for the friend in adolescent close friendships should increase with age, whereas the tendency to control or to establish enmeshed relationships should decrease.

Evidence to date suggests that there are sex differences in friendship intimacy. Adolescent females are reportedly closer and more inclined to self-disclosure than males (Camerana *et al.*, 1990; Jones and Dembo, 1989; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). Males tend to express themselves through separateness, characterizing friendships in terms of shared activities, whereas females perceive relatedness, emphasizing mutual closeness and reciprocity in friendships (Smollar

and Youniss, 1982). However, to the best of our knowledge, former studies have not explicitly compared how adolescent males and females balance closeness and individuality within their close friendships. It would also be reasonable to assume that girls, for whom it is important to secure connectedness, will be more inclined to give up individuality. Boys, in contrast, will tend to control their peers and insist on their individuality.

Few studies have examined individual differences in adolescent relationship intimacy. Research suggests that variations in intimacy produce three types of romantic relationships: merger, pseudointimacy, and genuine intimacy (Orlofsky, 1976; Orlofsky *et al.*, 1973). Merger describes a relationship that lacks balance and free expression. Pseudointimate relationships offer balanced roles and room to explore individuality, but little commitment to the relationship. Genuine intimacy is characterized by depth of roles and mutual commitment to the relationship. Similar distinctions are hypothesized for adolescent friendships. Research adapting a relationship typology from general systems theory (Minuchin, 1974; Reiss, 1981; Wynne, 1958, 1970) identified two types of friendships: interdependent and disengaged (Shulman, 1993). Interdependent friends were found to be connected by an emotional bond—it was important for them to cooperate. However, this closeness neither involved total dependence nor precluded separateness in thinking and acting. In the disengaged type, close friends probably were unable to integrate differing opinions and therefore ended up working separately and insisting on their individuality. We suggest that the distinction between the two types of friendship might further be demonstrated by their concepts of intimacy. For adolescents belonging to the interdependent type of friendship, this concept might reveal a better balance between closeness and individuality, whereas for disengaged adolescents this concept might reflect less respect for their close friend's individuality.

The present investigation is based on a model of adolescent friendship intimacy that considers both normative developmental depictions of friendship as well as individual differences in the quality of close relationships (Shulman *et al.*, 1994). From this perspective, friendship intimacy entails affection, disclosure, and commitment, as well as a tendency to impose control or to conform to the other in order to secure the friendship. In addition, intimacy also entails aspects of individuality like respect for the friend and ability to cope with differing views. The maturity of the relationship reflects a balance of closeness and individuality. Across adolescence, more mature relationships should develop as children are better able to integrate the competing demands of friendship. Individual differences are expected, however, as some adolescents lag behind others in intimacy, especially respect for individuality and expressions of closeness.

To elaborate this model of adolescent friendship intimacy, two studies of closeness and individuality are described. The first explores attributes and developmental patterns of adolescent friendship intimacy. Three questions concerning normative features of adolescent friendship are addressed: (1) What attributes characterize intimate adolescent friendships? (2) Does friendship intimacy change across adolescence? (3) Are there gender differences in perceptions of intimacy? Regarding the second and third questions raised by this study, it is expected that such attributes of individuality as Balanced Relatedness and Respect for Friend will increase with age, whereas such attributes of closeness such as Control and Conformity will decrease with age. It is also expected that females will report higher levels of attributes of intimacy reflecting emphasis on closeness, whereas males will report higher levels of individuality and control of friend. The second study identifies qualitative differences between adolescent friendships in perceptions of intimacy. Two questions concerning variations in types of adolescent friendships are addressed: (1) Do perceptions of intimacy distinguish adolescents with close friends from those without close friends? (2) Does intimacy vary across different types of adolescent friendships?

These studies were designed to advance our understanding of adolescent friendship, specifying the normative role of intimacy in the relationship and distinguishing between different types of friendship on the basis of intimacy. Based on previous findings, it was hypothesized that mature characteristics of intimacy (i.e., a balance of closeness and individuality) were expected to increase with age, corresponding with a decrease in less mature characteristics of intimacy (i.e., control and conformity). Gender differences were also anticipated, with greater intimacy, conformity, closeness, and self-disclosure among females than males. In contrast, males were expected to emphasize individuality more than females. Individual differences should emerge in types of friendship, with interdependent friends reporting more closeness, individuality, and self-disclosure than disengaged friends. In contrast, disengaged friends were expected to report more control and conformity than interdependent friends.

