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Peer Involvement in Adolescent Dating Violence

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Adolescent dating violence (ADV) is a significant public health problem with broad social implications. ADV has many physical, psychological, and relational adverse consequences. Furthermore, ADV is associated with intimate partner violence during adulthood. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways that peers were involved in the dating violence of other adolescents.

This study is part of a larger, parent project. The study entitled, “Adolescent Dating Violence: Development of a Theoretical Framework” (ADV) was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and utilized grounded theory to develop a theoretical framework of how dating violence begins, unfolds and ends. Seven categories of violent relationships between adolescent couples were identified. They included, maltreating, turbulent, volatile, brawling, deprecating, bickering, and intrusive relationships.

This research used the narratives from the ADV (n=88) study to explain and describe the ways that peers were involved in ADV. Peers were involved in maltreating relationships by “participating in the aggression” (males) and by “deserting the recipient” (females). Peers were involved in turbulent relationships by “agitating the aggression” (males) and by “cheating with the boyfriend” (females). Male and female peers were involved in volatile relationships by “ignoring the aggression.” Male and female peers were involved in brawling relationships by “confronting a partner.” Peers were involved in deprecating relationships by “being the competition” (males) and by “being the

audience” (females). Peers were involved in bickering relationships by “joking with the dating partner” (males) and by “needling the dating partner” (females). Peers were involved in intrusive relationships by “keeping tabs on the recipient” (males) and by “helping the recipient” (females).

This research provides an important contribution to the literature by developing a typology of peer involvement by relationship type and by gender. This advancement can serve as a useful guide to future research and clinical intervention.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Chris and daughters Alexa and Lauren. Without their support this endeavor would not have been possible. Their love and patience has directly contributed to my ability to complete this research. It is also dedicated to my parents, Bill and Blanche Shockey, who have always believed in me and taught me to believe in myself. My love and appreciation goes out to everyone who helped me along this journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Adolescent dating violence (ADV) is a significant public health problem with broad social implications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2006) defines adolescent dating violence as “physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence within a dating relationship.” Theriot (2008) adds that dating violence includes property damage, kidnapping, and homicide among other actions. Furthermore, he states that sexual abuse includes harassment (e.g., explicit jokes, rumors, or spying), coercion (e.g., lying and deceit to facilitate sexual contact with an unwilling partner), and unsolicited sexual contact. Verbal abuse includes yelling, sarcasm and name calling and is closely associated with psychological abuse that includes being ignored and treated inferiorly. Bjorkqvist, Lagerpsertz, and Kaukisenen (1992) included relational aggression as a specific form of aggression that targets the social relationships of adolescents. Examples of relational aggression include gossiping and snubbing peers.

In a 2006 report from the CDC, 9.9% of adolescents in grades nine through twelve reported physical dating violence. Similarly, investigators on The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) reported that one in ten adolescents experienced physical violence (Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001). The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) and Add Health surveys collect

information on several health-risk behaviors of high school adolescents. Each represents a national probability sample of all American high schools.

Reports of sexual aggression are varied depending on how it was defined. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) surveyed a nationally representative sample of teens in grades eight through eleven and found that 81% of students reported sexual harassment, which was defined as any sexual imposition that made recipients uncomfortable (AAUW Educational Foundation Sexual Harassment Task Force, 2004). Moreover, findings from the YRBS data revealed that nearly 7.7% of adolescents reporting ever having been pressured into sexual intercourse against their will (Howard & Wang, 2005).

The effects of ADV are also experienced by peers who are not dating. Liz Claiborne, Inc. (2008) reported that 24 to 40% of 12- to 17-year-olds knew someone who had been victimized by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Sixty-two percent of early adolescents (ages 11 to 14) knew someone who had been verbally abused by a dating partner. These statistics illustrate the pervasiveness of adolescent dating violence and suggest that most adolescents will experience dating violence either through direct involvement or vicariously through peers.

ADV is a particularly significant problem because of the negative outcomes of victimization. Correlates include unhealthy weight-related issues, psychological distress, sexually transmitted disease, academic struggles, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation (Ackard, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007; Thompson, Wonderlich, Crosby, & Mitchell, 2001). Sexual violence is associated with dissatisfaction in peer relationships, unhappiness with life in general, and decreased self-esteem (Ackard & Neumark-

Sztainer, 2002; Coker et al., 2000). Dating violence during adolescence has been linked to intimate partner violence during adulthood (Close, 2005; Whitaker et al., 2006).

Adolescence

Adolescence has been aptly described as a time of “storm and stress” (Hall, 1904) and is marked by many physical, psychological, cognitive, and social transformations. During adolescence, young people are learning to think rationally and hypothetically, making them more susceptible to the criticisms and opinions of peers. In addition, their preoccupation with sexuality makes them eager to seek attention from members of the opposite sex, and they become increasingly interested in dating (Grasley, Wolfe, & Wekerle, 1999).

During adolescence teens seek independence as they begin the transition from childhood to adulthood. Parent/child relationships change as parents reduce supervision and teens seek closer affiliations with peers (Erikson, 1968). While parents remain an important influence on their teenage children, friends become more important (Gagne, Lavoie, & Hebert, 2005). Close peer relationships provide adolescents with support and acceptance (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000).

As teens mature they progress from relying on best friends for companionship to becoming members of social networks that include opposite-sex friends (Jouriles, 2009). These friendships serve as templates for future dating relationships and demonstrate what are and are not acceptable norms of social interaction (Connolly, Pepler, Craig, & Taradash, 2000; Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). The need to impress peers can cause dating conflicts (Connolly et al., 2000).

Dating

The act of dating has many labels that are used interchangeably. Dating is referred to by teens as “going out,” “hooking up,” “crushing,” and “seeing each other” (Pittman, Wolfe, & Wekerle, 2000; Theriot, 2008). The rules and boundaries of adolescent dating are unclear. Some teens struggle with determining if they are, in fact, someone’s boyfriend or girlfriend. This is especially true with younger adolescents (Jouriles, 2009). To compound this confusion, adolescents are likely to engage in serial and superficial relationships that may or may not include sexual intimacy (Ackard et al., 2007). Cavalier sexual attitudes obscure boundaries even further and facilitate arrangements such as becoming “friends with privileges”; a casual friendship that incorporates noncommittal sexual relations (Theriot, 2008).

Inexperience with dating causes complex emotions with the potential to lead to conflict and aggression (Leadbeater, Banister, Ellis, & Yeung, 2008; Wolfe et al., 2003). These emotions are new for teens who must learn to manage them. Inadequate coping skills and immaturity can put adolescents at risk for resorting to violent behaviors as a method of resolving conflict (Close, 2005).

Peers and Dating

The characteristics of adolescent friendships are predictive of the types of dating relationships they will have. For example, teens who experience healthy peer relationships usually have healthy dating relationships as well. Friendships based on mutual respect and reciprocity provide the best foundation for similar romantic relationships later (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000).

Adolescents model their dating relationships by observing others. Role models include parents, peers, and friends (Swart, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002). Teens with negative or absent role models have trouble recognizing a healthy relationship and consider dysfunctional relationships to be normal (Leadbeater et al., 2008). Kinsfogel and Grych (2004) found that boys who witnessed parental violence were more accepting of violence in dating relationships. Girls can become conflicted if they see mentors struggling with violence in their relationships. This becomes more complicated if what they witness contradicts what the teen thinks is right (Banister & Jakubec, 2004).

Adolescents can influence peer dating relationships through direct or indirect involvement with the dating couple. Direct involvement includes serving as a confidant to one member of the dating couple, overtly attempting to steal another's boyfriend, being flirtatious, or participating in outward confrontations with a friend's partner in order to challenge controlling and isolating behaviors. Indirect involvement includes being unknowingly objectified by one partner in order to threaten or evoke jealousy in another. This can be carried out through acts of flirting or infidelity (Adelman & Kil, 2007; Leadbeater et al., 2008)

Violence in Dating Relationships

This discussion illustrates the complexities of adolescent dating relationships including the challenges of adolescence, the lack of experience with dating, the effects of both helpful and hurtful interactions with peers, and the modeling of dating after other relationships, which may or may not be healthy. These complexities suggest that dating violence cannot be viewed as the manifestation of isolated explosive events but are embedded within the context of adolescent development.

Intervening with adolescent dating violence is important because healthy dating relationships have been shown to promote successful relationships in adulthood (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). Professionals may assist with the prevention and intervention of dating violence, but are infrequently sought out by adolescents experiencing ADV.

Several authors have called for research to focus on how peer relationships influence adolescent dating violence (Buchanan & Bowen, 2008; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Prospero, 2006a; Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). Examining the interrelated and multiple ways that peers become entangled in the dating couple's relationship will facilitate a more comprehensive view of the complexities of adolescent dating and violence.

In summary, ADV includes a variety of negative behaviors with negative health outcomes. It is very prevalent and extends beyond the dating partners to include peers who are drawn into the violence and who experience its physical and psychological impact. Adolescence is a time of significant developmental change, especially regarding relationships with others. Peer group members are very influential on each others' behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes. Dating occurs first within peer groups and then within one-to-one intimate relationships. The roles that peers can have in adolescent dating relationships are varied. The definition of dating and the social norms are defined by the peer group. Furthermore, there is some indication that peer relationships may serve as causative mediating influences in the escalation or discontinuation of dating violence. A comprehensive theoretical understanding of how peer relationships affect ADV would contribute to the development of research-based prevention and intervention activities.

This study explored the phenomenon of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence and addressed the following research questions: (a) In what ways are peers

involved in adolescent dating patterns and experiences? and (b) How do peers influence the management of dating violence? The specific aims of this study were:

1. To describe the qualities of the peer relationships of adolescents who experience dating violence.
2. To determine the roles of peers on the social processes of how teens manage adolescent dating violence.
3. To determine any gender difference between how peer relationships of males and females affect adolescent dating relationships and the management of ADV.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature was conducted to synthesize the current state of knowledge about peer involvement in adolescent dating violence (ADV). Several data bases were searched, including CINAHL, MedLine, SocIndex, and PsychInfo. The key words “dating violence,” “adolescence,” “adolescent dating violence,” and “peer involvement” were used independently and in combination. In total, 402 articles, books, and book chapters related to the key words were found. One-hundred and seven provided information relevant to peers and adolescent dating. Not all were directly related to peer involvement in ADV. Some provided supportive information about peer violence, peer relations, characteristics of victims, perpetrators, help-seeking behaviors, etc. Samples included middle school, high school, and college-age students.

Each of the 107 articles was reviewed to determine its relevance to the topic. The goal was to identify studies that reported findings on some aspect of the phenomenon of peer involvement in ADV. A total of 25 quantitative studies, 12 qualitative studies, and 2 studies using mixed methods with findings related to peer involvement in ADV were identified. A critical analysis of research methods in these studies will be presented.

Quantitative Research

Twenty-five quantitative studies were identified with findings related to peer involvement in ADV (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Avery-Leaf,

Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997; Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Black, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Weisz, 2008; Black & Weisz, 2003; Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995; Foshee, Linder, & Bauman, 1996; Foshee, Linder, MacDougall, & Bangdiwala, 2001; Gagne et al., 2005; Jackson, Cram, & Seymour, 2000; James, West, Deters, & Armijo, 2000; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Lehrer, Buka, Gortmaker, & Shrier, 2006; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Prospero, 2006a, 2006b; Ramisetty-Mikler, Goebert, Nishimura, & Caetano, 2006; Raviv, Sills, Raviv, & Wilansky, 2000; Reuterman & Burcky, 1989; Sears, Byers, & Price, 2007; Wang, Peterson, & Morpheys, 2007; Weisz, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Black, 2007). Studies originated from the USA (n=20), Canada (n=2), Finland (n=1), Israel (n=1), and New Zealand (n=1). The disciplinary affiliations of the first authors were psychology (n=11), public health (n=3), social work (n=4), sexology (n=1), community health (n=1), and sociology (n=1). Two studies were funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the authors of two studies did not identify their academic or professional discipline.

The 25 studies examined a wide variety of topics related to adolescent dating violence. They were selected for this literature review because they also reported findings pertinent to peer involvement in ADV. Some of the reports of peer involvement were brief while others offered more substantial insight about the phenomenon.

The primary purposes of the research studies were as follows. Four research groups compared parental and peer involvement to determine which was more salient for teens (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2007). Others looked at dating violence attitudes among general groups of

adolescents (James et al., 2000), as well as specific groups such as informal helpers (Weisz et al., 2007), males (Capaldi et al., 2001; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995), African Americans (Black & Weisz, 2003) and Asian/Hawaiians (Ramisetty-Mikler et al., 2006). Several research groups investigated patterns of abuse (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Foshee et al., 2001; Jackson et al., 2000; Reuterman & Burcky, 1989), risk factors (Lehrer et al., 2006; Sears et al., 2007), and prevention programs (Avery-Leaf et al., 1997; Foshee et al., 1996). Gagne et al. (2005) examined several mediators linked to the re-victimization of females, while Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) sought to uncover how female survivors of abuse construct social networks after the violence. Finally, Prospero (2006a, 2006b) conducted two studies that focused on the reaction to partner behaviors related to dating and aggression. Notably, three studies focused on the help-seeking (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Black et al., 2008) and help-offering behaviors (Raviv et al., 2000) of teens.

Peer involvement in ADV is relevant to both the dating couple and their peers. However, most of the studies were conducted from the point of view of the teen involved in the dating relationship or from a general population of teens, some of whom had never witnessed ADV. No study was identified that exclusively recruited participants who had witnessed ADV or been confided in by friends involved in dating violence.

All of the studies either used convenience samples or sub-samples from larger data sets. Five studies predominantly sampled Caucasian participants (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). Several specific ethnic or cultural groups were studied. Six research groups studied Latino (Prospero, 2006a, 2006b), African American (Black et al.,

2008; Weisz & Black, 2008), Asian/Hawaiian (Ramisetty-Mikler et al., 2006), and Jewish or Arab cohorts (Raviv et al., 2000).

Several researchers accessed large databases from nationally randomized samples to conduct secondary analyses. These included The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data (Lehrer et al., 2006), Oregon Youth Study (Capaldi et al., 2001), Safe Date Prevention Study data (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Foshee, 1996; Foshee et al., 2001), and a Canadian National Probability Survey (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995). James (2000) conducted a secondary analysis using 1996 Youth Dating Violence Survey data. Although data were originally collected on a large sample, James isolated the responses of 37 adolescents enrolled in an alternative high school program.

Male and female participants were recruited equally in the majority of studies. Women comprised the majority of participants in six studies (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Black & Weisz, 2003; Jackson et al., 2000; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Prospero, 2006b; Raviv et al., 2000) and were recruited exclusively in four studies (Gagne et al., 2005; Lehrer et al., 2006; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Reuterman & Burcky, 1989). Males represented the majority of participants in one study (Foshee et al., 2001).

Researchers who conducted the 25 studies collected data on a variety of age cohorts. Wang and colleagues (2007) recruited same-age groups, while other researchers recruited participants within a two-year-age range (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Avery-Leaf et al., 1997; Foshee et al., 2001), three-year-age range (Capaldi et al., 2001; Prospero, 2006a, 2006b; Sears et al., 2007), four-year-age range (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Black et al., 2008; Ramisetty-Mikler et al., 2006; Weisz et al.,

2007), five-year-age range (Jackson et al., 2000; James et al., 2000; Lehrer et al., 2006; Reuterman & Burcky, 1989; Sears et al., 2007) and six-year-age range (Foshee et al., 1996; Gagne et al., 2005; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Leadbeater et al., 2008). Other researchers did not report the actual ages of participants but reported average age or participants' grade level.

All researchers collected data via questionnaires. Prospero (2006a, 2006b) conducted focus groups to brainstorm about the concerns of teens and dating violence. Based on the focus group findings exemplar scenarios and corresponding surveys were created to reflect the concerns of the teens. The questionnaire was then administered to a large sample of respondents. The researchers asserted that teens were in the best position to relate distressing dating scenarios that would have the greatest relevance to the groups being surveyed.

In summary, the researchers conducting the 25 studies contributed to the understanding of ADV by recruiting large samples of teens. However, because the purpose of most of these studies was to explore some aspect of ADV rather than the peer involvement, questions remain as to the relationship between peer involvement and ADV.

Qualitative Research

Twelve qualitative studies were identified with findings directly related to peer involvement in adolescent dating violence (Adelman & Kil, 2007; Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Black & Weisz, 2004; Chung, 2007; Foshee, Bauman, Linder, Rice, & Wilcher, 2007; Gallopin & Leigh, 2009; Ismail, Berman, & Ward-Griffin, 2007; Johnson et al., 2005; Lavoie, Robitaille, & Herbert, 2000; Sears, Byers, Whelan, & Saint-Pierre,

2006; Weisz & Black, 2008). Studies originated from the USA (n=6), Canada (n=4), Australia (n=1), and New Zealand (n=1). Disciplines of the first author included social work (n=3), nursing (n=2), psychology (n=2), public health (n=2), and education (n=1). The discipline of the first author was not identified in two articles.

The purposes of the 12 qualitative studies were diverse. Three research teams explored how teens construct the meanings of relationships (Allen, 2004), dating and dating violence (Chung, 2007), and health and dating violence (Banister & Jakubec, 2004). Two investigators studied the attitudes regarding dating violence of Mexican American (Black & Weisz, 2004) and Canadian (Lavoie et al., 2000) adolescents. Two other research groups explored gender differences (Johnson et al., 2005; Sears et al., 2006). Several investigators examined the role and attitudes of peers (Adelman & Kil, 2007; Weisz & Black, 2008). Foshee et al. (2007) developed a typology of ADV perpetration. Teen perceptions of interactions with professionals after ADV was examined by Gallopin and Leigh (2009). Finally, Ismail and colleagues (2007) explored the relationship of ADV and health in search of mediating factors.

