


# in Adolescence: A Prospective Study of Expressive Suppression and Depressive Symptoms

Gaak Diana, 402 group


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- ▶ During adolescence, affective situations often result in heightened emotional responses. Although adolescents have a more sophisticated awareness of emotions than do children, in general, the control functions exerted by adolescents are often regarded as inadequate. One cause for particular concern is the fact that adolescence is a critical period for the onset of depressive symptoms, especially among girls.


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- ▶ It is therefore not surprising that emotion regulation has emerged as an important topic in the study of adolescent depression. Emotion regulation is often defined as the processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modulating emotional reactions in order to accomplish individual goals and facilitate adaptive social functioning.

- ▶ Drawing on the process-oriented model of emotion regulation, in the current study we examine the link between expressive suppression and depressive symptoms in young adolescents. There are two main reasons for our interest in emotion expression. First, expressive suppression is relatively ineffective at reducing the experience of negative emotion and has physiological (e.g., increased cardiovascular activation), social (e.g., lower social support, less closeness to others), and cognitive (e.g., impaired memory functioning) costs. Thus individuals who report the habitual use of expressive suppression may be particularly at risk for developing depressive symptoms. Notably, the presence of expressive suppression appears to be more strongly associated with depression than the absence of cognitive reappraisal.

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- ▶ Cross-sectional studies have found a positive association between self-reports of habitual expressive suppression and depressive symptoms in adults and adolescents. However, the precise nature of this relation remains unclear. Expressive suppression originally was hypothesized to influence adjustment, but the onset and continuation of depressive feelings may also lead to greater use of suppression. Expressive suppression might provide a short-term function among depressed individuals, temporarily lowering their experience of sadness

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- ▶ Interpersonal theories of depression postulate that depressed individuals' behaviors related to displaying negative affect (e.g., irritability, excessive reassurance seeking, rumination) elicit rejection and stress in their relationships that may further exaggerate depressive symptoms. If depressed individuals are aware this is the case, then they may attempt to inhibit their display of negative emotions. Adolescents are increasingly metacognitive and aware of what others are thinking of them.


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- ▶ In addition, they examined whether sex moderated the relations between suppression and depressive symptoms. They hypothesized that the relation from suppression to depressive symptoms would be stronger for girls than for boys. Girls value interpersonal connectedness more than boys and, as a result, they may be more susceptible to depressive symptoms when they experience the social costs of using suppression.


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- ▶ On the one hand, depressed boys may be more likely to use suppression because they experience more peer rejection. On the other hand, depressed girls may be more likely to use suppression because they value interpersonal connectedness more than boys.



# Attachment, Friendship, and Psychosocial Functioning in Early Adolescence


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- ▶ From the earliest years of childhood, children develop significant relationships with family members and, with increasing age, their peers. Over the years, researchers have examined the influence that children's experiences with these relationships may have on their functioning. Links have been established between parent-child relationship quality and adjustment during the pre-, elementary, and middle school years as well as later adolescence

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- ▶ An Attachment Framework
  - ▶ Although there are a number of ways in which relationships with parents may influence relationships with friends and psychosocial functioning, our framework in the present study is based on premises drawn from attachment theory. According to attachment theorists, the child who receives responsive and sensitive parenting from the primary caregiver forms an internal working model of that caregiver as trustworthy and dependable when needed and develops a model of the self as someone who is worthy of such care



- ▶ Attachment relationships and social competence.
- ▶ Researchers have shown that securely attached toddlers are more sociable and positively oriented toward unfamiliar peers than toddlers with insecure attachments

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- ▶ Attachment and psychosocial adjustment. Children who feel secure and supported by their primary caregivers have been shown to have higher levels of perceived competence in multiple domains, have higher self-esteem and feel less lonely

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- ▶ Attachment and friendship.
  - ▶ Aspects of the early parent-child relationship, including security of attachment, have been shown to predict competence in forming close friendships at 10 years of age such that children who had positive early relationships with their parents were more likely to have a close friend at age 10


# Internalizing and externalizing

RESEARCH FROM OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY HAS CHALLENGED THE COMMON PERCEPTION THAT GIRLS TEND TO INTERNALIZE THEIR PROBLEMS, BECOMING DEPRESSED OR ANXIOUS, WHILE BOYS EXTERNALIZE, COMMITTING VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE OR PROPERTY.