## STUDY 1

### Method

**Subjects**—A total of 288 adolescents in the 7th ( $M = 12.6$  years), 9th ( $M = 14.5$  years), and 11th ( $M = 16.6$  years) grades participated in the research. The sample included 57 males and 59 females in the 7th grade, 43 males and 45 females in the 9th grade, and 46 males and 38 females in the 11th grade. Subjects resided in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area; most were from middle and lower-to-middle class families. The final sample represented 93% of all adolescents originally invited to participate.

**Instruments**—Two scales (see Appendix) were constructed to assess intimacy and self-disclosure. Scale items were adapted from established instruments (originally designed for college students and young adults), which assess characteristics of friend, romantic, and marital relationships (Jourard, 1964; Schaefer and Edgerton, 1979; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). Subjects rated intimacy items describing a same-sex friendship on a 4-point scale ranging from *low* (1) to *high* (4): “To what extent do the following statements characterize your relationship with your close friend?” The final questionnaire consisted of 5 intimacy subscales with 8 items in each: (1) Emotional Closeness included shared affect, availability, and instrumental assistance; (2) Balanced Relatedness described tolerance for differing opinions and ideas; (3) Respect for Friend assessed mutual respect for individuation, competence, and uniqueness; (4) Conformity assayed similarity in appearance and ideas, and the importance of conforming on these issues; and (5) Control measured preference for unilateral decision making. Scores for each subscale ranged from 8 to 32.

Subjects also completed a questionnaire describing self-disclosure,<sup>5</sup> rating items on a 4-point scale ranging from *rarely* (1) to almost *always* (4): “To what extent do you share with your close friend about the following issues?” The final questionnaire consisted of 3 self-disclosure subscales with 8 items in each: (1) Disclosure About Family described parental attributes and home atmosphere; (2) Disclosure About Friends assessed perceptions of and exchanges in close peer relationships; and (3) Disclosure About Physical Development included concerns of appearance and maturation. Scores for each subscale ranged from 8 to 32.

The final questionnaires were derived from pilot measures administered to 134 adolescents (64 males and 70 females) in Grades 9 and 10 ( $M = 15.6$  years). This pilot sample was not part of the final pool. The pilot intimacy questionnaire included 60 items, with 12 items for each of

<sup>5</sup>Conceptually, self-disclosure reflects a measure of closeness between friends and as such is similar to the subscale of Emotional Closeness. However, in former studies, self-disclosure was considered as the essence of intimacy. Jourard (1964) considered self-disclosure as the central attribute of intimacy. Reis and Shaver (1988) defined intimacy as a process in which a person expresses important self-relevant feelings and information to another. Youniss and Smollar (1985) have shown the emergent and increasing importance of self-disclosure in adolescent friendships. For this reason a separate questionnaire for measuring self-disclosure was constructed.

the 5 domains. The pilot of the self-disclosure questionnaire included 36 items, with 12 items for each of the 3 domains. Two separate confirmatory factor analyses supported the hypothesized 5 factor structure of intimacy and 3 factor structure of self-disclosure, explaining 62 and 58% of the variance, respectively. The five intimacy and self-disclosure subscales included the 8 items with the highest factor loadings (factor loadings given in parentheses): Emotional Closeness (.56 to .84); Balanced Relatedness (.44 to .76); Respect for Friend (.47 to .73); Control (.68 to .81); Conformity (.41 to .64); Disclosure About Family (.69 to .81); Disclosure About Friends (.51 to .84); and Disclosure About Physical Development, (.40 to .79).

**Procedure**—Upon receipt of parent consent, questionnaires were administered in class to groups of 20 adolescents. Internal reliability coefficients (alphas) were computed for the sample as a whole as well as separately by age and gender (see Appendix). In all cases, subscale alphas were adequate, ranging from .69 to .95 ( $M = .88$ ). All questionnaires were administered in Hebrew.

## Results

Separate sets of analyses were conducted on the intimacy and self-disclosure scales. First, Pearson correlations ( $ps < .01$ ), conducted for the sample as a whole and for each grade, determined interrelations among subscales. Second, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) explored grade and sex differences in the five intimacy subscales and the three self-disclosure subscales. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) and Scheffé contrasts ( $ps < .05$ ) followed statistically significant MANOVAs to specify differences.

