Affect During Conflicts Between Adolescents and Their Best Friends, Other Friends and Acquaintances

Mary J. Spenceri
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Affect During Conflicts Between Adolescents and Their Best Friends, Other Friends and Acquaintances

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Psychology

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

M.A.

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Mary C. Spenceri

July 1996
THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree M.A., University of
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Abstract

While conflict, in general, has received much attention in the literature, "affect felt" during conflicts and its influence has not been a major concern to researchers. Only a few investigations of "affect intensity" associated with conflict have been conducted. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of affect intensity, an individual differences factor, in the affect experienced in conflict situations with friends and acquaintances by different age groups, and the resolution strategies that are used. Students from grades 5, 8, and 11 and first and second year college students completed the Affect Intensity Measure, a conflict questionnaire, and a constructed conflict vignette. The questionnaire and vignette focused on either a best friend, friend, or an acquaintance relationship. Differences in the strength of feeling for the reported conflict on the questionnaire and the vignette situation was examined as well as affect, strength of affect, resolution strategies, and the relationships among these factors. Gender differences were also examined. The intensity of affect was found to differ as a function of age/grade and relationship target, and the intensity of affect also influenced resolution strategies that were chosen. These differences suggest that some changes are occurring in later adolescence that involve interactions among friends and acquaintances. Further research on affect intensity in conflicts involving adolescents is necessary in order to understand more fully the dynamics of affect in conflict situations.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and friends for their constant support. This would not have been possible without their encouraging words and undying faith in me, especially during times I felt in despair. I cannot thank my parents enough. Without my father's continual push for me to persevere and my mother's patience, understanding and belief in me, this would have remained a dream.

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Others whose help cannot go unmentioned include Carol Lloyd, Reading Specialist, who conducted the readability check, Candy Lindberg, an undergraduate student, who helped me with data input, and the schools that agreed to allow their students to participate in my study. I thank them all for their assistance. I also cannot fail to mention my supervisor, Gina Pearson, whose flexibility and understanding has allowed me to continue my studies. I thank her and all my co-workers, whom I consider dear friends, for their constant support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

People have different interests, ideas, goals, and agendas. If you interact with others, conflicts are likely to occur (Killen, 1989). Conflict within a relationship refers to disagreements, quarrels, or behavioral opposition. Given the nature of relationships, conflicts are often present. Research on adolescent conflicts has addressed issues such as conflict content (LaVoie, Johnson & Spenceri, 1995); target, or the relationship of those involved in the conflict such as peer versus adult or someone close, such as a parent, sibling, or close friend versus someone more distant, such as a boss, teacher, or a classmate who is not a friend, and resolution strategies (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b; Laursen & Collins, 1994; LaVoie, et. al., 1995; Slomkowski & Killen, 1992). The role of feelings during conflict has been examined in a few studies (Braine, et. al., 1991; Laursen & Collins, 1994; LaVoie, et. al., 1995; Raffaelli, 1991), and some investigators have examined the intensity of these feelings (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Laursen & Collins, 1994). Laursen and Collins (1994), looked at intensity and resolution strategies, however, they did not address how affect intensity might affect selected resolution strategies.

The content of adolescent conflicts, feelings during these conflicts, and their respective resolution strategies were the foci of a study by LaVoie,
Johnson, and Spenceri (1995). They found some significant differences for feelings during conflicts across age groups, and between males and females. The lack of strong expected gender differences, as well as the lack of stronger effects for affect in the LaVoie et. al. study suggests the need for further investigation of these factors. Participants in the LaVoie et. al. study were asked a very general question, "How did you feel?" A more appropriate question may be one that asks not only "How did you feel?", but also "How strong was this feeling?" The latter question focuses more precisely on the intensity of the feelings (i.e., the strength or depth of the felt affect) and should provide more information associated with the reaction to the experience. Further, the relationship between the feelings experienced during conflicts and the resolution strategies that followed was not examined in the LaVoie et. al study.

A related issue, as yet unanswered in the conflict literature, is whether differences in how individuals react to positive and negative situations influence their behavior in conflict situations. Larsen (1984), using a measure of affect intensity (i.e., the strength of reaction to events), developed by Larsen (1983, as cited in Larsen, 1984), suggests that this individual differences factor is a stable trait across time. However, Larsen used a population of college students in his study, and therefore the assumption of stability may not hold when different age groups, especially younger individuals, are in the population
sampled. It seems more likely that some developmental differences (age differences) will be found in affect intensity.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of affect intensity, an individual differences factor, in the affect experienced in conflict situations with friends and acquaintances by different age groups, and the resolution strategies that are used. It is expected that individuals who differ in affect intensity will experience affect in conflict situations that matches their level of affect intensity, and that they will differ also in the resolution strategy that is selected. A second purpose of the study is to investigate age differences in the affect reported by individuals in conflicts with friends and acquaintances, the resolution strategies which are used, and the affect associated with that resolution strategy.

**Review of Literature**

The literature on conflict is abundant in some respects, but lacking in others. While conflict, in general, has received much attention, "affect felt" during conflict and its influence has not been a major concern to researchers. "Affect intensity" associated with conflict has been examined in only a few studies. In this review of current literature, recent studies regarding conflict target, affect in conflict, and affect intensity will be discussed. Although the focus of this study is not on gender differences, the literature on gender will be discussed, briefly, because it suggests differences may be present.
**Conflict Target**

In the literature on adolescent conflict, one finds significant developmental components, such as intellectual maturity, that involve target (e.g., those involved in the conflict) relationship differences as well as differences in resolution strategies and outcomes (Laursen & Collins, 1994). Conflicts between adolescents and adults differ from those between adolescents and peers because of the equality issue. Power imbalances tend to call for different resolution strategies than those where power is equivalent among the individuals involved (Hartup, 1993). Recent reviews using meta analysis (e.g. Laursen, 1993a, 1993b; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995) show that more positive, complete resolutions which are less win/lose focused occur with close friends, whereas more disengagement and less negotiation occur with parents. Laursen and Collins (1994) suggest that these differences are due to the impact that the outcome of the conflict has on the relationship of those involved. "Family relationships are least susceptible to change on the basis of a disagreement" (Laursen & Collins, 1994: p. 201). Conflict with a friend, on the other hand, may lead to termination of that relationship.

Laursen (1993a, 1993b) reports relationships involving risk (e.g., voluntary relationships such as friends, and romantic partners) are vulnerable to disruption. Conflicts in these relationships are resolved differently than in relationships such as siblings or parent/child where affiliations tend to remain
regardless of conflict outcome. Closeness of the relationship also appears to make a difference in choosing a particular resolution strategy. A conflict with a close friend as opposed to a casual acquaintance entails greater risk. Therefore, in a conflict with a close friend, one is more likely to discuss the situation or give-in to the other as opposed to responding in an aggressive manner or disengaging. One is also less concerned about resolving a conflict with casual acquaintances or strangers than with a friend.

Slankowski and Killen (1992) contend that incidents occurring with friends (such as one child taking a toy away from another) are not considered conflicts. However, if the same incident were to happen with a non-friend a conflict would arise. Apparently children use contextual cues (i.e., being in the presence of a friend versus a non-friend) to interpret the social interaction (e.g., a friendly act versus a non-friendly one), and their response (e.g., let the friend have the toy versus take back toy from non-friend) fits the context and the nature of the social interaction.

As presented here, the relationship factor is an important part of the intricate dynamics involved in adolescent conflict. It not only affects the content, but also the chosen resolution strategies, and hence the outcomes. Adolescent conflicts occur with peers and adults, with family members, friends and acquaintances. Each relationship, to which is attached the individual's social interpretation of the event, has a degree of risk (e.g., dissolution of a
relationship or relationship maintenance). These factors are weighed in order to select a resolution strategy that maximizes the likelihood of a positive outcome for the adolescent.

**Affect in Conflict**

Affect and emotional reactions associated with conflict have been addressed in a few studies (e.g., Braine, Pomerantz, Lorber, & Krantz, 1991; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b; LaVoie, Johnson, & Spenceri, 1995; Raffaelli, 1991). Raffaelli (1991) examined emotional reactions in conflicts with siblings and friends. Male and female students in grades five and eight provided information on specific fights with siblings and friends. The students reported more negative feelings after a conflict with siblings and more positive feelings after conflicts with friends. The results indicate that emotional reactions differ according to the relationship, or interpersonal context.

Other studies on affect reported similar results. For example, using findings from a meta analysis, Laursen (1993a) notes that negative affect is associated with family members, but negative affect is not characteristic of conflicts with friends. Laursen attributes this difference to the demand placed on close friend relationships which are volitional, as opposed to family relationships which one does not choose. Therefore, more risk in terms of relationship disruption is involved in a conflict between friends than within a family. This situation also has implications for the resolution strategies that are
used. When confronted with a conflict, friends are more likely to use strategies that promote the maintenance of the friendship, whereas this concern is not necessarily a consideration for siblings or acquaintances when a conflict arises. Siblings and acquaintances are more likely to use strategies that disrupt the relationship, such as power assertion, rather than disengagement or negotiation.

