Girl Talk: Disclosure Between Adolescent Sisters

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Child Development

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February 12, 1999
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Sisters, Adolescence, Disclosure
Abstract

In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 adolescent girls (7 sister pairs) between the ages of 13 and 18 years to examine disclosure between adolescent sisters. The content of disclosures between sisters focused on relationships, particularly those with boys, family, and peers. Participants described childhood relationships as play-oriented, whereas adolescent relationships were marked by less overall interaction but more talk. They identified their sisters’ ability to understand, be nonjudgmental, and be trustworthy as facilitating disclosure. The possibility that a sister may breach confidentiality through gossip or tattling, however, can limit disclosure. Participants perceived disclosure to bring them closer, to help them understand each other, and to highlight differences between them. Although disclosure was perceived to be important, participants also valued companionship and playfulness in their relationships. Perspectives and opinions of each sister within a dyad were generally congruent. Findings suggested an association between disclosure and closeness. Directions for future research are suggested.
Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance I received from many people while I worked on this project. I am especially grateful to my chair, Dr. Mark Benson, who provided valuable feedback and guidance and was always generous with his time. I also thank Dr. Andy Stremmel and Dr. Cosby Rogers for their support and assistance.

I also thank my friends, Jill Sobon and Nathalie Carrick, for their support and encouragement. Thank you, Jill, for always doing everything first and then assuring me I could do it, too. And thank you, Nathalie, for letting me use your apartment and computer and spurring me on by threatening to graduate before me!

Finally, I am grateful to my family for their support and encouragement. I am especially grateful to my niece and nephew, N-I-K-I and Alex, for helping me maintain the proper perspective. And of course, I am grateful for the assistance provided by my sisters, Sylvia and Cindy, the inspirations for this project.
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