- ▶ Researchers studied 2549 young people appearing before juvenile courts in five Ohio counties and found that whether African-Americans internalized or externalized their problems was dependent on family circumstances rather than gender.



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- ▶ Researchers used their Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) an internet-based questionnaire for young people designed to assess risk of further problems in life and including issues such as previous involvement with the law, family and parenting, substance abuse and traumatic events.

- ▶ The study found that once family circumstances were taken into account African-American girls and boys showed similar levels of externalizing and internalizing behavior being more likely to show outward aggression if they lived in families with higher levels of dysfunction. This relationship was not found in white families.
- ▶ Stephen Gavazzi commented:
- ▶ "Family issues affect children in African-American families differently than they do in white families. That is something that really hasn't been found before .... Researchers who study ethnicity and culture have long noted the primacy of family for African Americans. That's telling us that families matter in a different way for African-American youth than what we're finding for whites."



# **HAPPY AND UNHAPPY FAMILIES**

- GALADZHEV SERGEY
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# HAPPY AND UNHAPPY FAMILIES

RESEARCH FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME PUBLISHED IN *CHILD DEVELOPMENT* ANALYZED RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS IN 234 FAMILIES WITH A CHILD AGED SIX. CONSISTENT WITH LONG-ESTABLISHED FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY, RESEARCHERS FOUND THREE DISTINCT PROFILES: ONE HAPPY, TERMED **COHESIVE**, AND TWO UNHAPPY, TERMED **DISENGAGED** AND **ENMESHED**. SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES WERE ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIRST YEARS AT SCHOOL DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF DYSFUNCTIONAL PROFILE IDENTIFIED. THIS STUDY IS THE FIRST TO CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF THESE PROFILES ACROSS MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP AND BETWEEN CHILDREN AND PARENTS.

## RESEARCHERS EXPLAIN THAT:

- COHESIVE FAMILIES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY HARMONIOUS COMMUNICATION, EMOTIONAL WARMTH, AND FIRM BUT FLEXIBLE ROLES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN.
- ENMESHED FAMILIES MAY BE EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED AND DISPLAY SOME WARMTH, BUT EXPERIENCE 'HIGH LEVELS OF HOSTILITY, DESTRUCTIVE MEDDLING, AND A LIMITED SENSE OF THE FAMILY AS A TEAM'.
- DISENGAGED FAMILIES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH COLD, CONTROLLING, AND WITHDRAWN RELATIONSHIPS.

• RESEARCHERS ASSESSED FAMILIES USING PARENT AND TEACHER REPORTS AND THROUGH DIRECT OBSERVATION. PARTICIPANTS CAME TO THE LAB ANNUALLY FOR THREE YEARS, MAKING TWO VISITS ONE WEEK APART. BOTH PARENTS AND THEIR CHILD PLAYED JENGA, AN INTERACTIVE GAME, FOR 15 MINUTES. ON ALTERNATE WEEKS EACH PARENT INTERACTED ALONE WITH THE CHILD FOR TEN MINUTES DIVIDED BETWEEN PLAY AND CLEAN UP. PARENTS WERE ALSO VIDEOTAPED DISCUSSING TWO TOPICS INTENDED TO ELICIT DISAGREEMENT.


