Adolescent Development

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Ch. 10: Intimacy

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

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
**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

**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

**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.
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.

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.

Development of Adolescent Intimacy

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

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

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