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Gender and Family Factors as Predictors of Late Adolescent Emotional Expressiveness and Adjustment: A Longitudinal Study[1]

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This study examined the longterm effects of the socialization of emotion in a sample of European American families. Late adolescents, whose families had been more emotionally expressive and accepting of emotions when they were in fifth grade, were more likely to report showing emotions not traditionally associated with their gender roles—specifically, males reported a greater propensity for crying, and females reported a greater tendency to express anger. In addition, in late adolescence, greater frequency of showing fear and showing warmth or affection were associated with higher levels of social and psychological adjustment—whereas crying was associated with better adjustment for males and poorer adjustment for females. Overall, adolescent females tended to report a higher level of emotional expressiveness and a higher level of family support of emotions than did adolescent males.

There is a growing body of evidence that emotional expressiveness contributes to positive adult functioning. A number of psychotherapy outcome studies have found that emotional release tends to enhance recovery from psychological distress (Bierenbaum, Nichols, & Schwartz, 1976; Greenberg & Safran, 1989; Greencavage & Norcross, 1990; Hoge & McLoughlin, 1991; Karle, Corriere, & Hart, 1973; Fairbank & Keane, 1982; Kellerman, 1985). In addition, research in the area of health psychology suggests that the

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suppression of emotion is related to diminished immune system response (Jamner, Schwartz, & Leigh, 1988; Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988), and to a higher incidence of physical illness (e.g., Abramson, McClelland, Brown, & Kelner, 1991; Kune, Kune, Watson, & Bahnson, 1991; Weirberger, 1990). However, despite this evidence, theoretical perspectives on child rearing and parenting styles have generally not included parents' encouragement of children's emotional expressiveness as an important factor in promoting positive social and emotional development. Neither the older literature, which viewed warmth and permissiveness as the main components of optimum parenting (Bayley & Schaefer, 1960; Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Hess, 1970; Kohn, 1977; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957), nor more recent studies proposing the benefits of warmth coupled with firm control (Baumrind 1991a, 1991b; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamburn, & Dornbusch, 1991) have taken parents' receptiveness to children's emotions into account.

Similarly, in the parent training literature, parental responsiveness to children's emotions has received little attention, with the emphasis instead on the promotion of children's competence and coping skills (Gordon, 1970, 1977; Dreikurs, 1964; Patterson, 1974; McMahon & Forehand, 1980). When emotional expressiveness has been considered, it has generally been within the context of the need to curtail children's undesirable behaviors, including emotional displays such as crying, fearfulness, and tantrums (Berkowitz & Graziano, 1972; Reisinger, Ora, & Frangia, 1976). Within this literature, negative attitudes toward emotional expressiveness have had a long history. Shields and Koster (1989), examining references to emotion in parenting manuals from 1915 to 1980, found that across all eras, there was an overall preoccupation with the necessity for emotional control—with mothers' emotionality portrayed as a barely controllable force that was potentially damaging to children.

Recently, however, Bronstein and her colleagues have proposed an Aware Parenting Model, which includes parents' receptivity to children's emotions as one of its five components (Bronstein, Duncan, et al., 1996). Based on research evidence for the positive effects of catharsis in psychotherapy, Bronstein (1984a) has suggested that parenting which allows children's spontaneous expression of emotions may foster their psychological well-being by enabling them to recover quickly from distress. She has suggested that this can be accomplished by parents being positively receptive to children's expression of feelings, and by modeling emotional expressiveness themselves [i.e., showing their children that it is a normal human process to cry, and to show fear, joy, anger, and love (Tomkins, 1962)].

FAMILY EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN RELATION TO CHILD AND ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT

There is a small amount of research which provides support for this perspective on parental receptivity. For example, young children whose parents respond more positively to their emotional distress have been found to be more likely to react positively to emotional distress in others, display more prosocial behavior (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, and King, 1979), score higher on a measure of empathy, and be less likely to experience personal distress in sympathy-evoking contexts (Eisenberg, Schaller, Fabes, Bustamante, Mathy, Shell, & Rhodes, 1988). Such children have also tended to be rated as more competent by their preschool teachers (Roberts & Strayer, 1987), show greater social-emotional competence (Denham, 1993), and be more popular with their peers (Putallaz, 1987). In addition, an earlier study involving the present sample found family receptivity to emotion to be positively associated with girls' higher self-esteem and boys' better psychological adjustment and classroom behavior, over the transition to middle school (Bronstein, Fitzgerald, Briones, Pieniadz, & D'Ari, 1993).

The relationship between parental modeling of emotional expressiveness and children's adjustment is less clear—although a number of studies have found a positive relationship between parents' and children's expressiveness of similar emotions (Cassidy, Parke, Butkovsky, & Braungart, 1992; Cummings, Zahn-Waxler, & Radke-Yarrow, 1981; Denham, 1993; Denham & Grout, 1993), and between level of parental or family emotional expressiveness and individual expressiveness in early and late adolescence (Balswick & Avertt, 1977; Bronstein et al., 1993; Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987; Halberstadt, 1986). In terms of adjustment outcomes, parents' expression of positive emotions has been found to be associated with young children's social-emotional competence, (Boyum & Parke, 1995; Denham, 1989; Denham & Grout, 1992, 1993; Garner, Jones, & Miner, 1994), and non-hostile expressiveness in parent-child interaction has been found to predict psychological adjustment and peer popularity over the transition to middle school (Bronstein et al., 1993), while parental anger and hostility have been found to be associated with negative child adjustment outcomes (Boyum & Parke, 1995; Dadds, Sanders, Morrison, & Rebgetz, 1992; Hibbs, Hamburger, & Lenane, 1991; Schwartz, Dorer, Beardslee, Lavori, & Keller, 1990; Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Jouriles, Barling, & O'Leary, 1987). However, the findings for parental *overall* expressiveness have been less consistent, in that it was found in one study to be related to children's acceptance by their peers (Cassidy et al., 1992), and in another, to children's angry behavior in school (Halberstadt, Fox, & Jones, 1993).

