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Young Adolescents Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the conflicts of young adolescents with their same-sex peers. The study is descriptive and was designed to explore the adolescents' attitudes and beliefs about their peer conflicts. Four issues were delineated as topics for research in this study: frequency of same-sex peer conflicts, involvement of others in peer conflicts, the effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescents, and the behaviours utilized by adolescents during peer conflicts. Within each of the four issues questions were generated with specific interest given to gender differences.

The questionnaire utilized in this study was constructed with questions from the Social Milieu Scale (Frankel, 1986), the Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), and original items by the author. One hundred and forty-four junior high school students were surveyed about their beliefs and attitudes towards their same-sex peer conflicts. Results indicated that the perception held by adolescents is that female adolescents tend to be more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts; yet, results did not reveal that there were differences between males and females in the frequency of conflicts. Gender differences were found in the behaviours used by males and females during same-sex peer conflicts.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with three school counsellors and four adolescents. The results of these interviews were similar to the survey results in that school counsellors and the adolescents perceived gender differences in the frequency and in the behaviours utilized by adolescents in same-sex peer conflicts. Several possible explanations for the development of these perceptions were discussed throughout the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

Vignette

Lena, armed with an entourage of friends at her side, approaches Michelle in the crowded hallway. Michelle looks up from her locker and can see by the look in Lena's eyes that something is wrong.

"Hi," Michelle says cautiously.

Lena blurts out loudly, "we don't want to be friends with you anymore", and looks to the other girls for approval. "You are always mean to me!"

"What do you mean? I thought we were friends."

"You just use me. When you don't have anyone else to hang around with you come to me. You have been doing this to me since grade six and I'm sick of it! We all hate you."

The circle of friends nod in agreement, "yah, we don't want to hang around with you anymore."

Michelle, confused and on the brink of tears, turns and walks to the washroom through the crowd of junior high students that have gathered to watch the conflict. Michelle does not return to school for three days. She hopes that upon her return all will be forgotten. However, upon her return to school she finds her old circle of friends whisper as she approaches the group. Some roll their eyes when she speaks. Lena and a few others completely ignore her by turning their backs, snickering, and walking away. Only one girl says "Hi", then she too quickly turns away. Michelle in despair, realizes that she has been banished from the group, but for reasons unknown to her. With no one else to talk to she decides that she should see the school counsellor.

Importance of the Research

The above vignette is an example of the day-to-day conflicts that many female adolescents experience in their peer relationships. To adults who spend time with adolescents these conflicts may appear trivial. These frequent conflicts are anything but trivial to the adolescent. Opotow (1991) stressed that up to 80% of conflicts in schools were with friends and that "conflicts with familiar people are more memorable and disturbing than with strangers" (p.417). Due to the emotional and, at times, physical injuries that can be inflicted during peer conflicts, as well as the educationally disruptive effects of peer conflicts, schools have implemented conflict resolution programs. The

results released by Alberta Education (1996) revealed the most frequent innovative programs initiated by school counsellors during 1996 was conflict management programs (p. 9). The results of the Alberta Education survey implies that there is a recognition that peer conflict is a problem and therefore a need for conflict resolution programs exists.

The purpose of this research is to gain knowledge of the adolescents' perspectives into their same-sex peer conflicts. The intent is to provide counsellors and teachers working with adolescents an insight into the adolescents' views on peer conflicts, thereby providing counsellors and teachers with information which will enable them to develop strategies that will be helpful to the adolescents in the successful resolution of peer conflicts. In conjunction with gaining knowledge about adolescent peer conflicts, this study also examines the effect of gender on the adolescent's behaviour in conflict. The issue of gender differences is important, not only for developing a better understanding of the nature of same-sex peer conflicts, but also should be taken into consideration with the recent trend in education on gender segregated classes and the return of gender segregated schools. If the dynamics of male-female interactions within classrooms lay in question, the dynamics of all female and all male classes must also fall under scrutiny, especially, when focusing on same-sex peer conflicts.

Purpose of the Research

The main focus of this research is to gain insight into the conflicts of adolescents with their same-sex peers. The study is descriptive and was designed to explore the adolescents' attitudes and beliefs about same-sex peer conflicts. Four issues have been selected as topics for research: frequency of same-sex peer conflicts, involvement of other peers in same-sex peer conflicts, the effects of same-sex peer conflict on the young adolescent, and the behaviours utilized during same-sex peer conflicts by the adolescents. Relevant questions have been posed for each of the four issues with a specific focus given to gender differences. The research questions developed from the four issues are as follows:

1. Are there gender differences in the frequency of conflicts experienced by the

young adolescents with their same-sex peers, if so, why?

2. Why do young adolescents involve others in their same-sex peer conflicts? Are there gender differences in the frequency of involvement of others by the adolescent during their same-sex peer conflicts?
3. What are the effects experienced by the young adolescent during same-sex peer conflicts? Are there gender differences in the effects of same-sex peer conflicts?
4. What are the behaviours used most frequently in young adolescent same-sex peer conflicts by each gender?

An important clarification must be made in terms of definitions of words or phrases used in the above questions. The phrase "young adolescents" is defined as students between 11 to 15 years of age. The definitions of the phrase, effects of conflict, and the word conflict have been provided in Chapter Three.

The research process has been organized to include a review of the current literature, a survey conducted on adolescent females and males from grades seven through nine, as well as semi-structured interviews with three junior high school counsellors and four adolescents. The survey was undertaken specifically to access the attitudes and beliefs of the adolescents, thereby gaining an understanding of how adolescents perceive their actions and the reasons for their actions during same-sex peer conflicts.

The purpose of conducting both a survey and interviews was to gather information through both qualitative and quantitative methods. The integrated approach of using both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (survey) research methods was designed to provide dimensions that a single approach may not be able to provide. It is not that one approach is perceived as better than the other, rather that the approaches combined can lend support to present a stronger case.

Personal Biases of the Researcher

In my first year as a junior high school counsellor, my office seemed to be inundated with girls and their friends in some type of conflict. It appeared that adolescent girls were more frequently involved in peer conflicts than adolescent boys or, at least,

more female peer conflicts ended up in my office. When counselling the girls I noted they would bring up past grudges and conflicts. They carried these past hurts like visible scars ready to be displayed with an accompanied, "see what you did to me in Grade 6!"

The girls also appeared to use vindictive behaviours in conflict, usually through the involvement of other peers. They would spread rumours, divulge secrets once shared in confidence, write notes, make prank phone calls, use name calling, or subtle nuances such as turning a back or looking away when the person spoke. I found these behaviours difficult to grasp when placed in the realm of the stereotypical view that females are the more nurturing and relationship oriented gender.

Thus began the endless questioning of my views on this topic: Are girls in more conflicts than boys? Is this just happening at my school? Are girls nastier or more vindictive in conflicts than boys? Are there gender differences in adolescent same-sex peer conflicts?

While the intent of this research originally was to focus on the conflicts of adolescent girls, through the above questioning process I realized that I was making assumptions or judgements about gender differences in conflict based upon my own work related experiences rather than literature. This study is not to discount my personal experience but to gain insight into the issue of adolescent peer conflict, to put into context the issue of gender differences in adolescent peer conflict, and to some degree perhaps validate my perceptions.

Since I have developed perceptions on this topic of adolescent peer conflicts, it is necessary to acknowledge the personal biases I have formed. After each of the biases presented, I have added a clarifying statement in regards to adolescent males. This is done to make the reader aware that while I focus on female adolescents, I am also aware that this topic effects adolescent boys, but possibly in a different manner. Through the literature review and this research, evidence to support (or not) the following personal biases will be gained:

1. Adolescent girls [illegible]lationship oriented; meaning they place great emphasis on peer relationships. This does not imply that boys are not concerned with peer

relationships, just that adolescent girls appear to place a greater emphasis on peer relationships.

2. Girls are more sensitive to nuances given through body language, facial expressions, or tone of voice.
3. Adolescent girls involve others more frequently in their same-sex peer conflicts. This could be through positive means, seeking advice, or negative means that escalate the conflict, such as spreading rumours or writing notes.
4. Adolescent girls use behaviours in conflict that hurt each other emotionally and psychologically. By this I mean that they divulge secrets given in confidence, they use the power of the group to back them up to hurt the other individual. This does not imply that adolescent boys are not emotionally or psychologically hurt during peer conflicts; however, it appears that girls know just the exact words to use that will hurt, which secrets to divulge that will hurt the most, and which people to involve to support their views.

Overview of the Thesis

An example of the type of same-sex peer conflict experienced by adolescents, as well as the nature and purpose of this research has been presented in Chapter One. A brief overview of the current status of conflict management programs in Alberta schools was provided to establish the rationale and need for this research.

In Chapter Two a review of the current literature on adolescent peer conflicts is provided. In the first section a brief overview of adolescent development is presented along with major concepts that play a role in adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. This is followed by the current literature on adolescent peer conflicts which is divided into five main areas: the lack of information on peer conflicts, gender differences in peer conflict, the importance of peer conflict, the causes of peer conflict, and the tragedy of peer conflict. A discussion on possible factors which influence gender differences in peer conflict follows; specific emphasis is given to the areas of socialization (family and play) and gender identity. The final section of the literature review consists of a brief overview

of the area of moral development as it relates to adolescent peer conflicts. A summary is then provided emphasizing the major points discussed in Chapter Two.

A presentation of the design and research procedures used to conduct this study is presented in Chapter Three. Other sections in Chapter Three include the definition of terms, the selection of participants, the development of the research instruments, and the method of data analysis utilized. The results of the data collection along with a discussion of their meaning, as related to the questions highlighted in Chapter One and Three, are presented in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five there is a discussion of the implications from the study, direction for further research, and delimitations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

He doesn't smell right!" he exclaimed. "He isn't a rabbit at all! He isn't real!" "I am Real!" said the little Rabbit. "I am Real! The Boy said so!" And he nearly began to cry.

Just then there was a sound of footsteps, and the Boy ran past them, and with a stamp of feet and a flash of white tails the two strange rabbits disappeared.

"Come back and play with Me!" called the little Rabbit. "Oh, do come back! I know I am Real!"

But there was no answer, only the little ants ran to and fro, and the bracken swayed gently where the two strangers had passed. The Velveteen Rabbit was all alone.

"Oh, dear!" he thought. "Why did they run away like that? Why couldn't they stop and talk to me?"

Williams (1991) The Velveteen Rabbit

To be rejected by one's peers for reasons unknown is a common theme voiced not only in fictional literature, but in the reality of adolescents' peer conflicts. "But I don't know what I did wrong" or "I don't know why they won't talk to me" are common statements, which reflect the confusion of peer conflict, posed by adolescents. The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize the research available on adolescent peer conflicts. Despite the fact that there is limited research conducted on adolescent same-sex peer conflicts, the scope of this review is broad due to the nature of adolescence, and the topic of conflict.

The volume of literature and research available on the topic of adolescence is substantial. Due to the volume of information on adolescence only a brief overview of the developmental stage of adolescence will be presented in the first part of this chapter. Certainly, each of the basic concepts presented in the overview could be delineated as variables, and assessed to the degree and role they play in peer conflicts; however, this is not the focus of this research and therefore only a brief overview will be provided.

Following the overview of the developmental stage of adolescence is a review of

the current literature on adolescent peer conflicts in which five main areas are highlighted: the lack of information on peer conflicts, gender differences in peer relationships and peer conflict, the importance of peer conflict, the causes of peer conflict, and the tragedy of peer conflict. Through the process of reviewing the literature on peer relationships certain questions continually surfaced: "Why are there gender differences in the ways in which adolescents perceive and interact in peer relationships and peer conflict?", "What are the factors that contribute to the gender differences noted?" and "What is the origin of the behaviours utilized by adolescents in same-sex peer conflicts?" The attempt to answer these questions led to the next section of this review, which is composed of two areas: social learning theory with specific emphasis given to family and play, and gender identity.

The final section in this review provides a brief overview of the area of moral development. It was believed that a review of the pertinent research in moral development was necessary given the research questions. When examining the topic of conflict, one has to question the treatment of individuals towards each other in times of conflict, and the moral issues that are at stake.

Two important clarifications must be made at this point. First, the developmental areas chosen (moral and social) are very broad; therefore, only the literature related to peer conflicts is presented. Secondly the emphasis of this literature review, due to personal biases and interests, is often related specifically to adolescent females same-sex peer conflicts. The intent of focusing on adolescent females is not to further the gap between the genders nor dismiss and ignore the adolescent male. The specific focus and emphasis on adolescent females, as stated in Chapter One, is based upon personal work experience with adolescent females and the lack of information focusing on the adolescent female. The effects of researchers' past exclusion of adolescent females from studies is perhaps best summarized by Sprinthall and Collins (1995) when they state, "not only is our knowledge of female development shortchanged by the emphasis on male developmental issues, but our understanding of male development is overly narrow because of concern with stereotyped masculine characteristics" (p. 47). The final section

in this chapter is a summary highlighting important themes presented in the chapter.

Overview

As anyone who deals with adolescents can attest, whether one is a counsellor, parent or teacher, this age is one of great change. Rivers, Barnett and Baruch (1979) give an example of this change through a reversal of the caterpillar-butterfly metamorphosis. They describe the "well-mannered, well-brought-up young girls suddenly seem to metamorphose into members of some primitive cult, wearing bizarre outfits, talking in unintelligible patois, and listening constantly to an ear-shattering sound that resembles nothing more than an exquisite method of torture" (p. 168).

The degree of change is not the same for all adolescents, nor necessarily as drastic as the examples cited. This change has been referred to as a "time of passage" (Rivers et al.,1979, p. 160) where the adolescent is searching for their identity. In Erikson's (1968) eight stages of psychosocial development the individual is faced with a social task that needs to be resolved at each stage of development throughout the life cycle. During adolescence teenagers are faced with the crisis of Identity verses Role Confusion. The main task of adolescence is to establish a new sense of ego identity, a search for the definition of self. Since adolescents are uncertain about who they are as individuals they tend to identify with the group (Crain, 1992, pp. 256 -258).

The quest for identity is accompanied by cognitive changes for the adolescent. Piaget's theory of cognitive development places adolescents in the formal operations stage (Brainerd, 1978). With formal thought the adolescent moves from the concrete to abstract; thoughts become more comprehensive and more future-oriented, as well the adolescent is able to distinguish between self and others in more subtle and complex ways (Mitchell, 1992; Sprinthall & Collins, 1995).

One would think with this expanded intellectual capacity the adolescent would deal more rationally with conflict in peer relationships; however, this is not always the case. Adolescence is a conflicting time for teenagers since in some respects they have become less egocentric and are able to "anticipate, identify, and understand what another

may be thinking or feeling" (Pecukonis, 1990, p. 61). Yet in the same breath this stage involves the resurfacing of egocentrism with new dimensions, "where adolescents attribute unlimited power to their own thoughts" (Crain, 1992, p. 120). The result of this unlimited power of thought can result in cognitive distortion (Mitchell, 1992, p. 36), meaning there "is the unflinching belief that whatever applies to me also applies to the outside world" (Mitchell, p. 51).

With these cognitive changes, and adolescent egocentrism, there is an increased self-awareness and self-consciousness for the adolescent. Elkind (1970) attributes this increased self-consciousness to the adolescent's new capacity for "introspection" (p. 102). This introspection of adolescent egocentrism gives birth to the concepts of "imaginary audience" and "personal fable", which Elkind theorized could explain, in part, the adolescents behaviours and experiences (p. 92, 93).

Parents of teenagers, or individuals who have worked with teenagers, have witnessed the concept of imaginary audience at work. Based upon my counselling experiences, it appears that teenage girls voice these mis-interpretations of motives, facial expressions, and body-language more frequently than teenage boys:

> *Sheila was staring at me. I know Michelle was whispering about me. Janet doesn't like me because she didn't sit beside me in class today. Rachel hates my guts because she didn't say "Hi" to me in the hallway this morning.*

This is not to say that adolescent boys are not affected by, or do not create, imaginary audiences; however, in discussions with girls they will frequently voice what appears to be examples of imaginary audience.

The personal fable, a concept that is also present in times of conflict, is the adolescents ability to "over differentiate his feelings", implying an uniqueness to their own experiences and feelings (Elkind, 1970, p.93). With comments such as *"no one understands me, no one listens to me, or why does this happen only to me"* one hears the adolescents struggle to understand their feelings and signs of the personal fable.

Mitchell (1992) stresses that the imaginary audience and personal fable are so

persistent at this stage since the adolescent thought process is so influenced by affective logic. He defines affective logic as "a sequence of judgements in which the connection between one judgment and another is largely emotional" (p.42).

In summary, the cognitive changes and the quest for identity arrives at a time when the emphasis on relationship has moved from the family to peers. Adolescence involves a separation from family ties and great emphasis on peer relationships (Bell, Cornwell & Bell, 1988; Helms & Turner, 1981; Konopka, 1976; Opotow, 1991; Rivers et al., 1979). Elkind (1970) attributes these very cognitive changes, the capacity to construct multiple alternatives, to the conflicts between parent and adolescence, and the increased dependency on friends for final decision making.

The development of strong peer relationships is important in providing support, reassurance, and at times refuge in the adolescents journey of becoming a person separate and apart from their parents (Rivers et al., 1979; Blos, cited in Mitchell, 1992, p. 81). So not only do peers provide support and reassurance, they also provide a sounding board for sharing ideas as "the adolescent discovers different aspects of the self that must be accepted and integrated" (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1993, p. 91). The assumption, therefore, is that the combination of the search for identity and separation from family ties will have a major influence on the adolescent's friendships and relationship. The many joys and heartaches that friendships can provide arrives with this emphasis on peer relationships.

The Lack of Information Pertaining to Adolescent Peer Conflicts

The process of finding information pertaining to adolescent peer conflicts revealed three problems with the current research. The first is that while there are numerous studies found in the literature pertaining to adolescence, and the struggles and conflicts they face, the phrase adolescent conflict has come to represent a broad range of definitions. It has come to refer to moral dilemmas, personal dilemmas, such as identity formation, self-image, substance abuse, or relational dilemmas with parents or peers.

Despite the substantial amount of research completed on adolescents, the number

of studies dealing with relational dilemmas exclusive to adolescent same-sex peer conflicts is limited. Furman and Buhrmester (1985) discuss that interpersonal relationships vary not only in dimensions of warmth, but relative power and conflict as well. They emphasize little has been said "about conflict in children's relationships, although it too can be expected to have a major impact on the nature of the relationship (p. 1017). Finally, the information specifically dealing with adolescent girls same-sex peer conflicts is even further limited. The literature found on adolescent girls was all inclusive, meaning the scope was broad, covering topics such as: same and opposite sex relationships, parental relationships, alcohol and drug use, diet, sexual intimacy, and self-image. This lack of information about female adolescents is acknowledged by Pipher (1994) when she writes, "psychology has a long history of ignoring girls at this age. Until recently adolescent girls have not been studied by academics, and they have long baffled therapists" (p. 21). Gilligan (1989) echoes this noticeable absence when she states "we will labour together to begin to fill in a startling omission: the absence of girls from the major studies of adolescence" (Prologue, Making Connections). Eder (1985) also refers to the absence of studies focusing on female peer relations. Pipher argues that this absence of information is due in part to the adolescent girl herself "because they are secretive with adults and full of contradictions, they are difficult to study. So much is happening internally that's not communicated on the surface" (p. 21). Perhaps another reason information is lacking on peer relations is as Youniss and Smollar (1985) stress, the difficulty with assessing the construct of relationship or conflict with statistical means is the difficulty to define complex relational constructs in simple behavioural terms (p. 43).

