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adjustment levels and psychological and physical health. Some go so far as to use the rate of self-disclosure between parents and children as a dominant measure of the strength of their relationship and its health.[33] In adolescents' relationships with their parents, self-disclosure is thought to serve three key functions: intimacy is formed when disclosure is without distance or closeness is readily achieved.[34] Autonomy is regulated. Teens pick and choose what to tell their parents, thus limiting their control over the teens' daily activities.[34] Individuality is honored. Adolescents' unique preferences and interests are expressed. If these vary from their parents', they establish an identity for their own.[34] Children still attempt to maintain a certain amount of control over their parents' knowledge of their lives by monitoring how and when to disclose to them. Thus, they moderate their parents' potential reactions. Because of this, it is important for parents to be aware of how they react to their children's disclosures, for these reactions will be used as judgment calls for the children's future sharing.[34] Often, the reason for disclosing given by children in studies is based on the parent's expectations: "I've learned that [Mom or Dad] wants to have this information." This is adaptive, in that the child has learned what their parents want to know. Other times a reason is that the children do not want their parents to worry about them, and this is called parent-centered disclosures. Disclosing in order to make oneself feel better or to ensure protection from parents is considered to be another reason for youth to disclose, and it is called self-oriented disclosure. On a more manipulative level, some adolescents report telling their parents things based solely on gaining an advantage of some sort, whether this is the right to reveal less or the fact that being more open tends to result in more adolescent privileges. Sometimes children qualify their disclosures by merely stating that they only disclose what they feel they want to their parents. Thus, some information is kept secret. This is dubbed selective self-disclosure. In sum, adolescents feel different pulls that make them self-disclose to their parents that can be based on the parents' needs and the children's needs. There has not been a distinct pattern found to predict which reasons will be utilized to explain disclosures by different children. For this reason it is widely believed that the reason for disclosure is largely situational- and context- dependent.[33] The self-disclosure of children to their parents is the dominant source of information for parents to gain knowledge about their children and their daily lives. Parental knowledge of their children's whereabouts and daily lives has been linked to several positive outcomes. The more parents know about their kids, the lower the rate of behavior problems among children, and the higher the children's well-being. Adolescents who disclose have been found to have lower rates of substance abuse, lower rates of risky sexual behaviors, lower anxiety levels, and lower rates of depression.[32][34] Additionally, those who are well-adjusted, meaning they exhibit the qualities discussed above, generally want and enjoy parental involvement and are likely to disclose more.[34] In contrast, keeping secrets from one's parents has been linked to more physical illness, poor behavior, and depression in all cultural groups.[33] Many theorize that in at least one significant relationship one should feel able to disclose nearly completely in order for a healthy personality to develop.[34] While parental behavioral control was once thought to provide the greatest benefits to children in limiting their activities and serving as a source of forced protection, more recent research strongly suggests that disclosures to parents that provide the parents with information about daily activities actually shows the most promise in fostering positive development through childhood and adolescence.[32] Reciprocity in children's self-disclosures is often examined in children's friendships. It has been shown that children's understanding of friendship involves sharing secrets with another person. This mutual exchange of sharing secrets could be the norm of reciprocity, in which individuals disclose because it is a social norm. This norm of reciprocity is shown to begin occurring for children in sixth grade. Sixth graders are able to understand the norm of reciprocity because they realize that relationships require both partners to cooperate and to mutually exchange secrets. They realize this because they possess the cognitive ability to take another person's perspective into account and are able to understand a third person's views which allows them to view friendships as an ongoing systematic relationship.[35] Children in sixth grade are also shown to understand equivalent reciprocity. Equivalent reciprocity requires matching the level of intimacy a partner discloses, therefore, a high-intimacy disclosure would be matched with an equally revealing disclosure while a low-intimacy disclosure would be matched with little information revealed. Another type of reciprocity is covariant reciprocity, which disclosures are more intimate if a partner communicates a high-intimacy disclosure. This differs from equivalent reciprocity, which matches the level of intimacy, while covariant reciprocity only focuses on whether someone disclosed something personal or not. Covariant reciprocity is shown to begin in fourth grade [35] It has also been shown that girls across all ages disclose more intimate information than boys, and that the number of disclosures a child reveals increases with age.