Additional data concerning affect in conflicts can be found in a recent study by LaVoie, Johnson, and Spenceri (1995) who reported both age and gender differences for conflict issues, resolution strategies and affect. Findings from an open-ended questionnaire showed that, with an increase in age from 10 to 20 years, females became more concerned with conflict. Female participants reported more issues of conflict, more detail in the feelings involved, and greater use of resolution strategies as compared to males. Older females reported more conflicts with close targets, but no affect differences were found for close versus distant targets. Although there were no affect differences specifically concerning the target (i.e., whether the conflict was with someone close to the individual versus distant to the individual), there were some overall affect differences. Female college students reported more positive feelings and more remorse associated with conflicts than college males. In addition, 14 year-old- and college-age females reported more apathy associated with conflict. On the other hand, 10 year-old males reported more apathy than 10 year-old females, 14 year-old- and college-age males. Although these
differences were found, the results were not sufficiently strong to support age and gender differences in conflict affect. In addition, the open ended questionnaire allowed for more than one response; therefore, the differences may reflect report error (i.e., some participants may simply have written more than others, giving the impression that a particular group responded in a certain way). Further investigation is necessary to determine the existence of age and/or gender differences in affect felt during conflicts.

**Affect Intensity**

Another unanswered question arising from the LaVoie et. al. (1995) study is "Do male and female 10 - 20 year-olds have similar affective reactions to conflict situations?" Only minor differences associated with adult versus peer targets were reported by LaVoie et. al.. However, the intensity of the affect felt was not measured, and research on affect intensity is very sparse, at least with respect to conflict situations.

Outside the realm of conflict, affect intensity has been studied by Larsen, Diener and Emmons (1986) and Larsen, Diener, and Cropanzano (1987). Larsen, Diener and Emmons (1986) examined differences between individuals who were high and low in affect intensity in their reactions to daily life events, whereas Larsen, Diener and Cropanzano (1987) examined a theory that may explain differences between individuals who are high and low in affect intensity.
Larsen et. al (1986) investigated how high intense and low intense college-age students reported reacting to both actual daily life events as well as to hypothetical life events. They used the Affect Intensity Measure (AIM) to identify high and low affect intense subjects. The AIM is a 40-item questionnaire in which individuals indicate how strongly they react to both positive and negative situations (e.g., those associated with accomplishing something difficult, watching a movie that elicits emotion, negative moods, etc.). After completing this instrument, Larsen et. al., also presented the college students with a set of the daily life events and hypothetical life events. Reactions to actual life events were obtained from daily report forms. The questions concerned events that happened that day, the nature of these events, whether the events were good or bad, and an evaluation of these good and bad events which involved rating them on a four point scale. Individuals also completed a questionnaire about how often they reacted in a specific way to a hypothetical event using a six point scale ranging from Never (1) to Always (6) (e.g., "When something good happens, I am much more jubilant than others;" "The sight of someone who is hurt badly affects me strongly;" "I get very anxious when I go to the dentist;" "I tend to be a very sociable type of person") (Larsen et. al., 1986).

Larsen et. al. (1986) found that both high and low intense individuals gave similar reports to actual life events and hypothetical events. The reactions
of the high intense subjects were stronger than the reactions of less intense individuals, regardless of whether the stimuli presented were judged to be slightly intense, moderately intense, or extremely intense. Further, low intense individuals appeared to decrease the effects of the arousal associated with the various events, thereby not reacting to or only mildly reacting to intense situations.

As a result of their study, Larsen, Diener, and Emmons (1986) suggest that affect intensity is a stable trait. From childhood to adulthood as well as across situations, an individual's affect intensity is consistent; therefore, developmental change is not likely, but individual differences could be present (i.e., some people just naturally react more strongly to positive and negative situations than others, regardless of age, gender or circumstance). A limitation of the Larsen et. al. study is that the data were obtained largely through parental report about their recall of their child's affect which was then compared to the child's self-reported Affect Intensity Measure score as a young adult.

One theory of affect intensity, studied by Larsen, Diener & Cropanzano (1987), indicates that certain cognitive differences are associated with individual differences in affect intensity. Thought processes which occur during emotional events or situations for high affect intensive individuals include personalizing (relating the stimuli to the self), generalizing (taking one thing to
represent the whole), and selective abstraction (focusing in on parts of an event which are particularly laden with emotional implications). Hence, individuals whose thought processes follow these patterns are likely to react more intensely to emotionally provoking stimuli than those individuals whose thought processes do not contain personalizing, generalizing and selective abstraction (i.e., low affect intensity persons).

According to a modulation theory of affect intensity, certain people may seek heavily laden emotional situations to satisfy their need for an optimal level of arousal. Larsen, Deiner, and Emmons (1986) claim that "some individuals modulate the intensity of emotional stimuli such that they consistently exhibit stronger or more intense emotional reactions" (p. 804). That is, these individuals inflate experiences (i.e. make something out to be more than it is). For example, an event thought of as only slightly emotionally intense, by individuals high and low in affect intensity, would be reacted to with great intensity by highly intense individuals. Thus some people experience their emotional situations very strongly, while others react much differently to similar events or stimuli.

Although these studies focus on affect intensity and individual differences, they do not address the role of affect intensity in conflict situations. Based on the limited data which have been presented, it seems reasonable to assume that while high and low affect intensity characteristics may be stable
traits for individuals (i.e., a particular person may be high intensive and another person may be low intensive), their degree of highness or lowness may fluctuate over time. Thus, age differences may exist within low and high intensity groups, and these differences may influence conflict management.

By examining reactions to conflict more closely, differences in the intensity of affect may appear where there are no differences in the quality of the affect experienced. In addition, conflict resolution could differ as a result of the intensity of the feelings created by the conflict. Further, these feelings and resolution strategies are likely to differ according to target closeness (i.e., best friends versus other friends, versus acquaintances), age, and gender.

**Gender Differences**

Fujita, Diener, and Sandvik (1991), using self-report, peer report, daily report and memory performance, examined affect intensity in males and females. They suggest that what appears puzzling is that females have higher negative affect than males, yet females' reports of happiness are similar to that of males' reports. This result seems to occur because females have more intense positive affect which balances their greater negative emotions. Grossman and Wood (1993) claim that research which suggests females experience greater positive and negative affect than males may be biased by social role stereotypes. In their study, Grossman and Wood gave unbiased
instructions to males and females that held no obvious gender expectations. They found no gender differences in emotional self reports.

Although these studies looked at gender differences in affect and affect intensity, they did not address the role of gender differences in affect in conflict experiences. Research by Laursen (1993b) and LaVoie et. al. (1995), has addressed this issue. Laursen (1993b) noted that females report higher levels of anger than males, but in both females and males, anger subsided quickly after the disagreement. Gender differences in the LaVoie et. al. (1995) study showed that females overall reported engaging in more conflicts dealing with money, responsibilities, possessions, interpersonal issues and personal issues than males. Females, 10-20 years of age, also reported more positive and negative affect than 10-20 year old males, and 20 year old females reported using more disengaging, negotiating, conceding and power assertion resolution strategies than males 10-20 years of age. However, 10 year-old males reported more apathy than 10 year-old females and 10- and 14 year-old males reported using more disengaging, negotiating, conceding and power assertion resolution strategies than 10- and 14 year-old females.

The trend for reporting conflict experience, resolution, and affect appears to be an increasing one for females and a decreasing one for males across the years of 10-20. Although gender differences were found in the LaVoie et. al. study, only tentative conclusions can be drawn from this data because the
questionnaire used is subject to report error. That is, participants of one gender at a particular age simply may be more verbal and more apt to write about their conflict experiences than others. This potential response pattern suggests the need for tighter, more precise data gathering methods. Although gender differences are not the main focus of this study, the literature suggests that gender differences may be present.

The Present Study

The aim of the present study is two fold: First, to examine whether high and low affect intense individuals of differing ages and gender differ in the affect experienced in conflict situations and in the resolution strategies used. Second, to determine if affect experienced in conflict situations and the resolution strategies chosen differ with respect to the age of the participant as well as the conflict target (i.e., close friend, friend or acquaintance).

Given that the existing literature on affect during conflict is very limited, and that some of the findings are tentative at best, no hypotheses have been developed for this study. Rather, a series of research questions are posed, and consist of the following:

1. Are relationship and age differences present within high and low affect intensity groups in how intensely they respond to conflict situations?

2. What is the relationship between the affect experienced in a conflict and the resolution strategy that is chosen?
3. What is the relationship between the intensity of the feeling experienced in a conflict and the resolution strategy that is chosen?

4. What is the relationship between the resolution strategy used in a conflict and how one feels about the conflict resolution?

5. What is the relationship between the selected resolution strategy and the intensity of the feeling after the conflict is resolved?