The research that has provided the most in-depth information of girls perceptions are studies that are descriptive in nature (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Lyons & Hanmer, 1990; Kostash, 1987; Orenstein, 1994; Pipher, 1994). The study conducted by Brown and Gilligan (1992) is an example of the difficulty with assessing a construct such as relationship. The authors express the difficulty they experienced with maintaining traditional methods of research and yet trying to "capture the layered nature of

psychological experience and also the relational logic of psychological processes" (p. 11).

Adolescent Same-Sex Peer Relationships and Conflicts

The following presentation of the literature pertaining to adolescent peer relationships and peer conflicts highlights four areas where gender differences have been documented. The first area is that of intimacy and self-disclosure. A comprehensive study completed by Youniss and Smollar (1985) on adolescent relations with friends examined the "structure of friendships" (p.18). The results they found indicated that the types of activities adolescents enjoyed with their friends were similar when the focus was being "out", away from their parents and with their friends. "A major difference found between males and females is that ...close male friends most enjoy sports or "illicit" activities, while close female friends most enjoy just talking together" (p. 97). When Youniss and Smollar specifically looked at activities that involved intimate discussion, the authors found that twice the number of females to males were involved with intimate discussions. As well, the results indicated that when close friends talk "the topic more typically involves personal issues and problems if the close friends are female, than if they are male" (p. 97). Buhrmester and Furman (1987) indicated that there is a steady increase in the perceived levels of intimate disclosure for girls' friendships from preadolescence into early adolescence. The findings from the study conducted by Furman and Buhrmester (1985) validate that girls report not only more intimacy in best friendships than boys, but also more "affection" and "enhancement of worth" than boys best friendships (p. 1022).

These results are similar to those found by Camarena, Sarigiani and Petersen (1990) in a study specifically focusing on gender-specific pathways to intimacy. The results indicated higher levels, for girls close-friend relationships than boys close friend relationships, on three scales: intimacy, self-disclosure, and share experience. The author's stress that the size of the difference between male and female scores depended upon which definition for intimacy was used. They suggest, that while not statistically

significant, girls tend to chose the path of self-disclosure which leads to closeness, while boys chose an alternative path to closeness through shared experiences and activities. Reynar (1974) also found, in his study on adolescent self-disclosure and alienation, that there is a "significant sex difference in frequency of disclosure...girls consistently disclose more than boys" (p. 68).

In the studies conducted by Youniss and Smollar (1985) and Camarena and colleagues (1990), the authors are careful in stressing that feelings of closeness and intimacy occur within both genders, not females alone. This is an important issue to stress, since one does not want the incorrect assumption drawn that males do not experience intimacy.

A second area identified as gender differences in adolescent peer relationships is symmetrical understanding in discussions. In the study by Youniss and Smollar (1985) females reported significantly higher levels of reciprocated understanding on topics such as: schoolwork, friendships, future plans, dating behaviour, and family with their close friends (p. 100). Moran and Eckenrode (1991) also found in their study, which focused on gender differences in the costs and benefits of peer relationships, that females reported higher levels of problem focused support from friends.

The third area where gender differences were identified is in terms of the effects of conflict or social stress. Contrary to my personal experiences as counsellor and personal biases, the studies completed on adolescent peer conflicts indicate that the frequency of conflict or frequency of social stress does not differ between genders (Youniss & Smollar, 1985; Moran & Eckenrode, 1991; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1993). However, Moran and Eckenrode (1991), found that social stress was more strongly related to higher depression scores and lower self-esteem scores for females. This is a conundrum, since if females report higher levels of symmetrical or reciprocated understanding in their friendships, and more problem focused support, why then is the social stress they receive affecting them differently than the male adolescents? As Moran and Eckenrode clearly voice "if one assumes that disclosure and intimacy are more salient predictors of emotional well-being than shared activities, these findings are contrary to

expectations" (p. 406). This contradiction will be discussed later in this chapter under the section, Tragedy of Same-Sex Peer Conflicts.

An important limitation to the study completed by Moran and Eckenrode (1991) must be discussed at this point. In their study Moran and Eckenrode do not define adolescent peers as same-sex peers. Youniss and Smollar (1985) and Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1993) define peers as same-sex in their studies. This point is emphasized because one of the questions that remains unanswered is, is it the interaction of adolescent females towards each other which contributes to higher social stress for adolescent females or is it male-female peer conflicts which contributes to the stress?

The fourth area where gender differences are observed is in the behaviours used during conflict. In terms of resolving the conflict, girls tend to use communication to try and resolve conflicts (Youniss & Smollar, 1985) and have more problem focused support (Moran & Eckenrode, 1991), while boys tend to use avoidance until direct confrontation (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Youniss and Smollar summarize as follows:

> This suggests that the majority of males and females are similar to one another in their knowledge about how problems in relationships can be dealt with so that the relationships can be maintained. The difference between males and females appears to arise when they are confronted with actual situations. Then, a substantial percentage of the males use internal rather than overt procedures to resolve problems. (p.120)

In terms of behaviours used in conflict by adolescents it is necessary to clarify the dual role that language plays in conflict; to continue or escalate the conflict or to resolve the conflict. This dichotomy with language use appears more prevalent among adolescent girls (Faulder, 1995, Edmonton Journal). Adolescent girls have fewer power avenues they can utilize in conflict. Adolescent boys have the additional avenue of physical violence. This is not to say that adolescent girls do not utilize physical violence; however, it is not used to the same extent and it is not as accepted by society as a means for girls to use. Adolescent girls as a result tend to use language as weapons, through name-calling and spreading of rumours (Pipher, 1994, p.68). Pipher (1994) explains:

[girls] express anger by cattiness and teasing. They punish by calling a girl on the phone to say that there's a party and she's not invited. They punish by walking up to girls with insults about their clothes or bodies. They punish by nicknames and derogatory labels. They punish by picking a certain girl, usually one who is relatively happy, and making her life miserable. (p. 68)

The Importance of Conflict

As much as a counsellor, parent, or teacher would like to protect adolescents from the pain of peer conflicts, it is important to remember that conflict is an important and natural part of interpersonal relationships. The experiences from conflict can be both positive and negative and the effect on the adolescent's interpersonal growth depends upon the nature of the conflict (Pipher, 1994; Opotow, 1991). In a positive perspective, through conflict, adolescents' knowledge of themselves and others grows (Opotow, 1991; Youniss & Smollar, 1985; Schrumpf, Crawford & Usadel, 1991; Pipher, 1994). Opotow (1991) addresses the importance that conflict plays in the adolescent's life and emphasizes that conflict is not "senseless, wasteful, and destructive" for the adolescent. She extends this insight beyond the adolescent's personal growth when she states that conflicts, "arouse interest in human motivation, behaviour and morality: provide an opportunity for personal development; deepen interpersonal relationships; and offer insights into social dilemmas faced by the larger community" (p. 416). The negative effects of conflict will be discussed later in this chapter.

In terms of the adults' role in adolescent peer conflict, Opotow (1991) presents the effects "suppression" and "neglect", the two most common adult approaches, have on the adolescent and the conflict. By involving adults, the adolescent runs the risk that the adult will take disciplinary actions, as a result there may be an increase in the conflict or the risk of social humilation with peers. Brown and Gilligan (1992) reprimand well meaning teachers and adults for pushing conflict underground by creating solutions "designed to protect girls' feelings by ending public conflict" (p. 105). Schrumpf,

Crawford and Usadel (1991) report that it is the negative attitudes and perceptions associated with conflict that are detrimental to successful conflict resolution.

The Causes Of Conflict

The reader is asked to recall the concepts presented in the overview: cognitive changes, adolescent egocentrism with its partners imaginary audience and personal fable, and consider the role they play in adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. In addition to the concepts reviewed in the overview of this chapter, a presentation of specific behaviours which induce conflict will now be discussed.

The issues identified by Youniss and Smollar (1985) as causing conflict in close friendships are as follows: untrustworthy acts, lack of sufficient attention, disrespectful acts, unacceptable behaviours, and inadequate communication (p. 111). In terms of gender differences in behaviours that cause conflicts, the authors found that females were more likely to say that inadequate communication caused conflict in their close friendships, while males were more likely to chose disrespectful acts as causing conflict. Youniss and Smollar (1985) concluded that if these categories are issues that lead to conflicts, then it could also be said they "may be viewed as representing the rules that govern a close friendship" (p. 116). Opotow (1991) reiterates Youniss and Smollar's conclusion when she states that conflict results from "the opponent's violation of rules for fair interpersonal interaction" (p.424).

Schrumpf, Crawford, and Usadel (1991), in their manual Peer Mediation For Schools, define the origin of conflict based on Glasser's (1986) four psychological needs: to belong, for power, for freedom, and for fun. Schrumpf and his colleagues base the concept of successful conflict resolution, through peer mediation, on identifying the unmet need which is at the root of the conflict. Therefore, a possible explanation for the adolescents behaviour in peer conflict could be to fulfill a need, or because a peer has violated one of the rules of friendship. Rather than an unmet need or a broken rule of friendship, Opotow (1991) stresses that adolescents fear "social isolation, humiliation, and loss of status" from conflicts, and consider physical risks as secondary (p. 419).

If one examines the question of involvement of others in conflict it can be theorized that the fear of isolation and need to belong are part of the motivating factor for adolescents to involve others in their conflicts or to involve themselves in others conflicts. For the adolescent initiating the conflict, their status in the group is elevated if they are able to get more people on their side. For the students who become involved, it is an opportunity or chance to belong to a group.

Involvement in conflicts may be related to the group or clique of friends with whom the adolescent associates. In Eder's (1985) study on popularity, she found by "eighth grade, ... a clearly defined hierarchical system of stable cliques" has been formed among adolescent girls (p. 157). This partnership between involvement and popularity is demonstrated by a grade nine student who wrote, "if a popular girl and an unpopular girl get in a fight, most people go on the side of the popular girl, it doesn't matter if she is right or wrong" (Victoor, 1993, p. 9).

A third possibility for involving other peers in conflict can be viewed in terms of expectations of friendships. Youniss and Smollar (1985) found a significant difference between genders in expectations of friendships. Girls viewed being there when needed as most important in a friendship. Being there consisted of "helping with problems... because it showed caring for the other person" (p. 123). Boys on the other hand viewed being loyal and protective as an important expectation of friendship. This was demonstrated through comments such as "Protection is important, if you're a good friend you want to protect him, warn him if you foresee something coming up" (p.123).

The Tragedy of Conflict

A crying girl runs from the classroom. A counsellor receives a telephone call from an upset mother because her daughter no longer wants to attend school because of problems with friends. To observe a group of girls turn their back on one girl, who only yesterday they were friends with, to witness the planned whispering so that she can make out a few of the hurtful comments... the pointing ... name calling or jeering. A girl receives a letter of petition signed by innumerable other girls attesting their dislike for her. Another girl finds a cruel and nasty letter slipped into her locker or book. To find a girl eating lunch alone when only days before she had

been surrounded by friends. To find a girl surrounded by other girls with spit in her hair.

Thus is the tragic experience of many peer conflicts. The intent of providing the examples above, based upon personal counselling experience from a junior high school, is not to be melodramatic, but rather to illustrate the pain often experienced in female peer conflicts. It appears at times that girls can be especially hard upon one another (Kostash, 1987). Pipher (1994) notes the stress that adolescent females can place upon one another when she writes, "like any recent converts to an ideology, girls are at risk of becoming the biggest enforcers and proselytizers for the culture. Girls punish other girls for failing to achieve the same impossible goals that they are failing to achieve" (p. 68). The bottom line is, whether male or female, "being rejected by peers must be one of the most tragic experiences of a young person" (Sebald, 1977, p. 293).

The negative effects of conflict and peer rejection have been linked to behaviour such as suicide, substance abuse, school absenteeism, delinquency (Youniss & Smollar , Pg. 20, Moran & Eckenrode, p. 397) to depression and low self-esteem for females (Moran & Eckenrode, 1991). As well, conflicts which linger generate self-doubt and undermine self-esteem and self-confidence, and if not resolved lead to "confusion, anger, helplessness or depression" (Opotow, 1991, pp. 419, 420).

Another tragedy of peer conflicts is the lack of authenticity to self for the adolescent female (Pipher, 1994; Eder, 1985). Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest that this is a central paradox in women's psychology and girls' development, "a giving up of voice, an abandonment of self, for the sake of becoming a good woman and having relationships" (p. 2). The group becomes of such importance to the adolescent girl that she loses her own inner voice. They realize

> that it has become impossible for them to say directly what they are thinking and feeling, or at least to say it outside of the context of highly confidential or best-friend relationships. Knowledge of the power others have to look at them, to judge them, to spread rumours about them, to cause them harm, leads girls to protect themselves by removing their

> deepest feelings and thoughts from public scrutiny, and thus from public discussion, and taking them into an underground world. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 172)

The girls, through "vicarious reinforcement", learn what happens to anyone who expresses a view that may be different from the group (Crain, 1992, p. 176). Girls learn to be nice rather than honest, "friendly to people they dislike or mask anger and dislike with a smile" (Eder, 1985, p. 164). Pipher (1994) documents this concern with societal expectations of girls' behaviours, expressed by one of her adolescent female clients, "Girls are supposed to smile. If I'm having a bad day teachers and kids tell me to smile. I've never heard them say that to a guy" (p. 39). For those girls who do speak their minds or speak frankly they run the risk of being labelled "bitches" (Pipher, 1994, p. 39) or "snobs" (Eder, 1985, p. 164).

Let us turn back to the results of the Moran and Eckenrode (1991) study which highlighted the effects of social stress on adolescent females corresponding with higher depression and lower self-esteem scores. Although there is no study found directly focusing on why female adolescent experience social stress differently than adolescent males, let us theorize based on the literature that is present.

The initial premise is that females place greater emphasis on their relationships or are more relationship oriented. The formation of this premise will be discussed later in this chapter. Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1993) found in two of their studies, as well as citing numerous examples from the literature, that adolescent females place more emphasis on same-sex relationships than adolescent males. As previously stated, females experience more stress from peer relationships (Moran & Eckenrode, 1991) and girls place greater emphasis on being popular (Eder, 1985; Sebald, 1977). Pipher (1994) goes as far as declaring that "girls are obsessed with relationships" (p. 35). With the premise established that the relationship or group means everything to the adolescent girl, the presentation can now be made that girls may receive more stress in personal relationships due to two themes: social stratification through popularity (Eder, 1985), and the level of self-disclosure in the peer relationship (Reynar, 1974).

In Eder's (1985) study she stressed adolescent girls are more concerned with popularity or social status than with achievement. Eder contends that adolescent females are afraid of surpassing their friends in achievements because of the fear of being negatively labelled, snob or stuck-up. Eder also stressed that there is a marked increase in self-consciousness and a decrease in self-esteem for adolescent girls. This may be due to the development of cliques or social groups which begin in elementary grades, but are clearly defined as a hierarchical system by grade eight. The development of this stratification system is completed through the cycle of popularity. A few girls are identified as popular, in Eder's study popularity was through the selection of the cheer leading team, and then other girls attempt to become friends with the popular girls. This increase in attention is viewed as popularity by the other group members. Since one can only maintain a certain number of friendships, certain peers are rejected. Since more peers attempt to befriend the popular girl, she tends to reject more peers. Therefore, as an adolescent girl becomes more popular, she and the group she associates with are labelled as snobs and soon other girls stop interacting with the popular girl out of fear of rejection. As a result the popular girl becomes increasingly disliked.

In terms of self-disclosure, high levels of disclosure may have negative effects (Reynar, 1974). "Relationships that involve frequent conversations about personal feelings and concerns may lead to increased introspection that may actually be harmful to the adolescent. In contrast, friendships that provide fun and exciting distractions from introspection may be the most beneficial" (Moran & Eckenrode, 1991, p. 406). As well, if adolescent girls share more intimate and private moments with same-sex friends, then they run the risk of having these intimacies shared with others if they should have a conflict.

In preparation for the next section, let us take a step back and examine the premise made previously that adolescent females appear to place greater emphasis on relationships than adolescent males. By making this stereotypical premise the question which becomes apparent is "Why, are there differences between adolescent males and females in the emphasis they place on relationships?" This question is dealt with

extensively through the next section in which possible explanations for the emphasis on relationships by female adolescents are found in socialization. The clarification made previously must be reiterated at this point, social development is a broad area; therefore, in the section below, only the information as it relates to adolescent peer conflicts will be presented from the area of socialization.

Social Learning - Family and Play

A stated in Chapter One, in Personal Biases, it appears that adolescent females and males same-sex peer conflicts are very different. It appears that adolescent girls are more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent boys, that adolescent girls and boys use different behaviours in conflict, and react to conflict differently. The explanations for the possible gender differences in peer conflicts seem to derive or have an origin in social learning theory.

Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1992) contend that because the family unit spends a lot of time together and consists of individuals with varied beliefs and interests it is only natural that conflict should occur within this environment. A possible explanation for the formation of adolescents' perceptions and attitudes towards conflict, as well as the behaviours utilized by adolescents during peer conflicts, can be learned through the adolescents family. Perhaps this is why a common theme runs throughout the studies focusing on adolescent peer relationships; the adolescent's friendships in context with his/her parental relationships (Bell, Cornwell & Bell, 1988; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Youniss and Smollar, 1985; Youniss, 1980).

According to Bandura (1959), "the socialization process consists of the development of habitual response patterns that are acceptable in the society in which the individual lives" (p. 23). To determine how these "habitual response patterns" are learned, Bandura's socialization process focuses on the child's first role models, the parents; which are also the source of their first "observational learnings" (Crain, 1992, p. 176). Crain stresses that in a large number of studies it has been shown that "models influence not only children's sharing but also their helpfulness toward others in distress,

their cooperativeness, and their concern for the feelings of others" (p. 182). Crain also states that studies support the idea that "parental behaviour is linked to their children's altruism" (p. 182). In fact, Bandura "concludes that peer-group membership is usually not in direct opposition to family values", but an "expression and implementation of the norms and values they learned in their homes" (cited in Sebald, 1977, p. 142). Sprinthall and Collins (1995) echo this when they express "peer relationships are embedded in the patterns and practices or relationships in families" (p. 321).

The study conducted by Bell , Cornwell and Bell (1988) is an example of the continuation of the family's patterns through the peer group. They examined the relationship of adolescent daughters with peers by measuring the degree of connectedness in their family relationships. Bell and her colleagues believed that the "child learns certain relationship patterns. These patterns become models for, or otherwise influence, relationships outside the family" (p. 171). The child then has the tendency to replicate these patterns outside the family by selecting people who have similar patterns to their own. By selecting peers with similar patterns the family patterns are "expressed... maintained and stabilized" in the outside social world (p. 171).

The results from Bell and her colleagues' study (1988) indicate that the greater the closeness in the family the higher number of reciprocated friendships for the daughter. With the isolated or disconnected family, daughters had few friendships reciprocated. Similarly, Romig and Bakken (1992) found the greater the family cohesion, or emotional bonding, the greater the adolescent females desire for companionship and intimacy. For adolescent males, Romig & Bakken found that "family cohesion appeared to have little influence on the development of either desire for or expression of companionship and intimacy in their peer relationships"(p. 336).

Parental relationships with adolescents can be viewed as providing an important environment for adolescents on two dimensions. The first is providing nurturing attributes such as self-worth and affection (Lempers &Clark-Lempers, 1992) and the development of intimacy (Romig & Bakken, 1992). The second dimension, provided by sibling and parental relationships, is an environment in which the adolescent can express

opposing views and learn how to resolve conflict (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992).