Investigators used purposive sampling and recruited participants from community or teen recreation centers (Allen, 2004; Black & Weisz, 2004; Chung, 2007; Ismail et al., 2007; Lavoie et al., 2000), churches (Black & Weisz, 2004), health clinics (Banister & Jakubec, 2004) and community agencies and advertisements (Ismail et al., 2007). Schools were frequently used as recruitment sites (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Chung, 2007; Lavoie et al., 2000; Weisz & Black, 2008) and included special schools for disadvantaged and adjudicated youth (Johnson et al., 2005). Sears (2006) asked teachers and guidance counselors to select students they thought would be comfortable in groups

and representative of their peers. Two research teams recruited participants from existing programs aiming to support teens and minimize ADV; namely the Safe Dates Prevention Program (Foshee et al., 2007) and Break The Cycle education and empowerment program (Gallopín & Leigh, 2009). Finally, two research teams described snowball techniques for recruitment (Adelman & Kil; Ismail et al., 2007).

The majority of researchers collected data from focus groups (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Black & Weisz, 2004; Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Lavoie et al., 2000; Sears et al., 2006). Weisz and Black (2008) collected data as hand-written narratives while others utilized one-on-one interviews (Chung, 2007; Foshee et al., 2007; Ismail et al., 2007). Adelman and colleagues (2007) combined focus groups, written responses, and observation to collect data.

Sample sizes varied among the studies. Researchers utilizing focus groups convened samples ranging between 24 to 120 participants distributed between 4 to 26 focus groups (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Black & Weisz, 2004; Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Lavoie et al., 2000; Sears et al., 2006). Sample sizes of studies with one-on-one interviews ranged from 11 to 116 (Chung, 2007; Foshee et al., 2007; Ismail et al., 2007). Researchers who collected written narratives had sample sizes of 92 (Adelman & Kil, 2007) and 202 (Weisz & Black, 2008).

Most of the researchers recruited more female participants than males (Adelman & Kil, 2007; Black & Weisz, 2004; Foshee et al., 2007; Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Lavoie et al., 2000; Weisz & Black, 2008) although two did not describe the proportion of male and female participants (Allen, 2004; Sears et al., 2006). Females

were recruited exclusively in three studies (Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Chung, 2007; Ismail et al., 2007).

Four research teams did not report the actual ages of participants but reported a median age (Black & Weisz, 2004; Weisz & Black, 2008), or grade level (Foshee et al., 2007; Sears et al., 2006). Of those who did report the age range, participants were described as being two-years apart (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004), five-years apart (Chung, 2007), six-years apart (Lavoie et al., 2000), seven-years apart (Ismail et al., 2007), and nine-years apart (Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005). Adelman (2007) did not reveal the age of participants.

Several methods of data analysis were used. With the exception of four studies in which the researchers did not provide enough detail about analysis (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Chung, 2007; Ismail et al., 2007) all of the researchers utilized research teams to analyze data.

Research teams used grounded theory (Black & Weisz, 2004), ethnography (Adelman & Kil, 2007), and narrative analysis (Ismail et al., 2007). Johnson and colleagues (2005) combined grounded theory with ethnography. Although Weisz and Black (2008) did not develop a grounded theory, they used grounded theory methods to create categories for a qualitative descriptive study. They expressed concerns that relying on a priori categories can limit the fidelity of the phenomenon particularly when literature support is lacking. Other research teams described data analysis in more general terms but did not subscribe to a particular qualitative method (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Chung, 2007; Foshee et al., 2007; Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Lavoie et al., 2000; Sears et al., 2006).

In summary, the 12 qualitative studies offered significant contributions to the phenomenon of ADV. However, they did not offer a comprehensive account of peer involvement in ADV. Although Adelman and Kil (2007) investigated the role of friends in dating conflicts, they focused primarily on the negative interactions of adolescents and their peers and largely excluded constructive relationships. Weisz and Black (2008) sought to understand peer views regarding ADV. Their study limited the scope of inquiry to peer reactions to ADV and did not examine the contributing role that peers can have in ADV.

Mixed Methods

Investigators of two studies utilized mixed methods to explore dating violence (Ocampo, Shelley, & Jaycox, 2007; Rayburn et al., 2007). Both studies were funded by the CDC, conducted in the USA, and were focused on Latino adolescents.

Ocampo and colleagues (2007) conducted longitudinal research on 1,655 Latino adolescents to evaluate dating and dating violence attitudes and help-seeking behaviors. Male and female participants were represented equally and the average age was 14.53 years. Data were collected via questionnaires. Focus groups were conducted to validate that the interpretation of the surveys conveyed an accurate understanding of the key concepts related to dating and violence.

Rayburn and colleagues (2007) surveyed 41 Latino adolescents to examine their reactions to dating violence. Male participants outnumbered female by nearly 2:1. The average age of participants was 14.68 years. Participants were instructed to listen to audio-taped stories depicting dating violence scenarios after which focus groups were conducted. Participants were encouraged to openly discuss their reactions to the

scenarios. Discussions were audio-taped for analysis. By using audio-taped scenarios and data collection methods, the focus groups were able to function independently without an on-site facilitator. The researchers were concerned that the presence of a facilitator might interfere with the group members' candor. Data collected from focus groups were coded for statistical analysis using a within-subjects experimental design.

In summary, these two investigations are limited to Latino cohorts. Even though they contribute to the overall knowledge of ADV among Latinos, this is a homogeneous group with strong cultural influences. Findings from these studies could not be applied to a heterogeneous group of adolescents.

Review of the Findings

The 39 studies described above yielded findings about peer relationships and adolescent dating violence that clustered in three major topics. These include (a) the culture of adolescent dating, (b) interference by peers in the dating relationship, and (c) peers as confidant.

Findings will be synthesized across studies. Limitations of the studies will be discussed with the review of specific findings. Global limitations that represent multiple research designs and methodologies will be discussed at the conclusion of the review of findings. A discussion about the gaps in the literature will be presented at the end of this chapter.

The Effect of Adolescent Culture on Dating

Major findings of several studies demonstrated an adolescent subculture that provides the foundation for the experience of adolescent dating. Morris (1996) portrayed adolescents as a faction existing within the general society. He proposed that "subcultures

have their own norms, values, and rituals, which may or may not be similar to those of the dominant culture” (p. 568).

Teens are sensitive to how they are perceived by peers and develop an overwhelming need to be socially accepted. Therefore, peers’ beliefs and attitudes about dating are foundational to the development of shared norms, values, and rituals guiding adolescent dating. Findings from the studies reviewed indicate that the effect of adolescent culture on dating can be categorized in four areas: (a) gender-based stereotypes, (b) dating attitudes and behaviors, (c) motives for dating and violence, and (d) parental versus peer involvements.

Gender-based stereotypes. A number of research articles presented findings about adolescent cultural beliefs in which dating is couched in traditional gender-based stereotypes. The socialization of boys and girls generates expectations of how each should behave in dating relationships. Males are expected to be in control and behave with “macho,” whereas, girls are taught to be sensitive, emotional and nurturing (Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Jackson et al., 2000).

For example, the manner in which males talk about females within the context of dating is sometimes harsh, demeaning, and hostile (Capaldi et al., 2001). In an investigation conducted by DeKeseredy and Kelly (1995) of older adolescent and young adult male behavior, peer attitudes were an important predictor of male sexual aggression towards females. Specifically, attachment to abusive peers and the advice given by peers about sexual, physical, and psychological assaults were correlated with sexual abuse. The report depicted a male culture that can be misogynistic. Male domains such as

fraternities, bars and athletic clubs provide a venue for the indoctrination of gender stereotypes that condone violence as a means of preserving male dominance.

Similarly, Sears et al. (2007) assert that male socialization teaches boys to pursue sexual conquests with vigor. Males are expected to demonstrate sexual prowess not to accept rejection, and pursue females more aggressively. Intensification of the pursuit, especially in the absence of sexual maturity and experience, can cause boys to become too forceful and commit sexual abuse. In some instances males view the event not as abusive but as a necessary consequence of sexual triumph. Sears et al. (2007) explain that hearing similar stories of the sexual pursuits of peers adds credence to beliefs that it might be necessary for dating to become aggressive.

In contrast, adolescent females are socialized to nurture (Banister & Jakubec, 2004). The tendency to nurture may lead females to put the needs of their boyfriends and their relationships before their own needs. Therefore, girls are more apt than boys to invest a significant amount of time, effort, and emotion into maintaining the relationship and may have more difficulty accepting a failed relationship. Because girls tend to invest more into dating relationships, they are often more vulnerable to abuse. Ismail and colleagues (2007) suggested that for girls, nurturing can take the form of submission so that their male partner appears strong, powerful and in control.

Findings by Sears et al. (2006) however, indicate that gender stereotypes among adolescents may be undergoing changes. They found that girls use more psychological aggression on boys because they seek control of the dating relationship. Sears and colleagues (2006) suggest that modern women are expected to provide for themselves rather than assume the role of the submissive female. Likewise, today's boys resort to

psychological aggression as a means to maintain control if they feel physical aggression is unacceptable. Although this dynamic was not identified in any other study reviewed, it provides an interesting insight into contemporary adolescence and the impact of gender equality.

While there is some evidence that gender stereotypes might be changing for adolescents, at least one study suggested that traditional gender stereotypes persist for male and female teens from Mexican American backgrounds. Black and Weisz (2004) interviewed 30 youth who were of Mexican American culture. Both male and female participants held traditional beliefs about the strong man/weak woman stereotype. Males expressed concerns that women, who were weaker, could be harmed by stronger men. Females were concerned about being harmed by stronger men. Furthermore, both males and females blamed the female for the abuse; males blamed females for not doing as the man instructed and females blamed other females for allowing men get away with the abuse.

Adherence to gender stereotypes has also been linked to associations with peers who are involved with violent dating relationships. Sears et al. (2007) surveyed 633 adolescent boys and girls, and found that boys who held traditional gender views were more accepting of a male's use of psychological, physical, and sexual perpetration. In addition, the respondents associated with peers who had similar aggressive experiences within their own relationships. Similar outcomes were found for females. Girls who were in higher grades at school were more accepting of female psychological and physical perpetration and had peers whom they saw as physically and sexually abusive in their own dating relationships.

Dating attitudes and behaviors. Research indicates that males and females expressed different attitudes and behaviors regarding adolescent dating relationships. Furthermore, these attitudes and behaviors were shown to be related to peer attitudes and behaviors. Several investigators proposed that males were less troubled about violence and may even condone violence among their friends. Weisz and associates (2007) queried 197 adolescents to investigate help-seeking patterns of teens after experiencing dating violence. Investigators found that peers minimized abuse imposed against males and were less likely to minimize abuse against a female. They speculated that this is likely due to the fact that boys expressed less distress about the violence. Not only do boys appear to be less distressed about dating violence, but according to Prospero (2006b) they are also more likely to respond to aggression with more aggression. Focus groups attended by male and female adolescents revealed mixed opinions about male attitudes towards violence. While some members shared stories about male peer groups who condoned sexual violence, others argued that males sometimes overlooked violence perpetrated by friends in order to avoid confrontation, which could be misinterpreted as actively supporting it (Lavoie et al., 2000).

Some teens believe that violence perpetrated by females is inconsequential. Reports indicate that younger females commit mild, moderate, and severe violence more often than males, even after controlling for self-defense. However, because females are smaller and weaker, many believe they cannot inflict as much harm on the male and, therefore, minimize the impact of the violence (Foshee et al., 2001; Sears et al., 2006) . Similarly, because females are regarded as the weaker sex, boys who are victimized frequently face ridicule from friends about having been beaten by a girl (Rayburn et al.,

2007). Sears and colleagues (2006) refer to this as a double standard that allows females to get away with abusive behaviors while males face sanctions for similar actions.

Several researchers discussed the degree to which parents and peers influenced adolescent dating attitudes. Wang, Peterson, and Morphey (2007) found that adolescents maintained close connections with parents and peers but that each has influence over different aspects of the adolescents' lives. Peers held more influence over clothing, hairstyle, and music preferences. Parents were more influential about academics, sexual activity, and substance use. The authors caution, however, that the sample consisted of young adolescents (mean age = 12.5 years) which might account for their strong guidance from parents.

In general adolescents appear to befriend other teens who share similar attitudes about dating violence. Arriaga and Foshee (2004) conducted longitudinal research of 526 rural adolescents and revealed that victimized boys befriended other males who had also been victimized. The selection of aggressive friends did not appear to influence the participants' own violent tendencies. Rather, aggressive friends were selected after their own victimization, most likely to find other males with similar experiences. In contrast, females who established friendships with girls who had previously been victimized increased their own risk of becoming victimized.

Several researchers have found that the risk of dating violence increased for females who had friends with violent dating experiences. Ramisetty-Mikler et al. (2006) studied teens from Asian/Pacific Island and Native Hawaiian cultures and found that girls who engaged in sexual activity at a young age tended to have friends who made similar decisions. These girls, in turn, had a greater risk of being victimized. Gagne, Lavoie, and

Hebert (2005) reported that girls involved with violent friends are nearly two times more likely to be victims themselves. Arriaga and Foshee (2004) speculated that girls might seek experiences similar to their friends in order to be socially accepted.

Female behavioral patterns of violence change with age. Bjorkqvist et al. (1992) tracked the trends of violence for male and female youth in Finland. They investigated three cohorts of preadolescent and adolescent youth, ages 8, 11, and 15. Although male tendencies towards physical violence were consistent throughout adolescence, female patterns of violence shifted from direct (e.g., physical and verbal) to indirect (e.g., relational) forms of abuse. Relational abuse was described as abusive actions that targeted the social standing of the victim (e.g., damaging reputations). Because data were collected on three cross-sectional cohorts, it was hard to determine which mediators might have also impacted developing attitudes.

Motivations for dating and dating violence. Some research described the motivations that underlie violent and non-violent dating behaviors. The primary motivation for both types of dating behavior is the adolescent's need to be accepted by their peers.

For girls the dating experience can be a source of connection. Boyfriends, dating, and relationships are a large part of what girls talk about and they are more likely than boys to discuss the pressures of dating (Allen, 2004; Chung, 2007; Ismail et al., 2007). Without a personal dating experience, girls can be perceived as having little in common with the group and can be ostracized (Chung, 2007). The intense need to be socially accepted by peers can motivate girls to become romantically involved before they feel ready (Ismail et al., 2007).

The pressure to conform can be so strong that girls choose to stay in violent relationships. The perceived need to have a boyfriend can cause girls to tolerate relationship violence rather than risk peer rejection or being alone (Ismail et al., 2007; Lavoie et al., 2000). Teen girls often decide not to disclose violence in order to preserve the myth that the relationship is good. Isolation can result (Chung, 2007).

Boys may benefit by engaging in violent behaviors. According to Sears et al. (2006), boys use violence as a way to maintain control of their relationships and improve their social status. Johnson and colleagues (2005) found that partner violence enhances the male self-esteem and sense of power.

Several reports indicated that exposure to family violence contributes to dating violence during adolescence, particularly for males (Gagne et al., 2005; Ismail et al., 2007; Ocampo et al., 2007). Kinsfogel and Grych (2004) reported conflicting findings for females. They sampled 391 adolescents and found that conflicts between parents did not influence female behaviors towards dating partners. However, they did find that family violence influenced boys. Boys who were exposed to parental aggression viewed dating aggression as an acceptable way to conduct relationships. The researchers asserted that viewing aggression as justified changes it from an immoral act to an acceptable form of conflict and allows for innate impulses associated with anger to be expressed.

In summary, viewing adolescents as a subculture within a larger, more dominant society offers a lens through which teen dating violence can be explored. Traditional gender stereotypes tend to influence the attitudes and motives of adolescents. The role of the peer is central to how adolescents view teen dating relationships and dating violence.

Interference by Peers in Dating Relationships

The literature indicates that peers often interfere in dating relationships. Peer involvement in dating relationships can be intentional or unintentional depending on whether or not the peer knowingly participates in the conflict and realizes the ramifications. Specific forms of interference cited in the literature include jealousy, isolation, control, and the objectification of peers.

Jealousy can occur between dating partners through intentional or unintentional actions. James et al. (2000) reported that three-fourths of the 37 adolescents interviewed claimed that a partner did something to provoke jealousy. Lavoie et al. (2000) described situations where adolescents used manipulation, control, and harassment to cause jealousy. Johnson and associates (2005) queried urban adolescents about dating violence and found that both males and females cited jealousy as the cause of dating violence.

Any opposite-sex relationship can induce conflict. Adelman and Kil (2007) collected narratives from adolescents who described platonic, opposite-sex friendships as a source of jealousy. Childhood friendships can be threatening to dating partners during adolescence and worries that the friendship is sexual can cause conflict. Confrontations and ultimatums to dissolve the friendship can force a teen to either choose between the dating partner and friend or remain secretive about the friendship.

Jealousy between same-sex peers is common as peers vie to secure a desirable dating partner. Such jealousy is more prevalent among girls. Adolescent girls can be resentful of a peer who achieved an elevated status because of her association with a socially-valued male. According to Adelman and Kil (2007), this form of jealousy leads to relational abuse through gossiping, name calling, and marginalization of the resented

girl. Rumors can cause others to question the girl's association with the sought-after male. Even though this form of abuse does not occur directly between the dating couple, it can cause stress that leads to conflicts between the couple.