Furthermore, although findings from some of the above research suggest that fostering children's emotional expressiveness generally promotes positive development, most of those studies have involved short-term effects with young children. The research that has considered adjustment outcomes beyond childhood has focused mainly on adolescent empathy (Adams, Jones, Schvaneveldt, & Jenson, 1982; Eisenberg-Berg & Mussen, 1978; Kalliopuska, 1984); in addition, one study has considered retrospective reports of family emotional expressiveness by female college students, in relation to their tendency toward depression (Cooley, 1992). Only the study by Bronstein et al. (1993) has looked beyond childhood at broader developmental consequences, over time, that are associated with parents' fostering of emotional expressiveness.

The present investigation is a longterm follow-up to that study. Findings from the earlier study suggest that family non-hostile expressiveness and support of emotions may have served as a buffer against psychological and behavioral problems, and enhanced social functioning over the potentially stressful transition to middle school. In the present investigation, which was part of a larger project on late adolescent development, we examined whether the socialization of emotional expression within the family was consistent over time, and whether it was related to emotional expressiveness and positive adjustment in late adolescence. We anticipated that the level of family support of emotions at the end of twelfth grade would be similar to that which had been observed and reported in fifth grade, that both earlier and later family support of emotions would be positively

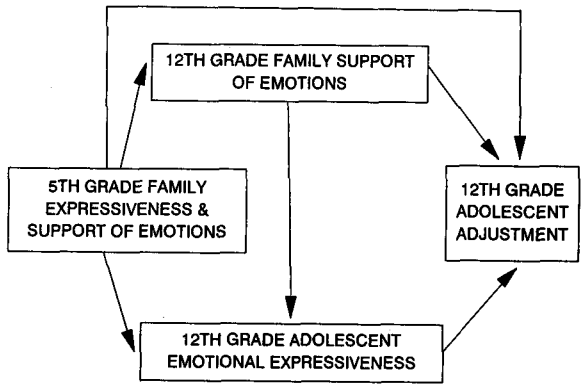

Fig. 1. Proposed model of the relation between earlier and later family support of emotions and late adolescent emotional expressiveness and adjustment.

related to late adolescents' expressiveness, and that each of these would be related to more positive adjustment outcomes. A theoretical model of these relationships is presented in Fig. 1.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVENESS

We were also interested in whether there were gender differences in the socialization of emotional expression. Research related to the socialization of emotion suggests that there are gender-related expectations which are communicated beginning in the first few years of life (e.g., Condry & Condry, 1976; Malatesta & Haviland 1982; Moss, 1972; Van Leishout, 1975). Based on these studies and others, which are consistent with long-standing cultural norms that it is more expected for females than for males to show emotions, and less acceptable for males to cry and for females to show anger (see Brody, 1985 and Brody & Hall, 1993 for reviews), we expected several gender differences to emerge in the present study. We anticipated that in late adolescence, females overall would report higher levels of both of their own emotional expressivity and of family acceptance of emotions, than would males—with the exception of anger. We also anticipated that greater family acceptance of emotions would give children leeway to express a wide range of feelings, including displays which in this culture tend to be regarded as inappropriate for their gender. Thus we expected to find that in families that were more accepting of emotional expressiveness, adolescent males would report a greater propensity to cry, and adolescent females would report a greater tendency to show their anger.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ADJUSTMENT OUTCOMES AS A FUNCTION OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVENESS

In addition, we were interested in whether differences in the socialization of girls' and boys' emotional expression might be related to gender differences in late adolescent social and psychological adjustment. Given that the clinical literature suggests that the open expression of emotion can enhance mental health, we anticipated that youths who showed a stronger tendency to express a range of emotions, including those traditionally viewed as inappropriate for their gender, would have better adjustment outcomes than youths whose emotional expressiveness was more constrained by cultural mores. Thus, we expected that overall emotional expressivity would be associated with positive outcomes for both males and females,

and in particular, for males who tended to cry more easily, and for females who more frequently showed their anger.

METHOD

Participants

All 43 youths from the earlier study (Bronstein et al., 1993) were contacted in the summer following their twelfth grade year, and 40 of them agreed to participate in the follow-up study. The sample, which was almost entirely European American, included 25 girls and 15 boys between the ages of 16.5 and 18.9 (M = 18, SD = .4),[3] most of whose families still lived in a middle to upper-middle income suburb in northern New England. In the initial study, there had been 28 nondivorced two-parent families, eight single-mother families, and seven reconstituted families with biological mother and stepfather or partner. By the time of the follow-up, many family-structure changes had occurred, including partners marrying, biological parents separating or divorcing, divorced parents marrying or living with a new partner, and children changing households. Of the 40 adolescent participants, 35 had completed high school, one had dropped out and then earned a General Equivalency Degree, and another was working on it at a community college. Twenty-seven of the graduates were entering their first semester of college. Of the three nonparticipants, two had completed high school, and one of them was entering college. Although the participants could be regarded as beginning the transition to adulthood, in order to avoid confusion when discussing the follow-up in relation to the earlier study, they will continued to be referred to as girls and boys, rather than as women and men. Similarly, for simplicity's sake, the term "twelfth grade" may be used in referring to the time of the follow-up, although in actuality, the data were collected after the end of twelfth grade year, and some of the participants never reached twelfth grade.