Based on the results found by Bell, Cornwell & Bell (1988), the hypothesis could be made that adolescent girls' peer conflicts are a result of attempts to find friends with similar patterns to the patterns which girls have been socialized to accept within the family. Therefore, the girls excluded from the group have a different experiential map or different family relationship patterns. It is interesting to note that while studies empirically test the construct of conflict in same-sex friendships, sibling relationships, mother and father- adolescent relationships, (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992; Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1993; Moran & Eckenrode, 1991) the studies do not examine the relationship between family conflict style and adolescent's conflict style with peers. As well, there are no studies found examining the relationship between the degree of conflict in the home and the frequency or degree of conflict for the adolescent with peers. The dimension that studies have assessed, is the relationship between ineffective parenting (neglectful, inattentive and unresponsive to the child's needs) and the effect this has on adolescent peer relationships. Specifically, Sprinthall and Collins (1995) cite results from studies indicating that ineffective parenting is linked to antisocial behaviour, aggressiveness, disruptive behaviour, rejection by normal peers, and involvement in antisocial peer groups (pp. 318-319).

Gender differences in peer relationships and conflict become evident at very young ages, if one consider the results of Lever's doctoral thesis reviewed by Rivers, Barnett and Baruch (1979). In the review of Lever's thesis, Rivers and colleagues highlighted significant differences that Lever noted between the genders in the games children play. In terms of play, boys more often played outdoors resulting in play which is loud, and physical movements that are large; girls more often play indoors making their play more private and quiet. Due to the nature of the games they choose to play, boys' games require larger numbers and often have natural surprises that occur within the game. Girls, on the other hand, often have less complicated games than boys, require fewer players, and have less elements of surprise built in (Rivers et al., pp. 105, 106). As a result of the games they play, the boys develop the social skill of "de-personalizing the

attack" (Rivers et al., p. 108). In their desire to maintain the game boys learn not to take disputes personally. Boys learn to restrain frustration and resolve disputes so that friendships are not destroyed and the game can continue.

Lever concludes since boys games tend to be more complicated, they learn to settle disputes more effectively. Due to the nature of girls' games, disputes are less likely to arise; therefore, girls do not get much experience in the strategies or skills of settling conflicts. Lever's results indicated that typically when a conflict arose with girls, the game would end and little effort was made to resolve the problem (Rivers et al.,1979, p. 107). A major criticism with Lever's work is that she is influenced by a masculine bias (Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan (1982) stresses that Lever is implying that the male model of functioning to resolve conflict is better or the correct way.

The hypotheses that can be generated from the results of Lever's work are not founded in any current research but are presented here as food for thought. Based upon Lever's results, if girls play in small, intimate dyads this would explain the emphasis adolescent girls place on the intimacy of best friend relationships. If boys, through the nature of their play, adjust to hanging out with large groups and learning to de-personalize the attack, perhaps girls appear more frequently in conflict since they are uncomfortable with the impersonalized nature of the large group, are striving to obtain the intimacy of best friends, and have learned not to de-personalize the attack. An alternative perspective to the phrase,"boys learn to de-personalizing the attack", could be that "boys learn to ignore or avoid conflict" while girls tend to not ignore the conflict.

Gender Identity

A possible explanation for gender differences in adolescent peer relationships and peer conflicts is linked to gender identity. The gender intensification hypothesis, proposed by Hill and Lynch (1983), is built on the contention that during adolescence society and parents place greater emphasis on females to behave or to conform to stereotypical gender roles. The emphasis to conform is greater for adolescent females, Hill and Lynch propose, due to the earlier onset of puberty for females. Moran and

Eckenrode (1991) suggest that the gender intensification hypothesis is a possible explanation for adolescent female's experiencing more stress from peer relationships. They propose that there is an "increased concern with taking on the feminine role of connectedness with others" for the adolescent female (p. 398).

The concern for females with defining themselves through their relationships is articulated by Gilligan (1982) in her theory of interdependence. Gilligan theorizes that gender differences and gender identity deals with the issues of dependency:

> For boys and men, separation and individuation are critically tied to gender identity since separation from the mother is essential for the development of masculinity. For girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the progress of individuation. Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation. (pp. 7,8)

Two possible explanations for the adolescent females preoccupation with relationships is the gender intensification hypothesis (Hill & Lynch, 1983) and Gilligan's (1982) theory of interdependence and commitment. With the adolescent females concern for interpersonal relationships it is plausible that females would be more aware of the nuances of relationships and have a great desire to maintain relationships; therefore, making greater attempts at resolving conflicts. The question which arises when discussing gender differences as they relate to peer conflicts is, "to what degree are these differences inherent (biological) or social?" This question has origins in the long debated topic of "nature verses nurture". While it is not the intent to become enmeshed in this debate, a brief glimpse into the scientific world and a new approach will be presented as it relates to adolescent peer conflicts.

An alternative approach to examining gender identity and gender differences is

through the recent studies in the scientific world involving brain-imaging. Through brain-imaging studies neuroscientists use "functional magnetic resonance imaging" and "positron emission tomography" to watch brains in the very act of "cogitating, feeling or remembering" (Begley, 1995, p.48). As a result, conclusions are drawn on how men and women use their brains differently.

Two studies that Begley (1995) cities, involving brain-imaging comparisons of men and women, can be utilized to explain the behaviour of adolescent males and females in conflict. In the first study Begley cited, the male and female participants of the study were asked to judge whether faces revealed happiness or sadness. Both genders had no difficulty recognizing the happy face. The differences occurred when discerning sad faces, specifically for men. The men in the study accurately recognized sadness on another mans face 90% of the time, but had only 70% accuracy recognizing sadness when reflected on female faces. In the second study Begley (1995) cites, 10 women and 10 men were asked to recall sad memories. With both genders, during the process of remembering, the limbic system revealed activity, but in women the active area was "eight times as big as it was in the men" (p. 51). This increased activity is the women's brains may be due to an extra 11% of neurons "all crammed into two layers of the cerebral cortex whose job is to understand language and recognize melodies and tone of voice" (Begley, 1995, p. 52).

Studies also indicate that with women's brains there is more ongoing activity between the right and left brain than there is for males. As a result this may explain why women are more intuitive, more sensitive to nuances, facial expressions, tone of voice, and more language oriented (Begley, 1995). Perhaps this ability to use the right and left brain simultaneously explains why adolescent females take things more personally in their friendships and peer conflicts.

Moral Development as it Relates to Adolescent Peer Conflicts

"The function of morality is to provide basic guidelines for determining how conflicts in human interest are to be settled..." (Rest, 1986, p.1).

If one considers conflict and the treatment towards each other in conflict, it is impossible not to consider a moral perspective. Opotow (1991) suggests that at the core of each adolescent peer conflict are "engrossing and important moral issues" (p. 424). As a result of the moral issues in adolescent peer conflicts, Opotow (1991) contends that conflict provides a valuable experience for the adolescent to explore new ways of thinking and behaving.

Kohlberg (1969) theorizes that moral development is a sequence of six stages and every individual uses a particular stage at a specific age (Crain, 1992; Sprinthall & Collins, 1995). Sprinthall and Collins (1995) highlight results from Kohlberg's research which indicates that early adolescents in junior high school are between stages two and three (p. 211). At these stages, when faced with a moral question, the adolescent will take the perspective of their own "materialistic gain" or the path of "seeking approval from others". This "other-directed" thinking means that adolescents look to others or depend on others personal values rather than relying on their own beliefs and values (Sprinthall & Collins, 1995, p. 211).

A strong opponent to Kohlberg's theory of moral development is Gilligan (1982). Gilligan (1982) contends that Kohlberg's research on moral development is influenced by a male bias. Specifically, Gilligan (1982) challenges that females appeared deficient on Kohlberg's scale of moral development because of the scoring system and the framework used for defining the highest stages of his theory (Gilligan, 1982; Sprinthall & Collins, 1995). Gilligan insists that Kohlberg's higher stages of moral development do not take into account human compassion and caring; dimensions which Gilligan stresses are traditionally viewed as qualities which define women. Gilligan (1982) contends that "for the very traits that traditionally have defined the 'goodness' of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in [Kohlberg] moral development" (p. 18). This male bias that Gilligan refers to is supported by Sprinthall and Collins (1995) who find the male bias exists in popular views of competence and conclude that "apparently, femininity carries not only different implications than masculinity but less socially valued ones as well" (p.45).

Gilligan's view of moral development can be linked to her theory of interdependence for the formation of identity, discussed previously in this chapter. Since Gilligan defines female identity through issues of attachment, it naturally follows that when faced with moral dilemmas of interpersonal conflicts females would consider the relationship. Brown and Gilligan (1992) propose that this is the central paradox for women, the giving of self or losing of self for the sake of maintaining relationships.

Sprinthall and Collins (1995) in their review of moral development focus on this debate of moral development as a dimension of justice verses a dimension of care. Specifically examining the issue of gender differences in moral development, Sprinthall and Collins (1995) cite numerous studies which take into account Gilligan's challenge of defining moral development through the dimension of care. From the numerous results cited no gender differences in moral development were found.

Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk (1989) suggest that perhaps an alternative, or solution to the justice versus care debate is through the moral area of forgiveness. Enright and his colleagues (1989) use a social cognitive developmental model consisting of six stages to define forgiveness. From the results of their study Enright and colleagues (1989) conclude that adolescents are emerging into stage three of the forgiveness model, which is defined as, "I can forgive if others put pressure on me to forgive. It is easier to forgive when other people expect it" (p.96). As a result, adolescents are influenced by their peer group in their willingness to forgive others. Enright and his colleagues (1989) present an interesting thought on adolescent peer pressure and forgiveness, posed here as a question, what happens if the adolescents friends or peer group do not value forgiveness as a strategy for resolving conflict? (p.107).

A different perspective of moral development is presented by Rest's (1986) four component model. The model consists of the following components: interpretation of situation or action, judgement about what to do morally, priority to moral values above other personal values, and the ability to take action. Rest stresses his model is not a linear sequence, and that a person may posses more of one component than the other. An important dimension to Rests model is the ability to take action. This is important

because adolescents may be cognitively aware of what they should do to resolve the conflict, but they may not necessarily have the ability to carry out the action.

Rest also stresses that "no moral behaviour is separable from the cognitions and affects that prompt the behaviour "(p.4). This is an important statement by Rest if one questions where are the morals and the empathy of these adolescents involved in peer conflicts. The study completed by Pecukonis (1990) focused on a cognitive/affective empathy training program as a function of ego development in aggressive adolescent females. Pecukonis reiterates Rest's comments pertaining to the controversy in the literature as to whether "cognitive processes or affective experiences formulate the empathic response" (p. 60). Based upon the results of his study Pecukonis concluded that "the definition of empathy as being comprised of both cognitive and affective components interacting systematically" (p. 70).

The importance of looking at moral development is as Opotow (1991) suggests at the core of each adolescent peer conflict. An interesting and potentially fruitful area for further research would be to assess what the moral issues are in adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. As well, to note if there are any gender differences in the moral issues presented by adolescents.

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, an overview of adolescent development was presented, followed by a review of the current literature on peer relationships and conflicts in which five areas were highlighted. Throughout each section of this review relevant questions were posed followed by possible explanations drawn from the areas of social development and moral development. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of this review is the limited research conducted on the topic of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts, and even further limited literature on adolescent female same-sex peer conflicts. The lack of information certainly warrants further investigation into the topic of adolescent peer conflicts.

The review also provided insight into gender differences, if present, in the four issues selected as research topics for this study: frequency of conflict, involvement of

others in conflict, effects of conflict, behaviours utilized in conflict. While specific emphasis was given throughout the review to adolescent females, this should not be viewed as a detriment, but rather as Sprinthall and Collins (1995) suggest that, "what we are learning about female development during adolescence will broaden and enrich our approach to understanding adolescent development for both males and females" (p. 48).

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

A group of six girls stand huddled together in a close circle behind the school. They begin to tell their accounts of what Kim has done to them personally and why they do not like her. Some of the girls share that they do not like Kim, but say this only because the two popular girls have voiced this opinion. Without the group realizing, Kim approaches quietly and stands behind the corner of the school, overhearing the group's comments. Someone notices Kim and tells the rest of the girls to be quiet. The group turns to Kim and sees the reflection of the pain their comments have caused etched in her face. Kim begins to cry, turns and starts to run. Some of the girls run after Kim, pleading with her to stop. The girls surround Kim and attempt to apologize for what they have said, but Kim stands rigidly with her hands covering her ears and her eyes closed tightly...thinking thoughts one can only imagine.

The example given above is a true story based upon memories of my adolescence. Although I was not Kim, I was one of the girls influenced by the popular girls' opinions and very aware of the pain inflected upon Kim. The story is provided so that a glimpse into the pain and suffering caused by peer rejection and peer conflict is portrayed.

The current research project is primarily descriptive in nature and was designed to explore the adolescents' attitudes and beliefs about their same-sex peer conflicts. In this chapter the process in which the adolescents' beliefs were explored are explained in detail. Based upon a review of the current literature on adolescent peer conflicts, and personal questions from work related experience with adolescents, there are four issues which are central to the current study: frequency of conflict, involvement of others in conflicts, effects of conflict, and behaviours utilized during conflict. It is important to recall, as detailed in Chapter Two, no gender differences were noted in the frequency of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts in studies completed on adolescent peer conflicts; however, since this was contrary to my personal work experience, I chose to include the area of frequency of conflict in this study. The research questions are as follows:

1. Are there gender differences in the frequency of conflicts experienced by young adolescents with their same-sex peers, if so, why?

2. Why do young adolescents involve other peers in their same-sex peer conflicts? Are there gender differences in the frequency of involvement of others by the adolescent, during same-sex peer conflicts?
3. What are the effects experienced by the young adolescent during same-sex peer conflicts? Are there gender differences in the effects of same-sex peer conflicts?
4. What are the behaviours used most frequently in young adolescent same-sex peer conflicts by each gender?

A description of the samples, the research instruments as well as the method of data analysis utilized in this research project are outlined in this chapter. The data collection for this research consisted of three separate stages: Part 1 - survey of adolescents, Part 2 - semi-structured interview with counsellors, Part 3 - semi-structured interview with adolescents. Each section of this chapter is therefore divided and explained in respect to these three stages. Throughout the remainder of the chapter the three stages will be referred to as Part 1, 2 and 3 for ease of reference.

Ethical Practices

Following the requirements outlined by the University of Alberta, approval had to be obtained from the Department of Educational Psychology Research and Ethics Committee prior to conducting this research. The ethics proposal submitted outlined the nature and purpose of the study, methods to maintain confidentiality, the participants rights and the method in which informed consent would be obtained from the three samples. As well, the committee was provided with a sample of the survey and questions for the interviews with the adolescents and counsellors. Approval from the Ethics Committee was obtained on November 29, 1995 and is included in Appendix A.

Sample

Part 1

A sample consisting of 144 adolescents participated in this study. The subjects

were recruited from a predominantly white, middle-to-upper class Catholic junior high school, in a suburb of Edmonton, Alberta. Students from two Language Arts classes in each of grades seven, eight and nine were selected to complete the survey. The six classes were chosen since they were scheduled at the same time in the school day. This provided for convenience of administration of the survey and less opportunity for students to discuss the content of the survey prior to completion. The classes selected for participation were not known to be different from any other classes in terms of the gender mix, achievement or cognitive abilities, race or socioeconomic background.

The school administration granted permission to introduce the purpose and nature of the study to the students. The students were informed that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, and that the surveys were to be completed anonymously. After the introduction a permission letter was sent home with each student informing the parents of the study and asking for their consent to let their child participate in this research project. A copy of this consent letter is attached in Appendix B.

The students were also informed of the semi-structured interview for which they would have a chance to volunteer after completion of the survey. They were told that they could make the decision on the day they completed their survey. If students wished to participate in the interview they were to sign their name and grade on the last page of the survey, tear it off and place it in the appropriate envelope at the front of the classroom. If they did not want to participate they were to leave the last sheet blank, tear it off and place it in the appropriate envelope at the front of the classroom. Through this method all surveys remained confidential and provided a group of volunteers from which six students could be randomly selected.

The following information was obtained through the questionnaire. The total sample consisted of 144 adolescents; however, since two subjects did not complete the demographic information in section one the sample size used when reporting the data was 142. This consisted of 81 (57%) males and 61 (43%) females between the ages of 11 to 15 years.

Part 2

The second stage of data collection consisted of a semi-structured interview from a sample of three counsellors selected from junior high schools in a suburb of Edmonton; the same suburb as the adolescent participants for Part 1. All three counsellors were known to me before the research project and were selected because they work with adolescent populations. The counsellors were contacted by phone and informed of the nature and purpose of the study, asked if they would volunteer for an interview, and told that the interviews would be recorded. Two of the counsellors were female, one from a Catholic school, the other from a Protestant school. The third counsellor was a male from a Catholic School, which had a junior and senior high school population. All three counsellors consented to the semi-structured interview which was conducted over the phone.

Part 3

The final stage of data collection involved interviewing six adolescents. The six students, two from each of the three grade levels, were randomly selected from the volunteer sheets the students had completed when writing the survey for Part 1. The school administration granted permission to meet with each student separately and explain the purpose of the interview. Each student was informed that their participation was voluntary, that the interview would be recorded, and the method in which their confidentiality would be maintained. A permission letter was sent home with each student informing the parents of the study and asking for their consent to let their child participate in this research. A copy of this consent letter is attached in Appendix C. From the six students selected, only four returned their parental consent form; therefore, the sample size used when reporting is four.

Instruments

Part 1

The survey utilized in Part 1 was composed of five sections. Section one

consisted of basic demographic information. The questions for section two are from the Social Milieu Scale (Frankel, 1986). For section three, questions from the Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) were selected. I developed the questions for section four and section five. The questions for section five were compiled from information obtained from Opotow's (1991) study "Adolescent Peer Conflicts". A copy of the survey is attached in Appendix D. Written permission was granted by Dr. Karen Frankel and Dr. Wyndol Furman for the use of their work in this research project. A copy of the permission letters are attached in Appendix E and Appendix F.

Section One - Demographic Information

In section one the students were asked their grade, gender and age. As well, the adolescents were asked to describe their academic achievement by placing a summary of their last report card marks in categories divided by percentages. Two questions were composed pertaining to the level of involvement in extracurricular activities in the school and outside of the school. The remaining questions in section one pertained to family composition.

Section Two - Social Milieu Scale (SMS)

The Social Milieu Scale (Frankel, 1986) is a questionnaire designed to measure adolescent girls' perceptions of the supports and stresses in their social networks. This questionnaire was selected because it is specifically designed to study adolescent friendships. The questions pertain to both the positive and negative aspects of peer relationships, which will contribute to the analysis of gender differences in the effects of conflict.

The total scale consists of 28 questions which are answered in relationship to two categories; friends in general, and best friends. Students rate their responses on a four point scale; 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = usually and 4 = always. The two categories, friends in general and best friends, was changed to "same-sex friends" and "same-sex best friend" for the purpose of this research. The wording was changed because the

focus of this research is on same-sex peer conflicts and I wanted the students to focus on their same-sex friends, not their opposite-sex friendships.

Frankel (1986) divided the general friend scale into 5 subscales; general emotional support, general social stress, general problem-focused support, overt demonstrations, and trust/betrayal. The reported internal consistency, Cronbach's Alphas, ranged from .85 to .60 respectively for the above subscales. The best friend scale is also divided into 5 subscales; intimate problem-focused support, intimate emotional support, intimate stress, intimate discord, and embarrassment. The reported internal consistency, Cronbach's Alphas, for the five subscales ranged from .81 to .63 respectively.