[35] Early studies note two distinct factors that contribute to how much children self-disclose to their parents. The first is intra-individual factors, which are those that are on the child's mind and cause them to need social input. Biological development, cultural and social pressures, and individual maturity determine these issues, and, thus, a child's age, personality, and background also contribute to their level and need of self-disclosure in a relationship with a parent.[34] The second set of factors is called contextual factors, which include the opportunities and situations that the individual has to disclose as created by the sociocultural environment. These are most directly related, then, to the target of the disclosure; these targets are the parents.[34] Also, gender contributes: girls are noted for usually disclosing their problems, mostly to their mothers, while boys reveal more about bad grades, behavioral conflicts, and other issues to both parents.[34] Certain people are more likely to get others to disclose. These are called high openers. Even people known to disclose very little are likely to disclose more to high openers. Thus, if parents are characterized as good listeners, trustworthy, accepting, relaxed, and sympathetic, as are high openers, then they will likely elicit more disclosure from their children. Adolescents who view their parents like this are also said to see them as less controlling and less likely to react negatively to their disclosures. Parental responsiveness has been said to be the dominant factor of influence on adolescents' rates of self-disclosure; warmth and affection facilitate more disclosures.[34] Parental psychological control has also been linked to increased self-disclosure of personal issues and peer issues among youth. While this sort of control is not often thought of in a positive light, some hypothesize that these kids are likely just feeling coerced to disclose subtly and without being harmed. Much of what children choose to reveal to their parents is based on previous disclosures and their parents' reactions to them.[33] Features about the parent-child relationship during one upbringing have also been found to correlate with their child's disclosures to the parents. A child with a positive memory of their relationship with a parent during the past years is a predictor of a higher level of self-disclosure. In fact, the view of the parent-child relationship in the past is a stronger predictor than that of the child's view of the current parent-child relationship. The relationship with the mother, in particular, is extremely predictive of disclosures from adolescents. Such findings suggest to parents that fostering secure attachment early in their children will better set the stage for disclosures in the later years, and their children may then reap the benefits of such a relationship.[32] Adolescents are able to determine their own amount of parental authority over certain issues by how much or how little they choose to disclose to their parents.[34] Surveys revealed that they are least likely to share information that involves their personal feelings and activities. They actively resist disclosing this to their parents because they do not see the issues as being harmful, or they feel their parents will not listen to them, or because the matters are very private to them.[33] The way adolescents perceive their parents' authority as legitimate largely impacts how much they feel obligated to disclose to them. The more authority the children believe their parents rightly possess, the more obligation they perceive to share their lives accordingly.[33] Parents who attempt a large degree of psychological control over their children are unlikely to be disclosed to as frequently, which only makes logical sense given the fact that most children are searching for a sense of autonomy.[32] The adolescents have been found to feel the most obligation to tell their parents about such activities as drinking and smoking but less need to disclose information about personal issues. Not surprising either, less obligation is felt as age increases.[34] Contrary to popular belief though, most adolescents in the US do not consider themselves to be adults between the ages of 18 and 27, and their parents feel the same way. The age at which children feel they no longer are obligated to disclose to their parents has increased over time, and the same trend is predicted over the next few decades.[32] Often, the motivation to disclose negative behaviors is purely because the children fear that they will not get away with it or feel obligated to share. Adolescents also want to disclose more if they feel that the activities in question are out of their own jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is measured, in the adolescents' minds, as how short-term and close the activities are. Short-term, close activities are judged as ones to be handled without disclosure to parents, while activities that will take longer or require the adolescent to be farther from home are thought of as being issues to discuss with parents.[33] Certain events and characteristics of the parent-child relationship make disclosures unlikely.