6. Are gender differences present within high and low affect intensity groups in how they respond to conflict situations?
Chapter 2

Method

Participants

The sample included 36 1st and 2nd year college students, ages 19-22 (18 males, 18 females); 35 high school juniors, ages 16-18 (15 males, 20 females); 36 eighth-grade students, ages 13-14 (18 males, 18 females); and 32 fifth-grade students, ages 10-11 (17 males, 15 females). College students were obtained from an average size university in the Midwest. High school and grade school participants were drawn from schools, in a medium size city in the Midwest, that serve mainly middle class families.

The data on family structure for this sample showed that 75% of fifth graders, 75% of eighth graders, 71% of juniors and 50% of college students live with both their parents. Whereas 9% of fifth graders, 17% of eighth graders, 14% of juniors and 17% of college students live with their mothers only, and 3% of fifth graders, 6% of eighth graders, 3% of juniors and 3% of college students live with their fathers only. Only a small percentage of the elementary and high school participants (e.g., 6% fifth graders, 6% eighth graders, and 12% juniors) reported living with step families or having other living arrangements such as living with grandparents or in foster homes, while 8% of the college students reported living with step families and 22% reported living on their own or with roommates. None of the fifth graders were only
children, while 6% of eighth graders, 3% of juniors and college participants reported being only children. Families of four or more children were reported by 34% of fifth graders, 25% of eighth graders, 29% of juniors and 39% of college students.

Each participant completed the Affect Intensity Measure, a conflict questionnaire, and a constructed conflict vignette. The questionnaire and vignette focus on either a best friend, friend, or an acquaintance relationship.

Measures

Affect intensity. The Affect Intensity Measure (Larsen, 1984) is a 40-item questionnaire which measures high-low affect intensity based on answers to questions concerning how strongly one reacts to emotional situations (see Appendices A and B). The reliability and validity of this instrument, developed by Larsen (1983, as cited in Larsen, 1984) is as follows. Stability over a three month period of time produced test-retest reliability coefficients of .80, .81, and .81 for the one, two, and three months, respectively. According to Larsen et. al. (1986) the measure has internal consistency in that "The AIM obtains a coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) in the range of .90 to .94 across four samples. The mean corrected item-total correlations in those four samples ranged from .41 to .51, and split-half correlations ranged from .73 to .82" (p. 805).
The validity data shows that the AIM produces results similar to several daily mood measures relating to affect intensity taken daily over long periods of time (e.g., 56 days) (Larsen, 1984). Also, when compared to the participants' parents reports of their children's typical affect intensity responses, Larsen et. al. (1986) found the AIM to correlate .50 (p < .01).

The AIM is resilient to biases such as lying, faking, social desirability and extreme response styles (Larsen, 1984). The AIM differs from existing measures in that it distinguishes the magnitude of the affective state and how strongly a response is felt, whereas current measures are more concerned with the frequency of affective experiences (Larsen, 1984).

The participants in the study by Larsen et. al. (1986) were college students. The participants in the present study included students from grades 5, 8, and 11 as well as college students. Therefore a readability check was conducted by Carol Lloyd, Reading Specialist, College of Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha in order to assess the AIM's grade equivalency comprehension. It was determined that alternate words and phrasing were needed in order that certain items in the AIM could be understood by the grade 5 students. Difficult words and phrases were replaced with similar words and phrases in consultation with a dictionary and thesaurus.

The reliability of the modified version of the AIM was then reanalyzed. Internal consistency for this revision was: coefficient alpha .91, with a split
half correlation of .83. These reliability analyses indicate that the internal consistency of the AIM was maintained.

The breakdown for affect intensity among the 139 participants showed that 47.5% were high in affect intensity and 52.5% were low in affect intensity as determined by a median split of the possible scores from the AIM measure. For the 73 participants low in affect intensity 34% were female and 66% were male while 68% of the 66 participants high in affect intensity were female and 32% were male (see Table I).

**Conflict questionnaire.** The questionnaire focuses on conflicts with best friends, friends and acquaintances. A participant answers questions for one of these relationships. The participant is asked to describe a major conflict with either a best friend, friend, or an acquaintance and to choose from a list of five adjectives the felt affect associated with the conflict (these choices are taken from previous research by LaVoie, Johnson, & Spenceri, 1995) and then indicate on a seven point scale the strength of this feeling. This scale is anchored in four places to encourage participants to be as precise as possible in rating the intensity of the feeling. Participants are asked to select only one word that best describes how they felt because only their primary feeling is wanted.

The questionnaire provides seven options to indicate how the conflict was resolved. These resolution strategies are taken from previous research by
Table I

**Age and Gender Breakdown for Affect Intensity Level**

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<th>High</th>
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<td><strong>Affect Intensity Level</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** *Values in bold are percentages.*
LaVoie et al. (1995) and Vuchinich (1990). Participants are also asked to choose, from 5 affect responses, their feelings about how they resolved the conflict, and to indicate the strength of that feeling on a 7 point scale (see Appendix C).

**Conflict vignettes.** One vignette was chosen, from a series of conflict situations developed by Nawrocki-Bauer, McKeown, and LaVoie (1995), and adapted to fit male and female participants. The vignette involves betrayal of a confidence concerning self disclosure. The participants are asked to place themselves in the situation, tell how they would feel under the circumstances and how they would resolve the conflict situation from the standpoint of one of the individuals involved. The vignette was used to cross-validate the questionnaire data. Therefore, multiple measures were used to provide data relating to the research questions that were asked about conflict experiences (see Appendix D).

**Design**

The basic design for the study was a 2 (high-low affect intensity) by 4 (age-grade 5, 8, 11, and college student) by 3 (relationship of the conflict target -best friend, friend, or acquaintance).

The independent variables in this completely crossed design are: high-low affect intensity, based on a median split of the Affect Intensity Measure, age or grade, and relationship of the conflict target. Gender differences for
some dependent variables will be examined, but gender is not included in this design.

The dependent variables for both the questionnaire and vignette are (1) the affect associated with the described conflict (e.g., happy/good, sad/bad, angry/mad, afraid/scared, lonely/not wanted, no feeling/nothing or other - a choice which the participant must explain); (2) the intensity of that affect rated on a seven point scale anchored at points 1, 3, 5 and 7 with the descriptive words of weak, moderate, strong and extremely strong; (3) the chosen resolution strategy for that particular conflict (e.g., discussed, disengaged (walked away or ignored problem/person), asked for help, compromised, became physically or verbally aggressive, gave in, or other - a choice which the participant must explain); (4) the affect associated with the chosen resolution strategy (e.g., happy/good, sad/bad, angry/mad, afraid/scared, lonely/not wanted, no feeling/nothing or other - a choice which the participant must explain); (5) the intensity of that affect rated on a seven point scale anchored at points 1, 3, 5 and 7 with the descriptive words of weak, moderate, strong and extremely strong. Thus five dependent variables were obtained for each participant for both the questionnaire and the vignette.

Procedure

The Principals from the elementary schools described the study to the students from grades 5 and 8, and sent home with them parental consent
forms. A letter describing the study was attached on the front of the consent form. The parents signed the consent form and sent it back to school with their child. The teachers from grades 5 and 8 collected the consent forms. A letter describing the study, attached to a parental consent form was mailed to the parents of eleventh grade students. Parents were asked to sign the consent form and to mail it back in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. This procedure was used with the expectation of obtaining a greater return than by sending it home with the eleventh grade students.

Data collection occurred in a group setting. The college student data was collected in a room at the University at designated times. The data from students in grades 5, 8, and 11 was collected in their school classroom. Participants signed an assent form and then completed the AIM, conflict questionnaire, and conflict vignette. For the conflict questionnaire, participants were asked to describe a recent disagreement/argument they had with a best friend, friend, or acquaintance. The affect, intensity rating, and conflict resolution strategy that were chosen were in response to this conflict (see Appendix E for instructions given to participants). College students received extra points for participating in the research study. Elementary students received a small item such as a scribble and sniff pencil or a pencil with a design on it for their cooperation.
Chapter 3

Results

Types of Conflict Reported-Questionnaire

The recent conflict reported by each participant on the questionnaire was coded by the investigator into one of six types based on content. These types were attitudes, activities, possessions, betrayal, personal issues and responsibilities (see Table II). Attitudes was a frequent conflict type across age groups, high and low affect intensive individuals, and for disagreements with best friends, friends and acquaintances. Conflicts over activities occurred more often among fifth graders, whereas in a rank ordered list from most common conflict type to least common, activities were near the end of the list for eighth graders, eleventh graders and college students. Betrayal was a frequent conflict for eleventh graders, but it occurred much less often for all other grades. Personal issues were ranked near the middle for all groups except fifth grade, where it and responsibilities were least often mentioned. Responsibilities was mentioned less frequently by eighth- and eleventh grade students, but this conflict type was reported more often than any other conflict type by college students (see Table III).

