

CONVERSATIONAL SELF-FOCUS IN YOUTHS' FRIENDSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

The present research considered conversational self-focus, a previously unstudied variant of normative self-disclosure in which one conversation partner re-directs conversations to focus on the self. It was hypothesized that having a friend who is self-focused, especially during conversations about problems, would be related to negative friendship and emotional outcomes. These hypotheses were addressed in two studies, a survey and an observational study.

The results of the two studies were mixed. Study 1 suggested that youth with internalizing symptoms tend to perceive their friends as being self-focused and report lower friendship quality than youth without internalizing symptoms. Study 2, on the other hand, suggested that youth with internalizing symptoms tend to self-focus themselves but did not report lower friendship quality. Thus hypothesized relations did not hold when using more stringent methodology (observations). Future research should incorporate both survey and observational methods. Additionally, applied contributions of this research (e.g., interventions for self-focused youth) are discussed.