Isolation is another common form of peer interference in adolescent dating. Isolation is described in the literature in terms of (a) specific strategies used to isolate the partner, (b) female vulnerability to isolation tactics, and (c) the cyclical nature of isolation. Research conducted by James et al. (2000) provided insight into the role of isolation in dating violence. Although a small sample ($n=37$) was queried, the researchers reported that half of the respondents experienced romantic relationships where partners forbade them to socialize with peers or to talk to members of the opposite sex. Other researchers collected similar descriptions from teens. Specifically, isolation was an effective method of controlling infidelity and friends who were a bad influence (Chung, 2007; Ismail et al., 2007). Leadbeater et al. (2008) indicated that relationships can be further complicated when isolation is used to manipulate a dating partner to assume fault for conflict in the relationship.

Females are vulnerable to isolation for two reasons. First, isolation is easily misinterpreted as proof of their partners' love for them (Lavoie et al., 2000; Ocampo et al., 2007). Second, girls are socialized to nurture, compelling them to put another's needs before their own (Banister & Jakubec, 2004). According to Banister and Jakubec (2004), if a male wants his girlfriend to distance herself from friends, she might comply for the sake of the relationship. Challenging her boyfriend's request can jeopardize the relationship. Respondents from a study conducted by Ismail et al. (2007) described similar scenarios where girls' devotion to their boyfriends isolated them because they

chose their boyfriend over their friends. Chung's (2007) research indicates that girls sense the disapproval of friends who challenge their commitments to the friendship and feel less obliged to confide in these friends in the future. In the end, a cycle of isolation is created where friends become angry about rejection and isolated girls become more isolated by their choice to stay in their relationship with their boyfriends.

A final source of conflict occurs when a third-party peer is used by one of the dating partners to cause jealousy, embarrassment, or anger. This type of interference is unique because the peer member is neither aware of, nor an active participant in, the conflict. Several researchers presented evidence of peers being used to mistreat a dating partner. Lavoie and colleagues (2000) indicated that females were more likely than males to experience a damaged reputation due to disparaging remarks. Similarly, James and associates (2000) found that 64% of the 37 adolescents surveyed claimed that a dating partner insulted them in front of others. Leadbeater et al. (2008) found that flirting in front of a dating partner or the partner's friends was used to elicit jealousy.

In summary, peers have the ability to inflict negative consequences on the dating relationship by using social and relational aggression such as gossiping, flirting, or spreading rumors. Conversely, peers can also be drawn into dating conflicts unknowingly or unwillingly when one partner uses them to elicit jealousy or other negative reactions.

Peers as Confidants

The most substantial body of research relating to peer involvement in adolescent dating violence dealt with the role of peers as confidants. Most research was from the perspective of adolescents involved in a violent dating relationship who reflected on the role of their peers. Limited research was conducted on peers who responded to

hypothetical incidents of ADV. No study was conducted exclusively from the point of view of peers who witnessed actual violence. Major research findings relating to the role of peers as confidants are categorized as (a) the dating partners' decision to tell peers about the violence, (b) deciding which peers they should tell, (c) peer responses to being told, and (d) outcomes of telling or being told.

Deciding whether or not to tell. Before victims decide that they need assistance to deal with violent dating relationships, they must view them as abusive. An adolescent might be reluctant to view an event or relationship as violent if peers who determine social norms do not view it that way. Sears et al. (2006) conducted 26 focus groups and found that males and females interpreted the context of abuse differently. Boys considered the intent of abusive actions and girls considered the outcomes of abuse. According to members of the focus group, jealousy is only harmful if combined with the threat of physical harm; otherwise it could convey a sense of caring. During semi-structured interviews conducted by Johnson et al. (2005), one adolescent male confided that he did not consider an action to be physically violent unless it left bruises. Equating violence with love has been discussed by several researchers. Some adolescents have mistaken jealousy and violence as acts of true love (Ismail et al., 2007; Ocampo et al., 2007). Others believe that a girl should tolerate some abuse if she really loves her partner (Johnson et al., 2005).

Many victims of adolescent dating violence choose to keep the abuse private for various reasons. Reports indicated that teens are concerned about the ramifications of others finding out. Findings extracted from several studies indicated a number of concerns related to how others will respond to knowledge of violence. Specific concerns

include becoming the source of gossip (Lavoie et al., 2000) and feeling embarrassment (Gallopín & Leigh, 2009; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Sears et al., 2006) shame (Ismail et al., 2007) or stigma related to victimization (Avery-Leaf et al., 1997). Findings by Johnson et al. (2005) point to fear of retaliation as another reason for hiding the violence and staying in a relationship. Some adolescents described concealing or minimizing violence in order to protect their abuser from negative consequences (Lavoie et al., 2000).

Male victims of dating violence may not talk about the violence because they either do not view violence as a problem (Jackson et al., 2000) or they fear reprisals and teasing from friends for being victimized by a girl (Ocampo et al., 2007). Rayburn et al. (2007) found that victimized boys were ridiculed by peers who viewed them as weak. Avery-Leaf et al. (1997) found that victimization was more stigmatizing for males than for females. However, they acknowledged that other factors could contribute to the differences between males and females and called for further research.

Conflicting findings about male reactions to dating violence have been reported. Jackson, Cram, and Seymore (2000) conducted a study with 373 high school students from New Zealand and found that males were less likely to talk to anyone regardless of the type of violence experienced and seemed less bothered by violent events. These findings were contradicted by Ashley and Foshee (2005) who found that male perpetrators were more likely to seek professional help than their female counterparts. One limitation of Jackson et al.'s (2000) study was that data were collected on both victims and perpetrators. Because distinctions were not made during the analysis there is no way to know what differences exist between the perpetrators' and victims emotional consequences of confiding.

Certain situations have been shown to be more likely to warrant talking with someone than others. Black et al. (2008) found that girls were more likely to discuss their abuse if the incident had been witnessed by a friend, there was physical evidence of abuse, or if it was associated with intense emotions such as jealousy or anger. Somewhat different findings were reported by Jackson et al. (2000) who found that teens were less likely to talk to friends about sexual coercion or physical violence.

Deciding who to tell. Adolescents who decide to discuss their ADV situation with someone must decide who to tell. Mahlstedt and Kenny (1993) found that adolescents seek someone who is nonjudgmental, supportive, and reassuring. Weisz and associates (2007) found that female victims chose confidants who offered the greatest likelihood of nurturance. Some female victims of abuse have sought mentorship from other women who have also been victimized (Banister & Jakubec, 2004).

Research showed that adolescents preferred not to disclose violence to family members. They were reluctant to tell their parents about victimization due to a concern that parents might not believe them or worsen the situation by over reacting (Black et al., 2008; Ocampo et al., 2007). Some said they might test their parents' reaction first by seeking advice about a hypothetical friend (Gallopín & Leigh, 2009). Mahlstedt and Kenny (1993) reported that family members' responses to violence adhered closely with stereotypical roles; mothers were nurturing and fathers were removed from the situation.

Exceptions have been found among cohorts of teens from African American and Latino American descent. Black and Weisz (2003) found that teens who were African American were more comfortable talking to family members about violence than were their Caucasian counterparts. Whether these findings were due to racial variations or

confounding variables is unclear. The sample was comprised of seventh grade students. The researchers found that young adolescents were more inclined to confide in parents than older adolescents. Ocampo and colleagues (2007) found that many boys with Latino backgrounds preferred to seek help from parents fearing that friends would torment them about being victimized by a girl. A smaller proportion of males and females in the study were concerned that parents would not be able to relate to their situation.

Few adolescents chose to report violence to professionals (Jackson et al., 2000; Raviv et al., 2000), including teachers, counselors, social workers, police. Gallopini and Leigh (2009) conducted focus groups with adolescent teens and found they were distrusting of professionals who they viewed as incompetent. Specifically, adolescents feared that professionals would (a) activate the legal system, (b) fail to stop the violence, and (c) blame the victim for the abuse. These findings were supported by Ashley and Foshee (2005) whose sample believed that turning to professionals for help can lead to victim blaming and jeopardize confidentiality. Findings indicated that adolescents would not divulge their own violence to professionals, and were unlikely to report friends' violence, as to do so would be disloyal.

Several investigators reported that adolescents preferred to confide in friends about violence. Adolescents contend that friends have a better understanding of what it is to be a teen (Weisz et al., 2007) and are more likely to keep the details of the violence confidential (Jackson et al., 2000). Females interviewed by Mahlstedt and Kenny (1993) felt that friends understood more about their lives than their parents. Teens tend to develop intimate peer relationships and confide other personal events to friends over time, enabling the teens to predict how their friends might react to disclosures about

violence. This might partially explain findings by Weisz et al. (2007) that adolescents frequently confide in friends whom they believe will be most nurturing. In addition to selecting the most nurturing friend, some teens shape their stories about dating violence in ways that would secure a desirable response by friends.

Peer responses to being told. Several factors influence how peers respond to being told about ADV and whether or not they will intervene. First, teens must view the ADV events as requiring intervention. Several reports indicate that teens view dating violence as unacceptable in most situations. However, there are a few situations in which teens consider violence to be justified. Lavoie et al. (2000) conducted focus groups with teens and found that violence arising out of frustration or self-defense was more understandable than other causes of violence. Males acknowledged accepting violence used to defend family members. Females in these same focus groups indicated that aggressiveness that comes from “playing around” is acceptable as long as it does not go too far (Gallopín & Leigh, 2009). In a study conducted by Foshee et al. (2007) adolescent girls revealed that violence could be viewed as an appropriate response to a boyfriend’s infidelity or disrespect displayed in front of peers. Findings by Black and Weisz (2004) revealed that violence is viewed as an acceptable form of retaliation for jealousy and infidelity. Males told stories about perpetrating retaliatory abuse, while females focused on being hurt if their boyfriend retaliated against them. Rayburn (2007) found that Latino teens had more sympathy and were more tolerant of violence perpetrated by females than males. This was supported by Black and Weisz (2004) who observed that males from Mexican American culture were unconcerned about pain and injuries females could inflict.

Two factors influencing how peers responded to learning about a couple's violence were identified: (a) whether they were friends or strangers with the victim and/or perpetrator, and (b) the reputation of the offender and his/her friends.

Black and Weisz (2004) found that peers were often uncertain about getting involved in friends' dating violence. Teens were presented hypothetical situations about witnessing dating violence and were asked to speculate about their responses. The opinions of teens depended on whether or not they knew the parties involved. In general, they would help if the girl was a friend but they would not if they did not know her. Also, they were unlikely to intervene with the couple if both partners were strangers.

Other studies revealed that although many teens desire not to get involved with the relationship, they feel obligated to do so. Gallopini and Leigh (2009) reported that adolescents thought it was unethical to ignore a friend in an abusive situation although they did not apply this ethical principle to strangers. Lavoie and colleagues (2000) reported that although males might not condone violence, they may choose to overlook it for the sake of friendship and to avoid confrontation. This was particularly true for younger males. Ocampo et al. (2007) found that many Latino males would reluctantly take some sort of action against a perpetrator.

Teens in a number of studies indicated that they had concerns about intervening on behalf of friends. First, peers can become conflicted about the need to take sides if both dating partners are friends, particularly if the peers feel greater loyalty to the perpetrator (Rayburn et al., 2007). Second, confrontation can jeopardize friendships if peers are forced to challenge another member of the social group (Rayburn et al., 2007). Third, teens may fear retaliation if they are forced to side against one partner (Weisz &

Black, 2008). Finally, some teens were concerned about being misled by falsehoods or exaggerations about the alleged perpetrator by individuals who wanted to damage their reputation (Ocampo et al., 2007).

Reports indicated that teens are wary of getting personally involved in abusive situations involving strangers. Rayburn et al. (2007) found that adolescents who were of Latino backgrounds were more likely to call the police rather than to intervene themselves if they did not know the offender. Black and Weisz (2004) found that males from Mexican American heritage did not feel obliged to help a stranger. The researchers speculated that bystanders who witness violence can easily minimize its seriousness and lessen the burden of not helping when strangers are involved. Not knowing the participants makes it easier to imagine that the violence was provoked. Teens in several studies considered the reputation of the offender and their friends before getting involved. Offenders with violent reputations or with violent friends can cause concern for the peers who are considering getting involved in the conflict (Ocampo et al., 2007; Weisz & Black, 2008). Many adolescents have no frame of reference for this type of violence and worry that the abuse might have consequences for them. Developmentally, adolescents are egocentric and think that they are at the center of attention (Elkind, 1967). Therefore, adolescents can interpret violence towards someone else as having consequences for themselves.

The literature describes avoidance and minimization as the two most common responses of adolescents who are reluctant to deal with violence. Weisz and colleagues (2007) conducted research that assessed patterns of help-seeking behaviors among 224 Midwestern high school students. Friend/helper responses varied based on the severity of

violence. Peers were likely to provide nurturance for the least severe violence and avoidance for the most severe forms. Victims used avoidance after exposure to severe violence fearing that friends may be harmed through retaliation if they became involved. By not apprising friends of the situation, victims could protect them from becoming involved with the violent offender. Moreover, friends used avoidance if they felt overwhelmed with the details of the situation.

Peers who get involved with a friend's violence provide constructive or harmful interventions. The most frequent constructive form of peer intervention identified in the literature was nurturance. According to Weisz et al. (2007) females received more nurturing after victimization than did their male counterparts. They speculated that this may reflect a social tendency to minimize male victimization. Harmful interventions include encouragement to continue in an abusive relationship either because violence is viewed as an expression of love (Ocampo et al., 2007) or because avoiding a break-up serves the best interest of the peer group. Lavoie et al. (2000) suggested that maintaining the relationship is easier than allowing conflict to cause a schism within the group.

Outcomes of telling or being told about violence. There are few findings in the literature that discuss the outcomes of peer interventions in adolescent dating violence. Responses are categorized as having positive and negative consequences.

Positive outcomes are experienced when the teen involved in dating violence receives emotional support, mentorship, nurturance and acceptance (Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Jackson et al., 2000; Ocampo et al., 2007; Weisz et al., 2007). Acceptance from others after divulging violence can reverse the isolation and self-blame that many victims experience during and after an abusive relationship. Ismail et al. (2007) conducted focus

groups with teenage girls who reported that sharing stories with each other was supportive and that they found comfort in knowing that they were not alone.

Receiving support and positive regard from friends does not ensure that adolescents will end the abusive relationship. Jackson, Cram and Seymour (2000) confirmed that most students involved in sexual coercion felt better after talking with someone about their abuse, but few actually ended the relationship. In contrast, those who did not confide in another were more likely to end the relationships. Moreover, 40% of females and 18% of males felt that the situation had been resolved after talking with someone and did not feel the need to address the violence further.

In summary, the decision to tell someone about abuse usually entails deliberation about the expectations, concerns, and possible consequences of taking action. Research indicates that adolescents prefer to turn to friends after experiencing dating violence. Unfortunately, friends are the least experienced to handle problems of this magnitude and may not be faring well in their own dating relationships. Peer reactions include minimization, avoidance, or efforts not to get involved. Reactions rarely include guiding the teen towards adult resources or helping them to follow through with ending the relationship.

Limitations

Several limitations emerged from the literature review. Limitations are related to methodology and conceptual clarity.

Methodological limitations include issues with sampling, design, and data collection. Several studies used convenience sampling (Allen, 2004; Banister & Jakubec, 2004; Black et al., 2008; Leadbeater et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2007; Weisz & Black,

2008), cross-sectional designs, (Gagne et al., 2005; Prospero, 2006a; Wang et al.; Weisz & Black), had gender bias (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Lavoie et al., 2000; Leadbeater et al.; Mahlstedt & Keeny; Ocampo et al., 2007; Prospero, 2006a, 2006b; Rayburn et al., 2007), or ethnic bias (Black & Weisz, 2004; Gagne et al.; Leadbeater et al.; Mahlstedt & Keeny; Prospero, 2006a, 2006b; Sears et al., 2006; Weisz & Black) all of which limit generalizability (Knapp, 1998).

Other sampling problems included lack of power analysis. Several authors reported small sample sizes as a limitation, but did not report the results of power analyses. Therefore, it cannot be determined how limiting the sample sizes were (Black et al., 2008; Rayburn et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2007; Weisz et al., 2007).

None of the studies were conducted with instruments that focused exclusively on peer involvement in adolescent dating violence. Instead, questionnaires collected limited information about peers via one or two additional questions added to larger, comprehensive surveys about a number of adolescent issues.

Reporting on sensitive information can make participants selective about the information they share. What they remember and what they chose to divulge provide opportunities for events to be under- or over-reported (Ashley & Foshee, 2005). Focus groups take place in public settings that can discourage members from discussing sensitive topics (Sears et al., 2006). This is particularly problematic if the focus group is comprised of peers known to each other as they may be less candid due to fears that they will be rejected by others. Furthermore, adolescents have been shown to be reluctant to disclose their violent experience to peers. Thus the use of focus groups to learn about

dating violence experiences may be problematic. Those who do disclose within the group setting may have unique characteristics

Researchers in several studies asked teens to describe how they would handle hypothetical situations (Prospero, 2006a, 2006b; Rayburn et al., 2007). Hypothetical situations sometimes yield unreliable results and overstated intentions. For example, Raviv et al. (2000) found that teens were more likely to advise friends to contact professional help than they were to do so themselves in real life .