Pearson correlations of intimacy subscales revealed similar results for the sample as a whole and for each grade in associations among Emotional Closeness, Balanced Relatedness, and Respect for Friend ( $r_s = .35$  to  $.56$ ). In addition, Control was negatively associated with Emotional Closeness, Balanced Relatedness, and Respect for Friend ( $r_s = -.15$  to  $-.50$ ). Correlations between Conformity and other intimacy subscales were statistically significant only for 7th graders ( $r_s = .27$  to  $.50$ ). Pearson correlations of self-disclosure subscales revealed similar results for the sample as a whole and for each grade in associations among Family Disclosure, Friendship Disclosure, and Physical Development Disclosure ( $r_s = .52$  to  $.72$ ).

**Intimacy**—A MANOVA was conducted with 2 (sex)  $\times$  3 (grade) levels of between subject and 5 (intimacy subscales) levels of repeated measure within subject independent variables. Intimacy was the dependent variable. A significant main effect emerged for intimacy,  $F(4, 279) = 212.39, p < .001$ . In addition, there were two-way interactions between grade and intimacy,  $F(8, 558) = 3.74, p < .05$ , and sex and intimacy,  $F(4, 279) = 8.64, p < .01$ . Follow-up ANOVAs and Scheffé contrasts or simple main effects specified grade and sex differences on each intimacy subscale, as well as differences between intimacy subscales within each grade and sex.

The first set of follow-up comparisons entailed five separate ANOVAs with grade as the independent variable. Each intimacy subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable.  $F$  values, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table I. Significant grade differences emerged for Balanced Relatedness, Respect for Friend, Control, and Conformity. Scheffé follow-up contrasts elaborated these grade differences. Balanced Relatedness was lower among 7th graders than 9th and 11th graders. Respect for Friend was lower among 9th graders than 7th and 11th graders. Control was highest for 7th graders and lowest for 9th graders, with 11th graders at an intermediate level. Finally, Conformity was higher among 7th graders than 9th and 11th graders.



The second set of follow-up comparisons entailed five separate ANOVAs with sex as the independent variable. Each intimacy subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable. Significant sex differences emerged on four intimacy subscales: Emotional Closeness,  $F(1, 286) = 23.45, p < .001$ ; Balanced Relatedness,  $F(1, 286) = 8.35, p < .01$ ; Control,  $F(1, 286) = 8.65, p < .01$ ; and Conformity,  $F(1, 286) = 7.01, p < .01$ . Females ( $M = 25.29, SD = 4.00$ , and  $M = 25.73, SD = 4.52$ , respectively) reported more Emotional Closeness and Balanced Relatedness than males ( $M = 23.59, SD = 4.42$ , and  $M = 24.48, SD = 5.48$ , respectively). In addition, males ( $M = 12.07, SD = 4.96$ , and  $M = 18.66, SD = 5.14$ , respectively) reported more Control and Conformity than females ( $M = 17.59, SD = 4.06$ , and  $M = 10.63, SD = 4.05$ , respectively).

The third set of follow-up ANOVAs compared intimacy subscales within each grade and sex. Each revealed a significant main effect for intimacy ( $ps < .05$ ). Subjects in each grade and gender group ranked differently the five intimacy subscales. Simple main effects specified differences between intimacy subscales. As can be seen in Table I, subjects reported the highest levels of intimacy for Emotional Closeness and Balanced Relatedness, followed by Respect for Friend, then Conformity, and finally Control.

**Self-Disclosure**—A MANOVA was conducted with 2 (sex)  $\times$  3 (grade) levels of between subject and 3 (self-disclosure subscales) levels of repeated measure within subject independent variables. Self-disclosure was the dependent variable. A significant main effect emerged for self-disclosure,  $F(2, 281) = 4.38, p < .05$ . In addition, there was a two-way interaction between sex and self-disclosure,  $F(1, 281) = 8.26, p < .01$ . Follow-up ANOVAs and Scheffé contrasts or simple main effects specified sex differences on each intimacy subscale, as well as differences between intimacy subscales within each sex.

The first set of follow-up contrasts entailed three separate ANOVAs with sex as the independent variable. Each self-disclosure subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable. A significant main effect of sex emerged for Family Disclosure,  $F(1, 286) = 11.98, p < .01$ , Friendship Disclosure,  $F(1, 286) = 4.75, p < .05$ , and Physical Development Disclosure,  $F(1, 286) = 17.01, p < .001$ . Females reported higher levels of Family Disclosure ( $M = 20.03, SD = 7.70$ ), Friendship Disclosure ( $M = 19.12, SD = 6.65$ ), and Physical Development Disclosure ( $M = 21.45, SD = 7.33$ ) than males ( $M = 7.15, SD = 6.85$ ;  $M = 18.03, SD = 6.33$ ; and  $M = 18.30, SD = 7.30$ , respectively).