Section Three - Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI)

The Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) was developed to assess the various social supports and negative interactions in the adolescent's family and friendships. The inventory consists of eleven scales with three items per scale. For the purpose of this study only two of the eleven scales were used; conflict and antagonism, for two reasons. First, the two scales were selected because the results would contribute to the analysis of the issue frequency of conflict. Secondly, only two of the eleven scales were chosen since the overlap between the nine scales of the NRI and the five scales of the SMS would be redundant, increase the length of the questionnaire unnecessarily, and as a result be tedious for the participants.

The two scales, conflict and antagonism, contain six questions in total. The students indicate, on a 5 point Likert scale, the frequency with which each of the negative behaviours occurs in their relationships with their mother, father, siblings and same-sex best friend. Internal consistency of the eleven scales, conducted by Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1993) using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, resulted in coefficients which fell between 0.76 and 0.90 for same-sex relationships.

Section Four - Original Items

Seven questions were composed to investigate the adolescents' perceptions of peer

conflicts for the issues involvement of others, the effects of conflict, and the frequency of conflict by gender. The questions were both forced-choice and open-ended in format. This format of questioning was developed for the purpose of collecting qualitative data that the other sections of the questionnaire could not provide. Specifically, it was hoped that the open-ended questions would "allow the subjects to indicate their feelings or beliefs accurately" without created categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 259).

For the purpose of this research the issue, effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent, was assessed through three operational definitions. The first operational definition used to assess the effects of conflict was labelled "avoidance behaviours". Three open-ended questions were developed to address avoidance behaviours: have you ever stayed home from school because of something your friends might do? Have you ever stayed home from school because of something your friends might say to you? Have you ever avoided going to a certain place because you were afraid of you friends?

The second operational definition used to investigate the effects of same-sex peer conflicts was called "what is learned through conflict". Two open-ended statements were developed to address the duality of this learning process, something you learned about friends through conflict and something you learned about yourself through conflict.

The third operational definition used to investigate the effects of same-sex peer conflicts was suffering behaviours exhibited from conflict. The questions relating to suffering were only utilized in the interviews with the counsellors and adolescents.

Certainly there are other operational definitions that could be used to assess the effects of social stress from peer conflict. In their study of peer relationships, Moran and Eckenrode (1991) use the relationship between self-esteem and social stress, and depression and social stress. The three operational definitions used in this research project (avoidance behaviours, what is learned, suffering) were selected because of personal counselling experience. Through counselling experience it appears that the avoidance behaviours and suffering behaviours exhibited during and after peer conflicts influence the attitudes developed about peer conflicts.

The last open-ended question of section four was developed to evaluate the

perception of gender differences in the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts. The definition used for conflict in the open-ended question was the behaviour "argument". The operational definition given for the word conflict, within Parts 1, 2 and 3 of this research project, is important to note since it has an impact on the participants' responses.

Section Five - Original Items

The list of behaviours for section five was compiled based upon Opotow's (1991) study where students identified behaviours frequently used in conflict. For the purpose of this study the list of behaviours was created to identify those behaviours used most frequently by each gender during conflict. In addition, the information would be used to identify gender differences in the involvement of others in conflict.

The total section consists of 31 behaviours which are written as statements; however, the final analysis was composed of 29 behaviours since two of the behaviours statements were worded negatively. The combination of the wording for the two statements and the directions resulted in double negatives, this made it difficult to analyse the results because it was uncertain as to whether the students understood the question. The directions given were: "If the statement describes a behaviour you usually use in a conflict with same-sex students, make a check mark in the 'Yes' column. If the statement describes how you behave sometimes in a conflict, make a check mark in the 'Sometimes' column. If the statement does not describe how you usually behave in a conflict with same-sex students, make a check in the 'No' column".

Part 2

For the interview portion of this research a list of questions was designed to ensure the four areas of research were discussed as well as relevant subtopics. This list of questions was used to ensure that the same format was followed in each of the interviews and is included in Appendix G. The majority of questions followed a semi-structured format with a few structured questions. The semi-structured format was chosen since it allows for individual responses, but it is also specific in its intent (McMillan &

Schumacher, 1989). As a result of this combination of structured and semi-structured interview, McMillan and Schumacher (1989) stress "this provides a high degree of objectivity and uniformity, yet allows for probing and clarification" (p .267). Similar to section four of the questionnaire, the interview was specifically designed with the intent of providing the participants an opportunity to portray their feelings and beliefs through open-ended questions, rather than created categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989).

As described previously on page 38, the operational definitions utilized to assess the issue, effects of same-sex peer conflicts on adolescents, were avoidance behaviours and suffering exhibited from conflict. The word conflict was not defined for the counsellors, providing them with the opportunity to use their own definition.

Part 3

The final instrument, used for the interview with the adolescents, consisted of a list of questions designed to ensure each of the four areas of research were discussed as well as relevant subtopics. The list of questions is attached in Appendix H. Some of the questions utilized in the survey (Part 1) were repeated in the interview. The questions were repeated for two reasons, to see if an interview would provide or generate different results from the survey, and if the results obtained were similar, then the conclusions drawn would have greater validity since they were drawn from two sources.

As previously described on page 38, the operational definition utilized to investigate the issue, effects of same-sex peer conflicts, from the adolescents' perspective was suffering behaviours exhibited from conflict. Similar to the interview with the counsellors the word conflict was not defined for the adolescents, providing them with the opportunity to use their own definition.

The questions developed for the semi-structured interview with adolescents followed a structured and semi-structured format. In addition, the last question of the interview was unstructured. In this last question the students were asked to describe a conflict they had experienced with a same-sex friend. The unstructured format allowed for the opportunity to ask broad questions; this was especially beneficial, since

counselling approaches had to be utilized with two of the participants because they presented conflicts they were presently involved with emotionally. In keeping with the ethical guidelines outlined, as part of the requirement for conducting this research, the two students were asked if they would like to spend time with the school counsellor. Both participants accepted this suggestion.

Additional Qualitative Methods

Two informal group interviews were conducted during the process of this research. The groups came from the two schools where I work, and both groups were peer mediation or conflict management teams. One team came from an elementary school and was composed of grade six students. The second team came from an elementary/junior high school and was composed of grade nine students. Both teams were composed of both males and females.

The informal discussions were held for three reasons. The first was to observe the interaction between group members on the topic of conflict with same-sex peers. Secondly, it provided an opportunity to compare elementary and junior high perceptions on the topic of same-sex peer conflicts. Finally, it provided me with an opportunity to remain focused during the lengthy process of research.

Data Collection

Part 1

To collect the data for Part 1 of the study the adolescent participants completed the questionnaire in their classroom with teacher supervision. The two classes at each grade level completed the questionnaire at the same time, in separate rooms. I introduced the questionnaire, read the initial instructions aloud, and then rotated between the two classes to answer questions while classroom teachers supervised. Very few questions were asked at the grade eight and nine level; however, the grade seven students had more questions about the directions for each section of the survey.

Part 2

Through semi-structured interviews with three counsellors data was collected for Part 2 of the study. The interview was completed by telephone and tape recorded. As mentioned previously, the counsellors were informed prior to the interview that their responses would be recorded. Each interview with the counsellor lasted approximately twenty minutes.

Part 3

The data collection for Part 3 of the study was completed over a one day period with four adolescent participants. Each interview with the adolescent lasted between 15 to 30 minutes and was tape recorded. I spent time with each participant prior to the interview to establish a rapport. All subjects appeared relaxed and seemed to respond truthfully to the questions. As mentioned previously, in Part 3 on page 41, two of the adolescent participants became emotional while telling their personal experience of conflict with a same-sex friend. After spending counselling time with both students, they were asked if they would like to see the school counsellor for additional support; both students accepted the suggestion.

Data Analysis

Part 1

The results from the survey were keyed into a spreadsheet software program with statistical analysis capabilities called EXCEL version 5.0. From this program they were transferred to SPSS-X and analysed. A consultant from the Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation (CRAME) helped choose the statistics which were most conducive to answering the research questions. A variety of statistical tests were utilized to analyze information to address the research questions.

It is important to note that prior to keying in the information, the responses to the open-ended questions from section four of the questionnaire had to be coded so they could be addressed in a descriptive manner. The coding of the open-ended questions was

completed by me with the aid of six university volunteers. I began the process by reading a sample of 20 questionnaires and documenting common themes and highlighting key words to be used in the identification of these themes. This process is referred to as identifying "chunks of meaning", which means to "identify the attributes of each potential category and state a tentative name for the category which captures its essence" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 418). The next step was to instruct each of the volunteers in this coding method. The process of coding 142 of the questionnaires took approximately four hours. If the volunteers had difficulty with coding a response they would present the response to the group to decide, as well, if the statement did not meet the criteria for any of the coded variables, yet was meaningful, it was labelled as the variable "Other". The ultimate or final decision for coding lay with me as I reread each of the responses, and the corresponding codes, upon entry into the computer statistical program.

A problem which arose with the coding process was the closeness or similarities between the two variables "Support" and "Protect". The problem was addressed by defining the variable support in terms of emotional support and the variable protect in physical terms. The key words used as criteria for coding the variable support were: to help out, stick by, care for, and support. The key words used in the criteria for coding the variable protect were: for back up, in case they need help, stand by, and protect.

To obtain information for each of the research questions, descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation were calculated from the raw data. In order to analyze research question number one, the frequency of conflict, information from section two, parts of section three and parts of section four of the questionnaire were utilized. Specifically, the information was analyzed for gender differences. Univariate T-tests for independent samples were performed to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of male and female scores for frequency of conflict with same-sex friends. As well, a series of T-tests were also used for analysis of gender differences on the scales of General Emotional Support, Intimate Problem Focused Support, and Intimate Emotional Support, to generate information for additional

discussion. Following each of the T-tests performed, for this section and others, the Levene's Test of equality of variances was performed.

Information for research question number two, regarding the involvement of others in conflicts, was obtained from parts of section four and section five of the questionnaire. Univariate T-tests for gender differences were utilized for section four and section five. For section five simple descriptive statistical tests were also utilized, which provided the information to discuss the percentage of subjects using involvement behaviours.

Research question number three, the effects of conflict, was examined through the questions from section four of the questionnaire. This was tested by running univariate T-tests for independent samples to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of male and female scores.

For research question number four, the behaviours utilized in conflict, questions from section five were utilized. Simple descriptive statistics were generated so that percentages could be compared. The behaviours were then placed in categories and univariate T-tests for independent samples were run to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of male and female scores. The eight categories were developed according to themes such as; physical aggression, communication to resolve the conflict, and verbal abuse. The themes were developed by highlighting key words in the behaviour statements.

Part 2

The counsellor interviews were taped and results reviewed; however, due to time constraints only comments relevant to each question were transcribed verbatim. As well nonsense words (for example, like, um, uh) were excluded. These exclusions did not change the meaning of the response. Responses were then grouped as to similarities and differences and common themes highlighted.

Technical difficulty was experienced with the tape recorder during the interview with counsellor three. Notes were kept throughout the interview, and as a result

comments taken from this interview are not verbatim, but summarized comments.

Part 3

The student interviews were taped and results reviewed by the author. The responses were examined as to common themes and differences. Due to the lack of funds and time constraints the tapes were not completely transcribed. Sections of the interviews are transcribed verbatim to add clarity or emphasis to a theme. Technical difficulty was also experienced during the interview with the girl from grade eight. Notes were kept throughout the interview, and as a result comments taken from this interview are not verbatim, but summarized comments.

Limitations to the Pilot Survey

Two adolescent subjects were asked to complete the survey prior to administration to the sample of 145 students. Both subjects were female, from grade nine, and were not from the larger sample used to complete the survey. The students were asked to document the amount of time it took to complete the survey, to note the questions they had any difficulty with, and to make any suggestions. Both students completed the survey in approximately 25 minutes and reported they understood the directions and only had difficulty with two questions. Through a discussion with the two volunteers changes were made to the two questions based on the students' suggestions.

A major limitation to the pilot study was only grade nine students, both female, completed the pilot survey. As a result, there was no indication if grade seven or eight students would have difficulty with the survey. There was also no indication if males would perceive the questions differently than the females.

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, Research Methods and Design, the process of collecting data for this research project was outlined. Three distinct stages in the process of gathering data were described, as well as a description of the sample involved in each stage and the

method of data analysis utilized at each stage.

In Chapter Four, Results and Discussion, the results obtained from these three distinct stages, Parts 1, 2 and 3, are presented. Each of the four central issues and proposed research questions are restated, followed by the results and discussion relevant to that specific question.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results from the current research, adolescents' beliefs and attitudes about their same-sex peer conflicts, are presented and discussed. Both the qualitative and quantitative results from the adolescent questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews with the counsellors, and the semi-structured interview with the students, are presented in this chapter. For ease of reading, each of the four issues and the corresponding questions are restated, followed by the results of the data analysis. The approach described in Chapter Three is utilized for the presentation of results from the three separate stages of data collection; Part 1- survey of adolescents, Part 2-semi-structured interview with counsellors, Part 3 - semi-structured interview with adolescents.

The results of both qualitative and quantitative information are presented in an integrated fashion in the current chapter for three reasons. First, the reader is provided with a complete picture; all the results relevant to the question are given in that section. As a result the reader is provided with an all encompassing view rather than leafing through pages trying to connect the separated fragments. Second, the combination of results provides a simpler means to maintain triangulation, the "cross validation among data sources" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 418). Finally, the combination of quantitative and qualitative results accentuate each other by providing details that one approach alone does not always provide.

ISSUE #1 - FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT

Are there gender differences in the frequency of conflicts experienced by young adolescents with their same-sex peers, if so, why?

Part 1

Sections two, three, and four from the adolescent questionnaire pertained to the issue, frequency of conflict. The results from section two were analysed for gender

differences in the frequency of conflict. There were no significant gender differences noted in the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts (See Table 1).

Table 1
T-tests for Independent Samples of Gender for Frequency of Conflict With Same-Sex Peers

Variable - Conflict Mean	Numb. of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Male	79	2.2173	.918	.103
Female	58	2.0690	.734	.096

Mean Difference = .1483

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 3.378, P = .068
T-test for Equality of Means

Variances	t-value	df	2-tail sig.	SE of Diff.	95% CI for Diff
Equal	1.01	135	.312	.146	(-.141, .437)
Unequal	1.05	133.98	.296	.141	(-.131, .428)

* $p < .05$

The questions from section three of the survey were also utilized in assessing the frequency of conflict through two scales: General Social Stress and Intimate Stress. The scales were further divided into two categories, same-sex friends, and same-sex best friend. The results are similar to the results from section two, with no significant difference between genders on the scales assessing frequency of conflict: General Social Stress and Intimate Stress (Refer to Table 2 and Table 3).

The results from sections two and three of the survey are comparable to the results cited in Chapter 2 from studies completed by Youniss and Smollar (1985) and Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1993). An analysis of the data indicate that the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts is the same for adolescent males and females.

Table 2
T-tests for Independent Samples of Gender - General Social Stress

Variable- General Social Stress	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Male	81	9.7778	2.669	.297
Female	61	9.2459	2.063	.264

Mean Difference = .5319

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 4.905 P = .028
T-test for Equality of Means

Variances	t-value	df	2-Tail Sig.	SE of Diff	95% CI for Diff
Equal	1.29	140	.198	.412	(-.282, 1.346)
Unequal	1.34	139.89	.183	.397	(-.253, 1.317)

* p < .05

Table 3
T-tests for Independent Samples of Gender - Intimate Stress

Variable - Intimate Stress	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Male	81	6.9383	2.482	.276
Female	61	6.2951	1.585	.203

Mean Difference = .6432

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F = 5.217 P = .024
T-test for Equality of Means

Variances	T-value	df	2-Tail Sig.	SE of Diff	95% CI for Diff
Equal	1.77	140	.079	.363	(-.075, 1.362)
Unequal	1.88	136.67	.062	.342	(-.034, 1.320)

* p < .05

The results from section two and three, which contain the forced-choice questions, are contrary to those results from section four of the survey which contained the open-

ended question pertaining to the frequency of conflict. The results from this section indicated that 45% of the sample perceive adolescent females as having more conflicts, followed by 33% perceiving no difference in frequency of conflicts for genders and the final 20% perceiving adolescent males as having more conflict. When analysing the results by gender it is interesting to note 59% of the female sample perceive themselves as having more conflicts, followed by 30% of the female sample perceiving frequency of conflict by gender as the same.

Males on the other hand, did not perceive a gender difference in frequency of conflict which was reflected by 35% of the sample. This was followed closely by 33% of the males perceiving females as having more conflicts and 27% of the males perceiving themselves as having more conflicts. It is important to note that the statistical results (Table 7) indicate the difference between genders is not statistically significant. Tables 4 through 7 provide the statistical information from the open-ended question pertaining to the frequency of conflict.

Table 4
Total Adolescent Population Responses to Gender Differences in Frequency of Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Value - Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
.00	3	2.1	2.2	2.2
Male (1.00)	28	19.7	20.1	22.3
Female (2.00)	62	43.7	44.6	66.9
Same (3.00)	46	32.4	33.1	100.0
	3	2.1	Missing	
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Table 5
Adolescent Female Responses Pertaining to
Gender Differences in Frequency of Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Choice (Value)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
(Left Blank) .00	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
Male (1.00)	6	9.8	9.8	11.5
Female (2.00)	36	59.0	59.0	70.5
Same (3.00)	18	29.5	29.5	100.0
Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Mean = 2.164 Std. Dev = .663

Table 6
Adolescent Male Responses Pertaining to
Gender Differences in Frequency of Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Choice (Value)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Left Blank (.00)	2	2.5	2.6	2.6
Male (1.00)	22	27.2	28.2	30.8
Female (2.00)	26	32.1	33.3	64.1
Same (3.00)	28	34.6	35.9	100.00
	3	3.7	Missing	
Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Mean = 2.026 Std Dev = .868

Table 7
T-tests for Gender Differences in Adolescent Perceptions of Frequency of Conflict

Variable-Gender Conflict	Number of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Male	78	2.0256	.868	.098
Female	61	2.1639	.663	.085

Mean difference = -.1383

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances: F= 6.368 P= .013
T=Test for Equality of Means

Variances	T-value	df	2-Tail Sig	SE of Diff	95% CI of Diff
Equal	-1.03	137	.304	.134	(-.403, .127)
Unequal	-1.07	136.94	.289	.130	(-.395, .118)

*p < .05

The question now arises, why the difference in results within the questionnaire? A possibility lies in the form of questioning employed within each section and whether the term conflict was defined or left to the adolescents to define. The questions from section two and three of the survey were composed of forced-choice questions with specific definitions for the word "conflict" provided; such as, hassle or nag one another, disagree, and quarrel. Section four of the survey contained open-ended questions, which left the students free to voice their feelings, beliefs, or perceptions without established categories. What becomes apparent, and discussed later in this chapter, is the perceived masculinity or femininity of the word conflict and its effect on the students' responses.

The second question pertaining to the issue, frequency of conflict, explored why the gender selected by the individual adolescent were involved in more same-sex peer conflicts. The results from section four of the survey were coded, using the chunking format described in Chapter Three.

From the total sample of 142 subjects, 20% chose boys as having more conflicts. The responses were categorized into themes and coded as variables with the following results: from the 20% who chose boys as more frequently involved in conflict, 4% wrote

boys are more physical and like to fight more, 2% wrote boys have bad temper, 4% wrote boys are more competitive and have egos, the final 10% included a variety of responses and were coded as the variable "other".

