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Children's emotional development: Challenges in their relationships to parents, peers, and friends

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This literature review outlines the challenges and constraints which relationships to parents, peers, and friends offer for children's emotional development, including the development of appraisal, experience, expression, and regulation of emotion. Parents are important for their children's emotional development not only because they are attachment figures but also because of their cognitive and emotional expertise who instruct their offspring on the use of emotion labels, appraisals, expressions, and regulation strategies. In addition, parents introduce their children to cultural and subcultural rules on emotions. Yet parents' understanding of their children's emotions may be constrained by their social role as parents. Converging evidence suggests that display rules among peers promote the dampening of many emotions in many situations, especially those of vulnerability and anger. School-age children's increasing use of distancing strategies may help them achieve this "cool" public self-presentation. Intimate friendships which permit (and may even require) the disclosure of private emotional experiences challenge preadolescents to learn how to be supportive to the friend in need and how to manage anger and contempt in these close relationships. Handling issues of trust and exposure, jealousy, and envy are related challenges for friendships.

In the course of only a few years children demonstrate an amazing growth in their emotional development. Their skills in appraising ambivalent situations, in dampening emotional outbursts and in displaying unfelt "emotional fronts" (to name just a few) increases dramatically between 5 and 12 years of age (Saarni, Mumme, & Campos, 1998). In the past, most research has conceptualised these and other advances in emotional development as rather solitary or intrapsychic processes. Few studies have taken a transactional or interpersonal perspective on emotional development, although all human beings are born as social beings who cannot survive or develop normally without significant relationships (Stern, 1986). Disregarding the social context is particularly limiting for the study of emotional development, because emotions are frequently generated in the context of social relationships (e.g., Scherer, Wallbott, & Summerfield, 1986) and are often managed with the help of other people (Cassidy, 1994; Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). In addition, basic parameters, such as the frequency, duration, and intensity of emotional expressions, are shaped in the face-to-face interactions between children and their significant others (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982; Stern, 1986) and the dual role played by expressive behaviour as both an indicator of an (underlying) emotional state and a social signal (Hinde, 1985) is acquired in interpersonal exchanges (Saarni et al., 1998). And last but not least, children learn to negotiate conflicting emotions in a variety of social relationships (e.g., Laursen, Hartup, & Koplas, 1996; von Salisch, 2000b).

There are a number of theories which stress this interpersonal perspective on emotions, for example, Campos'

functionalist theory (Campos, Campos, & Barrett, 1990), Lazarus' cognitive-motivational-relational theory (Lazarus, 1991), ethological theories (e.g., Camras, 1982; Hinde, 1985), social psychological theories (e.g., Berscheid, 1983), social constructivist theories (e.g., Saarni, 2000), attachment theory (e.g., Cassidy, 1994) or Dunn's cognitive-relational theory (Dunn, 1988, 1993). Some of these interpersonal theories of emotions do not cover ontogenetic development (e.g., Berscheid, 1983; Hinde, 1985; Lazarus, 1991). Other emotion theories are more developmental in that they place a growing child in relationships but this social context is described in rather general terms. Attachment theorists, for example, are just beginning to consider the differential impact of different interpersonal relationships on emotional development (e.g., Waters & Cummings, 2000). Moreover, most of these interpersonal theories focus on the development of one or at most two components of emotions, that is, on the development of cognitive appraisals, subjective experiences, or emotional expressions (Ekman, 1992). Although these components of emotions are intertwined (e.g., Scherer & Ceschi, 2000), each of them follows a partially independent developmental trajectory and discrepancies between them (e.g., display rules) are just as important for emotional development and adaptation as covariation. Attempts at emotion regulation may take place in each of them (e.g., Thompson, 1990; von Salisch, 2000a). Therefore, it is wise to consider them separately (see Underwood & Bjornstad, this issue).