Preadolescent Family Measures

Self-Report of Family Emotional Expressiveness. The Family Emotions Scale was created for a project on preadolescents and their families, of which the earlier study was a part. It was administered to fifth graders and their parents, to obtain a collective perception of the family's receptiveness

[3]The mean ages for girls and boys were almost identical.

to emotional expression. It consisted of five items (e.g., "In our family, it's okay to be sad, happy, angry, loving, excited, scared, or whatever we feel"), with respondents rating on a four-point scale how true each item was for their family, and a higher score representing greater acceptance of emotional expression. The parent(s)' and child's perspectives were then averaged, to create a Family Emotions Scale score. Cronbach's alpha (.72) was computed based on a 15-item scale that combined the mother's, father's, and child's scales, with single mothers scales included twice to replace absent fathers. An alternative alpha (.71) was calculated for 2-parent families alone (n = 34). An additional alpha of .72 was obtained from a sample of 92 families of fifth graders in a separate study.

Observed Parent-Child Expressiveness. In the fifth grade year of the project mentioned above, fieldworkers made six visits to each family, during each of which they observed and tape-recorded 15 minutes of naturally occurring parent-child interaction—twice with mother present, twice with father present, and twice with both parents present (or four sessions with mother present, in single-mother families), so that each parent-child dyad was observed four times. For the sake of naturalness, other people (such as siblings or friends) were also permitted to be there. The tape recordings were later transcribed, and the parents' and fifth graders' behaviors coded, using categories based on a group interaction model developed by Bales (1970), and modified by Bronstein (1984b, 1985) for studying family interaction. The model includes three dimensions of affective style, two of which were relevant here: Positive vs. Negative (friendly or unfriendly), and emotionally Expressive vs. Controlled. All acts between parent and child were coded on both those dimensions; if an act could not be coded in either category of a dimension, then it was coded as Neutral for that dimension. An act was defined as a verbal behavior that communicated essentially one message, which could be as brief as a monosyllable, or several sentences long. If a person gave more than one message in a single speaking turn, each message was coded as a separate act. Initially, fieldworkers had been instructed to note nonverbal behaviors; however, because this was seldom done, and there was no way of checking the reliability of those few instances, nonverbal behaviors were eventually eliminated from the coding scheme. Average percent agreement between coders and the coding supervisor, on randomly selected 50-act segments of transcription, was 85% for the Positive/Negative dimension and 82% for the Expressive/Controlled dimension. The complete details of the observation and coding procedures are available in Bronstein et al. (1993).

The categories relevant to both the previous and present study were Positive and Expressive. They were operationally defined for coding as follows (after references to nonverbal behaviors had been removed):

Positive: To behave in a friendly, sociable, or supportive manner, through words or tone of voice.
Examples: to encourage, praise, joke with, or generally sound pleasant toward other.

(Mother, in interested tone) "So, how was the field trip?"
"That's a really nice drawing."
(Father inviting child) "C'mon over here, next to me."

Expressive: To behave in an emotionally expressive manner, or show feelings, through words, behaviors, or tone of voice. Examples: to act embarrassed, giggle, cry; to act excited, animated, enthusiastic, silly; to act distressed, fearful, or openly angry; to express affection.

"You get over here this minute!"
(Child, calling to Mother) "Ma! He took my baseball cap!"
"Look what I just made!"
"That's a *terrific* idea!"

Acts which fell into the Negative category, which was defined as behaving "in an unfriendly, uninterested, hostile, annoyed, or angry manner," did not seem likely to foster children's overall emotional expressiveness (Bronstein, 1994; Denham & Grout, 1993), or adjustment (Boyum & Parke, 1995; Dadds et al., 1992; Hibbs et al., 1991; Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Jouriles et al., 1987; Schwartz et al., 1991). Thus this category was excluded from the analysis; our method for partialling it out of the Expressive measure is described in the next section. The Controlled category, on the other hand, did seem relevant to the purpose of both studies.[4] However, because acts were coded as Controlled only 1.5% of the time for parents and .6% of the time for children, it too was excluded from the analysis.

The frequencies for each dimensional category were totaled separately for parent and child within each parent-child dyad, across all four sessions that the dyad was observed. Our aim was to include a wide sampling of naturally occurring parent-child behavior that occurs in the home, at different times and with different people present. From those frequencies, percentage scores were calculated, which indicated what percentage of a person's total acts to a recipient fell in each category. The percentage scores were used, rather than the raw frequencies, in all subsequent analyses, in order to adjust for differences in overall dyadic interaction rate, which could vary according to the family structure, the number of people present during the session, the activity, and the family's general communication style. Thus, for example, a mother's score in the Expressive category was determined in relation to her total number of acts to her child, and not simply by the total number of acts that were coded as Expressive.

[4]It was defined as behaving in a manner that suggests one is controlling her/his emotions (e.g., speaking in a measured or flat tone about an emotionally charged subject).

Several steps were then taken, to create an overall family measure of emotional expressiveness and receptivity to emotions. Acts that had been coded as Expressive could have occurred in either a Positive or Negative context (e.g., a joyful outburst or an angry outburst). However, because during the data preparation stage, each of the categories had been totalled separately, no indicators of co-occurrence (e.g. the percentage of a mother's behaviors that were both Expressive and Positive, or that were both Expressive and Negative) were available. We therefore created a new variable, Nonnegative Expressiveness, as one would compute an interaction term for a regression equation. This was done by totalling the scores for all acts not coded as Negative on the Positive/Negative dimension (i.e., the scores for Positive and Neutral), and then multiplying this total by the scores for Expressive. The formula for calculating mothers', fathers', and children's Nonnegative Expressiveness was as follows:

$$\text{Nonnegative Expressiveness} = \text{Expressive} \times (\text{Positive} + \text{Neutral})$$