The main difference in conflict types between individuals high and low in affect intensity was that following attitudes, possessions was the next most frequently cited conflict for high intense participants, and the least cited for individuals low in affect intensity. The reverse was true of betrayal.
Table II

Examples of Conflict Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Type</th>
<th>Example of the Issue Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Others' behavior (e.g., others &quot;acting like a snob&quot; or the way another treats other people); Saying mean things; Name calling; Lying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities/Games</td>
<td>Rules, calls, and cheating during games or sporting activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessions</td>
<td>Using personal items too often and/or without permission; Stealing; or Hitting or damaging someone’s personal items. Personal items included clothes, cars, cash, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal</td>
<td>Ditching friends; Talking bad about a friend to their face and behind their back; being &quot;two-faced&quot;, saying one thing and then doing another; Talking bad about a friend’s friend, girlfriend, or boyfriend; &quot;Messing around&quot; with a friend’s girlfriend or boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Issues</td>
<td>Points of view; Opinions on current political and moral issues; Personal decisions on what to wear, who to hang out with and what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Household chores; Work related tasks; Doing one’s share of work on a joint project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Type</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities/Games</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posessions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Participants whose answers could not be categorized are not included (e.g., 11 responses which included "about stuff", "the usual", and "too stupid to go into").
Following attitudes, betrayal was the next most frequent conflict type for students low in affect intensity, but it was the least frequent type for students high in affect intensity.

Conflict types with best friends, friends, and acquaintances also differed. Betrayal was more frequently reported for conflicts with best friends than for conflicts with friends or acquaintances. Personal issues were quarreled about more frequently with friends than with best friends or acquaintances; and possessions conflicts were reported more often for disagreements with acquaintances than with best friends or friends.

**Conflict Intensity**

A 2 (high-low affect intensity groups) x 3 (relationship target-best friend, friend, acquaintance) x 4 (age/grade level) analysis of variance was used to examine the strength of feeling for the reported conflict on the questionnaire and the vignette situation. The results of the analysis of variance are presented in Tables IV and V. Post hoc analyses included simple effects analyses for the two-way interactions and subsequent pairwise comparisons using the Tukey A analysis.

**Questionnaire conflict.** The three way interaction between affect intensity, relationship target, and age/grade, implied in the first research question, was not significant, $F(6,137) = .343$, MSE = .867). However, a significant interaction was found between relationship target and age/grade
Table IV

Analysis of Variance for Intensity of Feeling about the Questionnaire Conflict

**Significant Interaction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.706</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.832</td>
<td>1.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.937</td>
<td>.766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Way Interaction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.957</td>
<td>1.959*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect and Age/Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.877</td>
<td>2.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect and Relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade and Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.888</td>
<td>2.327*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Way Interaction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect Grade Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2.530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** *p < .05.
Table V

Analysis of Variance for Intensity of Feeling about the Vignette Conflict

Significant Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.064</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.568</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Way Interaction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.784</td>
<td>1.956*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect and Age/Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td>.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect and Relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.247</td>
<td>1.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade and Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.448</td>
<td>2.816*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Way Interaction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect Grade Relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.934</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05.
level, $F(6,137) = 2.33, p < .05$. This interaction is plotted in Figure 1. The mean intensity ratings appear in Table VI. The simple effects analysis of this interaction revealed that relationship target was found to be significant at Grade 5, $F(2,114) = 11.61, p < .05$; significant at Grade 8, $F(2,114) = 11.51, p < .05$; significant at Grade 11, $F(2,114) = 11.58, p < .05$; and significant at the college level, $F(2,114) = 11.53, p < .05$. Age/grade was found to be significant for best friend, $F(3,114) = 11.53, p < .05$; significant for friend, $F(3,114) = 11.56, p < .05$; and significant for acquaintance, $F(3,114) = 11.65, p < .05$. Subsequent Tukey A analyses showed that among fifth grade students, reported conflict intensity was higher for best friend and friend relationships than for acquaintances, (ps < .05). Among eleventh grade students, reported conflict intensity was higher for acquaintances than for both best friend and friend, (ps < .05). No differences were found among eighth grade or college students, (ps > .05). No differences were found across grades for either best friend or friend, however, intensity for conflicts with acquaintances was reported higher for grade 11 than the other age/grades, (p < .05).

**Vignette conflict.** The three way interaction between affect intensity, relationship target, and age/grade implied in the first research question was not significant, $F(6,137) = .583, \text{MSE} = 1.127)$. However, a significant interaction was found between relationship target and age/grade level, $F(6,137) = 2.82, p < .05$. This interaction is plotted in Figure 2. The mean intensity ratings
Figure 1. Mean Intensity Ratings for the Questionnaire Conflict by Age/Grade and Relationship
Table VI

Mean Ratings (1-7) for Intensity of Feeling about the Questionnaire Conflict by Age/Grade and Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Relationship Target</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Friend</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>5.08&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.20&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.44&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>4.43&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.33&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.15&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>4.77&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.17&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.80&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>4.54&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.17&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.36&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Values with different superscripts are significant at (p < .05)

Differences for each grade across relationship target, c > a > b.

Differences for each relationship target across grades, c > a and c > b.

N = 138
Figure 2. Mean Intensity Ratings for the Vignette Conflict by Age/Grade and Relationship
appear in Table VII. The simple effects analysis of this interaction showed that relationship target was found to be significant at Grade 5, $F(2, 114) = 16.92, p < .05$; significant at Grade 8, $F(2, 114) = 16.85, p < .05$; significant at Grade 11, $F(2, 114) = 16.89, p < .05$; and significant at the college level, $F(2, 114) = 16.85, p < .05$. Age/grade was found to be significant for best friend, $F(3, 114) = 16.89, p < .05$; significant for friend, $F(3, 114) = 16.88, p < .05$; and significant for acquaintance, $F(3, 114) = 16.89, p < .05$. Subsequent Tukey A analyses showed that among fifth grade students, reported conflict intensity was higher for best friends and friends than for acquaintances ($p < .05$). Among eighth grade and college students, intensity was reported higher for best friend than for both friend and acquaintance ($p < .05$). For eleventh grade students, intensity was reported higher for both friend and acquaintance than for best friend ($p < .05$). Differences for relationship target across grades included higher reported intensity for best friend among fifth graders, eighth graders and college students than for eleventh graders ($p < .05$). Intensity reports for friend were higher among fifth graders than among eighth graders, eleventh graders and college students ($p < .05$). However, eleventh graders reported higher intensities for conflicts with acquaintances than did fifth grade eighth grade and college students ($p < .05$).
Table VII

**Mean Ratings (1-7) for Intensity of Feeling about the Vignette Conflict by Age/Grade and Relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Relationship Target</th>
<th>Best Friend</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Acquaintance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>6.25&lt;sup&gt;a,1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.40&lt;sup&gt;a,1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.78&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>6.00&lt;sup&gt;a,1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.22&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.31&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>4.77&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.75&lt;sup&gt;a,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.20&lt;sup&gt;a,1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>5.92&lt;sup&gt;a,1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.25&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.18&lt;sup&gt;b,2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>**Note.** Values with different superscripts are significant at *(p < .05)*

Differences for each grade across relationship target, a > b.

Differences for each relationship target across grades, 1 > 2.

N = 138
Affect and Resolution Strategy Analyses

The complexity of the multiple chi-square analyses that were necessary to address research questions 2-5 required some collapsing of the data to obtain proper cell sizes. Therefore, relationship target was removed from examination, and the four age/grades were collapsed into two groups, grade 11 and college participants made up the older group, and fifth- and eighth graders were combined for the younger group. Age/grade and affect intensity groups were then examined in separate analyses with feelings about conflicts and selected resolution strategies. The resolution strategies that were included in these analyses were "discussion", "disengagement", and "physical/verbal aggression". Not enough participants chose the remaining strategies to include them in the analyses (see Tables VIII and IX).

Reported Affect and Resolution Strategy

A series of 2 (affect intensity groups) x 3 (resolution strategy) and 2 (age/grade) x 3 (resolution strategy) chi-square analyses were used to examine research question 2 relating to the association between the affect reported and the resolution strategy.

Questionnaire conflict. No significant differences were found for affect intensity and feeling sad/bad, \(X^2(2,N=23) = .81, p > .05\) or for feeling mad/angry, \(X^2(2,N=75) = 1.31, p > .05\). Also no significant differences for age/grade and feeling sad/bad, \(X^2(2,N=23) = 1.76, p > .05\) or for feeling mad/angry, \(X^2(2,N=75) = 2.19, p > .05\). Too few participants answered the remaining feelings of happy, scared, lonely, or no feeling for an analysis.
Table VIII

Frequency of Reported Resolution Strategies Across Age/Grade Groups for Questionnaire Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution Strategies</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Help</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys/Verb</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give In</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 139

Table IX

Frequency of Reported Resolution Strategies Across Age/Grade Groups for Vignette Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution Strategies</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Help</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys/Verb</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give In</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 139
Vignette conflict. Significant differences were found between younger and older age/grades and feeling angry about the conflict and resolving it by discussing, disengaging, or using physical or verbal aggression, \(X^2(2, N = 110) = 11.00, p < .05\) (see Table X). Subsequent chi-square analyses showed that upper grades chose "discussing the situation" as a means of resolving the conflict more than either "disengaging" or "using physical/verbal aggression" (\(ps < .05\)). Further, more students in the upper age/grades selected discussing the conflict as a resolution than students in the lower age/grades (\(p < .05\)). Not enough participants answered feeling happy, sad, scared, lonely, or no feeling to permit an analysis. No significant differences were found for affect intensity and feeling angry, and resolving the conflict by discussing, disengaging, or using physical or verbal aggression, \(X^2(2, N = 111) = .83, p > .05\). Not enough participants answered feeling happy, sad, scared, lonely, or no feeling to permit an analysis.