Dating violence has not been universally defined. Without conceptual clarity dating violence incidents can have widely fluctuating criteria. The studies that were reviewed investigated combinations of physical, sexual, psychological, or relational violence. The types of violence which are examined in a study will affect the likelihood that participants will have experienced violence. Thus, definitional issues affect reported prevalence rates. Disparity about definition of dating violence and inclusion criteria makes synthesizing data across multiple studies difficult.

Gaps in Knowledge

The literature review shows that the current body of knowledge related to peer involvement in ADV is limited. A detailed understanding of how peers are involved needs to be delineated through research.

We do know that peers have a significant influence on each others' lives and affect the process of dating and dating violence in positive and negative ways. But research has not delineated the specific ways that peers are involved under unique circumstances. For example, peers can participate in the dating conflict either knowingly as active participants or unknowingly through flirtation and objectification. Although

several studies have reported on some aspect of peer involvement, none were identified that specifically addressed this phenomenon. Little is known about how peers are involved in dating violence and its management. This study will contribute to the current body of knowledge by describing the social processes of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence.

By collecting narratives from those involved in the process of dating and dating violence, this phenomenon can be viewed through the social and cultural lenses of adolescents (Leadbeater et al., 2008). Also, since the rules of adolescent dating behaviors are formed by the teens themselves, grounded theory research, which seeks to describe social processes, is a good fit for examining this phenomena.

Currently, few qualitative studies describe peer involvement in ADV. An investigation using grounded theory methods will contribute to the current understanding of the role that peers have in adolescent dating violence by giving teens an opportunity to describe their experiences in their own words.

Improving the health and well-being of all members of society is the foundation of nursing. Adolescents are a critical segment of society and are often viewed as vulnerable because of their age and inexperience. By developing a better understanding of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence, those who develop and enact prevention programs will be better informed about how peer involvement might enhance or hinder prevention efforts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study used grounded theory methods to develop a theoretical framework that described and explained the role of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence. It addressed the research questions: (a) In what ways do peers influence adolescent dating patterns and experiences? and (b) How do peers influence the management of dating violence? The specific aims of this study were:

1. To describe the qualities of the peer relationships of adolescents who experience dating violence.
2. To determine the roles of peers on the social processes of how teens manage adolescent dating violence.
3. To determine any gender difference between how peer relationships of males and females affect adolescent dating relationships and the management of ADV.

Origins of Grounded Theory Methods

Traditionally, quantitative methods have been popular among researchers because they deal with quantifiable and testable theories. Trends towards quantitative research were largely due to the positivist philosophical stance that sought to identify a single reality, that was identifiable only if the right questions were pursued in the right way (Charmaz, 2006). The ontological assumption of a single reality was problematic for social scientists who contend that the human experience consists of multiple realities that could not always be understood through reductionist methods (Angen, 2000).

In general, qualitative methods offer a different approach for the examination of the human experience. Whereas empirical science concerns itself with the demarcation of true from false as illustrated by the rejection of the null hypothesis, qualitative inquiry seeks an understanding of various constructed realities as seen through the eyes of those involved (Miller & Fredericks, 1990).

One source of contention comes from disagreement about the nature of truth. Researchers are consumed with the search for truth, but disagree about its meaning and origin. Within the constructivist paradigm, a static truth is not obtainable because there is not a single reality. Rather reality is constructed by each individual and, therefore, 'truth' is subjective and unique. The subjectivity of the human experience makes data and analysis fluid and exclusive (Charmaz, 2006). To qualitative researchers, truth is revealed through the social constructions of experience and process (Angen, 2000).

Glaser and Strauss sought to address this disparity for social sciences by moving away from a logico-deductive measurement and towards an interpretive approach with expanded capabilities to describe, explain, and predict phenomena (Charmaz, 2006). An interpretive approach allows the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be human (Angen, 2000).

The intent of Glaser and Strauss was not to make qualitative and quantitative approaches antagonistic with one another (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Many qualitative scholars acknowledge opportunities for a complementary relationship to exist between the two methods by expounding on the expansion of qualitative theory through quantitative measurement (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is possible for theory to originate

by grounded theory methods and be further validated or expanded by empirical means (Miller & Fredericks, 1990) .

Grounded Theory Methods

Grounded theory is both a methodology and theoretical end-product of research. It is a mature qualitative method that strives to uncover the process or trajectory of a phenomenon. In this method, the researcher seeks to uncover a social process that is assumed to have a beginning, middle, and end. Narrative data are most congruent with grounded theory because they allow the theory to unfold through the process of storytelling (Morse, 2001).

The theory that is developed by grounded theory methods is grounded in the data. Grounded theorists use inductive, deductive, and verification measures to create substantive and formal theory (Charmaz, 2006; Schwandt, 2007). Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe grounded theory as being, “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon” (p. 23).

The idea of “provisional verification” as proposed by Strauss and Corbin is important and implies a process that is ongoing, dynamic, and exclusive (Miller & Fredericks, 1990). In fact, good grounded theory research should stimulate new ways of contextualizing knowledge, extend the current dialogue about the phenomenon, and perhaps even transform actions as a result of what is known (Angen, 2000).

Grounded theory methods move back and forth between data and analysis in a manner that inductively allows understanding to unfold (Backman & Kyngas, 1999). In

this respect, grounded theory is an emergent rather than pre-ordinate design. In the beginning, the researcher has broad expectations about the phenomenon that gain clarity as data are analyzed and the theory emerges (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Constructivism and ADV

This study used grounded theory with a constructivist approach. Constructivism adheres to an ontological belief that reality is created by the individual and, therefore, cannot uncover a single worldview that is representative of all experiences (Charmaz, 2006).

A constructivist approach is useful for the study of contemporary adolescence and provides a useful way to identify issues and challenges that are unique to the current generation. Because there are new concerns for this generation that are not clearly understood by previous generations, it is important for researchers to control their biases and listen to the stories of those who have experienced the phenomenon. Constructivism positions the researcher to listen to these stories with minimal bias and conjecture and, therefore, underpins the methodology of this research.

The Parent Study

This study was part of a larger parent project entitled, “Adolescent Dating Violence: Development of a Theoretical Framework,” which was an R01 study funded for three years by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Martsolf & Draucker, 2007). The study utilized a team approach consisting of ten members with diverse backgrounds in mental health nursing, psychology, social work and qualitative methods. This study is in the final year of analysis. The aims of this study are to:

1. identify common processes by which adolescents respond to their experiences of dating violence from a narrative/life course perspective,
2. develop a typology of common trajectories of violent events that occur over the course of adolescent dating relationships from a situational/events perspective,
3. examine the influence of social circumstances on adolescents' experiences of dating violence,
4. use grounded theory methods to analyze and integrate information about the processes, the trajectories, and influential social circumstances in order to create a comprehensive explanatory theoretical framework of adolescent dating violence.

From this point forward, this study will be referred to as the ADV (adolescent dating violence) study.

Sample in the ADV Study

With grounded theory methods, participants are selected because they are thought to have knowledge of the phenomenon being examined (Morse, 1994). The ADV study sought adolescent males and females between the ages of 18 to 21 who acknowledged involvement in physical, psychological/emotional, or sexual violence within the context of dating a situation when they were teens. Participants who were ADV victims, perpetrators, or both were recruited. Recruitment attempted to achieve equal representation of males and females and Caucasian and African American participants.

The study recruited young adults (ages 18 to 21) with the assumption that they would be able to easily reflect upon their adolescent experiences. In addition, recruiting

young adults avoided the need to seek parental permission for participation. Sensitive topics such as dating violence might discourage adolescents from coming forward if parental consent was required.

Sampling for the ADV Study

Adaptive sampling strategies were used for the ADV study. This is a useful strategy for identifying participants from populations that are limited, clustered, or hard to find (Martsolf, Courey, Chapman, Draucker, & Mims, 2006). Participants were recruited from 12 communities within three counties, representing urban, suburban, and rural regions in Northeast Ohio. Detailed community surveys were conducted on each of the twelve communities including windshield surveys and community nursing assessments (Martsolf et al., 2006). Two members of the research team first drove through each target community to obtain a general sense of the socioeconomics and characteristics of the area. This “windshield survey” was followed by a walk-through of the community in order to assess what types of services were available, where recruitment and interviews might be conducted, and to interact with community members and leaders to gain community support for the study. Theoretical sampling was also implemented for the ADV study to ensure the likelihood of recruiting participants who offered additional insight into the research question. Theoretical sampling allows data collection to be controlled by the emerging theory. The emerging theory informed researchers’ decisions to reach out to other groups in order to collect data that would shed light on differences or similarities in the social processes used by different groups of adolescents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, when the research team suspected that men experienced ADV differently, they actively recruited more male participants.

Sample size is difficult to identify a priori with grounded theory methods because of the inductive process of theory building. The study's complexity, expert recommendations, and the number of anticipated violence trajectories informed the projected sample size (Morse, 1994). Considering these factors, it was determined that an estimated sample size of 90 adolescents was needed to produce data representative of the phenomenon.

Procedures for the ADV Study

Permission to conduct research was obtained from the Kent State University Institutional Review Board for the ADV study (Appendix A). Participants for the ADV study were recruited by canvassing each community and posting flyers in establishments where adolescents were expected to frequent. Examples of these establishments included community recreation centers, bars, beauty salons, barber shops, nail salons, restaurants, etc. In addition, proprietors and patrons of the establishments were approached, when appropriate, to explain the study and encourage them to share the information with young adults.

Flyers included examples of dating violence, a list of inclusion criteria, a statement that \$35 would be offered to compensate for time and travel to the interview, and a toll-free number (Appendix B). Adolescents who were interested in participating were instructed to call the toll-free number and leave their name and contact information. A research associate called the interested young adult and conducted a screening interview to determine eligibility prior to proceeding with the research interview (Appendix C). The screening tool was intended to screen out those who were psychologically unstable or who might currently be involved in an abusive relationship.

Individuals who did not qualify for the study were referred to appropriate mental health and community resources (Appendix D). Young adults who were eligible to participate, were scheduled for an interview. Because the interviews involved sensitive topics and participants were vulnerable, interviews were conducted by three masters-prepared psychiatric/mental health clinicians. These clinicians were able to assess participants and make appropriate mental health referrals as needed. Interviewers were individually trained by the co-investigators of the primary study and were judged to have adequate interview skills after participating in mock interviews. The author of this dissertation was one of the interviewers.

Data were collected in one-on-one interviews. At least one interview site was established within each community. Interview sites were safe, accessible, private (libraries, healthcare facilities, college campus buildings) and located near public transportation. Before the interviews began, participants read and signed two consent forms. One was consent to participate in the study (Appendix E) and the second was consent to be audio-taped (Appendix F). In addition, each participant completed a demographic form (Appendix G).

Each interview was audio-taped. During the interview participants were asked to share their life narratives within the context of dating violence. Specifically, they were asked to share narratives about their childhood, family of origin, and adolescent dating experiences that were relevant to dating violence.

The quality of research interviews is dependent on the quality of the relationship between the researcher and participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interviewers made every attempt to make the participant feel comfortable during the interview. Open-ended

questions were used to elicit participant narratives (Appendix H). Additional prompts such as “can you tell me more about that” were used to collect details that gave the data richness and depth.

Once interviews were completed, participants were debriefed by the interviewer. Each participant was asked if the interview was upsetting. Those who acknowledged distress were further assessed for desires to inflict harm to self or others. Appropriate mental health referrals were made based on that assessment. If participants showed no undue distress, they were offered a referral sheet of local mental health and community resources that could provide assistance (Appendix D).

Finally, participants were thanked for their time and asked if they would be willing to be contacted again should a second interview be necessary. A second interview was requested if the researcher required additional information or clarification about content of the first interview. Also, participants were asked if they would like to receive any correspondence relating to the findings of the study. If so, appropriate contact information was collected (Appendix I).

Analysis for the ADV Study

Grounded theory method uses constant comparison techniques to move back and forth between the data and analysis, allowing the researcher to remain “close to the data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 103). Therefore, analysis began while data were still being collected. Theoretical sampling strategies were used to identify participants who could provide data to further develop the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed by the research team. Weekly meetings were conducted to review transcripts from the ADV study.

Members of the research team received one transcript to read and independently code weekly. Transcripts were discussed at the following week's research meeting.

Team members engaged in open discussions about the narratives provided by participants. Members were encouraged to discuss their individual impressions of the transcripts as well as their independent codes of the data. Discussions pertained to how the data informed the team's understanding of adolescent dating violence or adolescent dating relationships. During these discussions the team concluded that peer involvement as it relates to ADV was a pertinent feature of the experience. This researcher was selected to continue this line of inquiry and to develop a theoretical framework of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence.

Peer Involvement and the ADV Study

The research on peer involvement utilized data from the ADV study to describe the process of peer involvement in adolescent dating and dating violence.

The Role of the Researcher on the ADV Study

This researcher participated as an active member of the overall ADV team in several capacities. First, I was involved with the recruitment of participants from several communities and college campuses. In addition, I assumed primary responsibility for recruitment from the west side of Akron. This site has an alternative education center attended by teens from troubled backgrounds. Second, I was one of three interviewers collecting data from the young adult population. Third, I transcribed interviews. Fourth, I read each transcript and participated in weekly analysis meetings.

Sampling for the Peer Involvement Study

Peer involvement was identified as a salient category when approximately half of the ADV interviews had been collected. Subsequent participants were specifically asked about the role that peers played in their dating relationships and their experiences with violence.

Data Analysis for the Peer Involvement Study

This study expanded on previous work that was completed as part of the parent ADV research. Two typologies were developed in the ADV study that described ADV from two different levels of partner involvement. The first was the Events Typology (Table 1) which focused on the individual aggressive events as described by participants. The events depicted the aggression occurring between the dating partners at the most basic level. The second typology developed was the Relationship Typology (Table 2) which focused on the dating relationships and was informed, in part, by the aggressive events. Therefore, the Relationship Typology expanded on the Events Typology by categorizing the types of relationships that formed from the context of the dating violence. The current research expanded on the Relationship Typology by focusing on how peers were involved in the ADV relationships.

Development of the Events Typology. Participants described the aggressive events they experienced with a partner as adolescents. By closely analyzing each aggressive event, researchers were able to outline each event's trajectory and better understand how the events unfolded.

The Events Typology was developed by examining 184 events identified from 42 transcripts. An events grid was created for each identified event that outlined the process of the aggression (e.g., antecedents, points of escalation and de-escalation). Event grids

recorded environmental factors (e.g., where the aggression occurred, who else was involved), contextual factors (e.g., the involvement of drugs, alcohol or weapons involved) or other influences on the aggression. The events grids focused on the characteristics of the events themselves and not the individuals who were involved in the aggression.

Using cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) the 184 event grids were grouped according to characteristics they shared. The co-investigators identified eight preliminary categories representing event types of aggressive events. Categories were verified by members of the research team (including this researcher) who independently coded the events into one of the eight categories. Team members agreed that all of the events were accurately described by one of the categories and that no additional categories were warranted. Finally, event grids were created for the remaining transcripts and were successfully placed in the eight categories. The eight event categories are depicted in Table 1 and included: tumultuous, explosive, scuffling, violating, threatening, controlling, disparaging, and rejection/ignoring/disrespecting events (Draucker et al., 2010).

Development of the Relationship Typology. The Relationship Typology sought to identify the types of dating relationships that were most common to ADV. The types of relationships were based on the directionality (one partner against the other or mutual abuse) and frequency of the aggression that defined the relationship.

Table 1. Events Typology

Type of event	Description	Example
TUMULTUOUS	Events are chaotic and dramatic. Both partners exhibit aggression. Third parties are often involved in the altercations between the partners. Events are characterized by the presence of alcohol and/or drugs, law enforcement involvement, and/or injury of at least one party.	The BF ¹ and GF ² share an apartment but he decides to leave. She tries to block him from leaving. He drags her down the stairs. She goes back up and starts to unpack his things. He grabs her and yanks her around, pulling her shirt off. She swings at him. He spits at her and pours a glass of beer on her. The BF's cousin is present and swears at her. She hits the cousin. The grandmother jumps in to stop the fight and the neighbors call the police. The BF and cousin leave before the police arrive.
EXPLOSIVE	Events involve rapid escalation to a violent assault. One partner initiates the violence. If the other displays aggression, it is defensive. The violent partner has often used drugs or alcohol. Others are involved after the incident to assist the partner who was assaulted.	GF and BF are together at high school. GF is walking down the hall with her cousin. When she leaves to go class, she casually tells her cousin she loves him. Her BF overhears the exchange. He grabs her by the shoulders and throws her against the lockers. She tells him the boy was her cousin, but the BF does not believe her. He screams at her until a teacher comes upon the scene. The BF leaves.
SCUFFLING	Events involve a series of minor arguments or altercations that have a "back and forth" quality without a major escalation. Both partners exhibit aggression. The aggression is usually verbal but may include minor physical abuse such as grabbing or scratching while tussling.	The BF buys the GF a necklace. They argue about something, and she throws the necklace at him. He throws it back and says they are through. She slaps him and says he never cared about her in the first place.
VIOLATING	Events involve one person experiencing a sense of violation or being used. Often involves sexual activities or advances without the consent of one partner.	The BF and GF are living apart because he has a job in another city. They meet and stay at a hotel. She does not want to have sex but he insists, saying she would have sex if she loved him. He starts to have intercourse. They argue, and she asks that he use a condom but he does not have one. She tells him to "pull out" but he keeps going. She believes it was rape, although not the "Hollywood style" rape with screaming and crying.
THREATENING	Events involve one partner expressing intent to harm the other without actually carrying out the threat. Often involves threats of serious bodily harm or death.	BF and GF were sophomores in high school. She breaks up with him. He threatens to drag her out of bed and beat the "hell out of [her]." She thinks he was "venting," but her parents obtain a restraining order.
CONTROLLING	Events involve one person limiting or restricting the activities of the other. One partner typically disapproves of the behaviors or relationships of the other and is jealous or threatened of losing the partner.	BF and GF are driving to an event. She gets a phone call from her friend. He gets angry and ignores her the rest of the night. After he drops her off, he calls her about 80 times telling her he loves her. She eventually goes to see him.
DISPARAGING	The events involve one partner showing disapproval or contempt of the other, often with insults and putdowns. The disparaged partner feels hurt or embarrassed.	BF and GF have been going together three months. She buys some new clothes including some short skirts and "belly" shirts. He tells her she looks like a "slut" and a "whore" and insists she is trying to get guys attention.
REJECTING, IGNORING, OR DISRESPECTING	The events involve one partner failing to show attention or respect to the other or acting in a generally unkind way.	BF calls GF late at night. She tells him she is with her mother getting ice cream. He finds out that she is not with her mother when he calls her house. She says she was really with her brother, not her mother. He wonders why she would lie.

