The role of self-disclosure in buffering negative feelings within adolescent friendships

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Friendship serves a variety of functions throughout development and can buffer the effects of negative experiences through self-disclosure, the communication of emotions. Participants were 140 adolescents (51% male, M =12.95 years old) that completed surveys examining the buffering of negative life events, global self-worth, and relationships with their best friend in a correlational design. It was hypothesized that buffered feelings from negative experiences would mediate the relationship between self-disclosure and global self-worth, particularly for girls. Findings indicated levels of self-disclosure and buffered feelings from negative experiences were not associated with increased global self-worth. Gender differences were found between ratings of friendship and buffered feelings of different types of negative experiences, favoring girls. In addition, the overall model of self-disclosure and buffering of negative experiences together affected global self-worth for boys. Challenges in measurement of buffered feelings from negative experiences and global self-worth are discussed.

Extensive research on friendship supports that it is a positive experience which aids in the development of social skills, increases socialization, develops coping abilities, and provides intimacy (Berndt & Bridgett-Perry, 1986; Glick & Rose, 2011). Bowker, Thomas, Norman, and Spencer (2011) noted friendships are the most frequently observed relationship during adolescence, when compared to other relationships with parents, siblings, and acquaintances. Good friendships are comprised of a variety of qualities: intimacy, self-disclosure, aid, guidance, and companionship. Having a high quality best friend throughout an adolescent's development has the potential to buffer the effects of negative experiences (Adams, Santo, & Bukowski, 2011; Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999). Few studies have examined if there are specific characteristics that are most beneficial for reducing the impact of adverse events (Berndt & Hanna, 1995). The purpose of this study was to examine whether self-disclosure between friends leads to the emotional buffering of negative experiences, thereby increasing feelings of global self-worth.

Negative Life Experiences

Adolescents are subject to a variety of negative experiences throughout development. Such experiences include observing arguments between parents, fighting with parents, peer victimization, or romantic rejection (Peterson et al., 2009). All of these events can result in negative outcomes for adolescents, such as depression, loneliness, aggressive behaviors, and withdrawn behaviors. Learning how to handle such situations in a positive fashion is essential to psychosocial health and identity development (Adams et al., 2011). Establishing friendships is the primary way children learn social skills and how to deal with undesirable experiences independently of the support of their parents (Adams et al., 2011; Glick & Rose, 2011). Adolescents who experience negative outcomes report having fewer friends and less social support (Peterson et al., 2009). Excessive stressors in academic or interpersonal relationships throughout development have been linked to clinical depression (Shahar & Priel, 2003).

Previous studies on friendship have been limited to the impact of interpersonal issues in a school setting, which fails to recognize the

events adolescents encounter outside of school. For example, observing parental conflict could have a severe emotional impact on an adolescent, but would take place outside of school. As adolescents age, they discuss such experiences more frequently with their same age friends as opposed to siblings or parents (Adams et al., 2011). Thus, the question arises as to what types of negative experiences best friends can most effectively buffer? In the current study, responses to three types of negative events were examined: negative-interpersonal events, negative-failure related events, and general negative life events.

Best Friend "Buffer Effect" and Social Support

The presence of a best friend has the potential to maximize positive developments and buffer effects of negative life experiences (Adams et al., 2011; Hodges et al., 1999). High quality relationships develop through increased intimacy and companionship as children mature and gain the cognitive capacity to understand social cues and situations, along with better perspective taking ability (Shany, Wiener, & Assido, 2012). These relationships, and greater understanding of relationships, have been linked to higher self-esteem and self-perception.

Adams et al. (2011) noted in their research the buffer against negative feelings provided by best friends is associated with increased global self-worth, which is the opinions and feelings a person has about himself or herself. For the purpose of this study, buffering refers to reduced negative feelings brought on from adverse experiences. Mutual understanding between best friends is essential and develops within the relationship. A best friend can serve as the agent in reducing the impact of specific negative-interpersonal events, such as when a child is being bullied (Hodges et al., 1999). A best friend may be able to help an adolescent

see past a situation and understand his or her own emotions (Berndt & Hanna, 1995). The findings from Adams et al., (2011) were all primarily based on physiological findings (e.g., monitoring cortisol levels after a negative event) as well as in-depth interviews of two friends. One goal of the current study was to evaluate the development of a shorter and less time consuming self-report measure to assess the buffering effect between two friends.