Affect Strength and Resolution Strategy

Research question 3, relating to strength of feeling and resolution strategy, was evaluated with the series of 2 (affect intensity group or age/grade) x 3 (resolution strategy) chi-square analyses.

Questionnaire conflict. No significant differences were found for affect and high intensity ratings followed by resolution strategies of discussing, disengaging, or using physical or verbal aggression, \(X^2(2, N = 60) = 2.74,\)
Table X

Feeling Angry about the Vignette Conflict and Resolving Conflict by Discussing, Disengaging, or using Physical/Verbal Aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Physical/Verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Grades</td>
<td>19(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Grades</td>
<td>42(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Differences significant at (p < .05)

Differences for each grade across relationship target and for each relationship target across grade, a > b.

N = 110.
Not enough participants answered the categories for affect and low intensity ratings (e.g., giving ratings of 1, 2, or 3 to their feelings about the conflict). No significant differences were found for grade and high intensity ratings followed by the three resolution strategies, ($X^2(2, N = 60) = 2.72, p > .05$). Not enough participants answered to analyze for low ratings.

**Vignette conflict.** When grade and affect were analyzed separately, significant differences were found for grade and high ratings of intensity reported for feelings about the conflict followed by one of the three resolution strategies, discussing, disengaging or using physical or verbal aggression, ($X^2(2, N = 103) = 8.20, p < .05$) (see Table XI), but not enough participants responded to permit an analysis for grade and low intensity ratings. Subsequent chi-square analyses showed that when intensities of feelings are high, upper age/grade students choose **discussion** as a resolution strategy more frequently than disengaging or using physical/verbal aggression ($p < .05$). Further, students in the upper grades select discussion as a resolution strategy more frequently than students in the lower grades, when their feelings about the conflict are high ($p < .05$). No significant differences were found for affect and high intensity ratings and resolving the vignette conflict by discussing, disengaging, or by using physical or verbal aggression, ($X^2(2, N = 104) = 1.51, p > .05$). There were not enough participants to permit an analysis for affect and reported low intensity ratings to feelings about the conflict in association with any of the resolution strategies.
Table XI

Assigning Feeling about the Vignette Conflict a High Intensity Rating (e.g., 5, 6, or 7) and Resolving Conflict by Discussing, Disengaging, or using Physical/Verbal Aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Discuss</th>
<th>Disengage</th>
<th>Physical/Verbal Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Grades</td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Grades</td>
<td>38&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Differences significant at (p < .05)

Differences for each grade across relationship target and for each relationship target across grade, a > b.

N = 103
Reported Affect Following Resolution and Resolution Strategy

The fourth research question implied a relationship between the resolution strategy and the feeling after the resolution. The 2 (affect intensity group or age/grade) x 3 (resolution strategy) chi-square analyses of this data revealed the following results.

**Questionnaire conflict.** No significant differences were found for either affect or grade, for affect and feeling happy, \( (X^2(2,N = 43) = 1.49, \ p > .05) \); for affect and feeling nothing, \( (X^2(2,N = 36) = .70, \ p > .05) \); for grade and feeling happy, \( (X^2(2,N = 43) = 4.04, \ p > .05) \); and for grade and feeling nothing, \( (X^2(2,N = 36) = 2.28, \ p > .05) \). Not enough participants answered for either affect or grade for feeling sad, mad, scared, or lonely to permit an analysis.

**Vignette conflict.** No significant differences were found for either affect and feeling happy, \( (X^2(2,N = 52) = 3.04, \ p > .05) \) or for grade and feeling happy, \( (X^2(2,N = 52) = .54, \ p > .05) \). There were not enough participants who answered for the remaining feelings for neither affect nor grade to permit an analysis.

Affect Strength Following Resolution and Resolution Strategy

Research question 5 addressed the issue of the strength of the feeling after the resolution strategy was implemented. A series of 2 (affect intensity group or age/grade) x 3 (resolution strategy) chi-square analyses were applied to the data.
Questionnaire conflict. No significant differences were found for low or high affect and a reported low intensity rating and selecting discussing, disengaging, or using physical or verbal aggression as resolution strategies, \(\chi^2(2, N = 40) = .88, \ p > .05\) or a reported high intensity rating, \(\chi^2(2, N = 41) = 3.37, \ p > .05\). No significant differences were found for grade and reported low intensity ratings, \(\chi^2(2, N = 40) = 1.09, \ p > .05\) or reported high intensity ratings, \(\chi^2(2, N = 41) = 5.30, \ p > .05\).

Vignette conflict. No significant differences were found for affect and ratings of low and high intensity, \(\chi^2(2, N = 43) = .17, \ p > .05\) and \(\chi^2(2, N = 48) = 1.21, \ p > .05\), respectively. No significant differences were found for grade and high ratings of intensity, \(\chi^2(2, N = 48) = 4.46, \ p > .05\). Not enough participants answered to analyze the data for grade and low ratings of intensity.

Gender Differences

Gender differences were examined by 2 (affect intensity group) x 2 (gender) chi-square analyses to address research question 6. Grade and affect intensity were analyzed separately.

The minimum number of participants per cell was not reached for any of the analyses. The number of participants was especially low for males in the high intensity category (see Table1). This occurrence may be a gender issue. However, the other cells suggest the possibility of interesting results (see Tables XII, XIII and XIV).
Table XII

Feeling Angry about the Questionnaire Conflict and Resolving the Conflict by Discussing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Affect Intensive</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Affect Intensive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 61.

Table XIII

Feeling Angry about the Questionnaire Conflict and Resolving the Conflict by Disengaging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Affect Intensive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Affect Intensive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 37.

Table XIV

High Intensity Rating (5, 6, or 7) for Feeling about the Vignette Conflict and Resolving Conflict by Discussing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Affect Intensive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Affect Intensive</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 56.
Cross-Validation Check

Following the vignette questions, participants were asked if they had ever experienced a similar situation. In response, 71% of the participants indicated that they had experienced a similar experience to the one presented in the vignette. It therefore appears that the selected vignette was a reasonable situation to use to cross-validate the open ended responses from the questionnaire portion of the study. In addition, while attitudes was the most frequently reported conflict type (32% of the participants), 25% of the remaining portion of conflicts concerned betrayal as the recent conflict for the questionnaire. The number of participants selecting betrayal as a recent conflict supports the selection of the conflict for the vignette situation.
Chapter 4

Discussion

Differences in intensity of affect were found in individuals’ responses to conflicts. These differences, although not within high and low affect intensity groups, as posed in research question no. 1, were found among the four age/grade groups and for the three relationship targets. These differences in intensity of affect show that this dimension of the conflict issue, which often is overlooked or ignored in conflict research, is an important factor that should be considered when examining conflict situations.

When older and younger individuals’ responses to vignette conflicts were examined along with responses to conflicts with best friends, friends and acquaintances, a relationship was found to exist for both the simulated affect experienced and the intensity of this feeling, and the resolution strategy that was chosen. This support for research questions 2 and 3 suggests the way one feels and the strength of this feeling influences how one deals with the situations. This finding provides further evidence that affect and the intensity of affect play an important role in the dynamics of conflict and should be addressed in the conflict literature.

Types of Conflicts Reported in the Questionnaire

There appears to be a pattern associated with the types of conflicts adolescents are involved in. While disagreements over activities and games as
well as possessions are quite frequent among younger adolescents, ages 10-14, 16-18 year olds quarrel over more betrayal type issues, whereas college students' conflicts frequently involve responsibilities. These findings corroborate the findings of the study by LaVoie et. al. (1995). Adolescents seem to be faced with different concerns between the ages of 10-22 years. Issues of importance in their lives are reflected in the conflicts they have. Interactions of 10-14 year olds revolve mainly around play. Hence their conflicts involve struggles during these activities. The change that appears to take place in friend relationships for 16-18 year olds and the importance of these relationships at this age result in more frequent disagreements over trust issues and acts of betrayal. As adolescents mature, it appears the issues that are most prevalent in their lives are of a more mature nature as well. For college students, ages 19-22, the most frequently reported conflicts involve responsibilities, of which they have more as a young adult than at younger ages of adolescence.

Findings in the literature (e.g., Hartup, 1993; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b) suggest close friend relationships, by their voluntary nature, are ones in which individuals try to maintain rewarding interactions and to avoid disruption. This pattern seems to coincide with the present results that show betrayal to be a frequently reported concern among interactions with best friends. Betrayal is an issue that has the potential to disrupt the relationship. A common pattern
for all ages and all target relationships is the frequent reports of quarrels about attitudes, the way others behave toward people. This conflict seems to disrupt friendships of all ages.