¹BF = boyfriend; ²GF = girlfriend

(Draucker et al., 2010)

The events described for the Event Typology were grouped so that all events originating from the same relationship could be viewed simultaneously. One-hundred and fourteen relationships were identified from 85 participants. Relationship grids were developed by dividing the relationships between all members of the research team so that each member was responsible for creating grids for approximately 13 relationships. Attention was paid to the types of events (as described by the Events Typology) that occurred as well as the order in which they occurred. Also important were the overall impressions that participants provided about the ongoing nature of the aggression that the research team thought represented the underpinnings of the ADV relationship (e.g., “he always put me down”). Using constant comparison analysis, the team participated in in-depth discussions to discern which relationship types were most common to ADV. Preliminary categories were discussed and refined as new cases were introduced. Once consensus about the inclusiveness of the categories was reached by the research team, seven relationship categories were identified as being common to ADV. The categories are depicted in Table 2 and included: maltreating, turbulent, volatile, brawling, deprecating, bickering, and intrusive relationships (Draucker et al., 2011).

Analysis of Peer Involvement

Tables 1 and 2 described above (Event Typology and Relationship Typology) provided useful descriptions of the dating couples and their relationships. This study expanded on the typologies by focusing on how peers influenced the dating partners and their relationships.

A team approach was used to evaluate the data for peer involvement. Data were analyzed by three nurse researchers with a combined experience in mental health nursing,

Table 2: The relationship typology		
	PRIMARILY ONE-DIRECTIONAL	PRIMARILY BI-DIRECTIONAL
RECURRING EPISODES	<p>MALTREATING RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>These relationships were marked by recurring aggressive events and were primarily one-directional. Most notable in this type of relationship was the variety of types of aggression used by the aggressive individuals (referred to as aggressors) against their partners (referred to as recipients). These couples experienced aggressive events that were combination of violating, threatening, controlling, disparaging, and rejecting, ignoring, or disrespecting behaviors (Draucker et al., 2010). Some aggressors occasionally used mild or moderate physical violence. In some cases, the abuse could be described as sadistic as the aggressors seemed to obtain gratification from the physical or emotional pain they were causing their partners. In maltreating relationships, the recipients considered themselves to be abused and rarely used aggression against their partners. Despite the pervasiveness of the abuse that occurred in these relationships, injury was rare, presumably because much of the abuse was not physical.</p> <p>In between the aggressive events, the aggressors often “put down” the recipients and their interactions were often devoid of positive experiences. Yet, while these relationships were clearly troubled, the partners did not experience the lifestyle turmoil noted in some other groups (see turbulent relationships). If the abused continued for some time, the recipients reported negative effects such as lowered self-esteem, isolation, and poor physical health.</p>	<p>TURBULENT RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>These relationships were marked by recurring aggressive events but were primarily bi-directional. Most notable in this type of relationship were the frequent and frenzied, often violent, and dramatic altercations that occurred between the partners. The couples often experienced events that were tumultuous (Draucker et al., 2010). While one partner often perpetrated more severe violence, both partners initiated altercations and engaged in aggressive behaviors that escalated the clashes between them. These episodes, therefore, were often described as fights rather than as abuse. Third parties were often directly involved in the aggressive events. For example, sexual rivals were present and provoked or joined in the altercations, children of the couple witnessed the events, and family and friends joined in the altercations. The fights frequently began in one location, resumed in another, and continued over several hours. Injury and law enforcement involvement were common.</p> <p>The couple's interactions were conflicted and troubled even between the violent episodes, giving the sense that violence was always brewing. These couples experienced frequent break-ups and reunitions. Both partners often experienced extensive lifestyle turmoil, including criminality, incarceration, substance abuse, drug dealing, pregnancy and contested paternity, and/or frequent infidelity.</p>
SPORADIC EPISODES	<p>VOLATILE RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>These relationships were marked by sporadic aggressive events and were primarily one-directional. Most notable in this type of relationship was the rapid increase in anger by one partner (the aggressor) that resulted in sudden physical violence. The aggressive events were often explosive (Draucker et al., 2010). The other partner (the recipient) experienced the violence as “coming out of nowhere” and perceived that the aggressor “just lost it.” If the recipients used aggression, it was most to defend themselves from an attack. Both partners often provided an explanation for the violence, such as the aggressor's drinking or jealousy or stress experienced by the couple. Some aggressors were remorseful after a violent event, and a few apologized and tried to make amends. Such repentance, however, would often fade after several explosive events. Some explosive events resulted in injury and in a few cases, the police were called and the perpetrator was arrested.</p> <p>The volatile relationships had varied trajectories. Often, the explosive events marked a turning point in the relationships. In some cases, the recipients ended the relationship following one or more violent events or demanded the perpetrators change their behaviors. In other cases, the explosive events continued and escalated in severity. In between the violent events, the couple could experience a period of normality but the recipients would often feel like they were “walking on egg shells” to keep the peace. While the violence in these relationships often occurred in the context of life troubles, such as substance abuse or an unwanted pregnancy, the couples did not experience the extreme lifestyle turmoil or chaos</p>	<p>BRAWLING RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>These relationships were marked by sporadic aggressive events but were primarily bi-directional. Most notable in this type of relationship were the angry and heated physically fights between partners. The altercations often occurred in public and had the feel of a scrappy bar brawl. The aggressive events were intense and mutual; both partners “got into it.” Most frequently, an argument would escalate into physical violence fairly quickly. The brawls were attributed to the use of alcohol or to tempers of both partners. The relationships were frequently conflicted, but did not have the on-going drama or chaos of the turbulent relationships.</p>

	that was evident in turbulent group.	
ROUTINE EPISODES	DEPRECATING RELATIONSHIPS <p>These relationships were marked by routine aggressive interactions that were primarily one-directional. Most notable in this type of relationship were the constant behaviors of one partner (the aggressor) that deprecated, belittled, or slighted the other (the recipient). The most common types of events that constituted these relationships involved disparaging, rejecting, ignoring, or disrespecting behaviors (Draucker et al., 2010). The participants could not recall specific aggressive events because the "putdowns" occurred so commonly; in some cases, these types of behaviors permeated all the couple's interactions. Aggressors insulted or ignored the recipients daily, often embarrassing or shaming them if the deprecation occurred in public. These relationships did not involve other physical or sexual aggression, and the recipients therefore often were hesitant to acknowledge that the behaviors were abusive.</p> <p>The couples generally did not experience notable chaos or turmoil in their lives overall. In fact, some of the partners came from stable families, did well in school, and were high achieving in other areas (e.g., sports, music). If these behaviors continued for any length of time, they would have a detrimental effect on the recipients' sense of self.</p>	BICKERING RELATIONSHIPS <p>These relationships were marked by routine aggressive interactions but were primarily bi-directional. Most notable in these types of relationships were frequent petulant and peevish arguments or wrangling between partners. The couple often engaged in aggressive events in which they scuffled with each (Draucker et al., 2010). The mutual aggression often resembled squabbling between peers or siblings who were trying to "top" one another. The bickering was mostly verbal, but at times involved some mild impetuous violence or minor impulsive property destruction. Although some events were described, the bickering was a common way that the couples interacted with one another. Others who spend time with the couples often became annoyed at their constant bickering. As with the prior two groups, the partners in this group did not live otherwise chaotic lives.</p>
	INTRUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS	
	<p>These relationships were marked by routine aggressive interactions that were primarily one-directional. Most notably in this relationship were the concerted efforts made by one partner (the aggressor) to contact, spend time with, or dictate the actions of the other partner (the recipient). The behaviors of the perpetrators were unwelcome, disruptive, uninvited, or dramatic, but not physically aggressive. The most common types of aggressive events involved one person trying to control the other (Draucker et al., 2010). Some aggressors demanded the recipients' time, attention, or obedience overtly, whereas others acted wounded or withdrew affection if a partner did not acquiescent to their wishes. In some cases, perpetrators would threaten self-harm to get a partner to submit to their demands or wishes.</p> <p>The aggression in these relationships often escalated. If the recipients did not capitulate, perpetrators often engaged in intrusive behaviors that became quite excessive, such as checking up on a recipient incessantly or engaging in surveillance behaviors, such as having friends monitor the behaviors of the recipients. In a few cases, physical violence, threats, and bizarre behaviors occurred when the intrusive partner becomes desperate or frustrated. These individuals were not experiencing otherwise chaotic lives and could be functioning quite well in school and other activities.</p>	

(Draucker et al., 2011)

adolescent dating violence, and grounded theory. NVivo8 (QSR International, 2009) software was used to analyze the data. Each of the 88 ADV transcripts was entered into the NVivo program in preparation for analysis. First, second, and third-level coding was conducted in order to transform raw data into categories and tentative hypotheses (Schreiber, 2001).

First-level coding proceeded with a line-by-line review of each transcript in order to isolate text units directly pertaining to peer involvement in ADV. “Text unit” refers to an excerpt (sentence, paragraph, or story) of the participant’s narrative taken directly from the transcript. The researcher assigned each isolated text unit a one or two word descriptor that best reflected the meaning of the text. When possible, the participants’ words were used in order to remain as true to their meaning as possible. For each group of related text units an appropriate concept was selected that best reflected the essence of the category. Examples of named categories for this level of coding are jealousy and cheating. In short, the aim of first-level coding was to identify and account for all references of peer involvement and produce a comprehensive list of coded concepts.

Second-level coding was used to identify similarities and differences between transcripts and uncover salient categories found throughout multiple transcripts. To thoroughly examine the similarities and differences of the text units coded during first-level coding, the researcher examined them in two different ways. First, all text pertaining to an individual category were viewed simultaneously regardless of the transcripts from which they originated. Second, the transcripts were kept intact so that all text units from a particular transcript were viewed simultaneously. This second way of

looking at the coded text units was enlightening because it enabled the researcher to identify similar patterns within each narrative rather than across multiple narratives. For example, by looking at all text units from a single transcript it became obvious if the transcript predominantly depicted peer interactions that were meddling, supportive, or provoking. In other cases, a transcript might only show a few text units indicating that peers were not very involved in that particular relationship.

During third-level coding, queries were made of the data about particular associations. Associations between the Relationship Typology and the peer involvement categories were considered. In addition, gender distinctions made between male and female peers were examined. Specifically, similarities and differences about how males and females contributed to the conflict or its management were explored.

Throughout the analytic process, the researcher maintained a thorough audit trail consisting of a reflexive journal, memos, and field notes. These items helped to shape the analytic process by organizing insightful and substantive reflections on the phenomenon.

Evaluation Criteria

The scientific rigor of this research was evaluated using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for establishing trustworthiness. The establishment of trustworthiness enhances the overall integrity of qualitative research and is comprised of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each criterion is achieved through the implementation of several specific actions. How trustworthiness was achieved in this study is discussed below.

Credibility refers to the degree that the research findings portray accurate and credible reflections of the phenomenon. Credibility for this study was ensured through

prolonged engagement with the data and peer debriefing. Prolonged engagement was accomplished by virtue of the considerable number of interviews. Also, this researcher was actively involved with interpreting the data for more than two years.

Peer debriefing has been an ongoing process for the research team and took place during the weekly meetings of the parent study. It was augmented by discussions between the researcher and dissertation chair on a weekly basis. By conferring with peers, the team was able to discuss ideas and concerns regarding methods, analysis, emerging categories, and the emotional reactions that the researcher experienced from immersion in the data.

Transferability refers to the degree that findings can be applied to other contexts or settings. The transferability of these findings was ensured through the large number of interviews and the rich descriptions obtained. Detailed demographic data and field notes, as well as the narratives provided participant characteristics and narrative contexts that could be used to assess the applicability of findings to other situations.

Dependability refers to the reliability of findings. A detailed report of the methodology along with a reflexive journal that included rationales of methodological and theoretical decisions allows the reader to assess the legitimacy and integrity of research methods.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which another interpreter corroborates findings. A detailed audit trail consisting of field notes, memos, and reflexive journaling documented the analytic process of the researcher. In addition, the dissertation chair, who has extensive knowledge in grounded theory and adolescent dating violence, reviewed

the transcripts and engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the researcher about her interpretations of the data.

In summary, this study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence. The intent was to develop a grounded theory that describes and explains the social process of how peers are involved in ADV. By developing a better understanding of the role of peers, researchers will be positioned to develop more effective strategies to support and educate adolescents about how peers may contribute to dating violence.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical framework that described and explained the role of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence. The research questions were: (a) In what ways are peers involved in adolescent dating patterns and experiences? and (b) How do peers influence the management of dating violence? The specific aims of this study were:

1. To describe the qualities of the peer relationships of adolescents who experience dating violence.
2. To determine the roles of peers on the social processes of how teens manage adolescent dating violence.
3. To determine any gender difference between how peer relationships of males and females affect adolescent dating relationships and the management of ADV.

Sample

Participants in this study were male (n=38) and female (n=50) young adults between the ages of 18 and 21. The majority of participants were Caucasian (n=46) or African American (n=29). Annual family incomes were reported between less than \$10,000 and over \$200,000 with most participants reporting incomes between \$60,000 and \$99,999. Participant demographics for are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant Demographics

		Total ADV Participants	Males	Females
Gender		88	38	50
Race	African American	29	13	16
	Caucasian	46	21	25
	American Indian	1	0	1
	>1 race	9	3	6
	Other	3	1	2
Family Income	<\$10,000	10	3	7
	10-14,999	6	1	5
	15-19,999	2	1	1
	20-24,999	10	6	4
	25-39,999	3	0	3
	30-34,999	6	3	3
	35-39,999	2	1	1
	40-44,999	4	1	3
	45-49,999	4	2	2
	50-59,999	5	1	4
	60-99,999	12	4	8
	100-124,999	8	4	4
	125-149,999	2	2	0
	150-199,999	3	2	1
	>200,000	1	1	0
	Unreported	9	4	5

Peer Involvement in Adolescent Dating Violence

To address the specific research aims, data in the participant narratives related to peer involvement were analyzed. To accomplish this, the two typologies originating in

the parent project were used. The first was the Events Typology (Table 1 on page 52) that categorized the types of aggressive events between partners involved in ADV (Draucker et al., 2010). Eight types of events were identified: tumultuous, explosive, scuffling, violating, threatening, controlling, disparaging, and rejection/ignoring/disrespecting events. The second typology was the Relationship Typology (Table 2 on page 54). It categorized the types of aggressive relationships that served the context of ADV (Draucker et al., 2011). Seven relationship types were identified: maltreating, turbulent, volatile, brawling, bickering, deprecating, and intrusive relationships.

Data related to peer involvement were analyzed according to the Relationship Typology, and categories were developed to explicate this typology by considering peer involvement in each relationship type. This resulted in the Peer Involvement Typology (Table 4). Considering how peers were involved with the dating couple and the abuse provides a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the relationships in the parent study.

The peer involvement in adolescent dating violence in each of the seven relationship types will be described in depth. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of participants. Some participants might appear in more than one relationship category because they had multiple relationships that fit into different categories. Also, each story was told by participants who were young adults at the time of the interviews, but reflected on experiences that happened during adolescence.

Table 4. Peer Involvement Typology

RELATIONSHIP TYPOLOGY	MALE PEER INVOLVEMENT	FEMALE PEER INVOLVEMENT
MALTREATING RELATIONSHIPS Marked by frequent and varied types of aggression by one partner against another.	PARTICIPATING IN THE AGGRESSION Male peers participated in aggressive acts against the female either through direct engagement or strong encouragement by her boyfriend.	DESERTING THE RECIPIENT Female peers deserted the female recipients of the aggression with whom they had been friends.
TURBULENT RELATIONSHIPS Marked by frequent and chaotic aggressive events between partners and /or others resulting in violence and injury	AGITATING THE AGGRESSION Male peers agitated the aggression by sharing damaging information with the boyfriend about his girlfriend.	CHEATING WITH THE BOYFRIEND Female peers cheated with the boyfriend despite knowing that he was dating someone else.
VOLATILE RELATIONSHIPS Marked by incident(s) of rapid or sudden increases in anger resulting in an explosive physically aggressive act(s).	IGNORING THE AGGRESSION No significant gender differences were identified because most abuse occurred in private. In the few instances where peers were aware of the abuse, they ignored it.	
BRAWLING RELATIONSHIPS Marked by angry and heated altercations between partners involving physical aggression.	CONFRONTING A PARTNER Both male and female peers were uncomfortable with the aggression and sought to manage their discomfort by eliminating the conflict and urging the dating partners to end the relationship.	
DEPRECATING RELATIONSHIPS Marked by on-going behaviors that deprecate, belittle, or slight the other without physical aggression.	BEING THE COMPETITION Male peers were seen as a threat by the boyfriends when the male peers were good friends with his girlfriend.	BEING THE AUDIENCE Female peers served as audience members for girlfriends who deprecated their boyfriends in public.
BICKERING RELATIONSHIPS Marked by frequent, petulant and peevish arguments or wrangling between partners.	JOKING WITH THE DATING PARTNER Male peers minimized the importance of the aggression by joking about it.	NEEDLING THE DATING PARTNER Female peers provoked more aggression by needling the male dating partner.
INTRUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS Marked by attempts by one partner to contact, spend time, or dictate the actions of the other with behaviors that are unwelcome, disruptive, uninvited or dramatic but not physical.	KEEPING TABS ON THE RECIPIENT Male peers aided the intruder by spying and keeping tabs on the other partner.	HELPING THE RECIPIENT Female peers aided the recipient of the intrusion by helping them view the relationship as unhealthy.