Two additional sets of follow-up ANOVAs compared self-disclosure subscales within each sex. A significant main effect for self-disclosure was found only among females  $F(2, 281) = 5.38, p < .05$ . Simple main effects specified differences between self-disclosure subscales. Females reported the highest level for Physical Development Self-Disclosure followed by Family and Friendship Self-Disclosure. Males ranked the three Self-Disclosure subscales in a similar order.

## Discussion

The factor structure supported five hypothesized dimensions of intimacy that included emotional closeness, balanced relatedness, respect for friend, conformity, and control, as well as three dimensions of self-disclosure (family, friends, and physical development). Adolescents tended to emphasize intimate aspects of emotional closeness, on the one hand, and tolerance for differing opinions and individuality, on the other hand. Conformity and control were not as characteristic of friendship intimacy. These findings suggest a comprehensive friendship intimacy construct that differs somewhat from descriptions that exclusively emphasize emotional closeness and self-disclosure (Reis and Shaver, 1988). Such findings are consistent with a systems theory perspective on friendship, wherein the needs of the Individual are negotiated alongside the needs of the relationship (Shulman, 1993). Steinglass (1978), for

instance, argues that it is the balance between vectors of closeness and vectors of individuality that keeps system “particles” (i.e., participants) together.

Results showed that balanced relatedness in friendships increase with age, whereas control and conformity decline. These trends conform to Selman’s (1990) developmental sequence of friendship intimacy: Shared experience is first achieved by acting the same as a close friend or by directing their behavior; later, shared intimate experience involves communication, integrating the needs of both parties. A closer inspection of the age differences reveals that age differences in perception of intimacy were mainly found between 7th graders and between 9th and 11th graders. We speculate that it is probably during the transition to adolescence their children change their perceptions of close relationships. After being more involved with peers, older adolescents learn more how to balance their own needs as well as the needs of others. In the younger group, friends are more inclined to use measures like control. Age differences on the Respect for Friend attribute showed a curvilinear trend; It was low for the 9th graders and high for the 7th and 11th graders. This finding is contrary to our expectations and does not fit the other findings that suggested balanced relationships increase and control and conformity decrease with age. Further studies could clarify this issue. There were no age differences in emotional closeness and self-disclosure, supporting assertions of consistency in these friendship characteristics during adolescence (Jones and Dembo, 1990; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). Closeness and self-disclosure become increasingly salient to Mends across childhood, and their stability during adolescence reflects the position of importance already accorded to these relationship characteristics.

Although the relative importance of friendship attributes were similar for males and females, hypothesized sex differences emerged in overall levels of closeness, self-disclosure, control, and conformity. Previous studies have also reported that females feel closer to and are more open with friends than males (Camarena *et al.*, 1990; Jones and Dembo, 1990; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). Greater mutual disclosure might prompt females to realize that friends have distinctive private domains that require respect to maintain the relationship; this was reflected in the higher level of tolerance that females expressed regarding differing opinions. In contrast, male friendships, which consist more of joint activities than shared ideas and emotions (Smollar and Youniss, 1982), tended to resort to control and conformity to maintain the relationship. Still, it is important to note that both males and females in the present study rated closeness as the most important feature of their relationships.

## STUDY 2

Building on the normative description of adolescent friendships provided by Study 1, an exploratory investigation of individual differences in friendship intimacy was conducted in Study 2. Previous research (see Shaulman, 1993) suggests variations in adolescent friendship styles. The present study was designed to replicate and extend these findings. To this end, a laboratory task identified different types of adolescent friendships (e.g., interdependent and disengaged). These groups of friends (and a control group of non friends) are compared on the attributes of intimacy identified in Study 1. It is hypothesized that adolescents who belong to interdependent friendships will display a balance between intimacy attributes reflecting closeness and individuality. In addition, disengaged friends and adolescents without friends are expected to report either a lower level of closeness to Mend or a relationship that emphasizes aspects of control or conformity.