Nonnegative Expressiveness thus included behaviors that were friendly or supportive, and excluded behaviors that were unfriendly, angry, or hostile. It also included behaviors that were neither friendly nor unfriendly (i.e., Neutral on the Positive/Negative dimension), which could involve nonhostile expressions of distress such as crying, concern, or fearfulness. Because mothers' and fathers' scores on this new variable were very highly correlated ($r = .88, p < .001$), we averaged within-family parent scores to create one parent measure. The same was done for children's scores toward mothers and fathers, which correlated .85, $p < .001$. Then, because parents' and children's scores on Nonnegative Expressiveness were correlated .81 ($p < .001$), we combined them into one overall parent-child measure of emotional expressiveness and receptivity to emotions (P-C Expressiveness). This combined measure was unrelated to the combined family members' self-report on the Family Emotions Scale ($r = -.05$), perhaps because it rated the emotional tone of each act of behavior, rather than rating specific feelings or reactions to feelings as the scale did.

Measures of Emotional Expressiveness in Late Adolescence

In the follow-up study, a structured interview was administered to participants, covering a wide range of late adolescent concerns. A number of questions focused on emotions, assessing how supportive of emotional expression families were, and asking about adolescents' own experiencing and expressing of emotions.

Family Support of Emotions. Eight items were combined to form a Family Support of Emotions scale, covering such topics as how often people in the family joke and laugh together, and show warmth or affection toward one another, and whether parents were affectionate, appreciative, and understanding of problems and feelings with the adolescent. Because the responses were not all scaled the same way, the item scores were converted to *z*-scores before combining them, with a higher total scale score representing greater family acceptance of emotional expressiveness. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .70.

Adolescent Emotional Expressiveness. Participants were asked how often they felt various emotions, how often they showed their feelings, what were some of the situations that evoked those emotions, and what they did when they felt that way. For the present analysis, we focused on four measures: ease of crying, frequency of showing anger, frequency of showing fear, and frequency of showing warmth or affection to people outside the family. Ease of crying was actually a scale consisting of three highly intercorrelated items: "About how often do you feel like crying?" "About how often do you cry?" (both scored on a four-point continuum from 1 = "Never/Almost never" to 4 = "Very often"), and "When is the last time you cried?" (scored on a five-point continuum from 1 = "More than a year ago" to 5 = "Within the past week"). Item scores were converted to *z*-scores before combining them, with a higher scale score representing greater tendency toward tears (Ease of Crying; Cronbach's alpha = .82). Frequency of showing anger, fear, and warmth/affection were measured by the following items: "When you feel angry, how often do you show it?" "When you feel scared or worried, how often do you show it?" and "How often do you show warmth or affection toward people outside your family?" These were all scored on a four-point continuum, from 1 = "Never/Almost never" to 4 = "Very often." We included the measure of warmth or affection shown outside the family (rather than within the family) because we wanted an adolescent measure that was not confounded with the Family Support of Emotion scale. Finally, we combined the four measures into a total measure of adolescent expressiveness (Cronbach's alpha = .57). Given that the total included only four scores, it is not surprising that the reliability is modest. However, we decided to included this total in our analysis to see whether, despite the modest reliability, a significant gender difference might emerge, as had been predicted.

Measures of Late Adolescent Social and Psychological Adjustment

Three subscales of the Bronstein-Cruz Child and Adolescent Adjustment Scale (BC Scale; Bronstein et al., 1986) were initially used as outcome

measures: Self-Concept, Social and Peer Relations, and Emotional Well-Being/Distress. Respondents rated on a four-point continuum how true the items were about them, ranging from "Not at all true" to "Very true," with some items reverse-scored, so that a higher score always represented more positive adjustment. The BC Scale has been normed on approximately 1000 children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 years, with acceptable levels of reliability and validity established for each of the subscales. The 15-item Self-Concept subscale (alpha range: .85-.86) is a general measure of self-worth (e.g., "I have a lot of natural ability;" "There are a lot of things about my looks that I'd like to change"). The 14-item Social and Peer Relations subscale (alpha range: .82-.88) measures sense of social acceptance (e.g., "I find it easy to make friends," "I don't get along very well with my classmates"). The 30-item Well-Being/Distress subscale (alpha range: .85-.90) measures overall psychological adjustment (e.g., "Lots of times I'm in such a good mood that I feel like smiling or singing;" "A lot of the time I feel that nobody really loves me"). Because in the present sample, the three subscales were highly intercorrelated (r's ranged from .59 to .76, $p < .001$), they were combined into one measure of social and psychological adjustment (BC Overall Adjustment), with an alpha of .95, based on the present sample.

Procedure

During the summer and early fall following the twelfth grade year, members of the research team visited the participants in their homes, to administer the interview and BC Scale. Seven out of the 40 interviews were conducted by phone, and the BC Scale sent by mail, for those participants who had moved away from the area, or already left for college. At the end of the visit, participants were given $10 for their involvement in the study. The tape recordings of the interviews were then transcribed, and the transcriptions were used to check the quantitative scoring on the interview protocols, which had been filled out by the research team members at the time of the interviews. The transcriptions of the responses to open-ended questions were used as a source of qualitative data.

RESULTS

Consistency of Family Support of Emotions Over Time

First, to examine the consistency of families' support of emotions over time, scores on the two fifth grade measures of family expressiveness and

support of emotions were correlated with scores for twelfth grade Family Support of Emotions. The fifth grade Family Emotions Scale was, as anticipated, significantly correlated with twelfth grade Family Support of Emotions ($r = .30, p < .05$). Because-gender differences are an important part of the findings for family emotional climate in relation to adolescent emotional expressiveness and adjustment, those findings are presented later in this section, after the basic gender differences in adolescent expressiveness, which are described below.

