May 2019 Webinar

Friends and Crushes-
The Effects of Friends on Romantic Relationships

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Webinar Information

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KATHLEEN HLAVATY, PHD
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Today’s Webinar

1. Friendships during adolescence
2. Relationship skills learned in friendships
3. Impact of friendships on romantic relationships
4. How relationship education can improve friendships as well as romantic relationships
Why Friends?

The development of stable, intimate relationships outside of the family is a key developmental task during adolescence.

This type of relationship is developed in friendships before romantic relationships.

Connolly, Furman, & Konarski (2000); Sulivan (1953); Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen (2004)
Friendships during Adolescence
Friendships during Adolescence

What do you think of when you hear the words “friend” or “friendship”?
Friendships during Adolescence

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

Gottman & Parker (1987)
Intimacy in Friendships

Elementary School

Middle School

High School

Share interests
Like to do the same things
Live nearby

Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, McDonald, & Heverly-Fitt (2015)
Intimacy in Friendships

- **Elementary School**
- **Middle School**
- **High School**

- Share values/interests
- Have loyalty
- Stick up for you

Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, McDonald, & Heverly-Fitt (2015)
Intimacy in Friendships

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

Share similar interests
Understand you
Have intimacy with

Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, McDonald, & Heverly-Fitt (2015)
Friendships and Romantic Relationships
Interpersonal Competence Skills

1. Initiating relationships
2. Self-disclosure
3. Asserting displeasure with other’s actions
4. Providing emotional support
5. Conflict management

Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis (1988)
Initiating Relationships and Self-disclosure

1. Initiating relationships:
   - Skills to meet new people
   - Greater confidence

2. Self-disclosure:
   - Increased desire for self-disclosure
   - Too much too soon

Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis (1988)
Asserting Displeasure & Providing Emotional Support

3. Asserting displeasure with others’ actions:
   ◦ Important for creating and maintaining boundaries
   ◦ Limits intimacy and creates discomfort if absent in relationships
   ◦ Impacts romantic relationship quality

4. Providing emotional support:
   ◦ Appropriately responsive and reciprocal
   ◦ Associated with romantic relationship quality

Buhrmester et al. 1988; Collins et al., 2009; Connolly et al., 2000; Allen et al., 2019
Conflict Management

5. Conflict management:
   ◦ Conflict is inevitable
   ◦ Solving problems proactively
   ◦ Conflict management with peers associated with romantic relationships
   ◦ More peer aggression = more romantic aggression

Collins (2003); Connolly & Josephson (2007); Stocker & Richmond (2007)
Conflict Management

Interactions with friends moderate the association between exposure to domestic violence (EIPV) and dating violence

Linder & Collins (2005); Narayan, Engulnd, Carlson, & Byron (2014); graph for illustrative purposes only; does not reflect data
It is not just relationship skills…

Adolescents choose romantic partners from friend groups

Friends provide a social metric for romantic relationships

Friends provide emotional support and relationship advice

Collins, Welsh, & Furman (2009)
What about Relationship Education?
The Benefits of Relationship Education

Relationship education programs provide information and tools for identifying, developing, and maintaining healthy relationships.

Evidence of improvement in:
- Conflict management skills
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal competence
- Dating violence attitudes
- Peer relationship functioning

Adler-Baeder et al., 2015; Gardner et al., 2004; Kerpelman et al., 2009
Friendships and Relationship Education

For students who have not yet experienced a romantic relationship, encourage them to apply what they are learning in RE to friendships.

If you are having trouble getting buy in, have them focus on their friends.

Particularly for girls at high risk of dating violence, intervening in friend groups may be particularly important.

Mumford, Taylor, & Giordano (2017)
In conclusion...

Friendships play an influential role in individual development and romantic relationships

Young people learn many romantic relationship skills and behaviors through interactions with peers

Relationship education helps grow the skills necessary for success in all types of relationships
Questions?

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Second Wednesday Webinar
June 12, 2019

What Do You Mean?
Unblurring the Lines between Consent, Assault, & So Much More

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