### Method

**Subjects**—Participants included 137 adolescents ( $M = 14.3$  years) in the 9th grade. Subjects were drawn from a pool of 228 volunteers with parental consent The final sample included 98 adolescents (50 mates and 48 females) with at least one reciprocated friendship and 39

adolescents (12 males and 27 females) without a reciprocated friendship. Subjects resided in a small city in central Israel; most belonged to middle-class families.

A two-step procedure identified adolescents with reciprocated friends. First, subjects named their closest friends in an open-ended questionnaire. Second, subjects were interviewed about closeness in these friendships, rating each on a 7-point scale ranging from *low* (1) to *high* (7). Reciprocated friends were defined as dyads in which both participants identified one another as friends and rated the friendship high on closeness (i.e., 6 or 7). The group of adolescents without reciprocated friends comprised subjects whose relationships did not meet these criteria.

**Instruments and Procedure**—All subjects completed the intimacy and self-disclosure questionnaires (see Study 1) prior to the joint task to be described. Interitem reliability (alpha) for questionnaire subscales ranged from .72 to .93 ( $M = .86$ ).

Friendship styles were identified with an adapted version of the Card Sort Problem Solving Procedure (Reiss, 1981), a technique with demonstrated efficacy in identifying different types of adolescent friendships (see Shulman, 1993). Pairs of friends are presented separate sets of 16 cards, each with a row of letters varying in order and length. Subjects are instructed to use any criteria to sort the cards into any number of piles. The task is divided into two phases. First, each adolescent sorts their own cards separately, without speaking. Second, each adolescent again sorts their own cards separately, but this time communication is permitted. Instructions are not provided on dyadic agreement during the second phase, so both separate and joint sorting is possible. Problem-solving behavior was coded on two dimensions: Configuration and Coordination (see Reiss, 1981). Configuration reflects changes from the first to the second card sorts. It denotes the extent to which friends influence each other when given the opportunity to interact; positive scores (i.e., greater than zero) indicate that interaction improves problem solving and negative scores (i.e., less than zero) indicate that interaction hinders problem solving. Coordination reflects both solution similarity and differences (standard deviations) in the time taken to complete the second sort. Small sort standard deviations indicate that participants finished trials at the same time. A median split defined Coordination criteria. High Coordination scores (sort similarity greater than .65 and sort standard deviations less than 4 seconds) indicate that friends worked together. Low Coordination scores (sort similarity less than .65 and sort standard deviations greater than 4 seconds) indicate that friends resisted cooperation.

Two friendship types were identified: Interdependent and Disengaged. A total of 26 pairs of friends (17 male and 9 female) qualified as interdependent. These dyads were high on Coordination ( $M$  sort similarity = .92,  $SD = .11$ , and  $M$  sort  $SD = 2.59$  seconds,  $SD = 1.31$ ) and Configuration ( $M = .12$ ,  $SD = .09$ ). A total of 23 pairs of friends (8 male and 15 female) qualified as disengaged. These dyads were low on Coordination ( $M$  sort similarity = .57,  $SD = .21$ , and  $M$  sort  $SD = 9.57$  seconds,  $SD = 5.51$ ) and Configuration ( $M = -.09$ ,  $SD = .12$ ).

## Results

Separate sets of analyses were conducted on the intimacy and self-disclosure scales. Multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) explored friendship type and sex differences on the five intimacy subscales and the three self-disclosure subscales. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) and Scheffé contrasts ( $ps < .05$ ) followed statistically significant MANOVAs to specify differences.

**Intimacy**—A MANOVA was conducted with 3 (friendship type: interdependent, disengaged, and no reciprocated friend)  $\times$  2 (sex) levels of between subject and 5 (intimacy subscales) levels of repeated measure within subject Independent variables. Intimacy was the dependent variable. A significant main effect emerged for intimacy,  $F(4,129) = 153.99$ ,  $p < .001$ . There



were also two way interactions between friendship type and intimacy,  $F(8, 258) = 2.25, p < .05$ , and sex and intimacy,  $F(4, 129) = 15.56, p < .001$ . Follow-up ANOVAs and Scheffé contrasts specified friendship type and sex differences on each intimacy subscale, as well as differences between intimacy subscales within each friendship type and sex. In this report of results the unit of analysis was the number of individuals. Results were significant when the unit of analysis was the number of pairs.

