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The Tendency of Older Adolescent Males to Use Verbal Aggression During Disputes

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect that levels of intimacy have on the approach taken by older adolescent males (18-20) (N=28) in disputes. The three same-sex relationship types surveyed were “best friend,” “important relationship,” and “acquaintance.” A projective version of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale was distributed at a small southeastern community college. The modified version of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale was used as a measure of the engagement or avoidance of conflict an individual would use in a proposed scenario. The findings indicate that best friends use a significantly lower amount of verbal aggression than males in important relationships or acquaintances. Verbal aggression is regarded as a precursor to physical violence. This study also indicates that physical violence may be more common within acquaintance relationships than best friend relationships. The study could have an influence on the way males manage conflict situations among various relationship types.