The present overview draws together theoretical formulations and empirical findings on emotional development in the

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three interpersonal relationships that are most important to children roughly between the beginning of preschool and the end of primary school, that is, their relationships to their parents, their peers, and their friends. (Relationships to siblings are also very salient during this period of life, but cannot be addressed due to constraints of space.) The aim of the following review is to outline the challenges for emotional development which are inherent in the relationships to parents, peers, and friends during late early and middle childhood. Challenges are tasks that confront children in their emotional life in a particular relationship at a particular period of development. Emotional challenges may create problems and difficulties at the time, but may in the long run foster development and adaptation. One example of such a developmentally stimulating emotional dilemma may be the sequence of peer norms which mandate the control of emotional expressions in many situations (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986). These norms are likely to propel children to acquire and to practise distancing strategies which may help them in showing the "cool" exterior required by peer etiquette (von Salisch, 2000a).

In this review relationships to parents, peers, and friends will be contrasted with respect to the challenges they offer for multiple components of children's emotional development, including emotional appraisals, subjective experiences, and emotional expressions. Within this framework, some of the structural properties of each of these relationships (such as symmetry or closeness) will be discussed as far as they may constrain children's emotional adaptation. Because their overview concentrates on social contextual influences on emotional development, only studies that examine emotional development in these interpersonal relationships will be covered in more detail. Studies on the "general" development of emotional appraisals, experiences, expressions, or regulation strategies that are not embedded in relationships will not be included here. For this broader picture readers are referred to the excellent reviews by Saarni et al. (1998) and by Hubbard and Coie (1994). Because individual differences between children are likewise not the central concern of this article, gender differences or variations in temperament that are likely to be important at many points in emotional development will not be examined in detail. For the same reason, results from clinical samples are not included. On the following pages, challenges for emotional development will be presented first in the parent-child relationship, then in peer relationships, and finally in friendships.

Emotional development in the parent-child relationship

Past and contemporary theories of development emphasise the importance of mothers and fathers in their children's emotional development due to the long-term mutual investment they have with room for intensive emotions (on both sides). In addition, this close dyadic relationship is asymmetrical or complementary in the sense that for many years the parent has more power to determine the course of the interaction than the child (Youniss, 1980). The close, complementary, and at the same time involuntary nature of the parent-child relationship has important implications, in terms of the challenges and the limitations it provides for children's emotional development. We will therefore start by exploring the challenges that are

engendered by two important aspects of the parent-child relationship, namely, the support it provides and the teaching that goes on in this relationship. Individual differences in the characteristics of the parent will be discussed together with the development in the end.

Parents as support persons in times of need

Over many years, mothers and fathers are primary figures for support in times of pain, anxiety, or distress; that is, they help their children in their emotion regulation when their own resources are taxed or overwhelmed. As children grow older, their reliance on this type of interpersonal support gradually diminishes, but up to adolescence (and sometimes beyond) parents play a major role in their offsprings' psychological functioning in times of need. As primary attachment figures, parents teach their young children basic lessons about whether their distress-related emotions are generally worth the attention of the parent. When a parent ignores these emotions often enough, their young child learns that they cannot be communicated in an open and nondistorted manner, but that their expression needs to be minimised or maximised in order to suit the response style of the parent. Mothers and fathers who are generally responsive to their children's distress or frustration tend to ameliorate their current distress and help them in the long run to tolerate negative affect temporarily in order to achieve mastery over the threatening or frustrating situation (Cassidy, 1994). Parents' lack of support in these distressing situations challenges children to develop and practise strategies of distraction which ultimately limit children's access to their own appraisals and subjective experiences of distress-related emotions (see Zimmermann, Maier, Winter, & Grossmann, this issue).

Inter-individual differences in caregivers' responsivity to their children's signals of attachment-related distress have many consequences for their children's emotional development. A secure attachment to mother tended to promote the understanding of negative valenced emotions (Laible & Thompson, 1998) and of mixed emotions (Steele, Steele, Croft, & Fonagy, 1999) in the preschool period. Children with an insecure attachment to their mother (and their father) were at a particular risk to make hostile attributions about a peer's intentions even when they were at best ambivalent (Suess, Grossmann, & Sroufe, 1992) and to behave aggressively (males only) in the early school years (Cohn, 1990). Adolescents with insecure (concurrent) attachment representations (AAI) tended to show more "dysfunctional anger" (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming, & Gamble, 1993) and to display fewer positive emotional expressions (Becker-Stoll, Delius, & Scheitenberger, this issue) during laboratory analogues of the struggle over connectedness and autonomy with their mothers.

