

# Adolescent Development

48.212: Dr. Jeffrey Leitzel  
Ch. 10: Intimacy

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## Outline/Overview

- Theoretical perspectives
  - Sullivan
  - Erikson
  - Attachment perspective
- Development of Adolescent Intimacy
- Intimacy and Psychosocial Development

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## Intimacy: Sullivan

- Intimacy as an Adolescent issue
  - Characteristics of intimate relationships?
- Harry Stack Sullivan (Interpersonal Theory) - Developmental progression of needs:
  - contact and for tenderness
  - adult participation
  - peers and peer acceptance
  - intimacy
  - sexual contact and intimacy-opposite-sex peer
  - integration into adult society

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● ● ● | Intimacy: Erik Erikson

- Crisis: Intimacy vs. Isolation
  - In a truly intimate relationship, two individuals' identities fuse
  - Neither person's identity is lost
- Must establish identity during previous stage
- Differs with Sullivan in sequencing
- Contemporary perspective – complementary tasks

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● ● ● | Intimacy: Attachment Perspective

- John Bowlby/Mary Ainsworth – Strange Situation
- A strong and enduring emotional bond
- An internal working model
- Anxiously attached infants carry problems into childhood and beyond
- Types: Secure, anxious-resistant, anxious-avoidant, disorganized
- Adult attachment interview – Mary Main

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● ● ● | Attachment style?

A. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, others want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

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## Attachment style?

B. I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

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## Attachment style?

C. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.

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## Development of Adolescent Intimacy

- Changes in the Nature of Friendship
- Companionship appears before adolescence
- Intimacy emerges later
- Conflicts that adolescents have with friends

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● ● ● | **Development of Adolescent Intimacy**

- Changes in the Display of Intimacy
- More knowledgeable about their friends
- More responsive to close friends
- Friends become more interpersonally sensitive & empathic
- Resolve conflicts by negotiation or disengagement

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● ● ● | **Development of Adolescent Intimacy**

- Sex Differences in Intimacy
- Girls' relationships are more intimate than boys'
- New targets of intimacy are added to old ones
- Different types of intimate relationships with parents and peers
  - Parent-adolescent relationships
  - Adolescent peer relationships

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● ● ● | **Intimacy and Psychosocial Development**

- Friends as a sounding board
- Friends provide advice
- Contribute to adolescents' self-esteem
- Can lead to too much introspection and self-consciousness
  - Corumination

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