The first set of follow-up comparisons entailed five separate ANOVAs with friendship type as the Independent variable. Each intimacy subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable. Significant main effects for friendship type emerged on Emotional Closeness,  $F(2, 135) = 3.74, p < .05$ , and Respect for Friend,  $F(2, 135) = 3.45, p < .05$ . Scheffé contrasts revealed that adolescents without reciprocated friends ( $M = 25.13, SD = 5.24$ ) reported less Emotional Closeness than disengaged Mends ( $M = 26.30, SD = 4.25$ ) and interdependent Mends ( $M = 26.60, SD = 3.59$ ). In addition, interdependent friends ( $M = 23.10, SD = 3.46$ ) reported more Respect for Friend than disengaged friends ( $M = 21.26, SD = 5.33$ ) and adolescents without reciprocated friends ( $M = 20.84, SD = 4.72$ ).

The second set of follow-up comparisons entailed five separate ANOVAs with sex as the Independent variable. Each Intimacy subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable. A significant main effect for sex emerged on Emotional Closeness,  $F(1, 136) = 49.98, p < .001$ , Balanced Relatedness,  $F(1, 136) = 6.15, p < .01$ , and Control  $F(1, 136) = 5.12, p < .01$ . Females ( $M = 27.50, SD = 4.35$ , and  $M = 26.71, SD = 4.86$ , respectively) reported more Emotional Closeness and Balanced Relatedness than males ( $M = 23.52, SD = 4.23$ , and  $M = 25.08, SD = 3.87$ , respectively). In addition, males ( $M = 12.52, SD = 4.92$ ) reported more Control than females ( $M = 11.52, SD = 3.34$ ).

Five additional sets of follow-up ANOVAs compared intimacy subscales within each friendship type and sex. Each revealed a significant main effect of intimacy ( $ps < .05$ ). Simple main effects specified differences between intimacy subscales. Subjects in each gender and friendship type group reported the highest levels of intimacy on Emotional Closeness and Balanced Relatedness, followed by Individuality, then Conformity, and finally Control.

**Self-Disclosure**—A MANOVA was conducted with 2 (sex)  $\times$  3 (friendship type) levels of between subject and 3 (self-disclosure subscales) levels of repeated measure within subject independent variables. Self-disclosure was the independent variable. A significant two-way interaction emerged between sex and self-disclosure,  $F(2, 131) = 6.38, p < .01$ . Follow-up ANOVAs and Scheffé contrasts specified sex differences on each self-disclosure subscale as well as differences between self-disclosure subscales within each sex.

Three sets of follow-up comparisons entailed separate ANOVAs with sex as the independent variable. Each self-disclosure subscale was considered, in turn, as the dependent variable. Significant main effects for sex emerged on Family Disclosure,  $F(1, 135) = 23.13, p < .01$ , Friendship Disclosure,  $F(1, 135) = 8.57, p < .05$ , and Physical Development Disclosure,  $F(1, 135) = 33.77, p < .001$ . Females reported higher levels of Family Disclosure ( $M = 23.38, SD = 7.26$ ), Friendship Disclosure ( $M = 22.75, SD = 7.52$ ), and Physical Development Disclosure ( $M = 24.35, SD = 7.18$ ) than males ( $M = 18.19, SD = 6.29$ ;  $M = 19.48, SD = 5.77$ ; and  $M = 17.83, SD = 6.88$ , respectively).

Two additional sets of follow-up ANOVAs compared self-disclosure subscales within each sex. No significant differences between self-disclosure subscales emerged for either males or females.

## Discussion

Results showed friendship types to differ on two intimacy attributes: Emotional Closeness and Respect for Friend. Adolescents who belong to the interdependent type reported a high level of Emotional Closeness and Respect for Friend. This trend reflects the ability of adolescents with interdependent friendships to negotiate and balance demands for closeness and individuality (Shulman, 1993). Adolescents without a reciprocated friendship were low on both attributes. This finding may suggest that the difficulties of such adolescents are twofold. They are unable both to be close to another and to respect that person. Such a difficulty results in their inability to establish a reciprocated friendship. Adolescents who belong to the disengaged type revealed a high level of Emotional Closeness and a low level of Respect for Friend. Their capacity for feeling close to the other could account for the fact that they are engaged in a reciprocated friendship. However, their ability to respect the other is low. This incapability surfaces in competitive contexts when self and another's interests are at stake and results in the tendency to work separately during a joint problem-solving task. Taken together, the results show again that the interplay between closeness and individuality determine the nature of the dose relationship, whether it is a friendship (Shulman, 1993) or a family (Minuchin, 1974; Reiss, 1981). Results are in line with our theoretical assumptions and conceptually replicate our former findings. However, no differences between friendship types on dimensions of Balanced Relatedness, Control and Conformity were found. Future studies could shed further light on the dynamics of the various friendship types.

