

What are Peer relationships and how do they form?

Chapter 15
Peers and the Sociocultural World





Peers

These are individuals of about the same age or maturity level



Are peers necessary for development?

Peer groups provide a source of information and comparison about the world outside of the family

Popular Children

➤ *Popular –(prosocial children)* have a number of factors that contribute to their likeability:

- They combine academic and social competence
- Perform well in school and communicate with peers in sensitive, friendly and cooperative ways

➤ *Popular – antisocial children*

- Consist of “tough” boys who are athletically skilled but often poor students
- They are aggressive but their peers view them as “cool”

Controversial Children

➤ *Controversial children* display a blend of positive and negative social behaviors

- Some peers dislike them but they also have qualities that protect them from social exclusion
- They appear to be relatively happy and comfortable with their peer relationships
- They are disruptive but also engage in prosocial acts

Neglected Children

➤ *Neglected children* engage in low rates of interaction and are usually described as shy by peers.




- They are usually well-adjusted and do not report feeling lonely or unhappy
- They can break away from their usual pattern of playing by themselves

Rejected Children

- **Rejected – aggressive children** are an especially problematic mix
 - Show high rates of conflict, hostility, and hyperactive, inattentive, and impulsive behavior
- **Rejected – withdrawn children**
 - Passive and socially awkward
 - At-risk for abuse by bullies

Peer acceptance is a powerful predictor of psychological adjustment

Rejected children are usually unhappy, alienated, poorly achieving children with low-self-esteem

Bullies

Bullying: repeated, systematic efforts to inflict harm through physical attacks

- Nearly 1 in 3 students report occasional or frequent involvement as a victim with bullying

Who is likely to get bullied?

- Rejected – withdrawn children
- Boy victims are physically weaker
- Girl victims are more shy

Crowds Versus Cliques

Cliques

- Two to twelve individuals (on average 5-6) who are good friends and, consequently, tend to be similar in age, sex, race, and interests

Crowds

- A larger mixed-sex group of older children or adolescents who have similar values and attitudes and are known by a common label



Membership in a crowd is linked to self esteem

In a recent study, the members of the more popular crowd had the highest self-esteem and the members of the least popular crowd reported the lowest self-esteem



Think on your own... What Crowds Existed in Your High School?

- Create a list of the crowds (such as jocks, brains, band geeks).
 - List the stereotypical characteristics that coincided with each crowd.
- Did it seem that people chose to be members of different crowds or were they "placed" into that crowd - does it depend on the crowd?

Parenting Style and Groups

- ▶ When parents emphasized achievement, their children were more likely to be in the popular, jock, and normal crowds and less likely to be in the druggie crowd
- ▶ When parents monitored out-of-school behavior, their children were more likely to be in the brain crowd and less likely to be in the druggie crowd
- ▶ When parents included their children in joint decision making, their children were more likely to be in the brain and normal crowds and less likely in the druggie crowd

Peers include people we barely know and people we know very well.



Why are friendships important?

Friendships serve the following functions

1. Companionship
2. Stimulation
3. Physical support
4. Ego support
5. Social comparison
6. Intimacy/affection

How Are Your Childhood Friends Different From Your Adult Friends?



Early friendships are generally based on proximity and similarity. Friendships later in life involve more intimacy than friendships early in life.



Younger friendships might be expected to focus on play activities

First Friendships

- ▣ Preschooler's definition of "friend"
 - Someone "who likes you"
 - Someone with whom you spend a lot of time playing
- ▣ Preschooler's ideas about "friendships"
 - Pleasurable play
 - Sharing of toys



Friendships in Childhood

- ☐ Children look for friends who are like them
 - Of the same age
 - Of the same sex
 - Of the same ethnic group
 - Have the same interests
- ☐ Even unpopular children have friends
 - They have fewer friends
 - They find friends among younger children, other unpopular children, or children in a different class or different school

Types of Friends

- ☐ School-aged children distinguish between “best friends,” “good friends,” and “casual friends”
 - By age 4 or 5, most children claim to have a best friend
- ☐ Girls:
 - Care more about having a few close friends they can rely on
 - Care less about having many friends
- ☐ Boys:
 - Care more about having many friends
 - Care less about having few intimate, affectionate friends

Friendships in Adolescence

There is a dramatic increase in the psychological importance and intimacy of close friends during early adolescence

The quality of friendship is more strongly linked to feelings of well-being

- Teenagers with superficial friends or no close friends report feeling lonelier and more depressed and have lower sense of self-esteem than teenagers with intimate friends



Adolescent Friendships

Adolescents disclose intimate and personal information to their friends more often than younger children

More dependent on friends than parents for companionship, reassurance of worth, and intimacy

Friends are an important source of support

In childhood kids likely to turn to parents in times of stress, in adolescence more likely to turn to friends



What are friendships like in adulthood?

Adult friends tend to be similar in terms of occupational status, ethnicity, age, marital status, income, education, gender, and religion



Adult Friendships



☐ Young women – single or married – tend to have more intimate friendships than men and find friendships with other women more satisfying than those with men.



☐ Men are more likely to share information and activities, not confidences, with friends.

Same-Sex Friendships

☐ Women continue to have more intimate same-sex friendships than men

- When together, female friends say they prefer to “just talk” whereas male friends say they like to “do something” such as play sports

☐ Men report barriers to intimacy with other men

- For example, they indicate that they sometimes feel in competition with male friends and are therefore unwilling to disclose any weakness

Friendships in Middle and Late Adulthood

☐ Social networks tend to become smaller and more intimate at midlife

- People choose close friends over new friends as they grow older



Disengagement Theory

- Mutual withdrawal between older adults and society takes place in anticipation of death
- Older people decrease their activity level and interact less frequently. At the same time, society frees elders from employment and family responsibilities



Activity Theory

- Social barriers to engagement, not the desires of older adults, cause declining rates of interaction
- When older people lose certain roles, they do their best to find others in an effort to stay active and busy



Social Relationships in Late Adulthood

■ In old age, contacts with family and long-term friends are sustained until the 80s, when they diminish gradually in favor of a few very close relationships

- Contacts with acquaintances and willingness to form new social ties fall off steeply from middle through late adulthood



Good Bye!

Best of Luck in the future