From the total sample of adolescents surveyed, 45% of the population chose girls as having more conflicts. Their responses were categorized into themes and coded as variables with the following results: 14% wrote girls are very emotional, more sensitive, or get upset over little things; 9% wrote girls are competitive over boys, hair, image, and who has more friends; 7% wrote girls are always arguing; 6% wrote girls tell more secrets, are more talkative or more gossipy; the final 9% included a variety of responses and were coded as the variable "other".

Part 2

Three questions, in the semi-structured interview with the counsellors, were utilized to gather information about the research questions pertaining to the frequency of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts For ease of reference, and to maintain confidentiality, the three counsellors will be referred to by pseudonyms as Mr. Jones, Ms. Smith, and Ms. White throughout this chapter and the remaining text. A summary of the counsellors' perceptions about the frequency of conflict for adolescents with their same-sex peers is provided in Table 8.

The results from the interview with the counsellors lend support to the results obtained from the adolescents for the open-ended questions from section four of the survey (Part 1). The adolescents perceive adolescent females as more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males; the counsellors report more counselling time for female adolescents peer conflicts, across all three grade levels, compared to adolescent males. The reported counselling time for female peer conflicts is very diverse, ranging from 15% up to 60 - 80%, and though it is not the focus of this research, it would be interesting to find out what elements contribute to the diversity of counselling time for adolescent peer conflicts. A limitation with the semi-structured interview is with questions one and three. Both questions were asked in reference to adolescent females,

not males, this may have biased the counsellors as to their responses. This limitation is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Table 8
Results Pertaining to Frequency of Conflict Obtained From Interview With Counsellors

Counsellor	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
	List the top five issues you spend your time on when counselling adolescent girls.	Rank order the following in respect to counselling time dealing to peer conflicts: Gr. 7 boys, Gr. 7 girls Gr. 8 boys, Gr. 8 girls Gr. 9 boys, Gr. 9 girls	What percentage of counselling time do you spend on adolescent female conflicts with girlfriends?
Mr. Jones	1) Friend relationships 2) Parents (dating, curfews) 3) Teachers 4) Academics 5) Career	1) Grade 8 girls 2) Grade 7 girls 3) Grade 9 girls 4) Grade 8 boys 5) Grade 7 and 9 boys about the same	Somewhere between 30% or 40%
Ms. Smith	1) Self-esteem 2) Peer relationships 3) Family problems 4) Drugs and alcohol 5) Academic difficulties	1) Grade 7 girls 2) Grade 8 girls 3) Grade 9 girls 4) Grade 8 boys 5) Grade 9 boys 6) Grade 7 boys	I expected it to be much higher when I first started counselling, maybe 15%. It is not as high as I expected.
Ms. White	1) Friendship conflicts 2) Boyfriends 3) Family, parent and teenage squabbles	1) Grade 8 girls 2) Grade 7 girls 3) Grade 9 girls 4) Grade 7 boys 5) Grade 8 and 9 are equal	Between 60% to 80%

Each of the counsellors' theory, as to why the frequency of peer conflict is higher for female adolescents than for male adolescents, is different from the other and yet corresponds with the reasons the students provided in the survey . Mr. Jones's theory

revolved around a theme of preparation for dating or one-on-one relationships:

> With the girls there is almost the sense of going out, almost like dating with their friends. Guys there is more of a group thing and they can have six or seven friends and there is not a best friend. But with girls, almost without fail, there is a best friend and there is another friend that joins in the group and wants to be best friends with one of them, and then it always ends up three best friends, and it never works. It is very weird.

Mr. Jones's theory is echoed in the story written by a grade eight girl on the survey. The grade eight girl expressed the difficulty with three best friends when she wrote:

> Our fight last year was a battle for attention. It seemed three of us couldn't have fun together usually because two always paired off and left one out. Usually it was Kim and Sally or Sally and I. So Kim and I had a silent war over Sally. She'd be horrible to me when they were together and sometimes it lasted until the next day, so they'd spend all day ignoring me, or Sally and I would ignore Kim. Seldom it was Kim and I for whatever reason. But at softball Kim and I were the best of friends, it was really weird. Together we were best friends, but with Sally around we'd both scramble for her. Over summer I wrote Kim a long letter while on vacation and gave it to her while Sally was still gone. It explains everything and now if one of us is being left out, we'll help each other out. It still happens, that we are mean to each other a little, but not as bad.

Ms. Smith's theory also revolves around the theme of the involvement of a third person. But rather than the third person trying to be best friends, the third person is involved through gossip and as a result the conflict continues or escalates.

> Girls are very much into what other girls think and there's an intermediary who goes between the groups that causes the trouble. And I find that's more of the thing, is the gossip ring and somebody going between the two parties involved which seems to create the most difficulty I think.

As stated earlier due to technical difficulties with the audio cassette recorder the

results from the interview with Ms. White were not recorded. Notes were made throughout the interview; therefore, Ms. White cannot be quoted directly, but conclusions can be drawn from the notes. Ms. White's theory revolved around the theme of language; that girls are better communicators, they are more language oriented than boys and as a result girls have a tendency to name and express their feelings better than boys.

The perception, that the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts is higher for adolescent females than adolescent males, was apparent from the interviews with the counsellors and the responses from the adolescents on section four of the survey. A possible explanation for this perception is the behaviours utilized by the adolescent girls in conflict. The counsellors and adolescents refer to adolescent girls as more verbal, gossipy, or language oriented than adolescent boys. As a result, if adolescent girls are more communicative in conflict, counsellors and adolescents will witness more female conflicts. This perception is discussed again later in this chapter under the issue behaviours used in conflict.

Part 3

The same question asked in section four of the survey (Part 1) was repeated in the semi-structured interview with the adolescents: Who do you think has more conflicts with their same-sex friends, boys, girls, or is it the same? The reason for repetition of selected questions was discussed previously in Chapter Three. The results from the interview with the students, pertaining to the differences in frequency of conflict by gender, are displayed in Table 9.

The results obtained from the adolescent interview were diverse, with no gender chosen more so than the other in terms of frequency of conflict. These results are contrary to the survey results from the open-ended questions, where 45% of the total adolescent sample choose females as more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts. A possible explanation for this difference may be attributed to the different sample size used in Part 1 and Part 3. If a larger sample of adolescents had been interviewed the results would probably be more similar. The results from the adolescent

interview are similar to the survey results in terms of why the gender they chose had more conflicts. These responses ran along similar themes as the results discussed on page 52; boys are perceived to be more physical, and girls are thought to be more sensitive.

Table 9
Results From Interview With Adolescents Pertaining to Frequency of Conflict by Gender

Subject	Question Who do you think has more conflicts with their same-sex friends, boys, girls or is it the same? If different, why?
Boy Grade 7	Sometimes boys have more arguments because, boys they think they're the strong ones, and macho, and plus boys jump to conclusions to fast about if somebody takes something. Girls try to find out things, they ask and they do not accuse.
Girl Grade 8	Around the same, but boys have more fights.
Boy Grade 9	Guys have bigger conflicts, they fight it out. Girls argue about little things.
Girl Grade 9	Girls have more conflict, they are more sensitive about things.

Summary

The combination of results from Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 has led to the following statements about the frequency of conflict with same-sex peers by gender. In Chapter One, I discussed my personal perception that female adolescents appeared to be more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males. Despite the literature presented in Chapter Two, which indicated that there were no gender differences in the frequency of peer conflict, the decision was made to include this area in the research. Through the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches and different styles of questioning (forced-choice or open-ended) contrasting results have been obtained. From the quantitative means used in this research there are no significant gender differences noted in the frequency of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. From

the qualitative means used in this research it is the perception of the adolescent sample (45%) and counsellors, that adolescent females have more same-sex peer conflicts.

As discussed previously, a possible explanation for the contrasting results may be the perceived masculinity or femininity of the word conflict. With the forced-choice questions the word conflict was defined; for example, get on each others nerves, disagree and quarrel, or argue with each other. With the open-ended questions the adolescents were allowed to express their attitudes and feelings about conflict, and as a result the word conflict was open to subjectivity.

The perception, that adolescent females are involved with more same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males was also discussed. It is possible that adolescent girls tend to be more verbal, as indicated by two counsellor's theories and the themes presented by the adolescents; therefore, we tend to hear and see more adolescent female conflicts. As a result we assume that they have more peer conflicts than the adolescent male.

ISSUE #2 - INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS

Are there gender differences in the frequency of involvement of other peers by the young adolescents during their same-sex peer conflicts? Why do young adolescents involve peers in their same-sex conflicts?

Part 1

The issue, involvement of peers in conflict, was examined through open-ended questions from section four of the survey and behaviours used in conflict from section five of the survey. Of the total adolescent sample surveyed, 76% responded that they have been in a conflict with someone who involved other peers, and 67% responded that they have personally involved other peers in their conflicts. There was not a significant difference between the results by gender: 69% of boys reported they had been in a conflict with someone who involved peers and 69% reported they had involved peers in their conflicts. The adolescent females response was higher than adolescent males in terms of being in a conflict with someone who involved peers, 85% of girls reported they had been

in a conflict with someone who involved peers, and 65% reported they had involved peers in their conflicts.

The list of behaviours utilized by the adolescent when in conflict (section five of the survey) were categorized into the following groups: avoidance or ignoring the fight, communication to resolve the conflict, verbal abuse, involvement of others, no involvement of others, methods of continuing the conflict, and physical aggression. Each of these categories, along with the behaviour statements used to establish the given category are illustrated on pages 73, 74 and 75.

To examine the issue of involvement of other peers when in conflict, only two of the eight categories listed above will be discussed at this time, since they are directly related to the involvement or non-involvement of others. Further discussion of all the behaviours utilized in conflict will be presented later in this chapter. The results obtained from for the two categories, involvement of others and no involvement of others, were analysed through T-tests for independent samples of gender (See Table 10). The Levene's test for equality of variances was utilized to examine significant differences between genders.

Table 10
T-tests for Independent Samples of Gender for the Categories, Involvement of Others in Conflict, and No Involvement of Others in Conflict

INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS				
GENDER	NUMBER OF CASES	MEAN	SD	2-TAIL SIG.
Male	79	4.5823	1.499	.100
Female	61	4.9672	1.251	
NO INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS				
Male	81	4.4074	1.349	.000*
Female	61	3.5902	.990	

* $p < .05$

From the results in Table 10 no significant difference was found between genders for the category "involvement of others" in conflict; however, a significant difference was noted between genders for the category "no involvement of others". The contradiction between the results could possibly be attributed to the perceived masculinity or femininity of certain words used in the behaviour statements used to establish the two categories; for example, the adolescent males and females surveyed may have perceived the word "fight" in a macho sense, a physical fight. The word fight was used rather than the word conflict in the two statements which composed the category "no involvement of others". The results for the behaviour statement "fight you own battle, don't call in friends", revealed 46% of the males responded "Yes", while only 16% of the females responded "Yes". This is similar to the responses to the behaviour statement "one-on-one, no one else enters the fight", where 43% of the males said "Yes" compared to only 18% of the females who responded "Yes". It is interesting to note that when involvement is phrased or defined with words which may be perceived as more feminine, the female response is higher than the male response. If involvement is phrased as "getting advice from someone", only 27% of males said "Yes" compared to 44% of females. If involvement is phrased as "talk about the problem with the other student", only 11% of males responded "Yes" compared to 44% of the females.

The results obtained from section five of the survey were also contradictory to the results obtained from the open-ended questions from section four of the survey. The immediate question that resurfaces is, "why would males respond in section four that they involve peers or have been involved in peer conflicts and yet in section five majority of males respond that they would not involve others?" The explanation can be attributed to two possibilities; the style of questioning, open-ended verses forced-choice, or the perceived masculinity or femininity attributed to key words used in the behaviour statements.

The second theme in the issue of involving peers in conflict revolves around the reasons for involving others. The results from the open ended questions from section four of the survey were coded for common themes. From the students' perspectives the

reasons other students involve peers are as follows: for support, to protect, they like that person more (they are more popular or have more friends), and to take sides or have more power. From the students' perspectives they personally involve peers in their conflicts for support, for protection, for fun, or something to do. The distribution of reasons from the 76% of the adolescent sample which reported being involved in other peer conflicts revealed: 26% for support, 12% for protection, 12% for popularity or like that person more, 12% for taking sides and power, and the final 14% included a variety of responses coded as the variable "other".

Part 2

In the semi-structured interview with the counsellors there were two questions which pertained to the issue of adolescents involving other peers in their conflicts. The responses of the counsellors (Table 11) indicate they perceive adolescent females as involving other peers in their conflicts more frequently than adolescent males. Two of the three counsellors added clarifying statements that boys were very close to the girls with involvement of others in their conflicts.

Table 11
Results From Interview With Counsellors Pertaining to Frequency of Involvement of Other Peers in Conflict

Counsellor	Question Who involves other students in their conflicts more; girls, boys, or is it the same?	Question How do they involve others and why?
Mr. Jones	Girls but not that much more.	Girls bring someone else in as moral support. They like to have back up for their point of view. It is usually to tear somebody else down. Proof that they're not the only one being screwed up by this bad person.

Table 11 Continued
Results From Interview With Counsellors Pertaining to Frequency of Involvement of Other Peers in Conflict

Counsellor	Question Who involves other students in their conflicts more; girls, boys, or is it the same?	Question How do they involve others and why?
Ms. Smith	I would say girls, but the boys - it depends on the type of personality. They can involve others as well, but more so with females.	Self-confidence and the issue that more people on their side they think they're right.
Ms. White	Girls involve others more.	Girls are more social beings. Boys handle independence. Girls have to be with someone; if a boy is alone at lunch he can handle shooting baskets by himself; a girl it would be death to be alone at lunch.

Part 3

The results from the semi-structured interviews with adolescents (Table 12) are consistent with the results from Part 1, the survey. The results are similar because both adolescent males and females are perceived as equally involving other peers in their conflicts; in the interviews the girls perceived girls as involving others more, and the boys perceived boys as involving others more. As well, if reasons were given by the adolescents in the semi-structured interview as to why adolescents involve other peers in their conflicts, the responses revolved around similar themes of support, back up, and revenge.

Table 12
Results From Interview With Adolescents Pertaining to Frequency of Involvement of Other Peers in Conflict

Subject	Questions Who do you think involves others more in their same-sex peer conflicts; girls, boys, or is it the same? Why is it different? Why get others involved?
Boy Grade 7	Boys. They say they're macho, but the girls they try to fight their own battles; they don't invite any girls in. When it's an argument they both don't involve people.
Girl Grade 8	Girls. Guys usually take care of things themselves. Girls involve others so they have people to fall back on.
Boy Grade 9	Boys. They will run to the person next to them and ask, "do you think this and this?" The girls will just go and discuss it among themselves. If two girls are fighting, they will talk about it between the two of them.
Girl Grade 9	Girls, probably to get more revenge on that person.

Summary

The results from the data collected through Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 of this research provides for the following statements with respect to frequency of involvement of peers in conflict. From the results obtained through the adolescent survey and interview, one can conclude that the adolescents perceive no gender differences in the involvement of peers in conflicts. Gender differences were noted in the behaviours utilized in conflict; specifically, if the wording of the question was perceived as masculine, a physical fight, the majority of boys reported they would not involve others. If the wording of the question was perceived as feminine, communication to find out what was wrong or to gain advice, then the majority of females would involve others. The gender differences in behaviours utilized in conflict are more fully addressed later in this chapter.

It appears from the results, that while adolescents do not perceive gender differences in the involvement of other peers in conflicts, that counsellors perceive gender

differences. The counsellors believed that adolescent females involve peers more frequently in their same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent boys. A possible explanation for the development of this perception may be the style or use of certain behaviours utilized by adolescent females to resolve conflicts. Through behaviours such as communication to find out what the problem is, or seeking advice, the counsellors tend to see more female students in their offices; as a result, the perception is formed that adolescent females involve others more frequently in their conflicts.

ISSUE #3 - THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

What are the effects experienced by the early adolescent during same-sex peer conflicts? Are there gender differences in the effects of same-sex pee conflicts?

Part 1

The issue, effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent, was assessed through five questions from section four of the survey. As defined in Chapter Three the phrase, effects of conflict, was evaluated through three operational definitions: avoidance behaviours, an awareness or acknowledgement of what is learned through conflict about self and peers, and suffering. Three of the five open-ended questions were utilized in assessing the effects of conflict on the adolescent through avoidance behaviours. The three questions included the following avoidance behaviours: staying home from school because of something your friends might do to you, staying home from school because of something your friends might say to you, and avoiding a certain place because you were afraid of your friends. The percentage of the total sample that responded "No" for each question were: 85%, 93%, and 73% respectively.

It could be suggested that with such a large sample size responding "No" to avoidance behaviours that perhaps the questions did not truly examine the effects of same-sex peer conflicts. Certainly there are other means of assessing effects of peer conflict, such as depression and self-esteem (Moran & Eckenrode, 1991); however, the

validity of assessing the effects of conflict through avoidance behaviours can be supported through three reasons.

The first reason, is in conjunction with the results obtained from the interviews with the counsellors (these results are discussed later on). The second is based on personal counselling experience, since the definition of avoiding behaviours was chosen because of receiving phone calls from parents that their adolescent was afraid to attend school because of a conflict, adolescents arriving late to school to avoid conflict, or the adolescent personally sharing their fear of conflict. The third area of support is the percentage of the sample that did respond "Yes" to avoidance behaviours; indicating that due to conflict, students will avoid certain places.

A possible explanation for the large "No" response was the style or format of the question. It was noted that while much information was shared by the adolescent through open-ended questions, the students written responses became shorter and less detailed further into the survey. The students may have became fatigued with the open-ended questions which required greater effort due to the written component. Perhaps forced-choice questions should have been provided along with narrow categories to define avoidance behaviours; such as, arriving late for school, missing a lunch hour or skipping a class, to avoid conflict.

The possibility that my own personal biases have led me to expect a higher "Yes" response must be examined. As a counsellor I have had the personal experience of students telling me they were afraid to go to the store at lunch hour, or a student missing three days of school because of a conflict, or a student afraid of high school next year because of old conflicts. My perception has been formed by the incidents I have dealt with and may have resulted in the assumption that there would be a larger "Yes" response than "No".

The second operational definition used to assess the effects of adolescent peer conflicts is, an awareness or acknowledgement of what is learned about self and about others through same-sex peer conflicts. This awareness or gain of knowledge was measured through two open-ended questions in section four of the survey. The responses

from the total sample for the question "something you learned about friends after being in a conflict" were coded with the resulting themes:

- people are mean, back stabbers, cruel, have bad attitudes
- can't trust anyone
- you find out who your true friends are
- friends stick together, they support each other
- people have the same feelings I do
- we can discuss the issue, we don't always have to fight
- find out what people can really be like

The responses from the total sample for the question "something you learned about yourself after being in a conflict" were coded with the resulting themes:

- I don't always have to be right, sometimes it can be my fault
- I can be mean, cruel, have a bad temper
- I can be head strong, stubborn, over react
- We can discuss the problem, don't have to fight, express your feelings
- I need friends, they are supportive
- I don't like being lonely, I feel depressed after conflict, I don't like conflict

Initially the attempt was made to code the responses as to what was learned through conflict, both positive or negative learning experiences. The problem which quickly arose was this subjective approach led to much debate among the volunteers coding section four of the survey. A response provided by a grade nine girl on the survey reveals the difficulty with categorizing conflict as a positive or negative learning experience. The experience reflects the pessimism or, the reality of conflict. She writes:

> I was in a fight with my best friend once and I wrote a poem and the last line was "the trust that I gave is once more abused, I don't know my true friends I guess I'm confused." And that was one of the most important things I learned about people and friendships. I'd like to think everyone is kind and nice and trustworthy so I treat them that way and sometimes it just blows up in my face. You can't just trust someone like I would like to.