Sex differences in Study 1 were replicated and extended. Females reported more closeness, self-disclosure, and individuality, but less control, than males. Males and females reported similar intimacy and self-disclosure profiles even though the prevailing type of close friendship differed. This suggests that gender differences in expressions of intimacy, openness, and the exchange of secrets (Camerana *et al.*, 1990) go beyond friendship types. Classification, into friendship types yielded unexpected gender differences. Over twice as many of boys' friendships were classified as Interdependent as compared to Disengaged, whereas far fewer of the girls' friendships were classified as Interdependent as compared to Disengaged. In our former studies similar proportions of boys' and girls' pairs were assigned to the two friendship types (Shulman, 1993, 1995). Future studies will tell whether boys and girls develop different paradigms of friendship.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Taken together, the two studies illustrate the role of intimacy in adolescent friendships, encapsulating the competing demands of closeness and individuation. Older adolescents insist on individuality within intimate friendships, whereas younger adolescents emphasize conformity and sharing ideas. We view this balance between closeness and individuation as an index of adaptation. Friends who cooperated on a joint task were closer and reported more individuality than disengaged friends and those without reciprocated friends. Thus, closeness is apparently advantageous not only because it is pleasant and desirable, but also because it fosters goal directedness and cooperation.

Theory and research have consistently emphasized the need to study qualitative differences in relationship functioning. For instance, major advances in our understanding of parent-child relationships emerged after attachment theorists applied qualitative categories to behavioral responses in a laboratory task; Hartup (1993) suggests that similar rewards await those who study variations in friendship styles. Systems theorists have long maintained that individuals, dyads, and families who skillfully balance closeness and individuality will demonstrate higher levels of adaptive behavior relative to those relationships that emphasize one at the expense of the other (Constantine, 1987; Shulman and Klein, 1983). These conclusions are underscored by research on parent-adolescent relationships associating high levels of self-esteem, school

achievement, and social competence with balanced family interactions reflecting closeness, respect, and tolerance Grotevant and Cooper, 1985).

Sex differences emerged in various aspects of intimacy. Most of the findings are in line with the well-established notion that females are more emotionally involved in close relationships than males (Camarena *et al.*, 1990; Jones and Dembo, 1989; Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). Females also reported more balanced relatedness, wherein one partner respects the views of the other. Despite these group differences, it should be noted that closeness and balanced relatedness were the most important features of males friendships also. Though it can be claimed that the intensive experience of females in close relationships leads to a capacity for resolving differences between individual needs, more studies are needed to disentangle relative and absolute differences in characteristics of male and female friendships.

Research on adolescent intimacy has been strongly influenced by Sullivan's (1953) description of adolescent chumships and Selman's (1981) depiction of adolescent advances in perceptions of close relationships. These theories of adolescent friendship produced a research emphasis on frankness, self-disclosure, willingness to help, and exclusivity (Sharabany *et al.*, 1981). The current studies expand this perspective by integrating developmental and systems theory frameworks. Intimacy is postulated to be a mature form of closeness that follows identity formation (Erikson, 1964) and cognitive maturation (Selman, 1990). Mature intimacy is achieved when the individual attains the desired closeness without sacrificing individual needs (Orlofsky, 1967; Orlofsky *et al.*, 1973; Reiss, 1981). In this vein, definitions of intimacy should probably be expanded to encompass "closeness with distinctive boundaries" (Williamson, 1982, p. 310), or a relationship in which "fusion" and "individuality" are developed and integrated (Karpel, 1976).

To conclude, a new framework of adolescent intimacy is proposed, emphasizing the need to balance closeness and individuality in friendships. Simply put, adolescent friends must negotiate the extent to which individuality is allowed within the emotional closeness of the relationship. Two studies describe how adolescents approach this task during different age periods. The results highlight the importance of considering a developmental timetable for the maturation of relationships and social skills, as well as the need to acknowledge individual variability in patterns of friendship intimacy.