**Conflict Intensity**

The expected relationship between affect, grade and relationship target, and their influence on feeling intensity in conflict situations was not significant. Also, no age/grade differences or target relationship differences between high and low affect intensity groups that were expected to affect intensity of feelings pertaining to the conflict were found. As a result, the answer to research question no. 1, pertaining to the presence of relationship and age differences in low and high affect intensive individuals’ responses to conflict situations, is "no." These results support previous research by Larsen et. al. (1986) who claimed that affect intensity is an individual difference factor and not a developmental factor. Within affect intensity groups there were no significant increases or decreases of intensity ratings across age groups in high affect intensity or low affect intensity. However, the results do not negate the importance of feeling intensity in conflict situations and its influence on selected resolution strategies.

Significant affect or intensity of feeling differences were found for conflict situations associated with age and friendship type. Among fifth graders (10-11 year olds), conflicts were found to be more intense with best friends and
friends than with acquaintances. Two different interpretations can be offered for this finding - early stage in friendship formation and a self-centered stage. The high intensity associated with conflict involving best friends and friends may reflect the importance of friendship, or friendship formation in early to middle childhood. Perhaps it is important to the child that their friends agree with them about choices, and if friends disapprove or disagree, it is a threat to their friendship (Hartup, 1993; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b). The absence of significant differences between best friends and friends may have occurred because friendship status often changes at this age. From the self-centered point of view, the fifth grade period is a selfish stage. At this age (10-11 years), conflict with friends and best friends may reflect a power struggle. It is more important for 10-11 year olds that their demands/wants be met than to maintain a friendship, so more intense conflicts that occur, which may cause disruption in friendship, are not reasons for concern. The lower levels of intensity associated with acquaintance relationships may have resulted because the 10-11 year olds experienced difficulty in recalling a recent conflict with a peer who was not a friend. With an increase in age, children become less concerned with wanting to dominate the relationship, and a win/lose approach to disagreements is less important than maintaining the relationship (Laursen 1993a, 1993b)
The absence of conflict intensity differences for 13-14 year olds (grade 8) seems to fit with the developmental data showing greater conformity at this age, and thus the desire to avoid conflicts. But no differences in conflict intensity for the 19-22 year olds seems to be the result of this age group managing conflict more successfully. On the other hand, 16-18 year olds' greater concern with maintaining close relationships with friends mitigates conflict intensity, whereas when disagreements occur, they are more likely with acquaintances (other peers), and these disagreements are likely to be more intense. These relationship differences generally agree with Raffaelli (1991) who found that emotional reactions following a conflict differed according to the relationship, and with the age differences reported by LaVoie et. al. (1995).

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the intensity responses to the vignette conflicts. A difference between questionnaire and vignette responses concerning the intensity of affect was that conflict intensity reported by eighth graders (13-14 years) and college students (19-22 years) was significantly higher for best friend than for either friend or acquaintance, indicating that they made a distinction between friend and best friend. The vignette conflict is about a trust issue, and therefore conflict intensity may be stronger for best friend when that trust is broken. The higher intensity ratings for the vignette conflict, compared to the ratings for the questionnaire conflict, for the 13-14 and 19-22 year olds either suggests eighth graders and college students are
unwilling to reveal more personal conflict situations or that open-ended questionnaires do not elicit the more personalized type of conflict that can be posed in a vignette. On the other hand, 16-18 year olds (grade 11) gave lower intensity ratings when the conflict involved a best friend, suggesting they are more willing to tolerate trust violations when a best friend is involved because the friendship is important.

**Affect and Resolution Strategies**

As expected, differences were also found in the type of affect and the intensity of affect in conflicts reported by participants as well as the resolution strategies that followed. However, these differences appeared for younger and older participants not for individuals high and low in affect intensity.

No significant differences in the questionnaire conflict were found between the affect intensity groups or across age/grade groups. The intensity of the conflict did not influence how the individual felt. In the reported conflict situations, individuals felt either sad, angry, or apathetic, and their feelings resulted in the same resolution strategies. Apparently the 10-22 year olds in this study used the same resolution strategies in all situations, similar to the study by LaVoie, et. al. (1995). Perhaps adolescents rely on the strategies that have worked for them in the past, suggesting an archetype exists of conflict resolution.
However, the trust violation in the vignette elicited different responses from the older participants than for the younger. When angry, more older students selected discussion as a resolution strategy. They also chose discussion more than disengagement or using physical or verbal aggression which were the most frequently chosen resolution strategies across age groups.

The resolution strategy selected by an individual is likely a maturity factor. According to the conflict literature (e.g., Hartup, 1993; Laursen & Collins, 1994), older students discuss their conflicts as a way to resolve them, which supposedly leads to more win/win outcomes. Choosing this type of resolution is described as the product of more advanced reasoning. Laursen (1996 in press) suggests that adolescents are aware of the costs of conflicts. Therefore, they try to manage conflicts in order to reduce their negative effect and return equity which is questioned in conflict. No differences were found between low and high affect intensity groups. Therefore, the resolution strategy which one chooses when angry about a conflict appears to be more of an age/grade factor.

No significant differences were found for affect strength and the resolution strategy that follows between the affect intensity groups or across age groups. Across the age span of 10-22 years, individuals responded similarly to conflict situations, regardless of the intensity of the feeling involved, or their affect intensity group. However, differences were found for the
vignette conflict. For high intensity feelings about conflicts, older students chose discussion as their resolution strategy more frequently than younger students. Older students also chose discussion more frequently than disengagement or physical/verbal aggression.

In low conflict intensity situations, 10-14 year olds and 16-22 year olds responded similarly, choosing similar resolution strategies. However, when angry or in situations of high intensity, 16-22 year olds selected a discussion strategy more often than 10-14 year olds. The 16-22 year olds apparently are interested in maintaining their present relationships and therefore seek win/win outcomes, as reported by Laursen (1993a, 1993b).

Both questionnaire and vignette reports showed that, following conflict situations, low and high affect intensity individuals from 10-22 years of age (grade 5 to college) respond with similar feelings and intensities of feelings, regardless of the resolution strategy chosen. The way in which one resolves a conflict does not lead one to experience a specific feeling more than others or more or less intense than those who resolved their conflict a similar or different way.

Gender Differences

Although an adequate number of participants was not available for an analyses of gender differences, some interesting results were tabled in the results section. Gender differences in choosing the means to resolve a conflict
seem to be present. Supporting the results of the LaVoie, et. al. study (1995), females reported using strategies of discussion as well as disengaging more than males. However, the results of the current study show there may be differences between males in low and high affect intensity groups in how they resolve conflicts. Further investigation into the gender issue involved in affect intensity in conflict situations is needed.

**Questionnaire versus Vignette Approaches to Conflict Study**

The significant, and nonsignificant, differences which were found for the vignettes and for the questionnaires were quite similar. The few differences that did exist may be a result of inherent differences between open ended responses and an artificial situation. Perhaps it is easier to say one would like to resolve a conflict in a more mature manner, however, when faced with the real situation, one behaves differently. The vignette, which was the same for everyone, may have been more severe than some of the conflicts recalled by participants for the questionnaire portion. However, as noted previously, 71% of the participants indicated that they had experienced a similar experience to the one presented in the vignette. Further, betrayal was a frequent type of conflict reported in the questionnaire section on a recent conflict that was experienced. It therefore appears that the selected vignette was a reasonable situation to use to cross-validate the open ended responses from the questionnaire part of the study.
Because the questionnaire and vignette formats yielded similar results, future researchers may want to choose one method or the other to simplify their study. An advantage to using the vignette conflict is that every participant responds to the same situation. However, if a more precise description of the conflict was requested in the open-ended questionnaire by providing subheadings or key words to trigger similar types of experiences and asking more specific questions, the same types of conflicts could probably be obtained.

**Limitations**

Participant response was lower than expected. Many schools did not want to participate for various reasons, including concerns over the time required of their teachers and administration fielding parental concerns, concerns that the project may cause parents unwarranted suspicions that conflict situations were occurring in the school of which they were not aware, and concerns that the questions may be too sensitive and too invasive for the students. Among the schools that agreed to participate, parental permissions were either slow in their return, or were not returned. Three separate public school systems and one private school were included in the study, but the parent permission return was still low. The problem does limit the external validity of the study.

Perhaps a higher return would have occurred if the investigator had visited the classrooms prior to the day of data collection, described the study
to the perspective participants, and told them about the incentives. The study may have sounded more exciting than the description given by the principals. Also, the students may have been more motivated to return the permission forms. Another way to increase the parental permission return would have been to market it to schools and parents as necessary research by noting the reality of recent conflict incidents in local area schools.