Social Information Processing Model and Self-Disclosure

In general, when a negative event happens in a child's life, a frequently used coping strategy is to seek support (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). One of the primary support groups adolescents possess are their friends. Friendships high in intimacy and understanding tend to provide the appropriate form of support relative to a specific situation. For example, at a funeral, a friend may offer emotional support as opposed to a distraction (Lemerise & Harper, 2014). These strategies are described in the *social information processing model* (SIPM), which is the process by which children interpret emotional cues and develop the skills and strategies to help themselves and friends overcome negative experiences (Lemerise, & Arsenio, 2000; Lemerise, & Harper, 2014). The model is intended to predict how children act in real life social situations, if effective social skills have been previously learned during past experiences.

A frequently used coping strategy is self-disclosure (SD), which is considered by many researchers to be the basis for a relationship with intimacy, particularly friendship (Berndt & Hanna, 1995; Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). SD is a behavior in which a person tells someone else (e.g., a close friend) private information about themselves that generally deals with emotions. This process allows the disclosing person to (a) gain increased

emotional understanding, (b) to hear a different viewpoint from their friend, and (c) potentially buffer undesirable feelings from negative experiences. SD contributes to development of high quality friendships, satisfaction, and length of the friendship (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). Being able to mutually disclose personal information leads to higher levels emotional satisfaction and aids in the development of coping skills (Berndt & Hanna, 1995).

Age and Gender Differences and Similarities

Friends are viewed as supportive relationships by all age groups (Berndt & Bridgett-Perry, 1986). Individual differences in emotional competence, however, can greatly affect interpersonal relationships at any age (Lemerise & Harper, 2014). In addition, as children grow older, they tend to understand what strengths their friends have and when a friend can be relied on (Berndt & Bridgett-Perry, 1986). Adolescents self-disclose more frequently than younger children, as they are more verbal and possess a better understanding of their own emotions and the emotions of others (Shahar & Priel, 2003). Overall, those friendships that display higher levels of emotional disclosure (e.g., trust, disclosure, and intimacy) are more likely to endure.

The current study focuses on adolescence, a time period during the second decade of life during which a variety of biological, emotional, and social changes take place (Steinberg, 2002). Researchers define the age range of adolescence based on the responsibilities that adolescents take on as they age, with definitions including children as young as 11 and extending until 19 (Arnett, 2000). For the purposes of this study, the adolescents that participated were 12 to 15 years of age, as this is believed to be the time which teenagers begin to learn extensively learn about social

skills and interpersonal relationships (Arnett, 2000; Steinberg, 2002).

Gender differences also play a large factor in self-disclosure (Berndt & Hanna, 1995; Rose et al., 2012). In general, girls report disclosing about emotions more frequently and the behavior generally takes place with their same-sex peers (Rose et al., 2012). Boys report having decreased amounts of disclosure and generally feel it is a waste of their time, which has been linked to the idea that boys do not want to display a weak image to peers. Some boys do not even have a friendship that has components of intimacy and report never experiencing any emotional expression (Berndt & Hanna, 1995). Boys possess a larger network of friends, however, these friendships tend to be of a lower quality and have fewer emotional connections, when compared to relationships between girls (Rose et al., 2012). Another gender difference is that girls report more positive feelings about friendship, such as being cared for and understood by friends, and greater overall friendship quality when asked how they felt about talking about their problems with a friend, when compared to boys (Rose et al., 2012). Overall, given the gender differences in self-disclosure, gender was considered as a moderating variable in this study.

Hypotheses

Despite the fact that friendship is a fundamental part of development and the impacts of having a best friend are considered beneficial, little research been conducted to examine the role of self-disclosure between best friends, the methodology of studying it, or how it aids in developing support for the ability to overcome negative experiences. Adolescents who possess adequate understanding of their own emotions should be able to disclose their emotions to a friend, which should allow the friend to use strategies that can buffer negative