[34] Mood: Nervous, angry, or unhappy parents make children less likely to disclose[34] Preoccupied: Parents who do not seem accessible to their children do not receive good disclosures[34] Reluctance: When parents seem unwilling to talk about problems or consistently avoid certain topics of conversation[34] Questioning: Adolescents are bothered by persistent questions that their parents ask of them[34] Respect: Children do not disclose as much if they feel their parents are not taking them seriously[34] Nagging: When parents seem to hag on unimportant matters, children become frustrated[34] Previous disapproval: Adolescents are not likely to disclose if their parents have previously expressed disapproval of a matter they wish to discuss[34] Certain events and characteristics of the parent-child relationship make the child less willing to disclose to that parent in the future: Distraction: If parents seem inattentive, the child is not likely to try to disclose in the future[34] Respect: Parents who make jokes about disclosures or tease their children discourage future discussions[34] Lack of trust: Children are not likely to disclose again when parents have shown doubt about their previous disclosures or checked the information that had been revealed[34] Interrupting: Parents who interrupt their children do not encourage future disclosures[34] Lack of reliability: Children will not disclose again if they feel their parents did not try to understand their position in previous disclosures[34] Lack of receptivity: Parents who seem not to care about the child's thoughts on matters and who will not listen to arguments discourage future disclosures[34] Confidentiality: Children feel less inclined to disclose in the future if their parents do not keep their disclosures confidential[34] Emotion: Parents who have angry reactions do not encourage future disclosures from their children[34] Consequences: Disclosures that resulted in punishment serve as discouragement for future disclosures. Additionally, long lectures from parents are not viewed as favorable[34] Disappointment: When disclosure has made a parent disappointed or sad in their child, the child feels less inclined to disclose again[34] Silence: Parents who respond to a disclosure with the silent treatment are unlikely to facilitate later disclosures[34] Withholding permission: If earlier disclosure resulted in parents withholding permissions for children to participate in their desired activities, the children often do not disclose such information again later[34] Certain events and characteristics of the parent-child relationship make disclosures likely: Mood: Positive moods (happy and relaxed) in parents make adolescents likely to begin to disclose[34] Accessibility: When parents seem ready and able to chat without doing other things, children want to disclose to them[34] Opportunities: Parents who make time for the child, initiate conversations, and prompt disclosures (perhaps with humor) usually facilitate disclosures from their children[34] Reciprocal disclosure: Children are encouraged if their parents choose to reveal things about themselves[34] Questions: Open-ended questions give adolescents motivation to disclose[34] Attention to child's mood: When parents recognize the affective state of a child, the child feels cared for and is likely to be open to discussing the causes of that mood[34] Unconditional disclosure: Children feel encouraged to disclose when parents make a point of telling the child to reveal themselves no matter what[34] Pace: Letting children choose how and how fast they disclose makes them more likely to reveal things to their parents[34] Certain events and characteristics of the parent-child relationship make the child more likely to disclose to that parent in the future: Support: Previous disclosures that have made the child feel emotionally supported positively affect whether or not they will disclose a future again[34] Humor: Parents who can appreciate humor in disclosure, where appropriate, encourage a child to disclose again[34] Reciprocity: Parental disclosure makes a child more likely to disclose to that parent again[34] Childen who are more motivated to disclose in the future if their parents do not keep their disclosures confidential[34] Appreciations: Parents who express to their adolescents that they value their disclosures encourage such to happen again[34] Respect: Children want to disclose again if they feel their parents take them seriously[34] Confidence in the child: Parents who express their trust in the child's ability to handle their problems will likely be disclosed to in the future[34] Trustworthiness: Adolescents will want to reveal information to their parents again if they trust that the disclosure will be confidential[34] Advice: If parents offer good advice and help for a youth's problems, they are prompted to discuss things with the parent later on[34] Reactions: Parents will often be told information from their children again if they keep their reactions to disclosures calm[34] Discussion: Children prefer to talk about their issues, so if adults are willing, children will likely open up to them often[34] Receptivity: Adults who consider arguments from the child and "hear them out" encourage these children to reveal their thoughts again[34] Results: If permissions for adolescents' wishes have been granted after disclosing in the past, the child is more likely to disclose in the future[34] There are four major differences between online communication and face to face communication. The first is that Internet users can remain anonymous. Individuals are more likely to speak more courageously online compared to how they would during in-person interactions when they are communicating anonymously online, a phenomenon known as the online disinhibition effect.