- THE STUDY FOUND THAT CHILDREN FROM DISENGAGED HOMES STARTED SCHOOL WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF AGGRESSIVE AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AND MORE DIFFICULTY FOCUSING AND COOPERATING WITH CLASSROOM RULES. THESE BEHAVIORS TENDED TO INCREASE WITH TIME. CHILDREN FROM ENMESHED HOMES BEGAN WITH NO MORE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS OR DEPRESSION AND WITHDRAWAL THAN THOSE FROM COHESIVE FAMILIES. HOWEVER, AS CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES WITH EITHER TYPE OF DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP PATTERN CONTINUED IN SCHOOL THEY BEGAN TO SUFFER FROM HIGHER LEVELS OF ANXIETY AND FEELINGS OF LONELINESS COMBINED WITH ALIENATION FROM PEERS AND TEACHERS.

- WHILE THE STUDY IDENTIFIED A CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL THE RESEARCHERS CAUTION AGAINST CONCLUDING THAT DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED. THEY POINT TO OTHER RELEVANT RISK FACTORS, INCLUDING HIGH-CRIME OR DEPRIVED NEIGHBORHOODS, PEER PRESSURE AND GENETIC TRAITS.



# Links Between Teenage And Domestic Violence

- *August 2007* - A study from the University of Washington published in *Violence and Victims* and funded by the National Institutes on Drug Abuse and Mental Health has identified a link between teenage and domestic violence. Using data from more than 800 participants in the longitudinal Seattle Social Development Project, researchers Todd Herrenkohl, Rick Kosterman, W. Alex Mason and J. David Hawkins found that adolescents who engaged in violent behavior relatively regularly throughout their teenage years or who began in their mid teens and increased with time were significantly more likely to perpetrate domestic violence in their mid 20s.

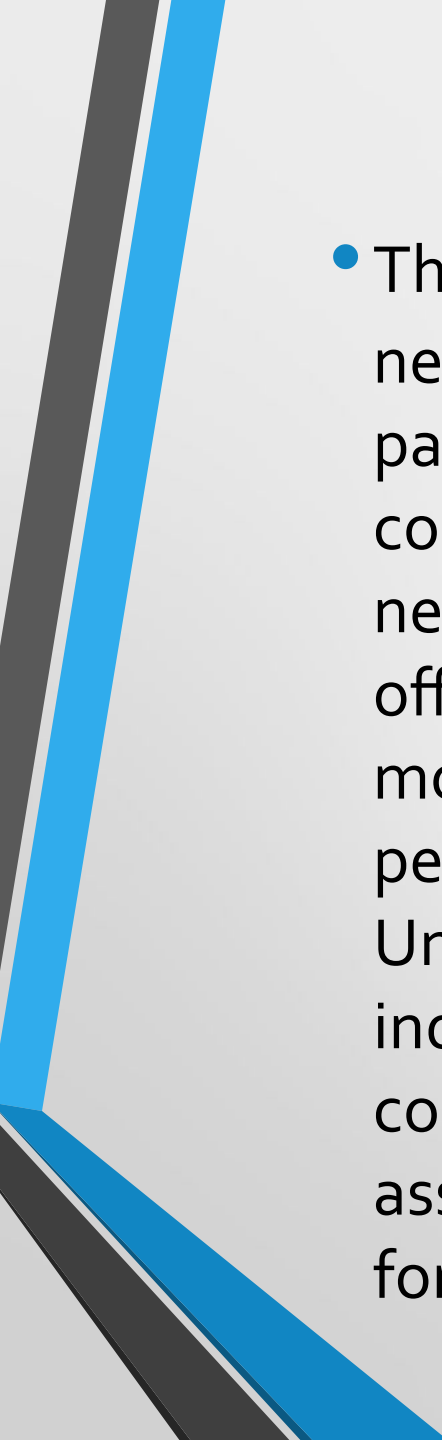


Todd Herrenkohl, lead author and  
associate professor of social work  
said:

- "Most people think youth violence and domestic violence are separate problems, but this study shows that they are intertwined."