Parents as emotional coaches and teachers

Because parents have more sophisticated knowledge than children, they inform their children about their appraisals for emotion-laden events (such as in social referencing which takes place well into adulthood). In addition, parents talk to their children about verbal labels for their inner experiences, about antecedents of other people's emotional expressions, and about the consequences of their own expressive displays. Much of the "feeling talk" in families with preschool children seems to be

made up of just these topics (e.g., Dunn, Brown, Slomkowski, Tesla, & Youngblade, 1991).

Talking about family members' emotions seems to be helpful for children's emotional development, because longitudinal studies demonstrate that the more time a mother spends with this type of teaching the more advanced is her 3-year-old's affective perspective taking (Dunn et al., 1991), her preschooler's emotion understanding (Brown & Dunn, 1996; Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994), and her grade schooler's moral sensitivity (Dunn, Brown, & Maguire, 1995). When parents' admonitions about emotions are misleading or idiosyncratic, their children may begin middle childhood with a distorted understanding of emotions, for example, with the anger-intensifying tendency to attribute hostile intentions to a peer who had provoked their anger, even when no offence was intended (Weiss, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1992). Further implications of the quality of emotion communication between parents and children are reviewed by Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) and by Thompson (2000).

In talking about feelings mothers and fathers provide their children with access to modes of thinking which prevail in their own culture and subculture. In doing so they transmit culturally prescribed or valued rules about the experience (Hochschild, 1983) and the display of emotions, such as rules of politeness and respect towards elderly family members in Asian cultures which prohibit children's expression of anger and frustration towards them (Joshi & MacLean, 1994). Parents also advise their children on culture-specific rules for coping with negative emotions (Saarni & Weber, 1999). In addition, parents usually have their own subcultural, familial, and personal goals and values for raising their children. These children-rearing values include ways of appraising emotional events as well as ways of feeling and displaying emotions in certain situations (e.g., Gottman et al., 1997; Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, et al., 1996). One example for the relevance of these child-rearing values for emotional development is the "toughness" white working class mothers from Baltimore teach their toddlers in order to prepare them for bullies and other challenges in their inner city neighbourhood (Miller & Sperry, 1987). Thus, frequent discourse about feelings challenges children to describe their own inner states, and to learn strategies of regulation in the areas of attention, appraisal, subjective experience (feeling rules), and in the expression of emotion (display rules) both by explicit teaching and by implicit learning.

Structural limitations for emotional development in the parent-child relationship

Because parents are (cognitively and emotionally advanced) adults, their understanding of their children's emotions is generally limited by the fact that they cannot share all of their children's appraisals. To put it simply: A ghost that frightens their child may not impress them very much. Even if a parent can understand why her child feels "X", she may discount the validity of her child's appraisal, as when a mother belittles the importance of her teenager's embarrassed appraisal that all of her peers noted her social blunder. Emotional scripts generated in the peer world are particularly likely to exceed parents' understanding. Parents' understanding of their children's emotional appraisals and experience may also be restricted by the fact that for many years they are responsible for the well-being of their child. Emotional thrills their youngster finds

exciting may not be condoned by them. Because the parent-child relationship is asymmetrical, children are requested by their parents to conform to culturally prescribed rules and conventions about the experience and the display of emotions. Because parents are expected to transmit and to enforce these rules, they may not appreciate their children's expression of emotions that deviate from these norms. For example, children's high-pitched emotional outbursts may be perceived as inappropriate in most churches. If a child repeats these outbursts, parents may be held accountable.

Individual differences between parents

Much of our knowledge of parents' influence on their children's emotional development comes from studies examining individual differences. As individuals parents differ not only in their willingness (Miller & Sperry, 1987) and their capacity to respond with empathy to their children's signs of distress (Eisenberg et al., 1999; Kienbaum, Volling, & Ulich, this issue), but also in their ability to join their offsprings' joy and exuberance (Halberstadt, 1986). Emotionally expressive fathers tended to have children who showed a more advanced understanding of emotions and who were better liked by their preschool peers (Cassidy, Parke, Butkovsky, & Braungart, 1992; Isley, O'Neil, Clatfelter, & Parke, 1999). Mothers' sharing of positive affect with their toddlers seems to further their children's development of conscience up to school age (Kochanska & Murray, 2000). Parents who are chronically depressed or stressed are obviously handicapped in their expressiveness of positive emotions. Depressed parents tended to instil higher levels of unjustified guilt in their children (Zahn-Waxler, Kochanska, Krupnick, & McKnew, 1990). Mothers who were often angry (with their children), tended to have children who were less empathic (Denham, 1998) and more often angry and defiant themselves (Kochanska, Clark, & Goldman, 1997). Witnessing inter-adult anger caused distress and sometimes anger in children (El Sheikh & Reiter, 1996), which was only alleviated when the adults resolved their disagreement and showed positive emotions (e.g., Shifflett-Simpson & Cummings, 1996).