[36] The user can choose what personal information (if any) they share with other users. Even if the user decides to use their own name, if communicating with people in other cities or countries they are still relatively anonymous. The second is that physical distance is not a factor in Internet communication. This allows people who have similar interests to meet people who have different interests than they do in their own lives. Visual cues, including those pertaining to physical attractiveness, are also not always present on the Internet. These factors have been shown to influence initial attraction and relationship formation. Finally, Internet users have time to formulate conversations which is not allotted in face to face conversation. This gives a user more control in the conversation because they do not have to give an immediate response.[37] Anonymity can allow individuals to take greater risks and discuss how they truly feel with others. A person might take these risks because they are more aware of their private self. Private self-awareness is when a person becomes more aware of personal features of the self. This is in contrast to public self-awareness in which a person realizes that they can be judged by others. This type of awareness can lead to evaluation apprehension, where a person fears receiving a negative evaluation from their peers. Public self-awareness is also associated with conforming to group norms even if they go against personal beliefs.[38] With that said, the absence of visual cues from a partner in Internet discussion can activate a person's private self which encourages self-disclosure. This is because the discloser is not worried about being judged publicly and is able to express their own private thoughts.[39] Anonymity also aids in identity construction. A person can change their gender and the way they relate to others due to anonymity. This can increase life satisfaction because those who can identify with multiple roles are shown to be more satisfied. Since the Internet can allow someone to adopt these roles, that close others may not accept in the real world, it can increase their self-worth and acceptance.[37] The anonymity that comes with Internet communication also makes it easier to reveal the "true self". The "true self", as described by McKenna and her colleagues includes the traits a person possesses but is unable to share freely with others. What they do share is the "actual self" which includes traits they do possess and are able to be shown in social settings. The actual self can be easier to present in a one-to-one conversation because a person's true self may not fit societal norms. Disclosing one's "true self" has been shown to create empathic bonds and aid in forming close relationships.[40] Anonymity can also help eliminate groupthink. When people come together to discuss aspects of the self that cannot be discussed in one's social circle. This can help them in life because it allows them to form a group of similar others and the opportunity to receive emotional support. It has also been found that those who join these groups and disclose their identity were more likely to share this aspect of the self with their closest family and friends. Sharing these long kept secrets has also shown to significantly reduce health symptoms over a length of time.[37] There are some negative consequences to being anonymous on the Internet. Deindividuation, where self-awareness is blocked by environmental conditions, can occur and be problematic. Some consequences of deindividuation include the reduced ability to control one's behavior and engage in rational, long-term planning, and the tendency to react immediately and emotionally. A person who is lacking this self-awareness is also less likely to care about other's opinions of their behavior. This all can lead to increased hostility towards others and the formation of anonymous hate groups.[37] There can also be some negative consequences to forming multiple selves. If these identities are not integrated it can lead to an incomplete sense of self. They could also be brought into the real world and lead to delusional and unrealistic behavior.[37] One downside to all of the connections that can be formed online regards the effect called the "illusion of large numbers." This effect means that people overestimate how many people share the same opinion as them. This can be especially harmful if someone holds negative views of a particular group because they may not realize that their views are very different from the mainstream.[37] Physical attractiveness plays an important role in determining if two people will begin a relationship. In face to face conversation, if initial attraction is not present, the relationship is less likely to form. This, however, does not play a role in Internet communication. Relationships online must form based on things such as similarities, values, interests or an engaging conversation style. Since these relationships form at a higher level they may be more durable and more important to the individual. Not being seen also assists in presenting ideal qualities (being an individual would not like to possess) to other worlds because there is no information to contradict what they say, the way there is in face to face conversation. This can contribute to why Internet relationships form so quickly. These online users do not have to go through the traditional stages that face to face interactions require in order to find similar interests. These face to face interactions usually take longer to find common ground but online users are able to dive right into conversations. [37] Internet communication differs significantly from face-to-face conversation in the timing and pacing of a conversation. For example, both users do not need to be online at the same time to have a conversation. E-mail, for example, allows individuals to send messages and wait for a reply that may not come for hours or even days. This can allow many people to stay in touch, even if they are in different time zones, which significantly broadens the range of communication.