Maltreating Relationships

As seen in Table 2, maltreating relationships ($n = 16$) were those marked by varied types of aggression that included verbal, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. The aggression was one-directional (one partner was the primary aggressor) and recurring (occurring regularly). The aggressive events were combinations of violating, threatening, controlling, disparaging, and rejecting/ignoring/disrespecting behaviors (Table 1). Recipients of the aggression felt abused and reported negative effects to their self-esteem, physical and/or mental health, and social status as a result of the relationship. Male peers to couples in this group were involved in the dating violence by participating in the aggression, whereas female peers to the couples in this group were involved in the dating violence by deserting the recipient of the abuse.

Male peer involvement: Participating in the Abuse. Within this group, the male dating partners were the primary aggressors against their girlfriends. The male peers actively participated in the aggression. The aggression enacted by male peers paralleled the aggression of the male partner in so far as it was recurrent, varied (included sexual, physical, verbal, and/or emotional) and one-directional (abuse by the male peer against the female). The male peers participated in the abuse two ways. Some peers joined in on abuse and were themselves aggressive toward the recipient, thereby serving as co-participants. Others encouraged the boyfriend by watching him abuse his girlfriend and cheering and egging him on. The manner and degree to which they encouraged the abuse, therefore, went beyond that of just watching. The excitement with which they responded to the abuse intensified the brutality and pushed the aggressor into carrying out more abuse than might have otherwise occurred.

Sandra was an 18-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend Angelo were considered to have a maltreating relationship because the recurrent abuse that Angelo inflicted on Sandra was varied and sadistic. Sandra rarely initiated aggression towards Angelo. She was more likely to submit to his abuse and surmised that fighting him would accelerate his aggression.

Angelo's peers participated in abuse against Sandra by driving by her house and yelling threats and obscenities at her. She was frightened because they threatened to kill her, and she thought they were capable of physical violence. She not only worried about her own safety but was concerned for the safety of her infant daughter as well. These same male peers also watched Angelo rape Sandra on several occasions. They were excited by the attack, and encouraged Angelo to continue. Sandra could not understand the peers' exhilaration and said it "was a high for them or something."

Danielle was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend Kirk were considered to have a maltreating relationship because Kirk displayed threatening, disparaging, and controlling behaviors towards her throughout their four-year relationship. His recurrent mistreatment of Danielle eroded her self-esteem and ultimately led her to develop an eating disorder and substance abuse issues.

Kirk's male peers were direct participants in Danielle's abuse and raped her several times per week for more than three years. The friends hit Danielle, screamed obscenities at her, and humiliated her while Kirk watched. She said that Kirk "just let his friends do whatever they wanted to." If she fought them, he would get angry.

Female peer involvement: Deserting the Recipient. The female peers contributed to the aggression in maltreating relationships by deserting the female dating

partners with whom the peers had been friends. In some cases, female friends abandoned the girlfriend because of struggles that occurred between them, such as gossiping or betraying each other in some way. In other cases, the boyfriends started rumors or gossiped about their girlfriends in order to ruin their reputations and turn their friends against them. The girlfriends therefore had no supportive female relationships and were socially isolated. The isolation increased their vulnerability so the abuse could occur with minimal interference. By not having advocates to intervene on the girlfriends' behalf, they felt powerless to stop the abuse.

Prior to dating her abusive boyfriend, Sandra (described above) was not a "peoples' person" and did not have close friendships with others. She had one good friend prior to dating Angelo, but her friend disapproved of the dating relationship and did not talk to Sandra for two years. Sandra felt deserted by her friend and wanted to impress Angelo's friends and be accepted by them. Her desire to fit in made her vulnerable. She tolerated Angelo's mistreatment of her, which his friends thought was "cool."

Francine was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Trevor, were considered to be a maltreating couple because Trevor was verbally, physically, and sexually abusive towards her. Francine tolerated his abuse because she thought that he loved her. On one occasion, Trevor attempted to sexually assault her and was stopped by nearby adults who intervened on her behalf. Rather than accept responsibility for his actions, he claimed that she consented to having sex with him because she was a "slut." Despite the fact that she had a good reputation and many friends before she began dating Trevor, when she turned to her female peers for support after the sexual assault they did

not believe her. She was ostracized by these peers who would no longer talk to her. She said, “They all said I was a liar. They all said I was a slut.” Instead of receiving their support during her time of need, she was deserted by them.

Turbulent Relationships

As seen in Table 2, turbulent relationships (n=15) were marked by frenzied and chaotic types of aggression in which family, friends, and law enforcement were often involved. The aggression between the dating partners was bi-directional (both partners were aggressive) and recurring. The relationships consisted primarily of tumultuous events (Table 1). Similarly, the dating partners experienced tumultuous lifestyles in which turmoil and chaos were common. Male peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by agitating the aggression, whereas female peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by cheating with the boyfriend.

Male peer involvement: Agitating the aggression. Conflicts between dating partners in turbulent relationships were constantly simmering. When peers became involved, aggression between the dating partners tended to escalate. The boyfriend’s male peers agitated the aggression by sharing information that implicated his girlfriend in some misdeed. Sharing information was motivated by attempts to be helpful or by jealousy or spite. Nevertheless, the information cast the female partner in a bad light and contributed to more aggression.

Monica was an 18-year-old woman of more than one race. She and her boyfriend, Byron, were considered a turbulent couple because they frequently demeaned each other and were physically aggressive in the presence of others. When Monica was visited by an Air Force recruiter, Byron accused her of cheating, kicked the recruiter’s truck, and

was arrested and jailed overnight. Although Byron's actions were demeaning towards Monica, she was physically abusive by trying to stop his departure with friends.

Byron's male friends agitated the conflict in the dating relationship by fueling his jealousy. They told Bryon that Monica was seen with other boys and that they were "messin' around" with her. She denied these things and accused the male peers of purposely causing trouble because she had previously rejected their advances.

Carla was a 20-year-old, African American woman. She and her boyfriend, Keevon, had a relationship in which his jealousy led to tumultuous aggression that sometimes ended with parental and police involvement. After an altercation in which Keevon stole items from Carla's purse, she sought help from neighbors before calling her mother and the police for help. Keevon was afraid of her mother because she had chased him with a hammer during a previous event.

His friends agitated the couple's aggression by telling Keevon that Carla was unfaithful. She said, "I think because his friends used to be kind of jealous so they would tell him stuff that wasn't really true...something they had heard." Their stories incited Keevon's jealousy, and he became physically, verbally, and psychologically aggressive towards her. On one occasion he broke her phone in an attempt to find evidence that she was cheating.

Female peer involvement: Cheating with the boyfriend. Female peers contributed to the aggression in turbulent relationships by cheating with the boyfriend. Although aware that the male was in a dating relationship, female peers flirted or participated in sexual encounters with the male dating partner. Aggression occurred between the dating partners either when the girlfriend confronted her boyfriend about his

infidelity or when the boyfriend told the girlfriend about the cheating. Female peers were often present during the confrontation and were unsympathetic to the girlfriend's feelings.

Tenisha was a 21-year-old woman of more than one race. She and her boyfriend Willie were considered to be a turbulent couple because of the continual displays of anger and fighting that typified their interactions and because of their tumultuous lifestyles. Tenisha surmised that Willie's anger towards her came from a childhood of paternal absence and maternal addiction and his own adulthood of incarceration, gang involvement and drug trafficking. Tenisha, felt pushed into fighting with Willie in order to stand up for herself against his abuse. Several of Tenisha's female peers had sex with Willie despite knowing that he was dating Tenisha. Willie's cheating with Tenisha's purported friends "hurt more than him beating me."

Fallon was a 21-year-old African American woman. She and her boyfriend Reggie were considered to be a turbulent couple because others were often drawn into their arguments which sometimes became physical. Reggie was continually angry and drank heavily. Fallon hoped to change his behaviors, but became frustrated and fought with him when she failed. Reggie was driving Fallon to her grandmother's house when he stopped to pick up Katrina, a woman with whom he had a child. Katrina openly flirted with Reggie while Fallon was forced to watch from the back seat. Fallon was distressed by their actions and felt even more degraded.

Volatile Relationships

As seen in Table 2, volatile relationships (n=12) were marked by impulsive and sudden acts of aggression. The aggression between the dating partners was one-

directional and sporadic (occurring intermittently). The relationships consisted primarily of explosive events (see Table 1). Prior to the explosive event the relationships were peaceful, and the aggressor was often apologetic after the violence occurred. Some recipients of the aggression were hopeful that the relationship would improve with time, particularly because the volatile events frequently correlated with a situational stressor such as an unwanted pregnancy and substance misuse. Other recipients were intolerant of the abuse and terminated the relationship immediately. There were no gender differences identified for peers' involvement in volatile relationships.

Peer involvement: Ignoring the aggression. The majority of explosive events that occurred in volatile relationships occurred in private. Peers had limited involvement during the attacks or afterwards and most recipients of violence did not tell others because of embarrassment. Peers who learned of the abuse were told about it by one of the dating partners. When peers did become aware of the violence, they ignored it.

Sarah was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Clay, were considered to be a volatile couple because on one occasion Clay was explosive and punched Sarah in the nose. Prior to this they shared a civil relationship, and Sarah thought Clay was charming and sweet. Clay was drunk and became volatile when Sarah refused his sexual advances. This surprised Sarah who never thought he was capable of violence. Male and female peers who were in the next room were surprised to see Sarah emerge with a bloody nose. Sarah was distraught that no one tried to help her or expressed concern; they were shocked by her appearance. Her friends did not talk to her about the violence later either, which she interpreted as their lack of concern. She decided that they were not good friends after all and opted to end their friendships.

Brawling Relationships

As seen in Table 2, brawling relationships (n=8) were marked by intense and heated fights between the dating partners. The aggression was bi-directional and sporadic. The relationships consisted primarily of scuffling, violating, tumultuous, and rejecting/ignoring/disrespecting events (Table 1). Unlike teens in turbulent relationships, teens in brawling relationships did not describe tumultuous childhoods and physical aggression was not their social norm. Rather, aggression occurred when arguments between the couple became heated and tempers flared. Both male and female peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by confronting a partner about the aggression.

Peer involvement: Confronting a partner. The sudden and sporadic nature of the fights within the brawling relationship represented atypical social behavior causing discomfort for both male and female peers. Peers sought to manage their discomfort by eliminating what they perceived to be the source of the hostility. In many cases the peers blamed the conflict on one of the partners and, therefore, encouraged the other to dissolve the relationship in order to restore harmony within the social group. Most dating partners did not agree with their friends' opinion that they were better off without their dating partner. Some lamented that they felt pressure to adhere to their friends' advice while others provided reasons why they could not break up with their partner.

Nico was a 21-year-old African American man. He and his girlfriend, Kendall, were considered to be a brawling couple because their disputes sometimes escalated into physical altercations. They were competitive with each other, which allowed small problems to be blown out of proportion. Often they fought about the custody of their

child, which once led to Nico's arrest. Police involvement was unusual though and was not the social norm for Nico or his friends. His friends were uncomfortable when he and Kendall fought, and they viewed Kendall as the aggressor. In order to manage their discomfort, Nico's friends confronted him and urged him to end his dating relationship with Kendall. They told Nico: "She's not good for you. You have plans, you have goals. There are many positive things in your future. You don't need this on your record." At the time Nico agreed that he probably should break up with Kendall but added that they would still be forced to share a relationship since they had a child together. Ultimately he decided to work to resolve the differences that caused them to brawl rather than end their relationship.

Lindsay was an 18-year-old woman of more than one race. She and her boyfriend, Ramon, were considered to be a brawling couple because they both had "really bad tempers" which would flare sporadically. They often yelled at each other, causing them to sometimes resort to mild physical violence to get the other's attention. Lindsay's female peers were uncomfortable with the way she and Ramon communicated and pressured her to break up with him. Their insistence made her feel obligated to leave Ramon against her desires. She knew the way he treated her was not right but she still cared for him.

Ashlee was a 20-year-old African American woman. She and her boyfriend, Eric, were considered to be a brawling couple because they infrequently pushed and slapped each other when they fought about their relationship. After an argument with Eric, Ashlee confided in her sister who demanded that Ashlee break up with Eric. As a result, Ashlee

did not confide in her sister again but went out of her way to keep the details of her relationship with Eric private.

Deprecating Relationships

As seen in Table 2, deprecating relationships (n=21) were those marked by behaviors in which one partner insulted or ignored the other partner. The aggression was one-directional and routine. The aggressive events were disparaging, and rejecting/ignoring/disrespecting (Table 1). Deprecation often occurred in public and led to hurt feelings, embarrassment, or affected self-esteem. Many participants did not consider the deprecating relationship to be abusive because it lacked physical and sexual aggression. Male peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by being the competition of male dating partners whereas female peers contributed by being the audience when female dating partners deprecated their boyfriends.

Male peer involvement: Being the competition. In deprecating relationships, the friendships that female dating partners had with male peers were threatening to the boyfriends. Boyfriends were threatened by their dating partners' friendships with either a particular boy or any male. Boyfriends viewed these relationships as direct competition for their girlfriends' attention. In addition to routinely belittling their girlfriends, male dating partners also belittled the competing male peers and tried to persuade their girlfriends to sever ties with these males. Some girls complied while others did not. Nevertheless, boyfriends sought to reestablish their position of importance in their girlfriend's' lives and secure their status among peers by "eliminating" the competition.

Brianne was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Jamie, were considered to be a deprecating couple because Jamie routinely belittled Brianne. Jamie

was shy and unsure of himself and felt threatened by one of Brianne's male friends, Tyler, with whom she was particularly close. Jamie dealt with the situation by saying mean things about Brianne and Tyler and urging Brianne to break ties with Tyler. Although she complied with his request, she later regretted this decision.

Amy was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Neil, were considered to be a deprecating couple because Neil frequently yelled at her in public when he was angry. Amy thought that Neil learned these behaviors from his parents, and she hoped that she could change Neil. Neil hated Amy's male friend, Brent, and resented the time Amy and Brent spent together. Amy said, "The fact that I picked Brent to be friends with really pissed Neil off because he hated him. Neil accused Amy of cheating with Brent. Neil began to berate both Amy and Brent and insisted that they end their friendship. Rather than end the relationship, Brent offered Amy support and reassurance which led the two of them to become closer.

Becca was a 20-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Matt, were considered to be a deprecating couple because he was routinely rude to her and to most of her friends. Becca attributed Matt's bad behavior to jealousy. Matt thought that it was only a matter of time before Becca cheated on him with another boy. He bullied her into terminating all of her friendships, but was particularly suspicious of her male friendships. Matt acted "like an ass" towards Becca's male friends by glaring at them and refusing to shake their hands. She was embarrassed by his behavior and eventually chose to end her relationship with Matt rather than those with her male friends.

Female peer involvement: Being the audience. Female peers served as an audience when their friends mistreated their boyfriends in public. The public nature of

deprecating relationships was embarrassing and jeopardized the recipient's self-esteem and social status. Partners who were belittled in public felt less confident about their ability to interact with peers. The deprecation shaped the peers' opinions about both dating partners. These opinions influenced the partners' popularity and status.

Lance was a 19-year-old Caucasian man. He and his girlfriend, Erica, were considered to be a deprecating couple because Erica belittled Lance in public on a regular basis. Her mistreatment of Lance affected his demeanor with others and caused him to be less outgoing and less confident. He surmised that his concern that everyone was judging him negatively was the result of Erica's criticizing him in front of peers when she suggested that he was too fat or too tall. He said: "Now I can't even look in the mirror without analyzing everything about myself and feeling like I'm not good enough for anyone."

Tim was a 20-year-old Caucasian man. He and his girlfriend, Anna, were considered to be a deprecating couple because Anna frequently yelled at Tim in front of peers when she was angry. Tim theorized that Anna was concerned that her friends were beginning to like him more than they liked her, and therefore she sought to "bring (him) down a notch" by embarrassing him in front of others. She yelled at him in public to make certain that people knew he was not better than her. These beliefs were reinforced by the fact that she never yelled at him when they were alone. Rather, her aggression always played out in front of friends.

Bobby was a 20-year-old Caucasian man. He and his girlfriend, Julie, were considered to be in a deprecating relationship because Julie frequently yelled at Bobby and called him names in front of peers. Bobby was especially offended when she behaved

like that in front of the underclassmen because it undermined his status as a senior. He worried that if the juniors witnessed him being mistreated his reputation would be compromised.