# The Seattle project identified four patterns of violence between the ages of 13 and 18:

- «non-offenders» (60 per cent)
- "desisters" who engaged in early violence but stopped by age 16 (15 per cent)
- "chronic offenders" who began early and persisted at a moderate level (16 per cent), and
- "late increasers" who began in mid adolescence and became increasingly involved (9 per cent)

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- The current research found that by the age of 24 nearly 650 of the original participants had had a partner. About 19 per cent reported having committed domestic violence in the past year, nearly twice as many women as men. Chronic offenders and late increasers were significantly more likely than non-offenders to have perpetrated moderately severe domestic violence. Unlike previous studies, researchers found no independent link between alcohol use and the commission of domestic violence and speculate an association might have emerged if more severe forms had been measured.

# A young adult's chances of involvement in domestic violence were increased if:

- they had been diagnosed with a major depressive illness
- were in receipt of welfare benefits
- had a partner with a significant drug problem
- sold drugs
- had a history of violence toward others
- had an arrest record
- were unemployed
- lived in areas where drugs and violence were the norm

# Todd Herrenkohl commented:

- "Individuals who have a history of anti-social behavior may be more likely to find a partner with a similar history and re-create what they experienced as children. They may also be more likely to be in places in their communities where they interact with people with the same types of behaviour."
- "The take-home message from this study is that it may be possible to prevent some forms of domestic violence by acting early to address youth violence. Our research suggests the earlier we begin prevention programs the better, because youth violence appears to be a precursor to other problems including domestic violence."

# Managing Teen Emotions



Smirnova Maria

Group 402

# Managing Teen Emotions

Research from the University of Illinois published recently in *Child Development* has found that teenagers can learn to manage powerful emotions and gain insight into the processes involved.

**August 2007**



# Managing Teen Emotions

Reed Larson, professor of family ecology said:

"There's a stereotype that teens don't manage their emotions, their emotions manage them. But this study showed that, in an atmosphere of trust and support, teens can become adept at identifying their emotions, learn to recognize the tricks emotions play on people, and begin to understand not only how to control their emotions, but to use them in positive ways."

# Managing Teen Emotions

Co-authored by Jane R. Brown and funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, the study examined 12 youth programs and found that students taking part in a high-school musical theater production showed "particularly rich emotional growth". Ten teens were interviewed every two weeks over a three-month period during rehearsals which were also observed weekly. Two adult production leaders were interviewed biweekly.



# Managing Teen Emotions

\*Reed Larson commented:

"In many ways, this production anticipated an adult workplace. The teens had to work together to achieve a goal, and they gained experience with the emotional dynamics of a group setting. There's nothing like learning how to manage your emotions in a situation in which there are a lot of intense emotions occurring."

The program was found to have a culture in which a range of emotions such as exhilaration, disappointment, anger, and anxiety were discussed in a supportive atmosphere, sharing wisdom and knowledge about how to deal with these feelings.

# Managing Teen Emotions

Reed Larson continued:

- \* "Frank talk about emotions doesn't happen in a lot of places. It occurs in some families a lot more than others, and it doesn't happen much in the classroom at all. Expressing emotions requires an atmosphere of trust."
- \* Researchers found that at the same time as undertaking the various practical elements of the program, participants learned that emotions can be used to manipulate, hard to interpret, deceptive and bias responses in ways that confuse adults as much as teens.

\*The study found that participants learned the benefits of controlling positive and negative emotions. One said:

"I'm always happy when I do well and I just want to express it, but that usually comes out as bragging, so I try not to do it much."

\*Participants also realized that their negative emotions could be transmitted to others; one described an experience in which other peoples' lack of preparation upset him:

"I can see myself really complaining about it, but if you do, you're just going to bring the whole show down."

# Managing Teen Emotions

Reed Larson said it was more difficult for parents to promote the emotional growth of their teenagers:

"As a parent, you don't have all the information that's behind your teen's behaviors. In a theatre production, it's obvious if someone is flubbing their lines; you can often pinpoint what's upsetting them. But a moody teen can be influenced by all sorts of things - problems with a girlfriend, peer pressure about a party, or a bad test grade. Still, parents can work hard to establish that atmosphere of trust, and there are opportunities for parents to be sensitive."