[37] This communication also allows an individual to take their time when speaking with someone. They do not have to have an immediate response that face-to-face conversation requires. This allows them to carefully select and edit their messages and gives them more control over their side of the conversation that they would not have outside of the Internet. There are also no interruptions in online communication that occur in face-to-face conversation. A person is able to "hold the floor" and say as little or as much as they would like in these communications, allowing them to fully form their point.[37] This control helps users to take greater risks with their self-disclosures online. These people also begin to incorporate their Internet lives with their non-Internet lives and engage in a presence-control exchange. In this exchange, Internet users start their relationships with relatively high control and gradually trade that for physical closeness as their comfort levels and knowledge of the other person increases. This seems to be the Internet version of social penetration theory, where individuals have a mutual exchange of self-disclosures. As the relationship develops in face-to-face communication the individuals' disclosures gradually become more revealing and cover a wide range of topics. This equivalent on the Internet includes the partners exchanging control of the conversation for physical closeness. The stages this occurs in could include moving from messaging online, to telephone conversations and eventually face-to-face communication.[37] The use of social media for self-disclosure has shown to be very helpful for those with low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem are more socially anxious and shy which can make it difficult to form close relationships with others. This can harm both their physical and mental health because feeling connected to others is considered a fundamental human motivation. Individuals with low self-esteem have difficulty disclosing to others because they are very focused on not revealing their flaws and fear criticism and disapproval from others. Disclosing less, therefore, protects them from the possibility of rejection or being ignored. In light of these fears, social media can provide a safe environment for people with low self-esteem to disclose personal information because they cannot see their partner's reactions which can help them to more freely express themselves.[42] While many with low self-esteem do view social media as a safe outlet for disclosure, many do not receive positive feedback for their disclosures. People with low self-esteem tend to post more negative thoughts on social media which has been shown to make them less liked by readers. Negative posts are also more likely to be ignored by readers in hopes that the discloser will stop and begin to post more positively. When someone who frequently shares negative thoughts posts something positive they do receive more positive feedback from readers. In contrast, someone with high self-esteem is more liked by readers and tends to post more positively. If they do post something negative they tend to get more responses than those with low self-esteem do.[42] Social media can also help those who are lonely. Many social networking sites give access to profiles, pictures and the ability to comment and message others which helps people to feel less lonely. It also aids them in gaining social capital like emotional satisfaction and access to information. These sites can facilitate disclosure because they make it easier to access others who can provide social support for someone to disclose personal information. Social support is extremely important in disclosure as it helps the discloser feel validated and cared for. Social support is also positively related to well-being.[43] It has also been shown that having this social support and forming close relationships online decreases loneliness overtime.[44] Some research does show that spending too much time on the Internet and forming these close relationships could take away time from existing non-Internet relationships. Neglecting these relationships could make a person lonelier in the long run because they could lose these face to face relationships.[37] However, other research shows that there are certain personality traits that lead to increased loneliness which then leads to increased use of the Internet. In particular, extroversion and neuroticism have been linked to loneliness. An extrovert is someone who is outgoing, enjoys the company of others, requires stimulation, and is spontaneous, while an introvert prefers their own company, is quiet, and prefers quiet, small gatherings. Introverts can often be seen as distant and unfriendly because of this behavior which may explain some of their loneliness. A neurotic person is extremely anxious, emotional and reacts in a disproportional way to many situations. Someone high in neuroticism generally has a negative attitude which may push people away and prevent them from forming close relationships which may lead to their loneliness. Both of these groups (introverts and neurotics) have been shown to have increased Internet use and in particular increased use of social service sites (i.e. chatrooms, newsgroups, etc.). This may show that those who are already lonely are more attracted to the Internet as a means of social networking and not that the Internet increases loneliness.