Gender Differences in Late Adolescent Emotional Expressiveness

To establish whether there were gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of their own emotional expressiveness and their families' support of emotion, *t*-tests were conducted on the relevant variables. As predicted, girls were significantly higher than boys in overall level of reported emotional expressiveness ($t = 2.73, p < .01$), and in ease of crying and showing warmth/affection in particular ($t = 4.37, p < .001$ and $t = 2.58, p < .01$). In addition, as predicted, girls reported a significantly higher level of family support of emotion ($t = 2.36, p < .01$). For these and for all subsequent analyses, probability estimates for predicted findings are one-tailed. No significant gender differences were found for showing fear or anger.

Cross-tabulations shed additional light on gender differences in the quantitative findings; in some instances (as reflected in the degrees of freedom given below), response categories were collapsed for purposes of Chi Square analysis. There were also qualitative gender differences, in the open-ended responses describing how adolescents experienced and dealt with crying, fear, and anger.

Crying

A number of gender differences emerged related to crying. All the girls reported having cried within the past six months, with 67% reporting having cried at least once during the past week. On the other hand, although 74% of the boys said they had cried within the past six months, only 20% had cried within the past week, Chi Square (4) = 11.7, $p < .01$. Further, 67% of the boys but only 20% of the girls said that they never or almost never felt like crying, Chi Square (1) = 8.7, $p < .01$; and 73% of the boys vs. 20% of the girls said they never or almost never cried, Chi Square (2) = 11.4, $p < .01$.

Girls' greater tendency to cry was also reflected in the wide range of things they reported crying about. They mentioned such things as fighting with their parents or boyfriend, seeing a sad movie or hearing a sad song on the radio, job frustrations, minor injury, a pet dying, a relative's illness, saying goodbye to friends or family, the plight of the world, and being overtired or stressed. Boys generally mentioned one of three causes: death of a friend or relative, breaking up or having problems with their girlfriend, or leaving friends or family to go off to college. Thus it appears that girls tended to cry more easily than boys about whatever happened to be making them feel sad or upset, whereas boys seemed to reserve crying for situations involving personal loss.

Expressing Fear

Although there was not a statistically significant difference in the average frequency that girls and boys reported showing fear, over 50% of the boys (vs. only 20% of the girls) said that they never or almost never showed fear, Chi Square (1) = 4.7, $p < .05$. In addition, there were notable differences in what girls and boys reported being fearful or worried about. As with crying, girls reported a wider range of causal factors than did boys. Girls most often mentioned fear of failure or not doing well in college, fear of being attacked in the streets at night, concern for others' welfare, fear of relationship problems, phobias and irrational fears, fear of financial difficulties, and fear of dying. Boys, on the other hand, mentioned mainly fear of the future, fear of making mistakes or failing, and fear of relationship problems. In addition, a few of the boys (but none of the girls) said they weren't afraid of anything.

There were also differences in girls' and boys' descriptions of how they experienced and dealt with their fear. The most common reaction for girls was to talk about it. Some described physical manifestations, such as fidgeting, nail biting, and stomach aches, and a few mentioned taking action or problem solving, trying to distract themselves or escape, or doing nothing. Boys, on the other hand, were most likely to report trying to change the situation or problem solve, keeping their feelings to themselves, or attempting to distract themselves or escape; a few reported simply acting tense. Only one boy said he would talk about it, and none mentioned physical manifestations. Thus girls were willing to acknowledge their fear to others, and most often sought to deal with it in a relational context. Boys took the opposite approach, and sought to cope with their fear on their own.

Expressing Anger

Although there was no gender difference in the reported frequency of expressing anger, there were some interesting differences both in the things that girls and boys said made them angry, and in the way they said they expressed their anger. Girls reported getting angry in four main areas: they most frequently mentioned issues of personal control (e.g., not getting their way, or being intruded on), and concern for others (e.g., injustice, oppression, seeing friends get hurt). They also reported anger at being personally mistreated or disrepected, and at others' offensive or irresponsible behavior. Boys, on the other hand, were twice as likely as girls to report anger at being personally mistreated or disrespected, and some reported getting angry at others' offensive or irresponsible behavior. However, only a few reported anger related to personal control or concern for others. In addition, three of the boys, but none of the girls, mentioned getting mad at themselves.

The ways that girls and boys described how they would show their anger were for the most part very similar. Over half of each mentioned talking about it, including telling the person they might be angry at, about a third mentioned raising their voice or yelling, and another third said they would not say anything. A few of the girls mentioned other responses, such as distracting themselves with reading or exercise, or writing about it, or taking political action. However, over a third of the boys, and no girls, said they would act in an insulting or violent manner.

Expressing Warmth and Affection

Eighty-eight percent of the girls, vs. only 47% of the boys, reported that they fairly often or very often showed warmth or affection to people outside their family, Chi Square (3) = 8.9, $p < .05$. However, because we neglected to include opened-ended probes related to this item in the interview protocol, no qualitative data was obtained about the situations and ways in which adolescents expressed warmth or affection outside the family.

Gender Differences in the Relation Between Family Support of Emotions and Late Adolescents' Emotional Expressiveness

To examine the relation between family support of emotions at two points in time and late adolescents' reported emotional expressiveness, scores for the fifth grade measures of family expressiveness/support and twelfth grade Family Support of Emotions were first correlated with the

measure of overall adolescent expressiveness. Then the family predictors were correlated with the four types of late adolescent emotional expressiveness: ease of crying, showing anger, showing fear, and showing warmth/affection. Because different patterns of relationships among the variables were expected for boys and girls, these latter correlations were done separately by gender. An examination of the scatterplots, for these correlations and those in the analyses that follow, confirmed that the significant findings reflected overall linear relationships, and not the effects of extreme outliers, which is always a possibility when small *n*'s are involved.