Development

During the first years of school, parents continue to be important persons for their children's emotional development. Most school-age boys still turned to their parents in order to share their fears over a monster story or a staged kidnapping at night (Rimé, Dozier, Vandenplas, & Declercq, 1996). Most elementary schoolchildren endorsed the genuine expression of anxiety, sadness, and pain in hypothetical stories in which their parents were watching their emotional reactions (Saarni, 1988; Zeman & Shipman, 1996). There was, however, one big difference between boys and girls and mothers and fathers: Boys in elementary school expected more negative reactions from their fathers than from their mothers when they would disclose to them how sad they were at a third person (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988; Zeman & Garber, 1996). Starting in second grade, youngsters expected that their expressions of anger (about third parties) will meet an unfavourable response from their parents (Zeman & Shipman, 1996). This picture of (unilateral) trust and emotional support completely changes towards adolescence: Adolescents in eighth grade were least willing to show their feelings of anger or sadness (at others) in

the presence of their parents and expected the most negative response if they did so (Zeman & Shipman, 1997). As concerns over autonomy increase in adolescence youngsters are no longer willing to disclose their private feelings to their parents when they do not reciprocate in kind. The asymmetrical "intimacy" of the parent-child relationship in childhood disappears over the course of only a few years (Lempers & Clark-Lempers, 1992). In fact, college students were less likely to discuss their anger with their fathers than with their (same-sex) friends. Instead, they preferred intrapsychic strategies, such as redirection of attention or thinking denigrating thoughts, when they were angry at their fathers (von Salisch, 1996).

Future directions

In the study of emotional development in the parent-child relationship there are two pressing concerns. (1) To explore the influence of the quality of infant attachment not just on the quantity but also on the quality of the parent-child discourse with preschool children, because this may mediate the way in which attachment experiences in infancy influence emotional appraisals, subjective experiences, expressions, and regulation strategies which may be part of later attributional biases (such as the hostile attribution bias), emotional dispositions or defensive styles (Thompson, 2000). Especially important seem to be discrepancies between the child's experience and the parent's talk about the eliciting event (Crittenden, 1993). (2) To study quantity and quality of the "feeling talk" in middle childhood in order to document parents' influence on stage-salient emotional issues, such as learning about complex emotions, mixed feelings, masked emotions, or cognitive restructuring (P. Harris, 1989).

Emotional development within the peer group

In contrast to the parent-child relationship peer relationships are symmetrical in that both partners have about the same amount of social power (Youniss, 1980). Relationships to peers, such as classmates, are mostly involuntary and many of them are not close in the sense that peers share intimate thoughts or activities with each other (Laursen et al., 1996).

Nevertheless, peers are expected to have a pervasive influence on children's emotional development for two reasons. First, peers may be in a better position to understand the emotional life of their agemates than parents or children of other age groups because of their similarity (Dunn & Hughes, 1998; Shantz, 1983). Children of the same age argue on about the same socio-cognitive and moral level, face the same transitions and (normative) life events and share the same role *vis-à-vis* the (pre)school and its teachers (von Salisch, 2000c). These similarities are expected to improve their understanding of their peers' situation, perhaps to some extent independent of inter-individual differences due to level of development, personality, or upbringing. The second reason follows from the fact that peers form a group (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1997; J. Harris, 1995). Being together with a group of like-minded peers should intensify some of the emotions children experience, such as fun over games, glee over a teacher's *faux pas* or panic over crawling insects, when their age-mates value and validate these emotions. As a group, children and adolescents create a culture with its own norms and values