## APPENDIX 6

### Emotional Closeness (.85–.86)

1. Gives me a lot of care and attention.
2. Says nice things about me.
3. Volunteers to help when I need it.
4. Enjoys being with me.
5. Speaks to me in a friendly way.
6. Helps me see that things are not so bad when I feel down.
7. Is available when I need him/her.
8. Gives me the feeling that I can tell him/her everything.

### Balanced Relatedness (.78–.80)

1. Considers my opinion.

2. Thinks it is right to sometimes disagree with him/her.
3. Is not hurt when I have other friends or business.
4. Respects my ideas.
5. Allows me to think over my ideas.
6. Respects my decisions.
7. Argues with me on minor issues.
8. Encourages my suggestions.

### **Respect for Friend (.78–.79)**

1. Thinks I am worth listening to.
2. Thinks I have interesting ideas.
3. Thinks I am worth learning from.
4. Says I know how to cope with difficulties.
5. Thinks I am competent.
6. Gives me a feeling that I am somebody.
7. Makes me feel reasonable when I say something.
8. Thinks I am smart.

### **Control (.84–.86)**

1. When we have a problem, he/she manages it.
2. Wants to control whatever I do.
3. Decides what we do when we are together.
4. Expects that everything will be done his/her way.
5. Tries to prevent me from being with others.
6. Always tries to change me.
7. Always argues when I say something.
8. Prefers that I act according to his/her decisions.

### **Conformity (.70–.79)**

1. When he/she is in a bad mood, I am too.
2. When he/she suggests doing something, I want to do it too.
3. When he/she is hurt by somebody, I am also hurt.
4. When he/she is in a good mood, I am too.
5. It is important for both of us to look similar.
6. I try to think like my friend.
7. We try not to argue.
8. We have similar expectations for the future.

### **Disclosure About Family (.87–.95)**

1. Characteristics or behaviors you do not like about your parents.
2. Anxieties experienced in your family relationships.
3. Feelings that you are not understood at home.
4. Feelings about being criticized at home.
5. Arguments or disagreements with your parents.
6. Feelings of being mistreated at home.
7. Opinions and feelings about your parents.
8. Being disappointed with your parents' behavior.

### **Disclosure About Friendship (.76–.92)**

1. Your disappointment about something your friend did.
2. Doubts you have about your relationship with your friend.
3. Your expectations about your friend.
4. Your feelings of jealousy towards your friend.
5. Your feelings of jealousy towards other friends.
6. Your feelings after being criticized by your friend.
7. Worries you have regarding your friend's expectations about you.

### **Disclosure About Physical Development (.89–.90)**

1. Worries about your appearance.
2. Expectations of future appearance.
3. Your illnesses and medical treatments.
4. Worries about future health problems.
5. Feelings about your body weight.
6. Feelings about your height.
7. Current medical problems.
8. Feelings about your face.

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Table 1

Friendship Intimacy Across Adolescence<sup>a</sup>

|                      | Total Sample (n = 288) | 7th Grade (n = 116)       | 9th Grade (n = 88)        | 11th Grade (n = 84)        | F Value           |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Emotional Closeness  | 24.44 (4.22)           | 24.12 (5.34)              | 24.48 (4.67)              | 24.75 (4.88)               | 0.74              |
| Balanced Relatedness | 25.10 (5.06)           | 23.86 <sup>a</sup> (5.71) | 25.82 <sup>b</sup> (3.96) | 26.03 <sup>b</sup> (4.45)  | 5.08 <sup>b</sup> |
| Respect for Friend   | 20.82 (5.38)           | 21.21 <sup>a</sup> (5.51) | 19.86 <sup>b</sup> (4.92) | 21.31 <sup>a</sup> (5.57)  | 4.32 <sup>b</sup> |
| Control              | 11.35 (4.58)           | 12.30 <sup>a</sup> (5.23) | 10.29 <sup>b</sup> (3.34) | 11.06 <sup>ab</sup> (4.24) | 7.33 <sup>c</sup> |
| Conformity           | 18.13 (4.66)           | 19.02 <sup>a</sup> (5.30) | 17.73 <sup>b</sup> (3.87) | 17.33 <sup>b</sup> (3.93)  | 8.51 <sup>c</sup> |

<sup>a</sup>For each subscale, potential scores ranged from 8 to 32, with higher scores indicating greater intimacy. Standard deviations are given in parentheses. Within rows, means with different subscripts indicate significant grade differences in Scheffé follow-up contrasts ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>b</sup> $p < .05$ .

<sup>c</sup> $p < .01$ .