Bickering Relationships

As seen in Table 2, bickering relationships (n=28) were those marked by petulant and peevish arguments consisting of verbal and mild physical aggression. The aggression was bi-directional and routine. The aggressive events between the dating partners were mainly scuffling (Table 1). The dating partners described quarreling as their regular way of communicating with each other. The regularity of their squabbles was demonstrated by statements such as “we always...” or “it happened all the time.” Male peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by joking with the dating partner, whereas female peers to the couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by needling the dating partner.

Male peer involvement: Joking with the dating partner. Bickering relationships were heavily influenced by peers who were often with the dating partners at school and social events. These peers were heavily involved in each other’s lives and contributed to the development of high school “dramas” in which bickering between dating partners readily occurred. Bickering was accentuated when some peers and dating partners viewed an event as trivial and others viewed it as catastrophic. Male peers tended to minimize the importance of the conflicts and joked about them, while female peers tended to take them more seriously.

Shawn was a 19-year-old, African American man. He and his girlfriend, Faith, were considered to be a bickering couple because they quarreled continuously with each

other both privately and publicly. Shawn's friends thought their squabbling was entertaining and did not take it seriously. Rather they saw it as an opportunity to create drama for the peer group. When they ran into Faith after she and Shawn argued, they encouraged her to throw a brick through the window of his home. Shawn suspected that they did so because "they thought it was a good laugh."

Jordan was a 21-year-old African American man. He and his girlfriend, Kat, were considered to be a bickering couple because Kat was always "poppin' off" at him. Initially, when Jordan tried to walk away, she would slap him. He did not believe in hitting girls and did not fight back. He argued with her instead. Jordan's male peers laughed about the altercation when Jordan confided in them. When Jordan received a bloody nose after Kat hit him, his friends convinced Jordan not to sulk but to laugh it off instead. He said: "I wasn't laughing at first, but after a while it became funny to me."

Curt was an 18-year-old Caucasian man. He and his girlfriend, Tara, were considered to be a bickering couple because they regularly disagreed about the rules of their relationship. From the beginning, Tara took the relationship more seriously and Curt felt harassed by her determination to do things her way. One of Curt's male peers, who was also a former boyfriend of Tara's, validated Curt's opinion that Tara took the relationship too seriously. After he broke up with Tara, he and the male peer laughed about Tara's silly behaviors and compared notes about their respective dating experiences with her. Curt found comfort in the support he received from his male peer and believed it is good when "you can just laugh about it."

Female peer involvement: Needling the dating partner. Female peers of couples in this category were also enmeshed in high school drama. They were more

likely to provoke additional drama between the couple by needling the male dating partner. They did so by picking fights or irritating him. Sometimes groups of female peers ganged up on the male dating partner, while at other times one female needled the boyfriend. Several participants speculated as to why the females needled the male partner. Some suggested that the females did not like the boyfriends or were uncomfortable with the amount of time they spent with their friend.

Fred was a 21-year-old Caucasian man. He and his girlfriend, Beth, were considered to be a bickering couple because they engaged in “constant arguing all the time.” Fred tried to please Beth, but she was never happy. Eventually he began to quarrel with her, even though he still cared for her and wanted to be with her. Beth’s friends needled Fred by belittling him and his family, making harassing phone calls, and soliciting him for money. They spoke badly about Fred and were disrespectful to him. He suspected that they resented the amount of time he spent with Beth even though he did not spend as much time with her as they did.

Donnie was an 18-year-old African American man. He and his girlfriend, Jaida, were considered to be a bickering couple because they frequently quarreled with each other. During their on-again/off-again relationship, the female peers contributed to their bickering by needling Donnie. Jaida’s friends drank Donnie’s alcohol when he left a house party to buy food. He left a bottle of alcohol in the freezer to chill, and while he was gone Jaida’s friends emptied it and returned the empty bottle to the freezer. When he realized what they had done he confronted Jaida’s friend, Simone, who owned the house and asked for an explanation. Simone became angry and told him to leave. He later

learned that Jaida's friends did not like him and wanted her to reunite with a former boyfriend. He felt that this was their reason for needling him.

Intrusive Relationships

As seen in Table 2, intrusive relationships (n=14) were those marked by the unwelcomed, invasive, and disruptive behaviors that rarely became physical. The aggression was one-directional and routine. The aggressive events between the dating partners were mainly controlling (Table 1). The intrusive partners were demanding of the recipient's time, attention, or loyalty. They often resorted to desperate acts if the recipients did not comply with their wishes. All of the aggressors in this group were male. They were intrusive towards their girlfriends both during the relationship and after it ended. They were controlling, demanding, and manipulative. They manipulated their girlfriends with threats of self-harm and by attempts to make them feel guilty. Male peers to couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by keeping tabs on the recipient of the intrusion, whereas female peers to the couples in this group contributed to the dating violence by trying to help the recipient.

Male peer involvement: Keeping tabs on the recipients. Male peers were involved in intrusive relationships by keeping tabs on the recipient and reporting her activities to the boyfriend. They offered information, support, and resources to the aggressor.

Rachel was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Jimmy, were considered to be an intrusive couple because Jimmy was controlling both while they were dating and after they broke up. While they were dating, Jimmy inflicted self-harm by punching objects to elicit sympathy from Rachel so she would feel guilty and submit

to him. After they broke up, Jimmy stalked Rachel and showed up at various places that she frequented. Jimmy's male peers were accomplices to his intrusive behaviors by telling Jimmy about Rachel's whereabouts.

Michelle was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Jared, were considered to be an intrusive couple because he was controlling and demanding. He coerced Michelle in doing things for him by making her feel guilty. Male peers helped Jared try to convince Michelle to reunite with him by making her jealous. For example, they went to the restaurant where she worked and, within earshot of Michelle, described how Jared had "hooked up with" another girl at a party. Michelle became jealous after overhearing their discussion and questioned her decision to break up with Jared. Michelle suspected that Jared's friends meant for her to hear these things because they talked loudly and went out of their way to find her (she worked an hour away from where they lived).

Jenna was a 21-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Alan, were considered to be an intrusive couple because Alan called Jenna multiple times when she was out with her friends. She said that Alan was "clingy" and wanted her to spend all of her time with him. The male peers were spies for Alan. Jenna said, "We had mutual friends. He asked them where I was going to be like over the weekend and he would conveniently be there." Also, Alan used his friends to make Jenna feel uncomfortable after they broke up. He told Jenna that his friends did not like her because she was mean to him. He used this as a way of manipulating her into dating him again.

Female peer involvement: Helping the recipient. Most of the female peers of those who were involved in the intrusive relationships were close friends of the

girlfriends who were recipients of the intrusion. These friends tried to be helpful. Most of their involvement was aimed at making the girlfriend consider her boyfriend's actions as deviant or unhealthy. Whether concerned about the girlfriend's toxic relationship or immediate danger, the female peers were instrumental in getting the girlfriend to view the relationship as problematic. Many of the girlfriends admitted that they missed early signs of problems in the relationships. However, most of the girls eventually accepted the opinions of their friends.

Becky was a 19-year-old Caucasian woman. She and her boyfriend, Cody, were considered to be an intrusive couple because Cody repeatedly tried to coerce her into being sexually active with him even though she adamantly refused. He took advantage of Becky by telling her she could trust him and that he only wanted to be friends, but he made strong sexual advances towards her. He once pretended to invite her to a party at his house, but when Becky arrived she was the only guest. Some female peers told Becky that Cody had several other girlfriends when he was away at school. Others told her that they did not care for Cody's attitude and that he was a "snob." One female peer, Trisha, told her that she had also been sexually pressured by Cody after he gave her a ride home from practice but she fought him off. Becky said that it was helpful to hear Trisha's story because it made her feel like she was not alone. They wondered how many other girls experienced similar behaviors from Cody.

One of Rachel's (described above) female peers tried to be helpful when she saw Rachel's boyfriend, Jimmy, punch a cement wall. Her friend, Jaylene, arrived at Jimmy's house to pick up Rachel. Jimmy was angry that Rachel was leaving so he punched the cement wall and injured his hand. Rachel was concerned about leaving Jimmy so upset,

but Jaylene urged Rachel to leave. Jaylene argued that Jimmy's mother should be the one to care for him - not Rachel. Rachel was concerned that others would learn about their argument so Jaylene agreed not to tell anyone if Rachel would leave.

Jenna's (described above) friends helped her realize that she was being mistreated by her boyfriend, Alan. Prior to her friends' involvement, Jenna did not consider Alan's intrusiveness to be abuse; she thought that his actions proved that he loved her. It was not until her friends asked her why she put up with his behaviors that she viewed his actions as mistreatment.

Summary

Peers were closely involved with most dating couples experiencing ADV. Distinct gender differences were found in all but two relationship categories. Only the volatile and brawling relationships did not show clear gender differences. Male peers were involved in ADV relationships by "participating in the violence" (maltreating relationships), "agitating the aggression" (turbulent relationships), "being the competition" (deprecating relationships), "joking with the dating partner" (bickering relationships), and "keeping tabs on the recipient" (intrusive relationships). Female peers were involved in ADV relationships by "deserting the recipient" (maltreating relationships), "cheating with the boyfriend" (turbulent relationships), "being the audience" (deprecating relationships), "needling the dating partner" (bickering relationships), and "helping the recipient" (intrusive relationships).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

A theoretical framework of how peers were involved in violent adolescent dating relationships was developed in this study. A discussion of the findings and their relationship to previously reported findings follows. Limitations, clinical implications, and recommendations for future research are also presented.

This study used grounded theory methods to examine the phenomenon of peer involvement in adolescent dating violence. The following research questions were addressed: (a) In what ways are peers involved in adolescent dating patterns and experiences? and (b) How do peers influence the management of dating violence?

1. To describe the qualities of the peer relationships of adolescents who experience dating violence.
2. To determine the roles of peers on the social processes of how teens manage adolescent dating violence.
3. To determine any gender difference between how peer relationships of males and females affect adolescent dating relationships and the management of ADV.

Review of the Findings

The Peer Involvement Typology that emerged from this research expanded on the relationship typology developed in an earlier study (Draucker et al., 2011) by focusing on

how peers were involved in the various types of ADV relationships. Gender differences were presented when male and female peers were involved differently in these relationships (Table 4).

Peers were involved in maltreating relationships by “participating in the aggression” (males) and by “deserting the recipient” (females). Peers were involved in turbulent relationships by “agitating the aggression” (males) and by “cheating with the boyfriend” (females). Male and female peers were involved in volatile relationships by “ignoring the aggression.” Male and female peers were involved in brawling relationships by “confronting a partner.” Peers were involved in deprecating relationships by “being the competition” (males) and by “being the audience” (females). Peers were involved in bickering relationships by “joking with the dating partner” (males) and by “needling the dating partner” (females). Peers were involved in intrusive relationships by “keeping tabs on the recipient” (males) and by “helping the recipient of the intrusion” (females).

Discussion of the Findings

Findings from this study extended current knowledge about ADV by making significant contributions to what is known about (a) the nature of peer relationships among teens involved in ADV, (b) how peer involvement affects the management of ADV, and (c) the gender-specific ways that peers were involved in ADV.

The nature of peer relationships is described in the Peer Involvement Typology. Previously, the body of knowledge about peer involvement in ADV consisted of incidental findings from a number of separate reports. The peer involvement typology makes a contribution to the literature because it describes peers’ behaviors according to the type of relationship that dating couples shared and the gender of peers. The typology

accounts both for how peers contribute to the violence and for how they assist couples to end the violence. No previous research was found that explained peer involvement in ADV in this way.

Prior research on peer involvement in ADV focused on whether peers are willing to get involved in the dating relationship. Weisz and Black (2008) found that nearly one half of African American teens would not get involved with the dating couples' violence because they viewed it as the couple's business. In these studies, peer involvement in ADV was conceptualized as voicing an opinion about or taking action to decrease the abusive aspects of the dating relationships.

The current study expands the idea of peer involvement by examining all of the ways in which peers were involved in the violence including actions that both fostered and inhibited the violence. While it is not possible to directly compare findings of the current study with other studies in which relationship types were not described, the expanded understanding of peer involvement in this study provides a theoretical understanding which may account for isolated findings in previous studies.

For example, findings in the current study that female dating partners in maltreating relationships were likely to experience social isolation is similar to the finding by Banister and Jakubec (2004) that females are more likely than males in dating violence relationships to become isolated. In the current study females in maltreating relationships were isolated through desertion by their friends. Banister and Jakubec (2004) suggested that females in their study were isolated because they remained committed to the dating relationship and put their boyfriends first. Participants in the current study indicated that a common reason for being deserted was that their friends felt

that they were focusing too much on the dating relationship or friends did not approve of the partnership. Furthermore, findings in this study indicated that girls in maltreating relationships experienced aggression enacted against them by male friends of their boyfriends. Once male peers began participating in the abuse against them, they were faced with the decision to further tolerate the abuse or leave the relationship and be alone. Lavoie et al. (2000) and Ismail et al. (2007) found that an adolescent girl's need to have a boyfriend can be so powerful that she might continue in an aggressive relationship rather than be alone or ostracized by peers for not having a boyfriend.

The present study found that female peers of teens in turbulent relationships flirted or cheated with the boyfriend. Sometimes female peers flirted with the boyfriends in front of the girlfriend, which provoked jealousy and hurt feelings. This finding supported previous research conducted by Leadbeater et al. (2008) who found that flirting with someone else in front of a dating partner or the partner's friends was used to elicit jealousy.

In the current study, girls in brawling relationships were confronted about the aggression by peers and were less apt to confide in those peers in the future. Similarly, Chung (2007) found that if friends openly disapproved of their female friend's dating relationship the friend felt less comfortable confiding in them later. While no gender differences were discerned in the findings of peer involvement in brawling relationships, findings by Mahlstedt and Kenny (1993) indicate that female peers of teens in troubled dating relationships are less likely than male peers to try to make decisions for their peer about the relationship.

In the current study male peers of females in deprecating relationships were viewed by male dating partners as competition. These findings are similar to those of Adelman and Kil (2007) who described how relationships can become troubled when one partner feels threatened by the other partner's platonic friendships. According to these researchers, just the perception of competition can incite jealousy between dating partners. Girlfriends in deprecating relationships in the current study claimed that their friendships with other boys were platonic and posed no real danger to their boyfriends. According to Adelman and Kil (2007), the perception of male competition threatened a male's status among peers. Allowing girlfriends to socialize with other boys threatens male self-esteem by making him appear weak in front of peers. Brown (1990) described adolescent society as a series of relationship ties shared by members of the social network. "Fitting in" with a particular crowd is crucial to the formation of adolescent identity and guides how each individual is regarded by peers. Status and popularity benefit from certain crowd affiliations and are viewed as vital commodities by many adolescents. In this study, deprecating partners were prone to using public deprecation to call the recipient's status into question. Furthermore, deprecating partners demonstrated their own self-worth to peers by dominating and overpowering their dating partner.

Male peers of couples in bickering relationships joked with the dating partner about the abuse. Similarly Mahlstedt and Kenny (1993) reported that female friends were less likely than males to trivialize the abuse, and Weisz et al. (2007) found males to be less troubled by violence than females. Males in the Weisz et al study (2007) responded to abuse by minimizing it. However, findings in the current study were dissimilar in that, while participants in the Weisz et al study (2007) used minimization to deal with severe

physical abuse, male peers in this study used minimization, or joking behaviors, to deal with the peevish arguments that occurred between dating partners.

Prior research has suggested that the major role of peers who get involved in friends' ADV relationships is as a confidant and potential helper. Our findings differed in that the roles of confidant or potential helper were not the primary way in which peers were involved in ADV relationships. While both male and female peers of those involved in brawling relationships confronted their friends about the violence, only females peers of girlfriends in intrusive relationships tried to offer help. A number of previous studies focused on how peers decided to confide in someone about their abuse (Johnson et al., 2005; Ocampo et al., 2007; Sears et al., 2006) or how they selected their confidant (Johnson et al., 2005; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Sears et al., 2006). Findings from most studies suggested that dating partners selected friends rather than adults as confidants for matters involving ADV (Raviv et al., 2000; Weisz et al., 2007). Helpful responses of peers have been examined in previous studies. Mahlstedt and Kenney (1993) found that friends listened, gave helpful advice, and were angry with the abuser. Female peers involved in intrusive relationships in the current study were helpful by assisting the girlfriend to see that the relationship was unhealthy.

There is ample evidence to support that both male and female peers are involved in ADV (Ismail et al., 2007; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Wang et al., 2007). However, ADV researchers have not clarified how male and female peers differed in their roles. The peer typology developed in this study indicated that males and females took actions that tended to provoke the dating aggression for different reasons. Male peers provoked more aggression because they thought it was cool (participating in the aggression, joking

with the dating partner) or they were self-serving (agitating the aggression). Female peers provoked the dating conflict because they were self-serving (cheating with the boyfriend, needling the dating partner).

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, data about peer involvement were collected through interviews with dating partners involved in abusive relationships and not the peers themselves. However, participants shared numerous stories about how peers had been involved in their dating relationships. While interviewing peers may have yielded additional or varied ways of involvement, sufficient data were collected to provide ample evidence for the categories in the typology. Furthermore, peers who were involved in the dating violence by contributing to it may have narrated their involvement in a way that was socially acceptable rather than in a way that contributed to the violence.