Part 2

Three questions were asked, during the interview with the counsellors, pertaining to the effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent. The results from the interviews with the counsellors (Table 13) lend support to the idea that the effects of conflict are assessed through avoidance behaviours and yet also coincide with the results from the survey. Mr. Jones reports avoidance behaviours as low as 5% which is supported by the results from the survey, the large sample size which responded "No" to avoidance behaviours.

Ms. White separated the adolescent population by gender, on her own initiative, to respond to the three questions. She reports avoidance behaviours as high as 40-50% for females which is not in keeping with the survey results. This is due to the clarification Ms. White adds to define her perspective of avoidance behaviours, which encompass arriving late to school, missing a part of the day, and avoiding the lunchroom or locker room because of conflict. Ms. White reports adolescent boys miss approximately 10% of school due to same-sex peer conflicts, which is similar to the survey results. Ms. White also adds an interesting clarification for adolescent males. If the result of missing school due to conflict includes in-school suspensions or out-of school suspensions because of fighting, then it would be as high as 25%. The clarification statements given by Ms. White may be viewed as possible avenues in future research to gain additional information into the effects of conflict through avoidance behaviours.

Table 13
Results From Interview With Counsellors Pertaining to the Effects of Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Counsellor	Question Think about the same-sex peer conflicts in your school, how are adolescents effected by conflict or how is the effect shown?	Question If you had to give a percentage of students you have dealt with who have missed school due to same-sex peer conflicts, what would it be?	Question In terms of suffering, hurt feelings from conflict, who do you think shows more suffering, girls, boys or is it the same?
Mr. Jones	They are distracted, so they're not able to concentrate in class. They generally back lash. They'll find someway to get back at them in school, so there will be more rumours. They will react without thinking as a rule.	It does not happen very often. Percentage wise I don't think it would be 5%.	Oh, females do.
Ms. Smith	They isolate themselves from others or are isolated by others. Their behaviour in class or in the halls is different. Teachers will notice that a student is no longer with their group and mention that the students behaviour is different.	Probably 10 to 15%.	I think girls, definitely girls. They will withdraw more, not want to come to school, or isolate themselves.
Ms. White	Girls are more demonstrative with their feelings, by tears and support and getting their friends to help them, by talking it out. Boys hang on to it a bit more and if they're going to show it, it will be more through violence. Certainly girls are more demonstrative, or dramatic, or explicit with their feelings.	For girls anywhere between 40-50%. That would include partial days when they phone Mom to come pick them up because something happened at lunch, or the night before something happens and they miss the first part of school or arrive late, or they're afraid to go to the lunchroom or locker room. Boys around 10%, but if it were to include results of conflict, suspensions for fighting or swearing, would be higher, 20-25%.	Girls show more of their hurt feelings, through the tears and wanting to talk it out because they tend to be more feeling oriented. Boys, I don't deny they are not hurting, but tend to stuff it more often and will hang on to it and get rid of it in different ways.

Part 3

In the semi-structured interviews with the adolescents two questions were asked

which were relevant to the effects of conflict. As mentioned previously, the third operational definition used to assess the effects of peer conflicts was the word suffering. Rather than ask the students, "What are the effects of conflict?" the questions asked were: "Who do you think suffers more from conflicts, girls, boys or is it the same?" and "Who tells more people about their suffering, girls, boys, or is it the same?".

Table 14
Results From Interview With Adolescents for Questions Pertaining to the Effects of Conflicts

Subject	Questions Who do you think suffers from friendship conflicts more, girls, boys or is it the same? Who shows or tells more people about their suffering, girls, boys or is it the same?
Boy Grade 7	Girls, boys, no the same, because they have the same feelings inside. Girls tell more people because girls keep more secrets than boys. When boys tell someone else they probably go blab, and keeps going on. "Boys don't tell because boys can't keep secrets, girls tell because they can keep secrets."
Girl Grade 8	Same. Girls show their suffering more.
Boy Grade 9	Girls, because they are more emotionally hurt. Guys will just go and fight and it will be over. They might be physically hurt but it will not stay with them as long as emotions, physical hurt does not stay as long as emotional hurt. Girls show it more because guys it is this macho thing so they hide it.
Girl Grade 9	Girls suffer more. They show it more because they get more emotional, they talk to somebody and get it out. Girls take it more seriously than guys do.

The degree of suffering was perceived as being the same by all four students interviewed; however, girls were chosen unanimously as telling more people about their suffering (See Table 14). The grade seven boy's explanation was girls tell more people about their suffering because girls can keep secrets better. The grade nine boy's explanation, for adolescent females display of suffering, was that boys hurt each other physically while girls hurt each other emotionally, and the emotional hurt lasts longer

than the physical hurt. This frame of thought is echoed by a grade nine girl who voiced the following for a research paper I completed previously: "girls are smarter than boys, they know that a punch to the face won't hurt or last as long as a blow to the heart" (Victoor, 1993, p. 11).

Perhaps the most emotional information provided throughout this research project was obtained in the interviews with the students through questions pertaining to the effects of conflict. The question posed to each student was to reveal a conflict they had with a same-sex friend. The word "emotional" was used previously because as the adolescent girls told their stories of peer conflict they revealed the emotional suffering that can accompany conflict. The examples of conflict that both girls provided were current and unresolved. The boys gave examples of conflicts that were two years old, resolved, and gave the impression of little unresolved emotion from the event.

As a result of the vivid emotion evoked from the retelling of a conflict, the interview with both adolescent females turned towards a counselling session. Following ethical practices, time was spent with each of the girls, talking about their feelings and coming up with strategies for them to deal with their current conflicts. As well, both girls were asked if they would like to speak to the school counsellor for additional support.

The conflict told by a grade nine girl is told in detail since it vividly portrays the effects same-sex peer conflicts can have on adolescents. For the retelling of this story the pseudonym Lucille will be used. The conflicts told by the other adolescents interviewed are displayed in Table 15.

Table 15
Results From Interview With Adolescents Pertaining to the Effects of Same-Sex Peer Conflict

Subject	Question Think about the worst conflict you have ever had with another boy/girl. Can you tell me what it was about, and what you did?
Boy Grade 7	Two years ago my best friend stole something from me. We argued about half hour then he tried to punch me, so I dodged it, but I didn't want to punch him because he's my friend. But after awhile I had to defend myself, so I punched him once. Then he said he did not want to be my friend anymore and we haven't seen each other since.
Girl Grade 8	I'm in one right now. We've been best friends for a long time. We used to talk on the phone every night, but we kind of lost touch. When I called her back she didn't want to talk to me. I don't know what I did wrong and she's telling these other people things that are not true about me.
Boy Grade 9	About grade 5 ... I found something. My friend said it was his and we had a big fight about who should have it. I went home and we weren't friends anymore.

Lucille began the retelling of the conflict tentatively, unsure and hesitant about how much and what to reveal. She talked about a conflict happening to someone else, not herself. As Lucille told the story she became immersed in it, and she revealed that the conflict had happened to her twin sister and how she was personally involved:

> I haven't had one personally, but when we came to this school one of these girl's friends got other friends and they totally ganged up on her. Her best friends other friend was going around the school and calling her names and stuff like that and this was going on for two years. Finally at the end of the year my mom went over to this girl's house and yelled and screamed at her. The girl my mom had it out with - she told her friends. She never did anything, but her friends kept doing stuff. Until my sister finally got sick of it and told them off herself.

I asked Lucille, "What was your sisters suffering like? How did your sister deal with the conflict?"

Lucille replied, with tears in her eyes, "She cried a lot, she never really told me a lot about it. I knew some of it because I was friends with a lot of the people. She talked to my Mom about it".

At this point I could see that Lucille was upset. I commented, "When you talked about your sisters suffering there were tears in your eyes." Lucille started to cry. The interview then turned into a counselling session as Lucille talked about her feelings. Eventually we focused on how she could deal with her fears for next year, when she and her sister will transfer to the school that this old group is attending. As well, Lucille was asked if she would like to spend time with the school counsellor for additional support.

Summary

In this research project three operational definitions were used to assess the effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent. From the results of Part 1, 2, and 3 gender differences were noted in only one of the three operational definitions, the way the effect or suffering of conflict is portrayed by the adolescent.

The first operational definition, avoidance behaviours, was composed of broad categories, such as missing school or avoiding a certain place. The results from the adolescent survey revealed a low percentage of the sample was effected by conflict in this manner. An important clarification, made by one of the counsellors interviewed, was to further define avoidance behaviours into narrow categories; for example, missing half a day of school, arriving late for school, and avoiding the lunch room or locker room. With these clarifications in place the counsellor expressed gender differences in the avoidance behaviours used by adolescent males and females; specifically, 40-50% of females missing part days of school, and up to 25% of males for suspensions due to fighting. The clarifications made by the counsellor are certainly insights into avoidance behaviours utilized by each gender.

With the second operational definition, what is learned about self and others through conflict, the adolescents provided a variety of responses with no single theme more dominant than the other. As well, there were no significant gender differences

noted in what adolescents learn about themselves or others through conflict.

For the third operational definition used for assessing effects of conflict, suffering exhibited, significant gender differences were noted. The results from Part 2 and 3 indicate the perception held by the counsellors and adolescents interviewed is adolescent females tell or show more people about their suffering. Both adolescents and counsellors added the clarification that males suffer from peer conflicts as well, but adolescent females show the suffering more, whether through tears or involving others for support or advice.

ISSUE #4 - BEHAVIOURS USED IN CONFLICT

What are the behaviours used most frequently in early adolescent same-sex peer conflicts by each gender?

Part 1

The issue, behaviours used in conflict, was assessed through the use of 31 behaviours listed in section five of the survey. As mentioned previously in Chapter Three, two of the behaviour statements were deleted from the final results since the negative wording made the student responses unreliable; therefore, the reporting size is 29 behaviours. As described in Chapter Three, the 29 behaviours were grouped into seven categories. The results (See Table 16) are separated by gender to illustrate the percentage of males and females who responded "Yes", "Sometimes" or "No" to each behaviour statement. Due to the format of Table 16 the category "Sometimes" has been abbreviated to ST.

Table 16
Results to Behaviours Utilized by Adolescents in Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Category #1 - Avoidance/ Ignore the Fight	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	ST	No	Yes	ST	No
Try not to listen to the argument	28%	47%	25%	18%	70%	12%
Ignore the fight	13%	47%	40%	13%	57%	30%
Leave them alone if they don't want trouble	50%	37%	13%	55%	35%	10%

Table 16 Continued
Results to Behaviours Utilized by Adolescents in Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Category #1 - Avoidance/ Ignore the Fight	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	ST	No	Yes	ST	No
If they hit you, tell them "don't"	17%	30%	53%	62%	13%	25%
Category #2 - Communication To Resolve The Conflict	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**
Tell the truth	30%	50%	20%	53%	44%	3%
Communicate directly to see what they are saying	24%	52%	24%	41%	54%	5%
Try to figure out what is wrong	26%	44%	30%	71%	26%	3%
Let your true feelings out	26%	33%	41%	50%	43%	7%
Talk about the problem with the other student	11%	33%	56%	44%	46%	10%
Category #3 - Involvement of Others	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**
Get advice from someone else	27%	43%	30%	44%	51%	5%
Get others to beat up the student	19%	24%	57%	3%	10%	87%
Call a same-sex friend before school	13%	22%	65%	30%	41%	29%
Call and talk to other same-sex friends about one friend in a bad way	13%	30%	57%	15%	51%	34%
Category #4 - No involvement of Others	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**
One-on-one; no one else enters the fight	43%	25%	32%	18%	26%	56%
Fight your own battle: don't call in friends	46%	38%	16%	16%	64%	20%
Category #5 - Verbal Abuse	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**
Make threats	15%	27%	58%	7%	15%	78%
Threaten the student's family	4%	4%	92%	0%	2%	98%
Call the other student names, use bad words	38%	36%	26%	21%	36%	43%
Make prank phone calls to the student's house	16%	9%	75%	8%	15%	77%
Yell at the person	36%	44%	20%	28%	54%	18%

Table 16 Continued
Results to Behaviours Utilized by Adolescents in Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Category #6 - Methods of continuing the conflict	Boys			Girls		
	Yes	ST	No	Yes	ST	No
Say things about the student that aren't true (rumors)	11%	37%	52%	16%	31%	53%
Write nasty notes about the person	7%	20%	73%	8%	43%	49%
Dirty tricks (i.e. hit them while they are not looking, grab them from behind)	19%	23%	58%	5%	13%	82%
Category #7 - Physical Aggression	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**	**Yes**	**ST**	**No**
Slap, kick, or use fists	32%	43%	25%	5%	15%	80%
Choke, strangle the other student	9%	22%	69%	0%	3%	97%
Spit, bite, scratch	9%	9%	82%	5%	8%	87%
Use weapons	9%	11%	80%	2%	2%	96%
Do what you have to do to win the fight	30%	35%	35%	12%	33%	55%
Hurt the other student without restraint	20%	35%	45%	3%	23%	74%

Univariate T-tests for independent samples of gender were utilized to determine if significant differences existed between the means of male and female scores for each of the seven categories (Table 16). As well Levene's test for equality of variances was utilized with each of the T-tests. Based upon the results (Table 17) significant gender differences are noted in the behaviours utilized by adolescents during same-sex peer conflicts. Prior to discussing the gender differences noted it is important to clarify that males and females utilized all 29 behaviours listed in section five of the survey, with the exception of two behaviours. The adolescent female sample did not respond "Yes" to the behaviours, "choke, strangle the other student" and "threaten the student's family". When differences are discussed it does not mean that males or females did not use that specific behaviour, but rather the focus is on the majority of male or females who utilized that behaviour.

Significant gender differences were noted in five of the seven behaviour categories: avoidance/ignore the fight, communication to solve the conflict, no

involvement of others, verbal abuse, and physical aggression. Adolescent males tend to ignore or avoid a conflict, are more physically aggressive and verbally abusive than females. Adolescent females tend to not ignore the conflict and use communication to resolve the conflict.

Table 17
T-tests for Independent Samples of Gender for Behaviours Utilized in Conflict With Same-Sex Peers

Category	Gender	No. Of Cases	Mean	SD	2-Tail Sig.
Avoidance/Ignore the Fight	Female	59	7.28	1.55	.001*
	Male	79	8.17	1.53	
Communication to Solve the Conflict	Female	61	12.31	1.93	.000*
	Male	80	9.46	2.56	
Involvement of Others	Female	61	4.96	1.25	.100
	Male	79	4.58	1.49	
No Involvement of Others	Female	61	3.59	.99	.000*
	Male	81	4.40	1.34	
Verbal Abuse	Female	61	7.49	2.11	.024*
	Male	79	8.39	2.55	
Methods of Continuing the Conflict (Nasty)	Female	61	4.45	1.46	.751
	Male	81	4.54	1.68	
Physical Aggression	Female	60	7.36	2.02	.000*
	Male	80	9.62	2.98	

* $p < .05$

The tendency for adolescent females to try and resolve the conflict and adolescent males to ignore the conflict is illustrated by the behaviour "talk about the problem with the other student"; only 11% of the male sample said "Yes" compared to 44% of the

female sample. It is also illustrated with the behaviour "try to figure out what is wrong"; 26% of the male sample said "Yes" compared to 71% of the female sample.

As previously discussed in this chapter, there were no gender differences observed for the category "Involvement of peers"; however, gender differences were noted for the category "No involvement of peers". This discrepancy applies specifically to the adolescent male responses. As previously discussed on page 60, this discrepancy may be due to the perceived masculinity or femininity of certain words used in the behaviour statements; for example, the word "fight" was used rather than "conflict" in the behaviours listed under the category "No involvement of others". As a result, 46% of male sample said "Yes" to the behaviour statement "fight your own battle" compared to 16% of female sample who said "Yes". This is similar to the results for the behaviour statement "one-on-one; no one else enters the fight", with 43% of the male sample who replied "Yes" compared to 18% of the female sample.

It is also important to note that while no significant gender difference existed for the category "Involvement of others", there certainly were gender differences in some of the individual behaviours which made up the category. When the behaviour was physical, "get others to beat up the student", 19% of the male sample said "Yes" compared to 3% of the female sample. If the behaviour was related to resolution of the conflict, "get advice from a teacher", only 27% of the male sample said 'Yes' compared to 44% of the female sample.

A noteworthy theme that has surfaced is the dual role verbal behaviours play in conflict. In a positive manner language or communication can be used to resolve the conflict, such as the behaviours illustrated under the category "Communication to Resolve the Conflict" (Table 16). With a negative approach, language can be used to escalate or continue the conflict through such behaviours as name calling, rumours or threats, such as the behaviours listed under the category "Verbal Abuse".

The dual role that verbal behaviours play has been discussed previously in the issue of frequency of conflict on page 56. A possible explanation for the perception that females are more frequently involved in conflicts can be explained through their use of

communication behaviours (Refer to Table 16): let your true feelings out, communicate directly to see what they are saying, tell the truth. By the very fact that the adolescent girls tend to get advice from someone else during conflict can lead to negative consequences. The conflict spreads to include others and the initial intention to communicate to resolve the conflict can become confrontational. By letting their true feelings out and telling the truth, the girls, at times, are perceived as more vindictive or nastier because they say things which may be truthful, but can be emotionally hurtful.

The point must be stressed that adolescent boys also use verbal behaviours in conflict, but usually in the form of threats or name calling, as displayed under the category "Verbal Abuse" (Table 16). One male grade nine student expressed this verbal abuse or name calling as "wrecking". The art of wrecking is calling the other guy down; cutting him down to the minimum, whether friend or foe, with insults and name calling.

Part 2

The results from the semi-structured interview with counsellors for questions pertaining to behaviours resorted to in conflict by adolescents are displayed by gender (Table 18) so that comparisons and contrasts can be made. The results from the interview with the counsellors are similar to those from Part 1, the student survey, in terms of the behaviours employed by adolescents during same-sex peer conflicts. The counsellors perceive adolescent males as more physically aggressive in same-sex peer conflicts while adolescent females tend to use more language oriented approaches in their conflicts, whether positive (to resolve) or negative (name calling and rumors).

It is interesting to note that the counsellors used terms such as "back stabbing", "spiteful", and "gossipy" to describe adolescent female conflicts. These are terms or behaviours, as discussed in Chapter One under personal biases, which I perceive and call "vindictive behaviours". While these terms were used by the counsellors to describe the behaviours utilized by females, the results from section five of the survey do not support this perception. In fact, of the seven categories outlined (See Table 17), males tended to be more verbally aggressive, as indicated by the category, "Verbal Abuse", and no gender

differences were noted for the category "Methods of Continuing the Conflict". Both of these categories should have supported the perception that females are more verbal, and use vindictive or nasty behaviours, in conflict.

Table 18
Results From Interview With Counsellors Pertaining to Behaviours Utilized by Adolescents in Conflict

Counsellor	Question Describe the type of behaviours adolescent females use in conflicts with their same-sex peers.	Question Describe the type of behaviours adolescent males use in conflict with their same-sex peers.
Mr. Jones	- Put downs - Tears - Girls have a tendency to go back further than guys, for example, remember in Grade 7 when you did that to me, You don't hear that often with guys. - Back stabbing	Boys tend to be more physical. With boys in a counselling session you see closing up, arms crossing.
Ms. Smith	- Gossip - [illegible] the words seem to be [illegible]ost of the injury.	More aggressiveness exhibited.
Ms. White	- Tears - Find someone to support their view - Talk to peers - Spiteful, back stabbing, vindictive	Boys tend to hang on to their anger, don't really talk about it. They go with verbal or physical behaviours.