# Managing Teen Emotions



Reed Larson concluded:

\*"In any adult work setting, people are dealing with feelings about success or failure, coping with jealousy, and navigating all the complexities of interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, many adults express their emotions in destructive ways. If you've learned to manage your emotions as a teenager, you're way ahead of the game."

# Self-Esteem

- ▶ Self-esteem increases throughout adult life, peaking at around retirement age but declining thereafter. Health and income are significant factors in the maintenance of self-esteem.



- ▶ Lead author, Ulrich Orth, PhD, of the University of Basel said:

"Self-esteem is related to better health, less criminal behavior, lower levels of depression and, overall, greater success in life. Therefore, it's important to learn more about how the average person's self-esteem changes over time."

# Self-Esteem

- ▶ The study recruited 3617 men and women living in the United States and aged between 25 and 104 who were interviewed on four occasions between 1986 and 2002. Self-esteem was assessed by asking participants the extent to which they agreed with statements such as:
  - ▶ "I take a positive attitude toward myself"
  - ▶ "At times I think I am no good at all" and
  - ▶ "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure."

- ▶ Data were also sought concerning ethnicity, education, income, work status, relationships, marital status, health, social support and experience of major stressful life events such as bereavement, sudden unemployment or being the victim of violent crime.
- ▶ In general, education, income, health and employment status all affected levels of self-esteem, especially as participants aged. Researchers found that, on average, women had lower self-esteem than men throughout most of their adult lives, but levels tended to converge after the age of eighty. Blacks and whites had similar levels until old age, when average self-esteem among blacks declined much more steeply than among whites, even after controlling for differences in income and health. The study concludes that these ethnic differences merit further research.

# Ulrich Orth explained:

- ▶ people who have higher incomes and better health in later life tend to maintain their self-esteem as they age. We cannot know for certain that more wealth and better health directly lead to higher self-esteem, but it does appear to be linked in some way. For example, it is possible that wealth and health are related to feeling more independent and better able to contribute to one's family and society, which in turn bolsters self-esteem."

- ▶ The researchers found that people of all ages in satisfying and supportive relationships tend to have higher self-esteem. However, this group experienced the same drop in self-esteem during old age as those in unhappy relationships.

# Co-author Kali H. Trzesniewski, PhD, of the University of Western Ontario commented:

- ▶ "Although they enter old age with higher self-esteem and continue to have higher self-esteem as they age, they decline in self-esteem to the same extent as people in unhappy relationships. Thus, being in a happy relationship does not protect a person against the decline in self-esteem that typically occurs in old age."

The researchers point to a number of theories to explain why self-esteem peaks in middle age and drops after retirement.

- ▶ "Midlife is a time of highly stable work, family and romantic relationships. People increasingly occupy positions of power and status, which might promote feelings of self-esteem. In contrast, older adults may be experiencing a change in roles such as an empty nest, retirement and obsolete work skills in addition to declining health."

# INTERNALIZING AND EXTERNALIZING

- Lezzhova M.V.
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- August 2008 - Research from Ohio State University published in the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy has challenged the common perception that girls tend to internalize their problems, becoming depressed or anxious, while boys externalize, committing violence against people or property.

- Researchers studied 2549 young people appearing before juvenile courts in five Ohio counties and found that whether African-Americans internalized or externalized their problems was dependent on family circumstances rather than gender.

Stephen Gavazzi, professor of human development and family science said:

- "If you look at most studies involving internalizing and externalizing among youth, they generally look at white, middle-class samples. Most research has not paid attention to race. And when studies do look at race, they are not likely to look at family and gender as well."
- Researchers used their Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) an internet-based questionnaire for young people designed to assess risk of further problems in life and including issues such as previous involvement with the law, family and parenting, substance abuse and traumatic events. For example, respondents are asked about fights with adults in their homes, if they have friends who have been in trouble with the law, and if they have trouble controlling their anger.