Conclusions

The intensity of affect is a concept that has been all but disregarded in the conflict literature. While a few studies (e.g., Braine, Pomerantz, Lorber, & Krantz, 1991; Laursen, 1993a; Laursen, 1993b; LaVoie, Johnson, & Spenceri, 1995; Raffaelli, 1991) have addressed emotional reactions in conflicts, the results of this study provide evidence that affect and the intensity of affect should not be ignored. The intensity of affect is an important factor to be considered in order to understand conflict situations among adolescents more completely. The intensity of affect has been shown in this study to differ as a function of age/grade and relationship target, and the intensity of affect also affects resolution strategies that are chosen. Higher intensities seem to be found among 10-11 year olds for best friends and friends, but for acquaintances among 16-18 year olds. These differences suggest some changes are occurring in later adolescence that involve interactions among friends and acquaintances. Similar findings have been reported by Hartup
The importance of discussion as a resolution strategy used more frequently by older individuals is supported by previous studies (Hartup, 1993; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b; Laursen & Collins, 1994). They suggest that discussion leads to more win/win outcomes which is more often the goal of older individuals than younger ones. Discussion was chosen more frequently by older participants in the present study for conflicts involving anger and high intensities. In these situations older individuals still prefer win/win outcomes, evidenced by their selection of "discussion", suggesting that maintenance of the relationship is the main goal, regardless of the feeling or its intensity. The pattern for younger individuals is different. In emotional situations, younger individuals choose "disengaging" and "using physical/verbal aggression" just as often as "discussing". Apparently this age group is less concerned about the relationship disruption as the literature also suggests (e.g., Hartup, 1993; Laursen, 1993a, 1993b; Laursen & Collins, 1994).

Overall, intensity of affect has been shown to be an important factor in conflict situation, and one which is affected by age and relationship target differences. Given this finding, there is a need for further research on affect intensity in conflicts involving adolescents.
References


Appendix A

A.I.M. QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: The following questions refer to emotional reactions to typical life-events. Please indicate how YOU react to these events by placing a number from the following scale in the blank space preceding each item. Please base your answers on how YOU react, not on how you think others react or how you think a person should react.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>When I accomplish something difficult I feel delighted or elated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>When I feel happy it is a strong type of exuberance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I enjoy being with other people very much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I feel pretty bad when I tell a lie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>When I solve a small personal problem, I feel euphoric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>My emotions tend to be more intense than those of most people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>My happy moods are so strong that I feel like I'm in heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I get overly enthusiastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>If I complete a task I thought was impossible, I am ecstatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>My heart races at the anticipation of some exciting event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sad movies deeply touch me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>When I'm happy it's a feeling of being untroubled and content rather than being zestful and aroused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>When I talk in front of a group for the first time, my voice gets shaky and my heart races.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>When something good happens I am usually much more jubilant than others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My friends might say I'm emotional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>The memories I like the most are of those times when I felt content and peaceful rather than zestful and enthusiastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The sight of someone who is hurt badly affects me strongly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>When I'm feeling well it's easy for me to go from being in a good mood to being really joyful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>&quot;Calm and cool&quot; could easily describe me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>When I'm happy I feel like I'm bursting with joy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Seeing a picture of some violent car accident in a newspaper makes me feel sick to my stomach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>When I'm happy I feel very energetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>When I receive an award I become overjoyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>When I succeed at something, my reaction is calm contentment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>When I do something wrong I have strong feelings of shame and guilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I can remain calm even on the most trying days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>When things are going good I feel &quot;on top of the world.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>When I get angry it's easy for me to still be rational and not overreact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>When I know I have done something very well, I feel relaxed and content rather than excited and elated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>When I do feel anxiety it is normally very strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>My negative moods are mild in intensity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>When I am excited over something I want to share my feelings with everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>When I feel happiness, it is a quiet type of contentment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>My friends would probably say I'm a tense or &quot;high-strung&quot; person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>When I'm happy I bubble over with energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>When I feel guilty, this emotion is quite strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I would characterize my happy moods as closer to contentment than to joy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>When someone compliments me, I get so happy I could &quot;burst.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>When I am nervous I get shaky all over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>When I am happy the feeling is more like contentment and inner calm than one of exhilaration and excitement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

A.I.M. QUESTIONNAIRE (revised)

Directions: The following questions refer to emotional reactions to typical life-events. Please indicate how YOU react to these events by placing a number from the following scale in the blank space preceding each item. Please base your answers on how YOU react, not on how you think others react or how you think a person should react.

Never  Almost  Occasionally  Usually  Almost  Always
1 2 3 4 5 6

1. When I can do something difficult I feel delighted or happy.
2. When I feel happy it is a strong type of happiness.
3. I enjoy being with other people very much.
4. I feel pretty bad when I tell a lie.
5. When I figure out a small personal problem, I feel wonderful.
6. My emotions tend to be stronger than those of most people.
7. My happy moods are so strong that I feel like I’m in heaven.
8. I get too excited.
9. If I finish a task I thought was impossible, I am excited.
10. My heart beats very fast when I am waiting for some exciting event.
11. Sad movies make me feel things deeply.
12. When I’m happy it’s a feeling of being untroubled and content rather than being very excited and aroused.
13. When I talk in front of a group for the first time, my voice gets shaky and my heart races.
14. When something good happens I am usually much more excited than others.
15. My friends might say I’m emotional.
16. The memories I like the most are of those times when I felt content and peaceful rather than excited and ready to do something.
17. When I see someone who is hurt badly affects me strongly.
18. When I’m feeling well it’s easy for me to go from being in a good mood to being really joyful.
19. “Calm and cool” could easily describe me.
20. When I’m happy I feel like I’m bursting with joy.
21. Seeing a picture of some violent car accident in a newspaper makes me feel sick to my stomach.
22. When I’m happy I feel very energetic.
23. When I receive an award I become overjoyed.
24. When I succeed at something, my reaction is a general feeling of pleasure.
25. When I do something wrong I have strong feelings of shame and guilt.
26. I can remain calm even on the most difficult days.
27. When things are going good I feel “on top of the world.”
28. When I get angry it’s easy for me to still be understanding and not overreact.
29. When I know I have done something very well, I feel relaxed and content rather than excited and very happy.
30. When I do feel anxiety it is normally very strong.
31. My negative moods are mild.
32. When I am excited over something I want to share my feelings with everyone.
33. When I feel happiness, it is a quiet type of feeling okay.
34. My friends would probably say I’m a tense or a very excitable person.
35. When I’m happy I bubble over with energy.
36. When I feel guilty, this emotion is quite strong.
37. I would characterize my happy moods as closer to feeling okay than to joy.
38. When someone compliments me, I get so happy I could “burst.”
39. When I am nervous I get shaky all over.
40. When I am happy the feeling is more like satisfaction and inner calm than one of real joy and excitement.
Appendix C

Questionnaire

Personal Data Form

1. Gender  Male ____  Female ____

2. Date of Birth ____/____/____  Age _____

3. Grade  (circle one)  5  8  11  College 1st yr.  2nd yr.

4. Family Type (check one)
   ___ Living with both parents
   ___ Living with mother only
   ___ Living with father only
   ___ Living in a step family with mother
   ___ Living in a step family with father
   ___ Other (explain) _______________________________________________________

5. Number of brothers and sisters  (fill in blanks)
   Number of brothers older than you ____
   Number of brothers younger than you ____
   Number of sisters older than you ____
   Number of sisters younger than you ____
The following questions pertain to conflicts in relationships.

A conflict refers to disagreements, disputes, arguments, or behavioral opposition (fighting).

Please take a few minutes to think about some recent conflicts you’ve had. What were these conflicts about? What words would you use to describe the conflicts and how you felt?

In the space below, write down a few key words that describe any disagreements, disputes or arguments you’ve had this past week or two.

When you have taken the time to write briefly about recent conflicts, please turn the page and complete the questionnaire.
CONFLICT WITH BEST FRIEND

Recall recent arguments/disagreements (conflicts) that you have had with your very BEST FRIEND. Choose ONE, to describe, that sticks out the most in your mind, something with which you really had a problem.

This should be a conflict you have had with someone who is the same sex as you (e.g., if you are a female, choose a conflict you've had with a female best friend. If you are a male, choose a conflict you've had with a male best friend).

1. Identify that person by first name or initials_____________________

2. Describe this conflict:

3. Which of these words comes closest to how you felt during this conflict? (Circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>happy/good</th>
<th>sad/bad</th>
<th>angry/mad</th>
<th>afraid/scared</th>
<th>no feeling/nothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lonely/not wanted</td>
<td>other (describe) ______________________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

weak moderate strong extremely strong

5. How did you resolve/settle/deal with this conflict? (check the one that best fits the way the problem was solved in the end)

___ discussed (calmly or otherwise)
___ disengaged (walked away or ignored problem/person)
___ got help
___ compromised
___ got physically or verbally aggressive
___ gave in
___ Other (explain) _____________________________________________

6. How did you feel after this conflict was dealt with or resolved? (Circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>happy/good</th>
<th>sad/bad</th>
<th>angry/mad</th>
<th>afraid/scared</th>
<th>no feeling/thing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lonely/not wanted</td>
<td>other (describe) ______________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

weak moderate strong extremely strong
CONFLICT WITH FRIEND

Recall recent arguments/disagreements (conflicts) that you have had with a FRIEND. (not best friend, these should not be with anyone you consider a best friend, we're talking just about friends)

Choose ONE, to describe, that sticks out the most in your mind, something with which you really had a problem.