(Corsaro & Eder, 1990), among them the shared appraisal of emotion-eliciting events ("spiders are yukki" or "rollercoasters are fun"). These appraisals are likely to differ from time to time and from place to place and children may seek each other out on the basis of similar emotional appraisals, for example, as regards danger. When emotion appraisals take on a prescriptive character and are internalised to the extent that they guide children's experience of emotions, they are called "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1983) or emotional scripts (Saarni et al., 1998). In addition, local peer groups typically have rules about the expression and the regulation of emotions, both explicit and implicit ones, but there is little empirical research on peer influences, neither on emotion appraisals and experiences nor on emotion expressions and regulation strategies.

Indeed, most studies have focused on the difference between the experience and the display of emotions (i.e., on the development of display rules). As Saarni's research has convincingly demonstrated, 11-year-olds tend to use display rules more often (Saarni, 1984) and can reason in a more complex fashion about managing emotions than younger children (Saarni, 1979). There is more research on the conditions of display rule development, but as it does not take an interpersonal perspective I will not go into it any further (see Saarni & Weber, 1999). Instead, I will start by reviewing peer influences on the display of emotions. Then I will consider the development of emotion regulation and the structural limitations of peer relationships for children's emotional development.

Peer norms about the expression of emotions

Display rules in today's peer culture seem to favour dampening the expression of many emotions in many situations. Converging empirical evidence suggests that school-age children report that they would express anxiety and hurt to their peers only when it reached extreme intensities or when it was visible from the outside, such as when bleeding (Saarni, 1988). Primary schoolchildren likewise expected more negative reactions when expressing sadness or pain in front of peer audiences than in the presence of their parents (Zeman & Garber, 1996). Among school-age boys only about one-third indicated that they shared their fears over a monster story or a walk at night with their peers or friends (Rimé et al., 1996). These display rules apply not only to expressions of vulnerability, such as fear or sadness, but also to the expression of anger (Zeman & Garber, 1996); the peer norm is to remain relatively calm or "in control" in the face of (most) emotions in many situations. That this norm seems to be especially strict for boys is underlined by two further studies: boys reported more frequently that they would "chill" and not show their anger at peers or teachers than girls (Underwood, Coie, & Herbsman, 1992). In adolescence, boys were more certain than girls that they would be ridiculed or belittled by their peers when they showed anger or sadness in their presence (Zeman & Shipman, 1997). Sometimes, however, it seems to be not advisable to be too unperturbed, such as when not showing the appropriate amount of assertiveness in the face of a peer provocation (Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). Therefore, it is necessary to explore these peer norms in more detail; that is, with regard to more situations, with regard to concerns of self-presentation, and with regard to other emotions. Whether expressive "coolness" is also mandated when experiencing positive emotions, such as joy or exuberance, is

a question for future research. Perhaps the occasions when the display of intensive (positive) emotions is permitted in the peer world, become more restricted as children grow up, especially for boys who may be under pressure to maintain a "tough" exterior.

There may be at least two ways in which peer groups establish and maintain these norms of dampened expressions of many emotions, but this needs to be confirmed empirically: One method is teasing and ridiculing which is common among school-age children. When extreme and repeated, it can take on the form of bullying. Children learn very quickly that bullies typically persist in confrontations if the target shows how upset he/she is (Olweus, 1978; Sullivan, 1953). The other mechanism is more indirect: When gossiping about the blunders of their age-mates children reinforce ingroup norms about emotional displays (and subjective feelings) which apply just as much to themselves as to the peer under discussion (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986). Shared negative evaluations become public when children are excluded from information, activities, or group membership because of their "emotional misbehaviour" in the eyes of their peers. Being ostracised, even if only temporarily, is a strong incentive for children to conform to peer standards of behaviour. Further group processes such as ingroup favouritism, outgroup hostility (e.g., towards younger children or other ethnic groups), between group contrasts (e.g., between the sexes) and within-group processes, such as assimilation and differentiation, which have been described for other aspects of development, should also intensify adherence to peer norms about appraisal, expression, and regulation of emotions (J. Harris, 1995; Rubin et al., 1997). An example for outgroup hostility may be a group of school-age girls' devaluating comments which declare the emotional expressions of an unliked classmate as "babyish" (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986).