- The study found that once family circumstances were taken into account African-American girls and boys showed similar levels of externalizing and internalizing behavior being more likely to show outward aggression if they lived in families with higher levels of dysfunction. This relationship was not found in white families. Researchers are currently trying to identify characteristics of African-American families that may influence these findings; for example, family conflict and levels of parental monitoring.

Stephen Gavazzi commented:

- "Family issues affect children in African-American families differently than they do in white families. That is something that really hasn't been found before .... Researchers who study ethnicity and culture have long noted the primacy of family for African Americans. That's telling us that families matter in a different way for African-American youth than what we're finding for whites."

- July 2008 - Research from the University of Vermont and the University of Minnesota published in Child Development found that young people with pre-existing relationship difficulties are more likely to develop anxiety and depression than the other way round, this being particularly the case when entering adulthood.
- The study analyzed data from Project Competence which has followed 205 individuals from mid-childhood (ages 8 to 12) into young adulthood. Researchers interviewed participants and questioned parents, teachers, and classmates to measure "internalizing" of problems (symptoms such as anxiety, depression, or withdrawn state) compared to social competence (healthy relationships). They then assessed the on-going relationship between these parameters and whether they changed over time. Researchers found a significant degree of continuity: those with more internalizing problems at the start were more likely to experience these problems in adolescence and young adulthood; those who were socially competent maintained this as they grew up. Results were generally the same for both males and females.

- The study also found evidence of spill-over effects, where social problems contributed to increasing internalizing symptoms over time. Those who were less socially competent in childhood were more likely to experience anxiety or depression in adolescence. Similarly, lack of social competence in adolescence was associated with greater risk of such symptoms in young adulthood. These findings remained the same when alternative explanations were taken into account, such as intellectual functioning, the quality of parenting, social class, and antisocial behaviour such as fighting, lying, and stealing.

Lead author Keith Burt, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Vermont said:

- "Overall, our research suggests that social competence, such as acceptance by peers and developing healthy relationships, is a key influence in the development of future internalizing problems such as anxiety and depressed mood, especially over the transition years from adolescence into young adulthood. These results suggest that although internalizing problems have some stability across time, there is also room for intervention and change. More specifically, youth at risk for internalizing problems might benefit from interventions focused on building healthy relationships with peers."

# GIRL TALK HEIGHTENS ANXIETY

- *August 2007* - A study from the University of Missouri published in *Developmental Psychology* suggests that excessive discussion about problems with friends (co-rumination) may have a negative impact on emotional adjustment in girls who are more likely than boys of the same age to develop anxiety and depression as a result.

- Researchers Amanda J. Rose, Wendy Carlson, and Erika M. Waller undertook a six-month longitudinal study of 813 girls and boys from third, fifth, seventh and ninth grades to test costs and benefits associated with co-rumination. They found that the process was generally predictive of enhanced levels of friendship but girls also experienced increased symptoms of depression and anxiety, leading to greater co-rumination.



AMANDA J. ROSE, LEAD AUTHOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY SAID:

- "Having anxiety symptoms (and presumably, associated heightened levels of worries and concerns) and a high-quality friend to talk to may provide a uniquely reinforcing context for co-rumination."
- Researchers speculate that co-rumination may result in girls thinking about problems in a more emotional way than boys, perhaps being more likely to take personal responsibility for failures.

## AMANDA J. ROSE COMMENTED:

- "These findings are interesting because girls' intentions when discussing problems may be to give and seek positive support. However, these conversations appear to contribute to increased depression."
- Researchers caution against "being lulled into a false sense of security" about young people, especially girls, with apparently supportive friendships. Previous studies have highlighted concerns about socially-isolated youth, but the current research identifies the risk of depression and anxiety if friendships are based on habitual co-rumination.