feelings. Based on the higher quality of their relationship with their best friend, these adolescents should have a friendship rated high in intimacy, and show higher levels of self-disclosure than their non-disclosing peers. For the purpose of this study, it was hypothesized (1) that participants who rated their best friend highly on the intimate exchange/self-disclosure (SD) subscale of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ) would (a) report more positively buffered scores for the effects of negative experiences on Recall and Evaluation of Experiences Task (REET) and (b) higher scores for feelings of global self-worth (GSW), particularly for girls. The buffering of negative experiences served as a partial mediating variable in this model between SD and GSW. This effect was predicted to be strongest for the buffering of negative-interpersonally-related events compared to other negative situations, as an interpersonal event is more likely to be understood by a friend, while other events may be more specific to the individual's experience. It was also hypothesized (2) that girls would rate each aspect of their friendship higher on the FQQ, as compared to boys, by displaying higher scores for self-disclosure, higher scores of overall friendship quality, and greater buffered feelings from negative experiences.

Method

Participants

Participants were 140 7th and 8th grade (12-15 years old) students from a rural Western Pennsylvania middle school. The sample included 72 adolescent boys and 68 adolescent girls who were recruited through convenience. All participants completed the same survey and were treated according to the APA ethical standards.

Materials

Best Friend Recall Task (BFRT). Participants were asked to think of their best friend and an experience shared with that friend, describe the event in as much detail as possible, and how it made them feel. This procedure was used to induce thoughts about an experience with the participant's best friend, so if the friendship was a high quality relationship, some buffering effects would occur, which would then influence responses on the survey. The proportion of positive versus negative adjectives were taken from the PANAS-C (Laurent et al., 1999) and calculated to evaluate the nature of the experience described. This measure was used so whoever the participants chose as their best friend would remain anonymous, as opposed to the Reciprocated Friend's Task (Adams et al., 2011; Glick & Rose, 2011).

Recall and Evaluation of Experiences Task (REET). This task was created for the current study and used a combination of frequently reported experiences from the Life Events Scale (Shahar & Priel, 2003) and the Negative Life Events Scale (Posick, 2013a). Participants were asked to recall and evaluate experiences throughout their adolescence. Twenty-one, randomly mixed scenarios were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very positive*, 7 = *very negative*). Participants read 15 negative experiences comprised of six negative-interpersonal events (e.g., "You quarreled with your brother/sister), six negative-failure related events (e.g., "You failed an examination."), and three general-negative events (e.g., "You experienced the death of someone you loved."). Participants also read 6 positive experiences comprised of three positive interpersonal experiences (e.g., "You formed a new friendship.") and three positive success related-events (e.g., "You were complimented on your academic performance."). Following the format of

Adams et al. (2011), participants were asked how the experience made them feel (Part A) (e.g., You failed a test. A. How did that make you feel?) and how talking to their best friend about the experience afterwards made them feel (Part B) (e.g., B. After talking to your best friend about it how did it make you feel?). The Life Events Scale (Shahar & Priel, 2003) had both high reliability as the internal consistency of the questions ranged between .53 and .88. To derive the score for the buffered negative feelings for each question, the score for feelings after disclosing to a friend (Part B) was subtracted from the score for the feelings from recalled experiences (Part A). This system of scoring allowed for a range between -6 and 6 with higher scores indicating greater buffering. The mean difference scores were then calculated for each type of event as well as an overall buffering score. The positive events were not included in the analysis.

Global Self-Worth Scale (GSWS). To examine global self-worth (e.g., "I like myself.") participants answered seven questions on a four-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*). This scale was comprised of two questions used in Adams et al. (2011) (α = .81) and five items from Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (α = .78). The mean of the seven questions was used as the score for the analysis, with higher scores indicating greater feelings of global self-worth.

Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ). To examine the friendships described by the participants as a whole, each participant completed the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ) (Parker & Asher, 1989; 1993). The questionnaire was comprised of 41 randomly mixed statements about friendship quality set on 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not true at all*, 5 = *very true*). Participants were asked to rate the statements as they related to their relationship with their best friend. This questionnaire contained several subscales: ten validation and caring statements (e.g., "Makes me feel good about my ideas,"); three conflict resolution statements (e.g., "Make up easily when we fight,"); seven conflict and betrayal statements (e.g., "Fight a lot,"); nine help and guidance statements (e.g., "Helps me so I can get done quicker,"); five companionship and recreation statements (e.g., "Always sit together at lunch,"); and six intimate exchange/self-disclosure statements (e.g., "Always tell each other our problems,"). Two questions on the conflict and betrayal subscale were modified at the request of the accommodating school district. There was high internal consistency with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .73 to .90 across subscales (Parker & Asher, 1993). The mean of each subscale's rating and the mean score for total friendship quality were the scores used for analysis.