A second limitation to the study was that data consisted of retrospective narratives. The decision to collect retrospective data from young adults who had experienced dating violence as adolescents was a reasoned one. Interviewing adolescents would have required parental consent. Securing parental consent would lead to a sample of adolescents whose parents knew about their violent relationships. There was concern that a significant number of teens who were eligible for the study would decline because they did not want their parents to know about their relationship abuse. This concern was supported by a number of participants who said that they chose not to disclose the aggression to their parents when they were teens. Sampling only teens who were comfortable disclosing their abuse to their parents could exclude a significant portion of the adolescent population. Despite the retrospective design of the study, the participants

were able to recall their experiences with dating violence with clarity and emotion. In addition, recalling these stories retrospectively gave the adolescents the ability to reflect on the entirety of a violent relationship from its onset to its termination.

Implications for Clinical Practice

These findings add valuable information to what is currently understood about adolescent dating violence. Understanding how peers influence the social process of adolescent dating violence can facilitate improvements in prevention programming. Practitioners who work in programs aimed at primary prevention of ADV should consider that both male and female peers of adolescents who experience ADV may actually contribute to the violence. Thus, primary prevention efforts could be enhanced by using the peer involvement typology. Didactic content could include information about how teens contribute to the violence in each of the relationship types. Role modeling and mentoring by adults who are in healthy intimate relationships could help adolescents learn effective strategies to avoid or recognize unhealthy dating relationships. Furthermore, those who engage in intervention efforts should recognize that adolescents may be experiencing violence not just by their dating partner but also by their peers. The peer involvement typology can be used to initiate conversations with teens who are experiencing dating violence to determine if and how peers are contributing to the violence.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research is one of the first to examine the ways in which peers are involved in adolescent dating violence. Findings support the assertion that peers are influential to adolescent dating relationships and violence and that their involvement contributes to the

violence in most types of ADV relationships and is helpful in only a few of the relationship types. Although these findings were important and provided an addition to what is currently understood about this phenomenon, several aspects of peer involvement in ADV require further research. Studies are needed in which peers are interviewed directly. These data were collected from dating partners who described how peers were involved and not from the peers themselves. It would be helpful to corroborate these findings with reports obtained directly from peers. A study in which both teens who experienced ADV and their friends are interviewed would allow a comparison of viewpoints about peer involvement.

Future studies should continue to refine the peer involvement typology and uncover additional factors that affect peers and dating relationships.

Conclusion

This research has provided a unique view of how peers are involved in ADV. A typology of ADV relationship categories was developed in a previous study. This study expanded on that typology by describing how peers were involved in each type of violent adolescent dating relationship. In addition, important gender distinctions were made in each category where relevant.

Dating violence does not occur exclusively between two partners. Many variables influence its trajectory. Peer involvement is one such variable that has a tremendous influence on how adolescents behave and relate to each other. Understanding how peers are involved in ADV enables interventions to be developed that will speak directly to teens in a language that is meaningful and aligned with their concerns.

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL

February 27, 2007

Donna Martzoff, Professor
College of Nursing
Kent State University

Re: 07-263 "Adolescent Dating Violence: Development of a Theoretical Framework"

Dear Dr. Martzoff:

I am pleased to inform you that the contingencies requested by Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the January 17, 2007 meeting have been met and your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants received final approval on February 27, 2007.

This approval is good for one year from January 17, 2007 through January 16, 2008. HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB further requests an annual progress report and a final report at the conclusion of the study. A Periodic Review form will be sent prior to the renewal date of January 16, 2008, but please be aware that timely annual reviews are ultimately the responsibility of the Principal Investigator.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001552.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 330.672.2704 or k.kager@kent.edu. You may begin collecting data. Good luck with your research project!

Sincerely,

Katherine Light
IRB Administrator

Division of Research and Graduate Studies
330-672-2651 • Fax: 330-672-2658
Graduate Program Services
330-672-2660 • Fax: 330-672-2658
P.O. Box 5190 • Kent, Ohio 44342-0001 • <http://www.kent.edu>

APPENDIX B

ADV RECRUITMENT FLYER

KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY
College of Nursing

Almost half of all teens have been in a dating relationship in which there was violence or mistreatment

Interviews Conducted in Your Community

Women and men between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in such relationships are needed to participate in a study seeking to understand more about adolescent dating relationships that are troubled.

Adolescent dating violence or mistreatment can include:

- Constant criticism and put downs
- Pushing, slapping or shoving
- Unwanted kissing, hugging or sexual contact
- Embarrassment and humiliation
- Hitting, punching, kicking
- Coerced sex
- Threats of harassment
- Attacking with a weapon
- Sexual assault or rape
- Control and isolation

Dating relationships might include:

- A long-time boyfriend or girlfriend (whether or not sexually active)
- A partner for a single event (e.g. school dance)
- A partner for a series of casual encounters
- A partner from a member of a group that socializes together

If you had any of these experiences when you were between the ages of 13 and 18, whether you initiated or received these behaviors, we would like to talk with you.

PARTICIPATION INVOLVES:

A 1-2 hour **confidential**, one-on-one interview. You receive \$35 per interview for your time. Your stories will help others.

For more information and to sign up, call our **confidential, toll-free number:**

1-866-520-7390

This study is conducted by the Kent State University College of Nursing and has been approved by the KSU Human Subjects Review Board: 330-672-2704

Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390	Adolescent Project 1-866-520-7390
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APPENDIX C
ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE STUDY
 SCREENING INTERVIEW AND DISTRESS PROTOCOL
 Last Revised: 1/29/2006

This is (name) from the Kent State University College of Nursing. Thank you for your interest in our study. Do you have any questions about the study? [If yes, answer questions. If no, proceed.]

Could you please verify your name, address, and phone number?

Because the topic of dating violence/mistreatment can be sensitive and might bring up tough feelings, we are advising individuals who are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress or whose participation might put them in danger not participate at this time. Is it all right if we ask you some questions to determine if there is any reason you should not participate? [If no, thank for time and interest. If yes, conduct screening interview]

Screening Question	NO	YES	If YES, ask follow-up questions	Caller's Responses	Acute Emotional Distress or On-going Safety Concern? (Y or N)	Imminent Danger to Self or Other? (Y or N)
1. Are you experiencing a high level of stress or any emotional distress?			1. Tell me what you are experiencing. 2. Is it getting in the way of you doing things you need to do (school, work, family obligations)? 3. Is it getting in the way of you taking care of yourself? 4. Have you been in the hospital recently for this problem?			
2. Are you currently having thoughts of harming yourself?			1. Tell me what thoughts you are having. 2. Do you intend to harm yourself? 3. How do you intend to harm yourself? 4. When do you intend to harm yourself? 5. Do you have the means to harm yourself?			
3. Are you currently having thoughts of harming someone else?			1. Tell me what thoughts you are having. 2. Do you have intend to harm someone else? Who? 3. How do you intend to harm him/her/them? 4. When do you intend to harm him/her/them? 5. Do you have the means to harm him/her/them?			
4. If you participated in the study, would you be in any danger if			1. How might you be in danger? 2. How might the other person find out your were participating 3. What do you think the other person would do if they found			

anyone else found out?			out your were participating in the study?			
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All screening will be conducted by an experienced mental health clinician (MHC).

Research interviews will not be scheduled with those who are experiencing a high level of stress or acute distress on screening

If answers to screening questions, are all NO, read the confidentiality statement below and schedule an interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

All answers that you give will be kept private. This is so because this study has been given a Certificate of Confidentiality. This means anything you tell us will not have to be given out to anyone, even if a court orders us to do so, unless you say it's okay. But under law, we must report to the state suspected cases of child abuse or if you tell us you are planning to cause serious harm to yourself or others.

If answer to any screening question is yes, ask follow-up questions.

1. If responses to additional questions reflect **acute distress or on-going safety concerns but NOT imminent danger to self or others**: a) do not schedule an interview, b) recommend that the caller contact their mental care provider if they have one, or Dr. Perkins (study psychologist from the Center for the Treatment and Study of Traumatic Stress 330-379-9445) if they do not, c) notify Dr. Perkins and Dr. Martsof (principal investigator 330-672-8822) of the results of the screening, d) with the caller's permission, Dr. Perkins will follow-up within 24 hours of the call.
2. If responses to additional screening questions reflect **imminent danger to self or others**, a) contact local law authorities, b) notify Dr. Perkins and Dr. Martsof the results of the screening, c) Dr. Perkins will follow-up with the caller within 24 hours of the call.

Note: If during the course of the study, Drs. Perkins or Martsof are not available (e.g., on vacation), another study psychologist from the Center for the Treatment of Traumatic Stress or another study investigator (Dr. Draucker) will be available to the MHC.

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY RESOURCE REFERRALS

Medina County Community Resources

Referral list (Updated 1/2008)

(Although every attempt has been made to update this referral list, telephone numbers, personnel, and services rendered can change without notice.)

Alternative Paths (Medina) (24 hours, suicide assessments)	Medina 330-725-9195 Brunswick 330-225-7100 Wadsworth 330-336-6657
Battered Woman Shelter	Medina 330-723-9610 Brunswick 330-225-7100 Wadsworth 330-336-6657
C-FIT (Child & Family Intervention Team, Medina)	330-722-0750
Rape Crisis Center	330-722-0750 330-434-RAPE (7273) Toll Free 1-877-906-RAPE (7273)
Victim's Assistance (Medina)	330-725-6631 24hr Help Line 330-723-9512
Medina City Information Line	2-1-1
Medina General Hospital	Medina 330-725-1000 Brunswick 330-225-8555 Wadsworth 330-336-1000 Akron 330-666-8300
Summa Center for Treatment and Study of Traumatic Stress	330-379-5094
Trenvor Hotline (Gay and Lesbian youths who are distraught and considering suicide because of issues surrounding their sexual orientation.)	1-800-850-8078
Crisis Support Hotline/ Suicide National Domestic Violence National Suicide Prevention/ Lifeline Spanish Domestic Violence Spanish Rape Crisis	330-434-9144 800-799-7233 800-273-8255 800-799-7233 888-568-8332

Portage County Community Resources

Referral list (Updated 1/2008)

(Although every attempt has been made to update this referral list, telephone numbers, personnel, and services rendered can change without notice)

Townhall II (Counseling and Medical Clinic) Rape Crisis Contact Townhall II HELPLINE 24-HOUR	330-376-0040 330-678-4357 866-449-8518
Safer Futures (Domestic Violence Shelter 24-Hour)	330-673-2500 330-296-2100
Coleman Behavioral Health Services 24-Hour Crisis Line	330-673-1347 888-673-1347 330-296-3555 877-796-3555
Robinson Memorial Hospital (24-Hour)	330-297-0811
Portage County Information Line	2-1-1
Crisis Support Hotline/ Suicide National Domestic Violence National Suicide Prevention/ Lifeline Spanish Domestic Violence Spanish Rape Crisis	330-434-9144 800-799-7233 800-273-8255 800-799-7233 888-568-8332
Summa Center for Treatment and Study of Traumatic Stress	330-379-5094
Trenvor Hotline (Gay and Lesbian youths who are distraught and considering suicide because of issues surrounding their sexual orientation.)	1-800-850-8078

Summit County Community Resources

Referral list (Updated 1/2008)

(Although every attempt has been made to update this referral list, telephone numbers, personnel, and services rendered can change without notice)

Victim's Assistance	330-376-0040
Battered Woman Shelter	330-374-1111 888-395-HELP
Portage Path Behavioral Health (Barberton)	330-745-0081
Rape Crisis Center	330-434-RAPE (7273) Toll Free 1-877-906-RAPE (7273)
Summa Health Systems Akron General Medical Center Barberton Citizen's Hospital	330-375-3000 330-344-6000 330-615-3000
Summit County Information Line	2-1-1
Crisis Support Hotline/ Suicide National Domestic Violence National Suicide Prevention/ Lifeline Spanish Domestic Violence Spanish Rape Crisis	330-434-9144 800-799-7233 800-273-8255 800-799-7233 888-568-8332
Summa Center for Treatment and Study of Traumatic Stress	330-379-5094
Trenvor Hotline (Gay and Lesbian youths who are distraught and considering suicide because of issues surrounding their sexual orientation.)	1-800-850-8078

APPENDIX E

ADV CONSENT FORM

(ON KENT STATE UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD)

Consent Form (Young Adult) **Study: Adolescent Dating Violence**

We are conducting a research project to look at the ways in which dating violence/mistreatment affects the lives of adolescents with the goal of providing information for mental health professionals and others who work with teens who have experienced adolescent dating violence/mistreatment. We believe that young adults who have just completed their teen years and can reflect back on those years can provide helpful information. We would like to invite you to take part in the study.

If you decide to do this, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately one to two hours and that will consist of several general questions about experiences you had as a teen and throughout your life, as well as some more specific questions about actual events of dating violence and mistreatment you experienced. The interview will be conducted by (*name of interviewer*), an experienced mental health clinician. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed. The audio recording will be destroyed after transcription. We may contact you sometime after the initial interview to ask for clarification of some information that you provided, to inquire about any additional thoughts you might have had, or to ask you to review a summary of the results of the study.

You may experience some discomfort or painful emotions while discussing this sensitive topic with a stranger, especially if you have not had the opportunity to discuss your experiences before. If you feel distressed during the interview, please discuss your reactions with the interviewer; you may answer only those questions you wish to answer and may stop the interview at anytime. If you would like to receive information related to mental health services in your area, the interviewer will be happy to provide that for you.

The benefit to you would be the opportunity to share your experiences in order to assist professionals in their work with teens who have experienced dating violence/mistreatment. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you and you may stop at any time without penalty. Information you provide will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Exceptions include information related to the abuse of a child or indications of danger to self and others. Results will be reported for the group as a whole, although descriptions of your experiences and your quotes may be used as examples. Your identity will be concealed in any reports. You will be given \$35.00 today to compensate you for your time and travel.

All answers that you give will be kept private. This is so because this study has been given a Certificate of Confidentiality. This means anything you tell us will not have to be given out to anyone, even if a court orders us to do so, unless you say it's okay. But under law, we must report to the state suspected cases of child abuse or if you tell us you are planning to cause serious harm to yourself or others.

The project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University's rules for research, please call Dr. Peter Tandy, Acting Vice President for Research, telephone 1-330-672-0700. Please contact Dr. Donna Martsof or Dr. Claire Burke Draucker at 1-800-xxx-xxxx with any questions or concerns related to your participation in this study. You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Consent

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will be asked to do and that I can stop at any time.

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

CONSENT TO BE AUDIOTAPED

(ON KENT STATE UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD)

AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT FORM
Study: Adolescent Dating Violence

I agree to audio recording at _____ on _____.
The audio recording will be transcribed and erased. It will not be used in any manner
after transcription.

Date _____ Signature _____

APPENDIX G
DEMOGRAPHICS
ADV DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

Age:

Gender: MALE / FEMALE

Are you Latino or of Hispanic Origin? YES / NO

Which ONE of the following BEST describes how you see yourself?

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ White
- ☐ More than one race
- ☐ Other

Occupation:

Marital status:

Number of children:

Religious affiliation:

Zip Code:

Number in Household:

Annual household income in the family you grew up in: ENTER LETTER _____

Your Current Annual Income: ENTER LETTER _____

- A. Less than \$10000 /year
- B. \$10,000 \$14,999/year
- C. \$15,000 \$19,999/year
- D. \$20,000 \$24,999/year
- E. \$25,000 \$29,999/year
- F. \$30,000 \$34,999/year
- G. \$35,000 \$39,999/year
- H. \$40,000 \$44,999/year
- I. \$45,000 \$49,999/year
- J. \$50,000 \$59,999/year
- K. \$60,000 \$99,999/year
- L. \$100,000 \$124,999/year
- M. \$125,000 \$149,999/year
- N. \$150,000 \$199,999/year
- O. \$200,000 or more/year

APPENDIX H
OPEN ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

LIFE NARRATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE (Young Adults)

You have indicated that you have experienced violence or mistreatment by someone you were going out with when you were a teen. I am interested in finding what that (those) experience(s) were like for you and how it (they) have affected your life.

Tell me about the violence or mistreatment you have experienced. (Note: Participants will be assured that they may provide as few or as many details as they would like)

Describe your relationship with the other person(s).

Tell me about the violence or mistreatment.

What else was happening in your life at the time?

Were you experiencing other difficulties in your life at the time? (eg: pregnancies, drugs and alcohol, any emotional distress or mental health concerns)

What was it like living through the violence or mistreatment?

How did you manage following the violence or mistreatment?

How do you feel the violence or mistreatment affected your life?

How do you feel you have healed, recovered, coped with your experience of violence or mistreatment?

When did healing, recovering, coping start?

What have been the high points?

What have been the low points?

What has helped you get through it?

How did your family or friends respond?

How does your community deal with teen violence or mistreatment?

How does your school deal with teen violence or mistreatment in general? In your specific situation?

Have you had contact with any agencies or services, such as health care, police, court, rape crisis? What were those experiences like?

Have there been any other times in your life that you experienced violence, abuse or mistreatment? Could you tell me about them?

Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to professionals who encounter teens who experience violence or mistreatment?

What do professionals need to do to prevent teen violence?

APPENDIX I

CONSENT TO RECALL PARTICIPANTS

CONTACT FORM

Study: Adolescent Dating Violence Study

- Are you interested in receiving a copy of the research findings from this project?
_____ Yes _____ No
- Are you interested in receiving correspondence regarding the project?
_____ Yes _____ No

If Yes to either question, how/where should we send this information to:

Name/Initials

(How should we address the envelope): _____

Street/Box #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

- Would you be willing to return for a second interview?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please provide a telephone number where we can reach you

_____.

May we leave a message? _____ Yes _____ No

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