The perception that adolescent females are nastier in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males is also held by the adolescents surveyed. This perception became evident through the open-ended questions of section four of the survey and through a discussion with a junior high Peer Mediation Team. When I presented the question, "Who do you think is nastier in conflicts?", to a group of grade nine students involved in a Peer Mediation team, the immediate response by all eight members was "girls". Then a few of the students questioned, "What do you mean by nastier?" I in turn asked "What do you think of when the word nastier is used?" The students listed behaviours such as back stabbing, talking behind backs, gossip, name calling and rumours. This perception of

nastiness was also expressed by a grade seven girl on the survey when she wrote, "Girls seem like the weaker sex to some, but really, they can be the nastiest kind." A grade nine male wrote that girls have more conflicts "because they always talk about their friends behind their backs."

Part 3

Two questions were asked during the semi-structured interview with the adolescents, pertaining to behaviours made use of in same-sex peer conflicts (See Table 19). As with Part 1 and Part 2, the results from the adolescent interviews indicate the

Table 19
Results From Interview With Adolescents Pertaining to Behaviours Utilized in Same-Sex Peer Conflicts

Subject	Questions Are there differences in the way girls and boys handle same-sex peer conflicts, or is it the same? What type of behaviours do boys and girls use in conflict?
Boy Grade 7	It's different. Boys, want to win the argument and if it gets out of hand they start swearing and stuff like that and they probably get into a fight. But girls they will try and keep it nice. Some swear, but not all of them. Girls try to work it out, boys keep going on and on. Girls try to prove, but boys just say I'm right your wrong.
Girl Grade 8	Sometimes the same, sometimes different. Guys fight and yell. Girls won't talk to the person, they get other people to find out.
Boy Grade 9	Guys will try to bring someone else into it. It you do something in class and the teacher gets mad at you, you say, "Well he did it too". Girls will just sit there and say, "Ya I did that". Sometimes the girls friendships are stronger than the boys.
Girl Grade 9	Yes they are different. Guys tell each other off and beat each other up. Girls confront the person and get other people involved.

perception held by adolescents is boys are more physically aggressive in conflicts while girls get others involved in the conflict and confront or resolve the conflict. The two

females interviewed both spoke of involvement of others as a conflict behaviour resorted to by girls. The difference in their responses is the reasons for the involvement; to use peers to gather information about the conflict, and for support in confrontation.

Summary

From the results obtained through Parts 1, 2, and 3 the conclusion can be drawn that gender differences do exist in the behaviours utilized by adolescents during same-sex peer conflicts. Adolescent boys tend to use more physical behaviours in same-sex peer conflicts while girls tend to use verbal behaviours in same-sex peer conflicts. The use of verbal behaviours by adolescent females is in terms of involving others for support or advice, and communication to resolve the conflict.

The dual role of verbal behaviours was discussed since it can be used to resolve or to continue the conflict. The perception that adolescent females are more verbal in conflict, is supported by results (See Table 16) under the category "Communication to resolve the conflict". It was not however, supported by results from the category "Verbal abuse"; males tend to be more verbally aggressive in peer conflicts. It is important to note that both adolescent males and females use words to injure, yet adolescent females also use verbal behaviours for resolving conflict.

The perception that females utilize nasty or vindictive behaviours in same-sex peer conflicts was also discussed. While the results from Part 1 did not support this perception, it was presented by counsellors and adolescents during interviews. This perception may be formed by the fact that adolescent females while attempting to resolve the conflict, use confrontational behaviours, and while intending to tell the truth, may be too honest. This is an area that will be discussed later in Chapter Five under Implications for Further Studies.

A topic which has continually surfaced within each of the four issues delineated as research areas, is the use of behaviours for involvement of other peers in conflict. While no gender differences were noted in the category "Involvement of others", there were gender differences for the category "No-involvement of others". Specifically, the male

sample responded that they involve other peers and then contradicted this by responding that they did not involve other peers in their conflicts. As previously discussed, the perceived masculinity or femininity of a word or phrase in the behaviour statement may have effected the choices made by the sample.

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, the results from the analysis of the responses from Part 1 - adolescent survey, Part 2 - semi-structured interviews with counsellors and Part 3 - semi-structured interviews with adolescents, were presented and discussed. The results were organized as they pertained to the four main issues and the relevant questions delineated for this research: frequency of conflict, involvement of other peers in conflict, the effects of conflict, and behaviours utilized in conflict.

The main purpose for providing a discussion, within each of the four issues, was to draw the readers' attention to any gender differences noted in same-sex peer conflicts, as well as, the similarities and differences between the results obtained from the three samples. Through the process of interpretation and discussion of the results it became apparent that gender differences do exist in some of the issues focused on in this research. It also became apparent that personal biases that I hold, stated in Chapter One, are also perceptions held by other counsellors and adolescents and yet are not always supported by the data.

Perhaps the most revealing example of stereotypical perceptions held pertain to the issue frequency of conflict. Through the open-ended questions on the adolescent survey, and the interviews with counsellors and adolescents, the perception that adolescent females are more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males was expressed. The data collected from the forced-choice questions from the adolescent survey did not support this perception. It appears that the definition used for the word conflict plays an important role in the type of responses expressed by males and females.

The most plausible explanation for the formation of the perception, that

adolescent females are more frequently involved in peer conflicts, is the dual role that verbal behaviours seem to play in conflicts. Based on the results (Table 16) girls typically make use of behaviours such as: telling the truth, communicating directly to see what they are saying, trying to figure out what is wrong, letting their true feelings out, and talking about the problem with the other students. As a result of using these verbal behaviours adolescent girls are more visibly in conflict. The adolescent male, while in the same number of conflicts as the females, tends to ignore or avoid the conflict until it escalates to a verbal or physical confrontation.

A hypothesis, for the stereotypical perceptions of adolescents and counsellors held about same-sex peer conflicts, can be formulated through the relationship of the four issues researched in this study. This relationship, between the four issues delineated as topics for research, along with the observations drawn from the discussion of the results, will be summarized in Chapter Five. As well, the limitations to the present research and areas for further studies will be presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Summary

In any environment, whether in humanity or in nature, the element of conflict exists. A junior high school is a social environment that breeds conflict due to the nature of the adolescents. Adolescence is a time when individuals move away from family ties and place emphasis on peer relationships (Mitchell, 1996). With this emphasis on peer relationships the stage is set for the joys of friendships and the heartache of peer conflicts.

The main purpose of undertaking this research project was to gain insight into the social environment of the adolescents through same-sex peer conflicts. Four issues were chosen as research topics for the current study: the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts, the involvement of other peers in conflict, the effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent, and the behaviours utilized in adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. In conjunction with each of the four issues, relevant questions were posed with specific emphasis on gender differences.

The study was descriptive in nature and was designed to explore early adolescents' attitudes and beliefs about their same-sex peer conflicts. The task of exploring the early adolescents' beliefs was accomplished through a survey and semi-structured interviews. Three junior high school counsellors were also interviewed to provide support and comparison to the adolescents' perspectives.

From the results obtained in this research project two broad statements can be delineated and discussed. First, it became apparent that gender differences do exist in same-sex peer conflicts; specifically in two of the four issues selected as research topics. A summary of the results for each issue indicate that for the first issue no gender differences were noted in the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts. These results validate the current literature pertaining to frequency of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. An interesting result from the open-ended questions on the survey and interviews revealed the perception held by adolescents and counsellors is that adolescent females are more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts.

The results for the second issue of this research project, revealed no gender differences in the involvement of other peers by adolescents during same-sex peer conflicts; males and females involve other peers in their conflicts. A contradiction was noted with the results obtained from the adolescent male sample between behaviours which were categorized as "involving other peers" and behaviours categorized as "not involving other peers". On the one hand adolescent males and females responded similarly that they involve other peers or have been involved in other peers conflicts. Yet a significant gender difference was noted, specifically a change in male responses, when key words such as "fight" or "battle" were substituted for the words "conflict" and "argument". Adolescent males tended to respond that they would not involve others in their "fight" or "battle". The explanation proposed and discussed in detail in Chapter Four is that perhaps the perceived masculinity or femininity of key words in the behaviour statements influenced the responses given by the participants.

The issue of effect of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent, was assessed through three operational definitions highlighted in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. There were no gender differences found in the quantitative results (the survey) for two of the operational definitions (refer to pages 64 and 65 for details). Gender differences were noted in the perceptions held by adolescents and counsellors, obtained through qualitative results (interviews), for the third operational definition, the "suffering" exhibited from conflict. The perception held is that adolescent females tend to demonstrate or display their suffering from peer conflicts more frequently than adolescent boys.

The final and fourth issue, behaviours utilized by adolescents in same-sex peer conflicts, revealed significant gender differences. Specifically, adolescent males tend to avoid or ignore a conflict until it escalates, and then they resort to the use of verbal or physically aggressive behaviours. Adolescent females tend to try and deal with the conflict through communication, whether through positive means or negative means.

The second broad conclusion that can be drawn from the results obtained is that a relationship exists between the four issues selected as topics for research; they do not

exist in isolation. As well, an interpretation of the results which reveals the interconnectedness or relationship between the four issues may be a possible explanation for the stereotypical perceptions of gender differences that were expressed by adolescents and the counsellors. The perception that female adolescents are more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts than adolescent males can be discussed through the relationship of the four issues. With the onset of a peer conflict, both adolescent girls and boys utilize specific behaviours to deal with the conflict. Due to the nature of the behaviours utilized in conflict by adolescent females, who tend to let their true feelings out, seek advice, and try to figure out what is wrong, the perception is formed that they are more frequently involved in conflict. As well, due to the behaviours exhibited through the effects of conflict, such as suffering and avoidance behaviours, females again are perceived as more frequently involved in same-sex peer conflicts. The involvement of other peers by the adolescent female also plays an important role in the development of the perception of frequency of conflict. The fact that adolescent females involve others to continue a conflict or to resolve a conflict, leads one to the perception that they are having more conflicts because more people are made aware of their conflicts. The fact that adolescent females tell or show others about their suffering also leads one to the perception that they are having more conflicts because, again, more people are aware of the conflict.

Implications of the Current Study

Adolescent same-sex peer conflicts is a topic that has not been widely researched. Only a few studies have been directed towards empirically testing peer conflicts and fewer have attempted studies comparing same-sex peer conflicts. This research project is important because it serves as an extension to previous studies, by broadening the scope of knowledge about adolescent same-sex peer conflicts. In addition, this research project serves as a validation of previous studies which focused on the issue of frequency of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts.

A cautionary note must be made with the implications or conclusions drawn in

terms of the gender differences noted and discussed in this research project. This research project was not intended to further the gap or strengthen the on-going debate of differences between genders. Certainly there are those who would say that to discuss the issue of gender differences merely serves to strengthen the differences. This view is reflected by Scott-Jones (1991) when she stresses, "Maximizing and romanticizing differences between males and females may be appealing...but it may have the long-term effect of maintaining a women's traditional subordinate status" (cited in Sprinthall and Collins, 1995, p. 222). Holmes and Silverman (1996) also stress that "girls have not benefitted from comparisons with boys, and neither has society, which is thus polarized. Competition reigns" (p. 11).

Therefore, any gender differences that are presented and discussed in this research are done with the sole purpose of verifying that gender differences do exist and why they exist, so that possible solutions can be implemented to deal effectively with conflict for each gender. The intention is not to teach the adolescent girls how to resolve conflict with a masculine approach or to teach adolescent boys to resolve conflict through a feminine approach. The intention is to find possible resolution skills that both genders can utilize without causing some of the tragic pain that can exist in peer rejection and

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The main purpose of this research was to gain insight into the same-sex peer adolescents, the results obtained certainly have practical implications that can counsellors, teachers, administration, and other adults involved with adolescents. In terms of recommendations it is important that adults have an awareness of the impact that conflicts have on adolescents in their everyday life. While they may appear trivial to the adults, it is important that adults do not neglect, suppress or overreact to conflict (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Opotow, 1991). It is important that adults, as well as adolescents themselves, acknowledge that peer conflicts exist, and that conflict is a natural element of relationships. It is also important that some support be provided to

adolescent girls and boys to deal with conflict through effective means. Adults must respect the adolescents' perspective of the conflict and not push a desired outcome upon the adolescents. The adolescents personal relationships are strengthened if, through a guided approach, they develop successful conflict resolution skills.

The second recommendation is to educate adolescents about the power of conflict, both the negative and positive effects; specifically, that successful resolution to a conflict can be a powerful experience. The recent trend in schools to develop peer mediation teams or conflict management teams provides the perfect avenue in which peers can educate peers about conflict. Through peer mediation teams there is an opportunity to educate the adolescents about the perceptions they hold as to gender differences in conflict, whether that be frequency of conflict by gender, behaviours utilized by each gender, or the effects of conflict on each gender.

The focus of providing conflict resolution teams, peer mediation teams or other conflict resolution practices in the school setting was addressed in the results of the semi-structured interview with the counsellors. The counsellors were asked "What can be done about the issue of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts?" As detailed in Chapter Four, the counsellors will be referred to by pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. All three counsellor described proactive approaches that could be used in a school setting and that represent the current trend in education to focus on resolution of peer conflicts.

Mr. Jones: Teach the students fighting fair. Teach this through classes, since it needs to reach more students because conflict is going to happen. That's not bad. Teach fighting fair by fighting about the issue not the person; no name calling, don't bring up past issues, and fight with the person, not in a round about way or back stabbing.

Ms. Smith: Peer mediation works well. With girls who have a tendency to be in more conflicts, sometimes involving them in a group setting where they have an opportunity to talk about issues that are bothering them helps. In our school

we introduced a policy against intimidation. Through health classes studen ere taught at the beginning of the year to understand the definition of intimidation. We looked at physical, emotional and interdependent forms of intimidation, so students at all grade levels knew what intimidation was... so if they were brought to the office for intimidation the students were clear on it. So, first educated students, and then worked on skills: positive self talk and effective communication.

Ms. White: First, it is important to be proactive. Teach healthy ways to deal with conflict. Provide anger management strategies or groups. Communicate with parents and teachers about modelling effective behaviours to deal with conflict.

An area which must be monitored, as to the effects of same-sex peer conflicts, is the new focus in education to provide gender segregated classes or gender separate schools. Sanford-Smith (1996) stresses that an all girl school provides an environment or setting "where pressures of appearance, popularity and dating are lessened and where students are more able to support their peers rather than to compete with them" (p. 31). It would be a fallacy to assume that the social stress of conflict vanishes because one is in an all-girl or all-boy environment.

Suggestions for Further Research

Through the course of this research project there were areas noted where improvements or modifications could be made; thus is the learning process that accompanies research. Since there is so little empirical research on same-sex peer conflicts, the suggestions that are listed in this section are but a few of the many possible areas that could be researched.

An issue which surfaced in Chapter Two, through the process of reviewing the current literature on peer conflict, is social stress from peer conflicts for adolescent

females. Moran and Eckenrode (1991) reported that, based upon their findings, social stress was more strongly related to high depression scores and lower self-esteem scores for adolescent females. The possible explanations for this relationship, which were presented and discussed in the literature review are as follows: popularity, levels of self-disclosure, and socialization factors. The degree to which these factors, or others, explain the difference in social stress for adolescent males and females would be an interesting avenue to explore.

In this study the issue, effects of same-sex peer conflicts on the adolescent, was assessed through three operational definitions. The first operational definition utilized to assess the effects of conflict was described as avoidance behaviours. It became apparent, from the lack of responses given by the adolescents for the open-ended questions pertaining to avoidance behaviours, that the broad scope which was used to describe avoidance behaviours did not accurately assess the effects of conflict. This will be discussed later under limitations to the current study. The modification that should be made, which would provide valuable information and possibly assess the effects of peer conflicts more accurately, is to use a narrow scope (forced-choice questions) or specific behaviours to describe avoidance behaviours; for example, arriving late for school, suspensions, missing a class, or not going to your locker because of conflict.

An area which has been studied, and discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, is the effects that socialization, specifically family and play, have on same-sex peer conflicts. Areas that require further investigation include the following, what is the relationship between frequency of family conflict and frequency of peer conflict for the adolescent? What is the relationship between family conflict style and the adolescents conflict style with peers?

An interesting avenue to explore would be to specifically focus on behaviours utilized in conflict and assess the perception that adolescent females use nasty or vindictive behaviours in conflict. Possible explanations for the formation of this perception were discussed in Chapter Four of this research project and certainly provide a springboard for further research.

The final area of suggested research is a replication of the current study to verify the results found regarding the four issues presented in this study: frequency of same-sex peer conflicts, involvement of other peers, the effects of conflict, and behaviours utilized. Along with the replication an extension of this current study could be provided by selecting a more diverse adolescent sample such as; adolescents from rural communities, from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, or cognitive or achievement abilities. Perhaps the most overwhelming realization in regards to the topic of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts is the amount of information yet to be gathered and synthesized. With that frame of thought in mind this research project can be viewed as a stepping stone to further research.

Delimitations of the Study

Due to time constraints several decisions were made with respects to the sample prior to gathering data through the survey. This has resulted in a number of limitations with respect to the sample of 145 adolescents selected for this study and have to be taken into consideration when drawing generalizations. The first delimitation made was that all subjects came from the same school. This means that information gleaned from the results will have to be used cautiously since they may only be indicative of the particular school.

Further delimitations include the following: all subjects were from an urban setting, all subjects are from a Catholic School , and all subjects are from what is considered an affluent city. Therefore, any generalizations from this study will be limited to a population with a similar demographic background. Perhaps future research could include a more diverse sample.

Limitations to the Study

The limitations with this research project appear to stem from the lack of clarity given to the definitions used to describe the word "conflict" and the phrase "effects of conflict". The limitations which will be discussed became apparent through the survey

used with the adolescent sample; specifically the difficulties lay with section four of the survey which consisted of open-ended questions composed by me. While the open-ended questions provided the adolescents with an opportunity to express their views and beliefs about conflict, and resulted in valuable information, the style of questioning led to several limitations.

The first limitation with the study, which became evident through the survey, was the number of definitions used for the word conflict. The problem with using a variety of definitions for the word conflict resulted in difficulties drawing conclusions. By this I mean, the definitions utilized for conflict in section two and three of the survey were words such as "upset", "mad", "disagree" and "annoyed". For section four of the survey the word "argument" was used to define conflict. When comparing results for the issue, frequency of same-sex peer conflicts by gender, no gender differences were noted from sections two and three. For section four the participants selected adolescent females as having more arguments. Would the response have been the same if the word "fight" had been used instead of "argument" to define conflict? Does the perceived masculinity or femininity for the word used to define conflict effect the response?

In this research project the issue of the effects of same-sex peer conflicts on adolescents was assessed through three operational definitions. The operational definition "avoidance behaviours" was described through broad statements: missing school because of conflict, avoiding certain places because of something your friends might do, and avoiding a certain place because of something your friends might say. The lack of information provided by the adolescent sample through the survey indicates the problem may be with the broad scope of the questions pertaining to "avoidance behaviours". The use of a broad scope to define "avoidance behaviours" is a limitation which was addressed by one of the counsellors during her semi-structured interview. The counsellor, on her own initiative, described "avoidance behaviours" through narrow descriptors. Some of the descriptors were: missing half a day of school, avoiding the locker room, avoiding the lunch room, or school suspensions. I believe the clarifications that were suggested by the counsellor provide an insight into the format that would

provide for more substantial results. The clarifications made by the counsellor also signify that "avoidance behaviours" can be used in assessing the effects of conflict by providing narrow or specific categories.