As predicted, higher fifth grade family expressiveness/support of emotions was associated with adolescents' higher level of emotional expressiveness; specifically, observed P-C Expressiveness correlated .27 ($p < .05$) with overall adolescent expressiveness. In addition, as predicted, the fifth grade family measures were associated with adolescents' freer expression of those emotions that tend to be regarded as less typical for their gender. The fifth grade Family Emotions Scale correlated .54 ($p < .05$) with boys' ease of crying, and fifth grade observed P-C Expressiveness correlated .42 ($p < .05$) with girls' frequency of showing anger. However, there was also an unanticipated negative correlation between the Family Emotions Scale and girls' ease of crying ($r = -.40, p < .05$, two-tailed). Twelfth grade Family Support of Emotions was not associated with any of the adolescent emotion variables except for an unanticipated negative correlation with girls' ease of crying ($r = -.39, p < .05$, two-tailed). The intercorrelations of all the predictor and outcome variables are presented separately for boys and girls in Table I.

Relation Between Expressiveness and Adjustment in Late Adolescence

To examine the joint and unique contributions of adolescents' gender and reported emotional expressiveness to self-reported social and psychological adjustment, we ran hierarchical multiple regressions, with the BC Overall Adjustment score as the dependent variable. In each equation, gender and one of the four types of adolescent emotional expressiveness were entered on the first step, to allow for an initial examination of main effects, and then an interaction term of adolescent emotion × gender was entered on the second. We had planned to include the measures of family emotional expressiveness and support of emotions from fifth and twelfth grade in the regressions. However, preliminary correlations revealed only one significant relationship among the family predictors and adjustment outcomes, which might have been a chance finding, given the number of correlations that were computed. Thus the family measures were dropped from the analysis at this stage.

Table I. Intercorrelations of 5th and 12th Grade Family and Adolescent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. 5th P-C Expressiveness		.23	.18	.11	.25	.00	−.01	.16	.16
2. 5th Family Emotions Scale	−.24		.24	.12	.54**	−.13	.04	.11	−.05
3. 12th Fam. Support of Emotions	−.33	.45***		−.05	.31	.04	−.20	−.20	−.36
4. Adolescent Total Expressiveness	.51***	−.49†	−.38		.61***	.83****	.89****	.44**	.59***
5. Ease of Crying	.05	−.40†	−.43†	.50***		.37*	.37*	.27	.46**
6. Shows Anger	.42**	−.18	−.32	.60****	.13		.85****	−.07	.54**
7. Shows Fear	.23	−.19	.23	.51***	.00	.01		.15	.62***
8. Shows Warmth/Affection	.31*	−.33	−.34	.51***	.07	.03	.15		.15
9. BC Total Adjustment	−.10	.09	.15	.07	−.35	−.04	.38**	.28*	

Note. Correlations for boys and girls are above and below the diagonal, respectively.

*$p < .1$.

**$p < .05$.

***$p < .01$

****$p < .001$.

†$p < .05$, two-tailed (for unpredicted finding).

Table II. Hierarchical Multiple Regression of Emotional Expressiveness on Overall Psychological and Social Adjustment in Late Adolescence

Variable	Beta	R	R^2	R^2 Change
Step 1: Ease of Crying	−.04			
Gender	.12			
Statistics for step 1		.10	.01	
Step 2: Crying × Gender	−.40**			
Statistics for step 2		.40	.16	.15**
Step 1: Shows Anger	.19			
Gender	.08			
Statistics for step 1		.21	.04	
Step 2: Anger × Gender	−.65			
Statistics for step 2		.32	.11	.06
Step 1: Shows Fear	.47***			
Gender	.06			
Statistics for step 1		.48**	.23	
Step 2: Fear × Gender	−.05			
Statistics for step 2		.48**	.23	.00
Step 1: Shows Warmth/Affection	.23*			
Gender	.01			
Statistics for step 1		.23	.05	
Step 2: Warmth/Affection × Gender	.44			
Statistics for step 2		.26	.07	.01

*$p < .1$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

The results of the regressions are presented in Table II. As had been predicted, frequency of showing fear and frequency of showing warmth or affection were positively associated with overall social and psychological adjustment. In these two equations, gender did not contribute significantly to the variance in adjustment, and the introduction of an emotion × gender interaction term did not significantly increase the R^2. For ease of crying, however, whereas neither main variable was a significant predictor of adjustment, the introduction of an Ease of Crying × Gender interaction term resulted in a significant change in R^2. The correlations in Table I reveal that ease of crying was associated with better adjustment for boys and poorer adjustment for girls. The regression results for showing anger did not reach statistical significance. For the Anger × Gender interaction, contrary to what had been predicted, showing anger was not related to positive adjustment for girls—although it was for boys (see the correlations in Table I).

In terms of the general model proposed in Fig. 1, the findings from this study provided a partial fit. As had been predicted, family receptivity to emotions persisted over time, earlier family receptivity was related to later adolescent emotional expressiveness, and adolescent emotional expressiveness was related to social and psychological adjustment. However, there were no direct links between twelfth grade family support of emotions and adolescent expressiveness, or between the family measures at either point in time and late adolescent adjustment. The aspects of the model that were reflected in the results are presented in Fig. 2.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we considered the longterm effects of family socialization of emotion. In addition to the proposed model shown in Fig. 1, we also predicted that there would be gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of family support of emotions, and in the degree of individual emotional expressiveness that adolescents reported. Finally, we anticipated that there would be gender differences in adolescent adjustment outcomes in relation to emotional expressiveness.