[45] Introverts and neurotic individuals have also been shown to feel more comfortable revealing their "true-self" online than in face-to-face conversation and revealing the "real you" has been shown to help the discloser to form close relationships.[46] It can be very difficult for those with social anxiety to engage in face to face communication. These people can become anxious when meeting someone for the first time, speaking with someone in a more active, or participating in group activities. This can be their in-person interactions and deny them the basic needs of intimacy and belonging. With the absence of many of these worries in Internet communication, many with social anxieties use it to form social connections. This is because individuals who are socially anxious are more likely to use the Internet to form close relationships. These relationships are also shown to be stronger online relationships as opposed to weaker relationships (i.e. "acquaintances") [37] Forming these relationships can also help a socially anxious person make themselves true-self and form their social identity. This identity often involves the groups a person is a part of because belonging to a group frequently becomes an part of one's self-concept. Someone with social anxiety would be denied this because of their fear of face-to-face interaction. Therefore, disclosing with others online gives a socially anxious person access to a wide variety of people with which they can form relationships and belong to a group.[44] Socially anxious people are also shown to become less anxious over time if they have formed close online relationships. They have also been shown to broaden their social circles in the "real world" when they have had this time to form online relationships.[44] One possibility for this occurrence may be that these online relationships can give the anxious individuals confidence in forming relationships outside of the Internet. Being able to practice communications online can show them they are capable of communicating and can lessen their anxieties in face to face communication.[37] They are also very likely to bring their online relationships into their offline lives in order to make them a "social reality" by sharing these relationships with family and friends in the real world.[44] Online support groups are another place where people from all over can come together to disclose common struggles. They provide an environment of mutual disclosure and support. People are more likely to use these forums to discuss personal struggles and disclose emotions and thoughts pertaining to these struggles than normal discussion forums. There is also a higher degree of reciprocity in online support groups than in normal discussion forums and reciprocity has been shown to help people feel valued after disclosing. Men and women are equally likely to use these forums, online disclosure provides personal information.[47] While there are many benefits to disclosing online, there are also some dangers. There is a relationship between Internet use and problem drinking. Internet use, including such as "patterns using the Internet that result in disturbances in a person's life but does not imply a specific disease process or addictive behavior." When a person is high for Internet abuse and high for self-disclosure it can lead to dangerous behaviors like sending personal information (addresses, home phone number etc.) and photos to online acquaintances. High ratings for Internet abuse and self-disclosure also positively influence online communication with all types of online relationships. These relationship types include long-distance relationships, in which some have met face to face and continue the relationship by communicating online; purely virtual relationships, where people meet online and stay in touch only by using the Internet; and migratory mixed-mode, where the relationship begins online and then proceeds to face to face interaction. The relationship between Internet abuse, self-disclosure and dangerous behaviors could pose an even bigger problem with the high number of communications this group has with others, particularly those they have only communicated with online.[48] The Internet, while providing most with a source of entertainment, knowledge, and social realms, is actually a large threat to children due to the ways in which they self-disclose. Their privacy is often more at risk than is an adult's because of their openness to sites. Given that they are still developing, researchers say that they are in the "Cued Processors" group between the ages of eight and eleven. At this time, many children are using the Internet and are doing so alone, without the guidance and overseeing of an adult/guardian. Thus, they must use their own judgments to decide how much information to share on the various sites they visit.[49] As "Cued Processors", however, they are only able to think logically about concrete events; the notion of their disclosures online being used against them is far in the abstract world. They will likely not think of any sort of consequences that could result from their disclosures, and this is just what online marketers and predators alike expect and are looking for. 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