Procedure

School district approval was required before the procedure could be conducted. All the necessary materials were sent to the administration in a formal request. Two weeks prior to data collection, an informed consent was sent home to the parents/guardians of the middle school students. The completion of the surveys took 35 minutes and occurred in the classrooms students reported to for homeroom. Participants were given assent forms that explained there were no harmful effects of this study and that they were allowed to abstain from completing the survey packet. Teachers distributed and proctored the completion of the packets using a standard script. The packet was constructed in the following order: The BFRT, the REET, the GSWS, the FQQ, and then mood repair. Finally, participants were given a debriefing form explaining the nature of the study.

Results

Reliability

Reliability analyses were conducted for each task. There was high internal consistency for the REET (α = .93), both Part A (α = .85) and Part B (α = .93). There was also high internal consistency for questions on GSWS (α = .94) and the FQQ (α = .95). Of the experiences described by participants, 86.4% were coded as a positive event, thus the majority of the experiences with friends that were recalled were positive.

Primary Hypothesis

In Table 1, the overall means are presented for each of the study variables. There was high multicollinearity between the subscales of the REET, therefore, only the overall buffering score for all the events examined (NE) was used in the subsequent analyses to test the study hypotheses. Participants showed low levels of buffering from different negative experiences examined on the REET, moderate levels of GSW, and high levels of friendship quality. As shown in Table 2, the scores for SD and NE were significantly correlated. Specifically, the higher the scores for SD, the better participants felt after talking to a friend about a negative experience, except for negative life events. Neither SD nor NE were related to GSW. Interestingly, overall friendship quality was positively related to all study variables, including GSW.

Even though some of the variables for the predicted model were not correlated (Baron and Kenny, 1986), a multiple regression was completed to test the hypothesis that increased SD and increased the overall buffering score for all negative experiences (NE) would predict increased feelings of GSW. The model for GSW with SD was not significant, p = .59. SD alone was not associated with GSW ($beta$ = .046, p = .59). The model was tested regardless, using SD and NE as the predictor variables and GSW as the criterion variable. The overall model SD, NE, and the impact these variables had on GSW was not significant, p = .47. Neither SD ($beta$ = .003, p = .97) nor NE ($beta$ = .103, p = .27) were associated with increased feelings of GSW within the model. Thus, SD and NE were not associated with increased feelings of GSW, as previously predicted.

As shown in both Table 3 for adolescent girls and Table 4 for adolescent boys, the scores for SD and NE were significantly correlated within each gender. The higher the scores for SD, the better participants felt after talking to a friend about a negative experience, with the exception of NLE and GSW in girls. For either gender, SD did not predict increased feelings of GSW. For boys, the higher the overall scores for NE, the higher the feelings of GSW reported. In addition, friendship quality for was positively associated with all of the study variables in boys, however, not for NLE and GSW in girls. As there was also multicollinearity between the subscales of the REET for each gender, only the overall buffering score for all negative experiences (NE) was used for further analyses.

To examine the prediction that the mediating model would be stronger in girls versus boys, a standard multiple regression was performed for each gender, testing first SD as a predictor of GSW, and then adding in the NE as the mediator. For girls, the overall model for GSW with SD as the predictor was not significant p =.73. In addition, the full mediating model with NE was also not significant p =.94. For boys, the overall model for GSW with SD as the predictor was not significant p =.08, but the full mediating model with NE added was significant for boys, F (2, 69) = 3.16, p = .05, accounting for 8.4% of the variance in GSW. Neither SD ($beta$= .109, p=.39) nor NE ($beta$ =.226, p = .08) was a significant predictor. Overall, the hypothesis

girls would have higher feelings of GSW through the model was not supported. Instead, NE had an impact on the overall model for GSW in boys, but was not a specific predictor.