Family Receptivity and Adolescent Emotional Expressiveness Over Time

In regard to the proposed socialization model (Fig. 1), we did find a direct link between families' reports of receptivity to emotion in fifth grade

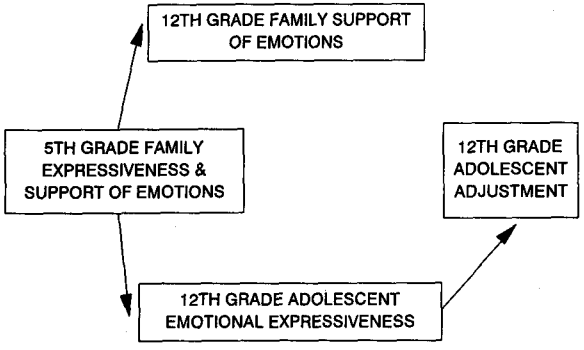

Fig. 2. The relation between family support and expressiveness of emotion and late adolescent emotional expressiveness and adjustment.

and adolescents' reports of their families' current receptivity to emotion. The fact that a significant correlation emerged even though different perspectives and very different measures were used at each time period suggests that family support of emotional expressiveness is a characteristic that remains somewhat stable over time. We also found a direct link between observed parent-child emotional expressiveness in fifth grade and adolescents' self-reported overall emotional expressiveness at the end of twelfth grade. It appears that family emotional climate may have helped shape the ways that children came to experience and express their emotions, and that the patterns of emotional expressiveness learned in the family may have persisted throughout adolescence. These findings are consistent with those from studies that found a connection between college students' emotional expressiveness and their perceptions of their parents' or families' emotional expressiveness (Balswick & Avertt, 1977; Halberstadt, 1986). Another possibility is that emotional expressiveness in families and individuals has a genetic component, and like other aspects of inherited temperament, tends to persist over time.

We also found a direct link between family support and expressiveness of emotion in fifth grade and adolescents' expressiveness of emotions not traditionally associated with their gender role. As had been anticipated, boys from families who had been more accepting of emotions in fifth grade tended to report a greater ease of crying in late adolescence, and girls from more emotionally expressive families tended to report a greater frequency of showing their anger. Possibly such families expressed and allowed the expression of a wide range of emotions, so that traditional sanctions against male crying and female expression of anger were not strongly conveyed, and the children grew up feeling freer to express emotions "inappropriate" to their gender.

In addition, there was an unanticipated negative correlation between family acceptance of emotions in fifth grade and girls' ease of crying in late adolescence. Perhaps girls from families who allowed a wider range of emotional expressiveness may have tended to express their anger directly, whereas girls from families where this was not permitted may have learned to express their frustrations through the more traditional female emotional outlet of crying. The relation between these family and individual factors apparently persisted over time, in that twelfth grade Family Support of Emotion was also negatively correlated with adolescent girls' ease of crying.

It is noteworthy, however, that apart from that last unanticipated correlation, we found no links between adolescents' current perceptions of family support of emotions and their own emotional expressiveness. This may have been because at age 18, these youths were tending to spend much less time with their family than when they were ten, as a normal aspect of

their developmental stage, and also because most of the mothers were now in the workforce, and less available at home than they had been seven years earlier. Very possibly the youths were, at this point in their lives, tending to share their emotions more with peers than with family members, and thus had less opportunity to experience or to gauge their family's support of emotions.

Gender Differences in Adolescent Emotional Expressiveness

As expected, given previous research (Brody & Hall, 1993), adolescent girls tended to report a greater overall frequency of expressing their feelings than did adolescent boys. In addition, the qualitative findings suggest that some of the gender differences that emerged may reflect more complex aspects of gender role socialization, and not just the direct socialization of emotional expressiveness.

In regard to crying, whereas both the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that males may be less sensitive than females to hurts and distress, it seems unlikely that the differences would be due to innate factors, given that males have generally not been found to show lower levels of sensitivity in studies of infants' emotions (e.g., Malatesta & Haviland, 1982; Moss, 1972). A more likely explanation is that family socialization and societal norms have played an important role in determining the degree to which it is acceptable for males to cry. This is supported by our finding, which Brody and Hall's (1993) review also concluded, that adolescent girls tended to report a higher level of family support for expressing feelings than did adolescent boys. It is also possible, given cultural sanctions against male crying, that boys tended to under-report the actual amount that they felt tearful or cried.

Gender differences in the experiencing and expressing of fear were qualitative rather than quantitative. Boys' fears seemed to reflect gender role expectations, in that they tended to focus on achievement and what they would make of their future. On the other hand, whereas girls also were worried about achievement, they tended to mention college success or failure, rather than longterm concerns. In addition, although girls did not express fear more frequently than did boys, their fears tended more to suggest vulnerability, of others as well as of themselves. Although the frequently mentioned fear of physical attack is reality-based, girls' reporting of vulnerability in other areas as well suggests that it may be more acceptable for girls than for boys to acknowledge feelings of vulnerability. This is consistent with the perspective presented by Brody and Hall (1993) that gender differences in emotion reflect females' lower social status and

power, as opposed to males' attempts to minimize vulnerability as they strive to differentiate from and compete with others.

The most striking gender difference in the handling of fear—that girls tended to talk about it with others, whereas boys generally dealt with it on their own—may be a result of both the higher level of family support of emotions for girls, and of societal norms extolling male bravery. In addition, the finding is consistent with developmental theories that portray girls as oriented toward the maintenance of relational connectedness, and boys as oriented toward the establishment of individuality and instrumental competence (Block, 1984; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Rosenberg, 1986).

