

THE ROLES OF PARENTS AND CLOSE FRIENDS
AS INFORMATION SOURCES REGARDING
CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' ADJUSTMENT

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ABSTRACT

Others' reports of youth distress (e.g., parent, aggregated peer reports) typically evidence small to moderate agreement with youth self-reports (e.g., Achenbach et al., 1987; De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). Recent findings demonstrate that children and adolescents' close friends also may be knowledgeable of youth adjustment (i.e., depressive symptoms; Swenson & Rose, 2003). The present research extends prior findings on friends' knowledge of adjustment by (a) directly comparing self-friend agreement to self-parent agreement, (b) expanding the domains of adjustment considered to include behavioral as well as emotional adjustment, and (c) examining the moderating influences of relationship quality and self-disclosure on self-other agreement. Relations between friend- and self-reported externalizing problems were stronger than for internalizing symptoms. Significant relations also emerged between mother- and self-reports of both internalizing and externalizing symptoms. When friend- and mother-reports were considered simultaneously, only mother-reported distress significantly predicted youth self-reported internalizing adjustment. For externalizing adjustment, however, both friend- and mother-reported distress uniquely predicted self-reported symptoms. Unique relations were moderated by relationship quality and by self-disclosure.