To test the hypothesis that adolescent girls would display a greater NE as compared to adolescent boys, an independent samples t-test was completed. The hypothesis was supported $F(1, 138) = 208.93$, $p. = 03$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Thus, adolescent girls ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 1.10$) displayed a greater NE than did adolescent boys ($M = 1.05$, $SD = .95$). There was also a significant difference in the buffering of NIRE, between each gender as $F(1, 138) = 166.98$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Thus, adolescent girls ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 1.16$) displayed a greater buffer effect than did adolescent boys ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.04$) for the average of all of the NIRE examined. To test the hypothesis participants would report a greater buffer effect for NIRE as compared to NFR and NLE, a 2 (gender) x 3 (type of negative experience) mixed between-within ANOVA was completed. This hypothesis was not supported, $p = .56$. Thus, there was no significant difference between the ratings of the buffer of NIRE when compared to NFRE and NLE. The means and standard deviations of the NE and each of the negative events examined are displayed in Table 5, by gender.

Gender differences were expected in ratings of friendship and SD, favoring girls. To test for these differences, descriptive statistics were calculated (see Table 5) and independent samples t-tests were conducted for all analyses. The hypothesis that adolescent girls would rate their friendships higher in overall quality than adolescent boys was supported, $t(138) = 6.32$, $p > .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$. The hypothesis that adolescent girls would rate their friendships higher in SD than would adolescent boys was also supported $t(138) = 12.10$, $p > .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.16$. Significant gender differences were found between several other subscales:

validation and caring, guidance, companionship, and communication. Adolescent girls rated their friends significantly higher than adolescent boys on all of the subscales of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, except for the conflict betrayal subscale. The average ratings and standard deviations are displayed in Table 5. Thus, when compared with adolescent boys, adolescent girls had higher quality friendships across a variety of characteristics of friendship examined. In addition, the means for each gender for GSW are also displayed in the table, and no differences were found between boys versus girls.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between SD and NE and how these factors related to feelings of GSW. It was hypothesized increased SD and NE would result in higher feelings of GSW. Findings indicated there was no relationship for the overall model between SD, buffered feelings from negative experiences, and feelings of GSW. Also, it was also hypothesized the relationship would be greater in adolescent girls as compared to adolescent boys, with gender serving as a moderating variable. The results indicated that higher SD was associated with NE, however, only boys showed an association between SD and GSW. Also, when the overall model was tested, there was a relationship found for boys when the combination of SD and NE on GSW was implemented. This was not found in the model for girls, contrary to the hypothesis that girls would display a significant and greater buffer effect of the model. None of the individual variables, however, were predictive of GSW. Clearly, some aspect of sharing information with friends in a way that reduces negative emotions is valuable for adolescent boys, and worth exploring in future studies

It was also hypothesized adolescent girls would report higher ratings of SD, overall friendship quality, and higher ratings on each subscale of the FQQ, as compared to adolescent boys. This hypothesis was supported as adolescent girls had significantly higher ratings of friendship quality, intimate exchange/self-disclosure, validation and caring, conflict resolution, guidance, and communication than adolescent boys. Only the conflict-betrayal subscale did not support this hypothesis. This confirms the frequent finding that adolescent girls are more likely than adolescent boys to disclose with their friends and report having higher quality friendships across several constructs (Rose et al., 2012).

Additionally, it was hypothesized that NIRE would have the greatest buffered scores as compared to NFRE and NLE when linked with SD between genders. The analysis indicated this was not the case and there was no significant difference between the ratings of each type of negative event. However, findings did indicated there were significant difference in the average rating of the NIRE, NFRE and NE, between genders. Thus, the buffer provided by adolescent girl's reported friendships was greater in this sample. However, there was no significant difference between the ratings of negative life events, between the two genders. This could be attributed to the high intercorrelations between the negative events that were examined on the REET, indicating that these subscales did not have enough variability within them. Also, the commonality of the events experienced throughout adolescence and girl's willingness to disclose more frequently could have been contributing factors (Peterson et al., 2009; Shahar & Priel, 2003).