Peers tend to reject children who do not conform to their display rules about emotions. Frequently exploding in anger and showing triumph over other children's failures are both associated with peer rejection (Volling, MacKinnon-Lewis, Rabiner, & Baradan, 1993). Expressing envy at other children's achievements on a regular basis is likewise linked to peer rejection (Tassi & Schneider, 1997). Although some studies support that children prefer to befriend peers who are "fun to be with" (Parker & Seal, 1996), there is little research on rules over the expression of positive emotions, such as joy or exuberance. Greater social maturity is generally associated with having a broader repertoire of emotion regulation strategies at one's disposal (Saarni et al., 1998). As Hubbard and Coie (1994) have demonstrated in their enlightening review, children with higher peer status tend to be better at imitating and encoding facial expressions of emotions, to be more accurate in matching emotional expressions to relevant situations, and to be more advanced in their understanding of emotions.

In the early elementary school grades (and possibly as the result of peer pressure), most children become aware that the emotions they show with their "public self" need not coincide with what they feel in their "private self"; they learn, in short, to adopt what Saarni (1988) has called an "emotional front". As one 10-year-old put it: "When you are sad, then you put up a smile and go with the others and try to be normal". Under the watchful eyes of their peers children are thus challenged to learn the skills for self-presentation and impression management which are important for public life. In most cases this

means being able to control the expression of subjective feelings. Although these "emotional fronts" make children's expressions less genuine, there are some positive sides to them. As Sullivan (1953) has noted, children are challenged to overcome the hurt resulting from unfulfilled wishes for special treatment in order to be an accepted member of the peer group. In addition, children are challenged to reduce expressions of anger so that they are able to negotiate or to reframe conflicting viewpoints with their peers (Krappmann & Oswald, 1995).

The development of emotion regulation strategies

How do children manage to suppress the expression of some of the emotions they feel? How do they go about regulating their experience of emotions? My own study on the regulation of the emotion anger suggests that school-age children increasingly learn to distance themselves from their anger. For this study I asked approximately 130 boys and girls between 9 and 13 years of age in a Berlin elementary school to fill in the Strategies of Anger Regulation Questionnaire for Children (SAR-C), which provides nine strategies of anger regulation at a particular peer (i.e., physical and verbal confrontation, relational aggression, revenge, ignore, seek social support, redirect attention, explain and reconcile, self-blaming reappraisal, and humour). A factor analysis confirmed that these theoretically derived strategies can be grouped into the four factors "confrontation and harming", "distancing", "explaining and reappraising", and "humour" which showed good psychometric properties and little relationship to social desirability. The validity of the children's self-reported anger regulation strategies was confirmed by peer reports (von Salisch & Pfeiffer, 1998). All four factors contain strategies which involve the expression of the anger at the peer in question, two of the factors contain strategies which make use of heretofore uninvolved children and three factors contain intrapsychic ways of anger regulation, mostly cognitive ones. Results indicated that 12- and 13-year-old children were more likely to say that they would distance themselves from the peer who had made them angry. Follow-up analyses on the kinds of strategies suggested by the older children indicated that they would turn away from the anger-eliciting peer and give him/her a "silent treatment" more often than the younger children. In addition, older boys and girls endorsed that they would redirect their attention more often than younger children. There were no age differences in seeking social support from their peers in order to share their angry feelings. There were also no gender differences in distancing (von Salisch, 2000a).

These findings converge with other evidence suggesting that school-age children refine their voluntary control over their emotional expressions (Lewis, Sullivan, & Vasen, 1987). Underwood, Hurley, Johanson, and Mosley (1999) likewise found that sixth graders reacted more often than second graders with no words, with neutral facial expressions, and with shrugs, when they were provoked by an unknown peer (who was a confederate of the experimenter). When asked what they do, after a peer has provoked their anger, children increasingly indicated that they avoided direct confrontations (Murphy & Eisenberg, 1996). Older children became increasingly aware of how the redirection of attention attenuates their experience of stress (P. Harris, 1989). Ten-year-olds almost uniformly (and thus more than preschoolers or adolescents and adults) believed that cognitive avoidance is an effective means to