This should be a conflict you have had with someone who is the same sex as you (e.g., if you are a female, choose a conflict you've had with a female friend. If you are a male, choose a conflict you've had with a male friend).

1. Identify that person by first name or initials __________

2. Describe this conflict:

3. Which of these words comes closest to how you felt during this conflict? (Circle one)

   happy/good   sad/bad   angry/mad   afraid/scared   no feeling/nothing
   lonely/not wanted   other (describe) ________

4. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   weak   moderate   strong   extremely strong

5. How did you resolve/settle/deal with this conflict? (check the one that best fits the way the problem was solved in the end)
   ___ discussed (calmly or otherwise)
   ___ disengaged (walked away or ignored problem/person)
   ___ got help
   ___ compromised
   ___ got physically or verbally aggressive
   ___ gave in
   ___ Other (explain) ______________________________________________________________________________________

6. How did you feel after this conflict was dealt with or resolved?
   happy/good   sad/bad   angry/mad   afraid/scared   no feeling/nothing
   lonely/not wanted   other (describe) ________

7. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   weak   moderate   strong   extremely strong
CONFLICT WITH ACQUAINTANCE

Recall recent arguments/disagreements (conflicts) that you have had with an acquaintance - a non friend (someone who you know, perhaps a classmate, someone you work with or a neighbor who is your age, but whom you do not consider a friend and who is not a relative).

Choose ONE, to describe, that sticks out the most in your mind, something with which you really had a problem.

This should be a conflict you have had with someone who is the same sex as you (e.g., if you are a female, choose a conflict you have had with a female non friend. If you are a male, choose a conflict you have had with a male non friend).

1. Identify that person by first name or initials __________

2. Describe this conflict:

3. Which of these words comes closest to how you felt during this conflict? (Circle one)

   happy/good  sad/bad  angry/mad  afraid/scared  no feeling/nothing

   lonely/not wanted  other (describe)________

4. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   weak  moderate  strong  extremely strong

5. How did you resolve/settle/deal with this conflict? (check the one that best fits the way the problem was solved in the end)

   ___ discussed (calmly or otherwise)
   ___ disengaged (walked away or ignored problem/person)
   ___ got help
   ___ compromised
   ___ got physically or verbally aggressive
   ___ gave in
   ___ Other (explain)________________________________________

6. How did you feel after this conflict was dealt with or resolved?

   happy/good  sad/bad  angry/mad  afraid/scared  no feeling/nothing

   lonely/not wanted  other (describe)____________

7. How strong was this feeling? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   weak  moderate  strong  extremely strong
Scenario: BEST FRIEND, FEMALE

Imagine what this situation would be like if this were to happen to you. Please indicate how you would react, not how you think most other people would or should act, but how you would react.

Keep in mind that Beth and Ellen have known each other for five years and they are best friends. The two girls completely trust each other and tell one another everything.

Beth, looking upset about something, finds Ellen in the hallway between classes. Beth tells Ellen that something totally humiliating just happened to her, and begs her not to say anything to anyone about it. Ellen assures her she wouldn't. Beth looks around to see if anyone can hear her, leans in towards Ellen, and whispers her secret. Ellen can't believe it and asks Beth what she's going to do. Beth said she's not sure, but again reminds Ellen not to tell ANYONE, and they'd talk about it later.

Ellen arrives at her next class. Gina, Chrissy and Carol immediately walk over to her. They said they saw Ellen talking to Beth in the hall and wanted to know what was going on. Ellen said it was nothing, but they insisted they knew something was up.

Ellen told them she promised Beth she wouldn't say anything to anyone, and if Beth found out she told anyone it would really hurt her. The girls promised they wouldn't say anything. Ellen gives in and tells them what happened to Beth. She tells them they can't say anything to anyone because Beth would kill her for telling them.

1. Knowing how Ellen responded, if you were Beth and Ellen was your best friend, how would you feel knowing Ellen has revealed your secret? (Circle one)
   - happy/good
   - sad/bad
   - angry/mad
   - afraid/scared
   - no feeling/nothing
   - lonely/not wanted
   - other (describe)____________________

2. How strong is this feeling? 1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   - weak
   - moderate
   - strong
   - extremely strong

3. How would you resolve/settle/deal with this conflict? (check the one that best fits the way you would solve the problem in the end)
   - discuss (calmly or otherwise)
   - disengage (walk away or ignore problem/person)
   - get help
   - compromise
   - get physically or verbally aggressive
   - give in
   - Other (explain)____________________

4. How do you think you would feel after this conflict was dealt with or resolved? (Circle one)
   - happy/good
   - sad/bad
   - angry/mad
   - afraid/scared
   - no feeling/nothing
   - lonely/not wanted
   - other (describe)____________________

5. How strong is this feeling? 1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   - weak
   - moderate
   - strong
   - extremely strong
Scenario: BEST FRIEND, Male

Imagine what this situation would be like if this were to happen to you. Please indicate how you would react, not how you think most other people would or should act, but how you would react.

Keep in mind that Bill and Mike have known each other for five years and they are best friends. The two guys completely trust each other and tell one another everything.

Mike, looking upset about something, finds Bill in the hallway between classes. Mike tells Bill that something totally humiliating just happened to him, and begs him not to say anything to anyone about it. Bill assures him he wouldn't. Mike looks around to see if anyone can hear him, leans in towards Bill, and whispers his secret. Bill can't believe it and asks Mike what he's going to do. Mike said he's not sure, but again reminds Bill not to tell ANYONE, and they'd talk about it later.

Bill arrives at his next class. Bob, Joe and Steve immediately walk over to him. They said they saw Bill talking to Mike in the hall and wanted to know what was going on. Bill said it was nothing, but they insisted they knew something was up.

Bill told them he promised Mike he wouldn't say anything to anyone, and if Mike found out he told anyone he'd really be upset. The guys promised they wouldn't say anything. Bill gives in and tells them what happened to Mike. He tells them they can't say anything to anyone because Mike would kill him for telling them.

1. Knowing how Bill responded, if you were Mike and Bill was your best friend, how would you feel knowing Bill has revealed your secret? (Circle one)

   happy/good  sad/bad  angry/mad  afraid/scared  no feeling/nothing

   lonely/not wanted other (describe)__________

2. How strong is this feeling?  1  2  3  4  5  6  7

   weak  moderate  strong  extremely strong

3. How would you resolve/settle/deal with this conflict? (check the one that best fits the way you would solve the problem in the end)

   _____ discuss (calmly or otherwise)
   _____ disengage (walk away or ignore problem/person)
   _____ get help
   _____ compromise
   _____ get physically or verbally aggressive
   _____ give in
   _____ Other (explain)______________

4. How do you think you would feel after this conflict was dealt with or resolved? (Circle one)

   happy/good  sad/bad  angry/mad  afraid/scared  no feeling/nothing

   lonely/not wanted other (describe)______________

5. How strong is this feeling?  1  2  3  4  5  6  7

   weak  moderate  strong  extremely strong
Appendix E
Data Collection Instructions

The investigator thanked the participants for volunteering and gave this brief description of the project:

"I hope that you will enjoy this experience and perhaps you will learn a little something about yourself. The task you are asked to complete involves everyday conflicts that you experience and the strategies you use to resolve the conflicts. I ask that you answer each question very carefully so that the results can be as accurate as possible. Again, your assistance is greatly appreciated."

The participants were then asked to complete the AIM. Following the AIM, participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire in the following manner:

"The first page of the questionnaire you have in front of you should be the personal data form. The next page provides a brief definition of a conflict and asks you to free associate about recent conflicts. Please take the time to do this; it will make answering the rest of the questionnaire easier for you. Finally, the page that follows ask you to describe a recent conflict with either a best friend, a friend, or an acquaintance. You are then to indicate how you felt during this conflict and to rate this feeling as well as to indicate how you resolved it, how you felt about the resolution, and to rate this feeling. In some instances choices are offered; please use these choices if they apply. However, if you have a response that more accurately answers the question check the category "other" and identify what that word or phrase that describes the conflict, feelings, or resolution strategy. Do you have any questions at this point?

When you are finished, please look over the questionnaire and make sure you did not accidentally skip any questions, especially those that you intended to answer. When you have finished answering the questionnaire, please read the vignette carefully and answer the questions pertaining to this typical, real-life situation. You should find this situation to be quite similar to those you've encountered in your every day lives. Perhaps you've experienced a situation almost exactly like the one described here. Further instructions are included at the top of the page of the vignette. You may begin."

The vignette has explicit instructions at the top of the page, encouraging the participants to answer how they would respond in that situation, not how they think they should or how they think someone else would respond.