One strength of this study is that two of the new measures which were developed, the BFRT and the REET, displayed characteristics that contributed to a sound research methodology. The BFRT was an effective indicator that the majority of participant's friendships were positively based. Although the instructions did not ask participants to write about a specific type of experience, 86.4% of students listed a positive event, thus showing the friendships that were recalled were positive in nature. Of the surveys used in the analysis, 2.9% of participants listed a negative event, however, the majority of these events dealt with the best friend aiding the participant in a negative experience (e.g., "My best friend hugged me when my pet died."). Thus, it would appear the BFRT task was an effective measure for priming participants with positive thoughts about a best friend, while keeping said friend anonymous, as opposed to the Reciprocated Friends Task (Adams et al., 2011; Glick & Rose, 2011). Another strength of this study is the REET appears to be an adequate measure of negative experiences and how participants felt about recalling negative experiences. The positive relationship between buffered feelings from negative experiences and SD and for the entire sample, and between buffered feelings for both SD and GSW for boys was indicative of this. In addition, the association with self-disclosure and friendship quality provides a measure of concurrent validity for this newly developed questionnaire. This measure provides an alternative, self-report measure, as opposed to measuring of physiological responses, as seen in previous studies to examine negative feelings and GSW (Adams et al., 2011).

One of the limitations of this study is the use of imagined contact to complete the BFRT. When related to best friends, imagined contact and self-report are not always appropriate methods to use, as children can imagine their ideal best friend, and may overlook negative characteristics (Gleason, 2002). Perhaps the buffer effect that would take place in actuality was reduced because the task was not explicit and was recalled by

participants, as opposed to actually taking place in a social situation. Another limitation of this study was the survey packets were administered by teachers in their own classrooms. Despite having a standardized script, teachers could have altered the administration directions. For example, a few teachers read aloud each survey question, despite being instructed to simply read the instructions to their students. In future research, it may be beneficial to have provided additional teacher training or have a single test administrator.

Implications and Future Research

This study did support the hypothesis that adolescent girls would rate their friendships higher in quality and SD, as compared to adolescent boys. These results could be applied to help educators examine what characteristics of a friend are most beneficial when it comes to dealing with adverse experiences. The findings could also be used to form programs to enhance friendships, particularly for boys, given they generally have lower SD and overall friendship quality, with an emphasis on growing SD between peers, to develop qualities needed to establish high-quality friendships. These findings could be further examined to focus on both adolescent boy's self-disclosure habits and overall quality of their friendships. It is important to look into characteristics of each genders' friendships that may make a positive impact throughout the many unique situations that arise during development.

This study also provided support for a relationship between SD and NE. In future research, it may be beneficial to examine other age groups, both younger and older, to examine if friendship quality, self-disclosure, or the buffering of negative experiences increase with age. SD should also be examined between other relationships that adolescents

have, such as comparing disclosure to friends to disclosure with parents and siblings. This approach would allow for self-disclosure and relationship quality to be examined within relationships other than friendship and to see if GSW was influenced differently from different relationships. This could be beneficial for general relationship development across a variety of interactions.

Additionally, future research could involve simplifying or expanding the format of the REET. For example, statements could be simplified from the two part format that was used (e.g., Part A and Part B) into a single question format (e.g., After failing a test and discussing your emotions and feelings with your best friend, how would you feel about the experience?). Additionally, it may have been beneficial to shorten the REET to examine just one type of negative event to establish if self-disclosure had an impact on a specific type of event and raising feelings of global self-worth. Finally, perhaps the REET could explore SD habits between adolescents and their other relationships, such as parents, siblings, etc. Expanding the REET is critical to establish a method of self-report to examine how adolescents feel about self-disclosure with their best friends and across other relationships.

Conclusion

This study did not establish support for a relationship between self-disclosure, buffered feelings from negative experiences, and feelings of global self-worth. There was, however, a relationship between self-disclosure and buffered feelings from negative experiences, showing that self-disclosure was associated with the buffering of negative feelings from previous experiences. Therefore, there is additional validation for the use of the REET Questionnaire. It is vital to further examine the impact self-disclosure and

friendship quality have on buffering negative experiences and any relationship with global self-worth. A better understanding of these variables and the development of new measures can greatly aid in understanding of the manner in which social support provided by friends reduces stressors and makes a positive impact on an adolescent's psychosocial health.