A third limitation in this study concerned the sample utilized to complete the pilot survey. As discussed in Chapter Three, only two grade nine girls were used to write the pilot survey. As a result, there was no indication if the grade seven or eights students would have difficulty understanding or completing the survey. Since no male students were involved in writing the pilot survey, the question arises, "would the adolescent males have noted different areas of concern than the adolescent females/"

A final limitation with this research project lay with the semi-structured interview with the counsellors. Questions one and three of the interview guide only pertained to adolescent females (refer to Appendix G for counsellor interview). Directing the initial questions only in relationship to adolescent females may have unduly influenced or biased the counsellors responses. In hind-sight all the questions should have pertained to both genders.

The final limitation in this study was the difficulty experienced with the audio equipment in one of the adolescent interviews and one of the counsellor interviews. Notes were kept during each interview so comments had to be taken from the notes, rather than transcribed verbatim from the tapes.

Concluding Comments

Girls have more fights with their friends than boys. The fact that this stereotypical view exists was confirmed through this research project. Not only junior high counsellors, but students, boys and girls, held this belief. Indeed this is why I began this research project, to find out why adolescent girls are involved in more peer conflicts than adolescent boys.

An important finding of this research is that this stereotypical view is probably not true. Results from this research, as well as literature cited in Chapter Two, reveal that in this sample there is no difference in the frequency of same-sex peer conflicts for

adolescent girls and boys. The significant factor reinforcing this stereotype is that gender differences do exist in the behaviours utilized by adolescents in conflict.

The nature of the behaviours utilized by each gender in conflict reinforces the perception that adolescent girls are more frequently involved in peer conflicts. Adolescent males tend to use behaviours which are physically or verbally aggressive to deal with their peer conflicts. They also tend to ignore or avoid the problem until it escalates into a confrontation. Adolescent girls tend not to ignore the conflict, and try to communicate directly to resolve the conflict. If the adolescent girl is adept with successful conflict resolution skills, the approach is positive. Generally, the majority of adolescent females, as well as adult males and females, are not adept in successful conflict resolution skills and as a result the intended communication often becomes confrontational. As a result more people, counsellors, teachers, and students, are aware of the conflict. Counsellors, teachers, and students are also more aware of female adolescent peer conflicts because females tend to show their suffering from conflicts, and tend to involve others for support and advice.

Conclusion to Opening Vignette

Michelle sits crying in the counsellor's office and sobs, "I don't know why Lena doesn't like me anymore. Since Trina joined our group, she and Lena hang out together, and Trina always pulls Lena away from me and starts to whisper. Lena never calls me anymore. Trina and I never got along, we hate each other."

The counsellor spends time with Michelle, listening carefully, and eventually suggests that perhaps Michelle and Lena should sit together (with the counsellor) and try to resolve the conflict. Michelle agrees to this suggestion. The counsellor approaches Lena with the suggestion of resolving the conflict and Lena agrees to the mediation.

The process of mediation begins... the girls fluctuate between anger and tears. Throughout the process Lena brings up past hurts and Michelle tries to justify her actions. Both Michelle and Lena bring up other girls' names and their influence on the conflict.

Lena blurts out, "Trina said that you didn't think Jeremy liked me, that he likes Rachel."

Michelle retorts, "I never said that! Trina is just trying to split us up, Rachel said that Jeremy does not like you."

The web of conflict continues to grow and becomes very tangled. The bottom line... Lena does not want to be friends with Michelle any longer, she has new friend, Trina. Days, and then weeks pass. Michelle is never invited back into the old group. By the end of the school year Michelle has made new friends, though some might say not with the "popular girls" or the "in crowd".

Did the mediation help or make the conflict worse? How does Michelle feel when she reflects back to the conflict, a year later? How does Lena feel when she reflects back to the conflict? How does the conflict effect Michelle and Lena's self-esteem? The concluding vignette illustrates the numerous unanswered questions that surround the topic of adolescent peer same-sex peer conflicts.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICS APPROVAL FORMS FROM

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

RESEARCH AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

November 28, 1995

From: Department of Educational Psychology
Research and Ethics Committee

The Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Educationa Psychology has reviewed the attached proposal and finds it acceptable with respect to ethical matters.

Applicant: Dr. Gretchen Hess.

Title: Adolescent peer conflicts.

Participating Agency(ies):

Recommended Change:

Peter Calder
Chairman or Designate, Research and Ethics Committee

Nov 29/95
Date

Department of Educational Psychology Ethics Review
Description of Project and Procedures for Observing Ethical Guidelines

PLEASE PROVIDE 2 COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT TO THE CHAIR, RESEARCH COMMITTEE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Project Title: Adolescent peer conflicts

Project Deadlines:

Date by which project approval is desired: ASAP

Starting Date: end Nov. **Ending Date:** Dec. 95

Applicant(s):

Principal Investigator: Dr. Gretchen Hess

University Status: Assistant Dean (Student Services), Faculty of Educ

University Address: 1-107 Education Centre North

University Telephone: 492-7375

If the principal investigator is a student, please provide the following information:

If the research project is for a thesis or dissertation, has the applicant's Supervisory Committee approved the project? Yes: ___ **No:** n/a Masters

Name of Academic Advisor (or Instructor if a course project)

Gretchen C. Hess

University Address: 1-107 Educ North

University Telephone: 7375

Gretchen C. Hess	Carmen Victoor	22 Nov 95
Signature of Principal Investigator. In case of a graduate student, signature of faculty advisor.	Signature of Graduate Student(if applicable)	Date

approved Hholder
28 Nov/95

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM
FOR ADOLESCENT'S PARTICIPATION
IN SURVEY

November 28, 1995

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a Graduate Student at the University of Alberta and am doing research on adolescent relationships. Specifically, I am interested in studying teenagers and their friendships.

Students from several of the Language Arts classes, at each grade level, have been selected to complete a questionnaire. The task will take no more than one class to complete. The students will not be required to give their names and their responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

If for any reason you do not want your child to answer the questionnaire, please contact me at 962-0536. If I do not hear from you, I will know that it is okay for your child to participate. If you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to call me at the above number.

Thank you to the parents, students, administration and staff of H. Junior High for your cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

Carmen Victoor	Mr. Smith	Gretchen C. Hess, PhD
Graduate Student	Principal	Assistant Dean (Student Services)

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM
FOR ADOLESCENT'S PARTICIPATION IN
THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Earlier this month your child answered a questionnaire during a Language Arts class. You may recall the letter you received November 28th which explained the purpose of the research: to learn about teenagers and their friendships.

Your child, (name), has volunteered to be interviewed for the second part of this study. Although the interview will be tape recorded your child's name will never be used in the transcripts of the interview. As well, slight details will be changed when writing about your child's comments so that no one will be able to identify (him/her). I will be conducting the interview which will take place on (date) from (time)-(time). Your child is free to withdraw from the interview at any time if (he/she) so chooses.

Please complete the permission slip below and return to H. Junior High by (date). If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call me at 962-0536.

Thank-you for your cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

Carmen Victoor	Mr. Smith	Gretchen C. Hess, PhD
Graduate Student	Principal	Associate Dean (Student Services)

.....

Please check only one of the following and return the bottom portion of this letter by (date).

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the interview.

_____ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the interview.

_____ (Name) _____ (Date)

APPENDIX D

ADOLESCENT SAME-SEX PEER CONFLICTS SURVEY

Dear student,

The following pages contain some general questions about teenagers' relationships with their family and friends. Please follow the directions for each of the different sections. You are asked to read each item carefully and not to spend too much time on any one question. Remember you do not have to give your name.

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Thank-you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Carmen Victoor

SECTION 1

A) Circle which grade you are in right now.

Grade 7 Grade 8 Grade 9

B) Circle your gender.

Male Female

C) Circle how old you are today.

11 12 13 14 15 16

D) Put a check beside the best description of the summary of your marks on your first report card this year.

_____ Below 50%
_____ 50 - 59%
_____ 60 - 69%
_____ 70 - 79%
_____ 80 - 89%
_____ 90% or above

E) Circle the number of SCHOOL activities (clubs/committees/teams) you are involved with IN SCHOOL.

none one two three more than three

F) Circle the number of activities OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (clubs/committees/teams) you are involved with.

none one two three more than three

G) Circle the female parent you live with right now:

mother step-mother other no female parent

H) Circle the male parent you live with right now:

father step-father other no male parent

I) Write down the names of your siblings or step-siblings **FROM OLDEST TO YOUNGEST.** If you have more than four brothers and sisters, write down the four who are **MOST IMPORTANT** to you.

	First name	**Boy or Girl**	**Age**	**Grade**	**Live at**	**Natural/ Step**
Sibling 1	_____	Boy or Girl	____	____	home away	natural step
Sibling 2	_____	Boy or Girl	____	____	home away	natural step
Sibling 3	_____	Boy or Girl	____	____	home away	natural step
Sibling 4	_____	Boy or Girl	____	___	home away	natural step

SECTION 2

In the next section you will be asked about your relationships with each of the following people:

1) **your mother or step mother** (if you have both, describe your relationship with the one you live with, if you do not live with a female parent leave the question about your mother blank)
2) **your father or step-father** (if you have both, describe your relationship with the one you live with, if you do not live with a male parent leave the question about your father blank)
3) **your same sex-friend** (best friend at school)
4) **each of your siblings**.

Answer each of the following questions for each person. Sometimes the answers for different people may be the same; sometimes they may be different.

1. How much do you and this person **get upset with or mad at each other?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

2) How much do you and this person **get on each other's nerves?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

3) How much do you and this person **disagree and quarrel?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

4) How much do you and this person get **annoyed with each other's behavior?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

5) How much do you and this person **argue with each other?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

6) How much do you and this person **hassle or nag one another?**

	Little or none	**Somewhat**	**Very Much**	**Extremely Much**	**The Most**
Mother	1	2	3	4	5
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 3

Below is a list of things friends can do. Read each sentence carefully. First answer the question for your same-sex friends in general. Then answer it for your same-sex best friend. Circle the word that describes how you think your same-sex friends act. If you are not sure, circle the one that you think is best.

Example:	How often do your same-sex friends do this?				How often does your best same-sex friend do this?			
	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
My friends read books	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Remember: Circle the word that describes how you think your friends act.

	How often do your same-sex friends do this?				How often does your best same-sex friend do this?			
	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1) My friends can keep secrets.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2) My friends lend me lunch money if I need it.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3) My friends can tell if I'm down or upset.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
4) My friends can cheer me up when I feel sad.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5) My friends say nice things about me.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6) My friends tell me secrets.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

	How often do your same-sex friends do this?				How often does your same-sex best friend do this?			
	Never	Sometimens	Usually	Always	Never	Sometimens	Usually	Always
7) My friends make me feel better just by being around.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8) My friends embarrass me in front of other people.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
9) I trust my friends.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
10) My friends do things that annoy me.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
11) My friends understand my problems.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
12) I tell my friends when I am upset.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
13) My friends complain to me about things.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
14) When I get quiet, my friends ask me what's wrong.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
15) My friends know what to say to make me feel better.		2	3	4	1	2	3	4
16) I argue with my friends.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
17) My friends talk about me behind my back.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
18) My friends tell me not to worry about things.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

	How often do your same-sex friends do this?				How often does your same-sex best friend do this?			
	Never	Sometimens	Usually	Always	Never	Sometimens	Usually	Always
19) My friends can get my mind off my problems.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
20) My friends like being with me.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
21) I can talk about anything with my friends.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
22) My friends make fun of me.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
23) When someone picks on me, my friends help me out.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
24) I get mad at my friends.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
25) My friends help me tell right from wrong.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
26) My friends help me work out family problems.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
27) My friends give me good advice.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
28) My friends want too much attention.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

SECTION 4

1) Sometimes, students find that when they are having an argument with one person, all the person's friends get involved in the argument.

Does this ever happen to you?

If you answered yes, why do you think this happens?

Do you and your friends ever do this to others?

If you answered yes, why do you become involved?

2) Have you ever stayed home from school because of something your friends might do to you?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, how often have you done this?

3) Have you ever stayed home from school because of something your friends might say to you?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, how often have you done this?

4) Have you ever avoided going to a certain place because you were afraid of your friends?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If yes, how often have you done this?

5) Tell me something you once learned about friends after being in a conflict.

6) Tell me something you once learned about yourself after being in a conflict.

7) Who do you think have more arguments with their same-sex friends: boys, girls, or are they about the same?

If you said boys, why do you think they have more arguments?

If you said girls, why do you think they have more arguments?

SECTION 5

Please mark each statement in the following way: If the statement describes a behavior you usually use in a conflict with **same-sex friends**, make a check mark in the "yes" column. If the statement describes how you behave sometimes in a conflict, make a check mark in the "sometimes" column. If the statement does not describe how you usually behave in a conflict with **same-sex friends**, make a check in the "no" column. Check only one column (either yes, sometimes or no) for each of the statements.

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
1) Choke, strangle the other student	____	____	____
2) Try not to listen to the argument	____	____	____
3) Get advice from someone else	____	____	____
4) Hurt the other student without restraint	____	____	____
5) Ignore the fight	____	____	____
6) Use weapons	____	____	____
7) Write nasty notes about the person	____	____	____
8) Threaten the student's family	____	____	____
9) Tell the truth	____	____	____
10) Communicate directly to see what they are saying	____	____	____
11) Slap, kick, or use fists	____	____	____
12) Leave them alone if they don't want trouble	____	____	____
13) If they hit you, tell them "don't"	____	____	____
14) Get others to beat up the student	____	____	____
15) Try to figure out what is wrong	____	____	____

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
16) Let your true feelings out	____	____	____
17) Say things about the student that aren't true (rumors)	____	____	____
18) Call a same-sex friend before school	____	____	____
19) Do not hurt one another	____	____	____
20) Do what you have to do to win the fight	____	____	____
21) Make threats	____	____	____
22) Spit, bite, scratch	____	____	____
23) Dirty tricks (i.e. hit them while they are not looking, grab them from behind)	____	____	____
24) One-on-one; no one else enters the fight	____	____	____
25) Call the other student names, use bad words	____	____	____
26) Make prank phone calls to the student's house	____	____	____
27) Yell at the person	____	____	____
28) Don't say nasty things	____	____	____
29) Call and talk to other same-sex friends about one friend in a bad way	____	____	____
30) Talk about the problem with the other student	____	____	____
31) Fight your own battle: don't call in friends	____	____	____

.....**TEAR THIS PAGE OFF**.....

If you would like to be interviewed about your relationships with family and friends, please write your name on the blank space provided below. When you are finished tear this section off and place it in the appropriate box at the front of the classroom.

If you do not want to be interviewed, **do not** write your name on the blank below, and tear this section off and place it in the appropriate box at the front of the classroom.

Name_____ Grade _____

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION LETTER FROM

DR. KAREN FRANKEL

Fax received from Dr. Frankel on October 30, 1995

THE SOCIAL MILIEU SCALE

Dear Colleague:

The Social Milieu Scale (SMS) is a 28-item scale, answered once for "friends in general" and once for "best friends". It is intended to be used as a research tool to describe girls' (11-15 year olds) perceptions of the supports and stresses in their social networks.

The SMS was standardized on a sample of 392 midwestern middle school girls. The girls were from white, lower middle-class families. The scale was factor analysed (see Tables 1 and 2). Highly loading items on each factor are summed to produce subscale scores for both "Best Friend" and "General Friend" perceptions. Scoring instructions are included on the following pages, and are means and standard deviations of each subscale. Preliminary validational work relating the SMS to sociometrics, as well as information on the association between social milieu and coping and self-reported depression are available upon request.

This scale is to be used for research purposes only, expressly by permission of Dr. Karen Frankel.

I would appreciate receiving copies of papers, presentations or articles using or citing the SMS.

Thank you.

Karen Frankel, PhD
Department of Psychiatry - C268-52
University of Colorado Health
Sciences Center
4200 East Ninth Avenue
Denver, CO 80262
(303) 270-6897

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTER FROM

DR. WYNDOL FURMAN

UNIVERSITY of DENVER

Department of Psychology

October 30, 1995

Ms. Carmen Victoor
36 53504 Range Road 274
Spruce Grove
Alberta T7X 3T1
CANADA

Dear Ms. Victoor:

Enclosed you will find information concerning the Network of Relationships Inventory. We have deleted the importance scale and have added nurturance and punishment scales. I have also included copies of the Sibling Relationship Questionnaire and parent and child versions of the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire. I would be pleased to have you use them, but I do have two requests.

1) You may only want to use certain scales or have children rate only certain individuals. I do not mind this kind of reduction, but I would appreciate it if the scales that are used are kept intact (i.e., not reducing the number of items to one or two or rewriting specific items). These kinds of changes make it difficult to compare results.

2) I would appreciate receiving information about the results of your work.

I hope you find these scales useful. This letter gives you permission to use the inventories. Good luck with your research!

Sincerely,

Wyndol Furman

Wyndol Furman, Ph.D.
Professor

2155 S. Race St. Denver, Colorado 80208 303-871-2478

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPANTS

STUDENT INTERVIEW

1) Do you think the arguments girls and boys have with their same-sex friends are the same or different? (If the conflicts are different, how so and why?)

2) a) Who do you think has more conflicts with their same-sex friends, boys, girls, or is it the same? (If different, why?)

b) Do you think boys and girls are raised the same by society (families) in the way they should to deal with conflict? (If different, how?)

3) Who do you think involves others more in their same-sex peer conflicts, girls, boys or is it the same? Why is it different? Why get others involved?

4) Who do you think suffers from friendship conflicts more, girls, boys or is it the same? Who shows or tells more people about their suffering, girls, boys, or is it the same?

5) a) Are there differences in the ways girls and boys handle same-sex peer conflicts, or is it the same? (If different, how?)

b) What types of behaviours do boys use in conflict? What type of behaviours do girls use in conflict?

6) Think about the about the worst conflict you have ever had with another boy/girl? Can you tell me what it was about and what you did?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE

SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

COUNSELLOR INTERVIEW

1) List the top five issues you spend your time on when counselling adolescent girls.

2) Rank order the following in respect to counselling time due to conflicts. (If they prioritize girls, at any grade, ask why more frequently than boys?)

_____ Grade 7 boys
_____ Grade 7 girls
_____ Grade 8 boys
_____ Grade 8 girls
_____ Grade 9 boys
_____ Grade 9 girls

3) What percentage of counselling time do you spend on adolescent female conflicts with girlfriends?

4) Who involves other students in their conflicts more, girls, boys, or is it the same? If they answered yes or occasionally above, how do they involve others and why?

5) Describe the type of behaviours adolescent females use in conflict with their same-sex peers. Describe the type of behaviours adolescent males use in conflict with their same-sex peers.

6) a) Think about the same-sex peer conflicts in your school, how are adolescents effected by conflict or how is the effect shown?

b) If you had to give a percentage of students you have dealt with who have missed school due to same-sex peer conflicts what would it be?

c) In terms of suffering, hurt feelings from conflict, who do you think shows more suffering, girls, boys or is it the same?

7) What can be done about the issue of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts? (Roles of administration, teachers, school counsellors, parents and adolescents.)

8) Do you have anything you would like to add, or that may have been missed, on the topic of adolescent same-sex peer conflicts?