ABSTRACT

Using social domain theory (Smetana, 2013; Turiel, 2002), the present study examines the patterns of disclosure within and across emerging adults’ sibling, friend, and romantic relationships, as well as associations between sibling and peer relationships. First-born and second-born college students ($N = 232$, $M$ age = 18.5 years, 62.9% female) reported their frequency of disclosure to a sibling, same-sex best friend, and, when applicable, their opposite-sex romantic partner ($n = 85$). Results show that patterns of disclosure within sibling, best friend, and romantic relationships differ based on the domain of the issue being disclosed. Peers are chosen most often to be recipients of disclosure depending on the individual’s sex. The association between sibling and peer disclosure is impacted by the sibling sex composition and appears to show a compensatory relationship for individuals from mixed-sex compositions. Taken together, the findings of the present study highlight the unique role each of these relationships plays. Limitations and future directions are also discussed.