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Appendix

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Tested Variables

	M	SD
REET		
Overall Buffering Score for All Negative Experiences (NE)	1.21	1.11
Negative Failure Related Events Buffering Score (NFRE)	1.26	1.03
Negative Interpersonally Related Events Buffering Score (NIRE)	1.21	1.11
Negative Life Events Buffering Score (NLE)	1.27	1.18
GSW		
Global Self-Worth	3.23	.66
FQQ		
Total Friendship	3.56	.66
Intimate Exchange/Self-Disclosure	3.54	1.07
Validation & Caring	3.95	.85
Conflict Resolution	3.62	1.02
Guidance	3.73	1.02
Communication	4.05	.83
Conflict & Betrayal	2.41	.76

Note. N=140. Scores on the REET were derived by subtracting the rating of participants emotional reactions to a negative event (1 = *very positive*, 7= *very negative*) minus reactions after talking to a best friend (1 = *very positive*, 7= *very negative*), with the more positive score indicating greater NE. The GSWS and the FQQ were on 5-point Likert scales (1 =*not true at all*, 5 = *very true*), indicating the higher the score the greater the described feeling. IESD = Intimate Exchange and Self-Disclosure.

Table 2

Correlations Between Variables Assessed in All Participants (N = 140)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. FQ	-						
2. SD	.817*	-					
3. NE	.363*	.413*	-				
4. NFRE	.350*	.396*	.942*	-			
5. NIRE	.380*	.418*	.945*	.809*	-		
6. NLE	.257*	.325	.909*	.815*	.805*	-	
7. GSW	.190*	.046	.105	.134	.080	.073	-

*Note. *p <.05. N=140.* FQ = Friendship Quality. SD = Self-Disclosure. All the Negative events are subscales of the REET. NE = Overall Buffering Score for All Negative Experiences. NFRE = Negative-Failure Related Events. NIRE = Negative-Interpersonally Related Events. NLE = Negative Life Events. GSW = Global Self-Worth.

Table 3

Correlations Between Variables Assessed in Adolescent Girls (N = 68)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. FQ	-						
2. SD	.762*	-					
3. NE	.324*	.343*	-				
4. NFRE	.317*	.347*	.955*	-			
5. NIRE	.361*	.362*	.958*	.857*	-		
6. NLE	.190	.223	.910*	.820*	.825*	-	
7. GSW	.067	-.043	-.008	.012	-.033	.007	-

Table 4

Correlations Between Variables Assessed in Adolescent Boys (N = 72)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. FQ	-						
2. SD	.793*	-					
3. NE	.339*	.422*	-				
4. NFRE	.336*	.408*	.923*	-			
5. NIRE	.332*	.400*	.926*	.739*	-		
6. NLE	.250*	.356*	.906*	.801*	.773*	-	
7. GSW	.336*	.205	.272*	.309*	.245	.171	-

Note. *p<.05 FQ = Friendship Quality. SD = Self-Disclosure. NE = Overall Buffering Score for All Negative Experiences. NFRE = Negative-Failure Related Events. NIRE = Negative-Interpersonally Related Events. NLE = Negative Life Events. GSW = Global Self-Worth.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Variables by Gender in Sample

	Adolescent Boys		Adolescents Girls		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
REET					
NE	1.05	.95	1.44	1.08	.03
NFRE	1.10	.95	1.43	1.10	.06
NIRE	1.00	1.04	1.45	1.16	.02
NLE	1.10	1.13	1.45	1.21	.09
GSWS					
GSW	3.28	.64	3.18	.68	.35
FQQ					
Total FQ	3.31	.76	3.84	.51	.01
IESD	3.00	1.08	4.11	.73	.01
VC	3.65	.94	4.28	.61	.01
CR	3.37	1.05	3.89	.93	.01
Guidance	3.47	1.20	4.00	.72	.01
CN	3.96	.94	4.29	.79	.03
CB	2.38	.68	2.45	.84	.08

Note. N = 140. NE = Overall Buffering Score for All Negative Experiences. NFRE = Negative-Failure Related Events. NIRE = Negative Interpersonally Related Events. NLE = Negative Life Events. Statements on the REET were the subtraction between the two statements (1 = *very positive*, 7= *very negative*). GSW- Global Self-Worth, which was on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 =*not true at all*, 5 = *very true*). Total FQ = Total Friendship Quality Mean. IESD = Intimate Exchange/Self-Disclosure. VC = Validation and Caring. CR = Conflict Resolution. CN = Communication. CB = Conflict Betrayal. The FQQ was on a 5-point Likert scale (1 =*not true at all*, 5 = *very true*).