In regard to anger, the differences in what girls and boys reported as anger-provoking may further reflect differences in gender role socialization related to developmental stage. The fact that personal control was of concern to girls but not to boys at the end of adolescence suggests that boys might have been granted more autonomy than girls by this time, so that for most of them, it was not an issue—Whereas for girls, it may have been a central one. The fact that girls' other main source of anger was related to concern for others' welfare, whereas boys were mainly concerned with being personally mistreated or disrespected, is consistent with the theories of gender role development mentioned above, that have described the emphasis on interpersonal connectedness and care in the socialization of girls, and individual identity and autonomy in the socialization of boys. In regard to the expression of anger, the fact that no girls but over a third of the boys said they would act in an insulting or violent manner would seem to reflect the direct socialization of emotional expression along gender lines (i.e., the message that aggression and violence are acceptable behaviors for males but not for females).

Expressing Warmth and Affection

Girls were twice as likely as boys to say that they fairly often or very often showed warmth or affection to people outside their family. This is consistent with research findings that have shown females to be rated (or to rate themselves) as expressing more warmth and love than males do (Balswick & Avertt, 1977; Dosser, Balswick, & Halverson, 1983; Fabes & Martin, 1991). The finding may reflect the stronger relational orientation that has been ascribed to females (Chodorow, 1980; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1975) compared with males, as well as societal homophobic constraints against males' same-sex displays of affection (Lewis, 1978). In addition, loving behavior may have been modeled more in families of girls than in families of boys. Adolescent girls tended to rate their families higher than did

boys on overall Family Support of Emotion, and three of the items in that scale specifically referred to family or parental affectionateness.

Predictors of Social and Psychological Adjustment in Late Adolescence

In regard to adjustment outcomes, as anticipated, we found positive associations between adolescent emotional expressiveness and overall social and psychological adjustment. Youths who said they were more likely to show their feelings if they felt scared or worried, and those who indicated that they were more apt to show warmth or affection to people outside their family, tended to score higher on the overall adjustment measure, which included self-concept, sense of social acceptance, and psychological well-being. Boys who indicated that they were more likely to show their feelings if they felt angry, and boys who acknowledged a greater propensity for crying, also tended to report a higher overall level of adjustment. However, a tendency to show one's anger was not, as had been anticipated, a predictor of adjustment for girls.

Although causality cannot not be determined from the above correlational data, the findings are consistent with the clinical and developmental literature discussed earlier, which provided evidence of the positive social and psychological effects of emotional expressiveness. One mechanism may be that emotional release facilitates recovery from distress, thereby preventing distress experiences from having a cumulative negative effect on psychological well-being (Bronstein, 1984a; Jackins, 1965; Nichols & Zax, 1977; Scheff, 1979). Another may be that children whose families are more accepting and expressive of emotions may become more sensitive and empathic to the emotional displays of others (Denham & Grout, 1992; Eisenberg et al., 1988; Putallaz, 1987), or may be perceived as more warm, friendly, and outgoing (Halberstadt, 1984). This could lead to their developing more rewarding social relationships and receiving more positive feedback from others, which could conceivably enhance their self-esteem, sense of social acceptance, and psychological well-being. It may also be that the effects are bi-directional—that greater emotional expressiveness leads to more positive adjustment, and greater sense of self-esteem, social acceptance, and well-being allow one to feel freer to express emotions openly.

One finding that was contrary to prediction also emerged in this area: girls' who reported a greater propensity to cry tended to show poorer adjustment outcomes. Girls overall cried relatively easily; they reported crying significantly more than did boys, and most had cried at least once during the past week. It may be that emotional release through crying generally tends to promote and to indicate mental health, but that beyond a certain

point, it may be an indicator of more severe distress or depression. This may have been the case in the present sample, for girls who cried much more frequently than the norm.

The fact that family acceptance of emotion in fifth grade was, for adolescent girls, positively related to anger expression but negatively related to crying, may shed further light on the above finding. It may be, as suggested earlier, that girls from families who were less supportive of emotions learned to suppress their anger, and to express their distress through the more culturally acceptable mode of crying. Such suppression of anger might thus have been a contributing factor in the poorer outcomes for girls who cried more frequently, in that from a clinical perspective, unexpressed anger may result in depression, self-blame, or a sense of powerlessness. However, this interpretation is speculative; the correlations in the present study do not show an association between anger and adjustment (or between anger and crying) for girls. In any case, such a connection would be difficult to demonstrate, because self-report measures assume an awareness of one's feelings, whereas the suppression of an unacceptable emotion may be an unconscious processes.

In sum, then, the data supported several aspects of the model we proposed regarding the socialization of emotion and the effects of emotional expressiveness on adjustment outcomes. Further, although family expressiveness and support of emotion in fifth grade were not directly related to social and psychological adjustment seven years later, adolescents who had been permitted or encouraged to express their emotions when they were ten were more likely to report being emotionally expressive when they were 18, and adolescents who reported being more emotionally expressive at age 18 were in general likely to have a more positive view of themselves and their social world, and to report a lower level of psychological distress and higher sense of well-being. Thus it appears that family emotional expressiveness and acceptance of emotions may have indirectly affected adolescents' social and psychological adjustment through a socializing influence on their emotional expressiveness. The fact that fifth grade family support and expressiveness of emotion were related to seventh grade adjustment outcomes in the earlier study, but not to twelfth grade adjustment outcomes in the present study, suggests that the direct effects of family support and expressiveness of emotion on such outcomes may diminish over time, while the indirect effects through their relation to adolescent emotional expressiveness can persist.

The study is limited, in terms of the small size and homogeneity of the sample, and the dependence solely on adolescent self-reports for all of the twelfth grade measures. Future research, involving larger and more diverse samples and measures obtained from additional sources, can further

elucidate family factors involved in the socialization of emotional expressiveness, and the implications for positive social and psychological functioning during late adolescence and the transition to adulthood.

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