decrease their feelings of anger and sadness (Stegge & Meerum Terwogt, 1998). In a social cognition study of grade schoolers distancing was also nominated as the best strategy when children were presented a vignette in which the protagonist's feelings were hurt by his/her peers. When the protagonist was shamed by his/her peers, problem solving was most often chosen as the best strategy to cope with the situation. In the vignettes, both distancing and problem solving entailed not showing the negative feelings to the peers. "Externalizing", that is "blowing up", was nearly unanimously selected as the worst strategy for coming to terms with experiences of shame, anger, or hurt feelings in peer contexts, because social gains in the peer group could only be made when the peers' negative comments were ignored and the problem was tackled (Saarni, 1997).

Structural limitations for emotional development in peer relationships

When the expression of a wide variety of emotions often runs the risk of being ridiculed by the peer group, a stifled atmosphere may ensue. Some children may withdraw from their peers or seek other peer groups whose emotional appraisal and emotion regulation styles may suit them better. Others (such as the victims of persistent bullying) may develop the elaborated intrapsychic regulation strategies that are typical for internalising problems (Olweus, 1978).

Future directions

Research in the future should address itself to these three problems. (1) The claim that peers may be more accurate than parents in assessing the emotional appraisals of their age-mates needs to be tested in different age groups in order to highlight the (understudied) significance of peers for emotional development. (2) Exploring peer norms for the expression of emotions in more detail would help in charting which emotions are permissible (and perhaps even required) under which circumstances, in order to become or remain an accepted member of the peer group. A similar study could be conducted on peer norms for feeling rules or emotion scripts. Research of this kind could be helpful for designing therapeutic interventions for children with peer problems. (3) Observational research would help to demonstrate the mechanisms through which peer groups shape emotional appraisals and expressive behaviours of group members ("we are tough"). Group processes, such as assimilation on peer norms, could be studied in experiments on conformity on emotional appraisals (e.g., Costanzo, 1970).

Emotional development in friendships

It is usually not until preadolescence that friendships are differentiated from relationships to "ordinary peers", because friendships now attain a new quality of intimacy (Sullivan, 1953). Prior to this, children's relationships to "friends" resemble in many ways those to playmates in that they are symmetrical, but they do not have an intimate character (Krappmann, 1996; Selman, 1980). Another difference between peer relationships and friendships is that friends choose each other. Friendships are thus voluntary relationships which are usually based on mutual sympathy (Laursen et al.,

1996). Challenges resulting from intimacy and disagreements in friendships will be discussed along with structural limitations.

Friends as support persons

Preadolescent friendships thrive on the exploration of appraisals and experiences of emotions which may deal with the many transformations of preadolescence and adolescence, such as the bodily changes associated with puberty or the many uncertainties connected to assuming an (adult) identity. Within the friendship one preadolescent's emotion-coloured evaluations are compared, contrasted, and often validated by the friend (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986, Sullivan, 1953; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Close friends are thus in a position to help each other in sorting out which of their feelings are "appropriate" (i.e., which are shared) and which are purely idiosyncratic, a process which psychotherapists call "reality testing". Reciprocal close friendships thus challenge preadolescents to be helpful to the friend in need, that is not to respond to her plight in an ignoring, hostile, or blaming way (Rose & Asher, 1999b). "To be there when needed" is one of the most important obligations in adolescent friendships, especially for females (Youniss & Smollar, 1985, p. 124). In Gottman and Mettetal's (1986) examples one girl helps her friend by reframing her experience of the break-up of a romantic relationships ("he wasn't worth it") and by giving her explicit advice on emotion regulation ("don't think about him any more"). Compared to older age groups, preadolescent friends tend to use distraction more often in order to keep the friend from ruminating over negative self-attributions (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996), which are part of self-evaluative emotions, such as shame, guilt, self-hostility, or depression. These negative (self-evaluative) emotions are quite salient during this period of life, especially for females (Stapley & Haviland, 1989). Close friendships may thus stimulate preadolescents to learn how to be supportive to each other, even when the friend is often in a bad mood, when support means foregoing more attractive leisure time options, or when it endangers the public self-presentation before the peer group (as in friendships with agemates who are victimised by other peers). In addition, close friendships challenge children not to misuse the friend's trust for short-term (social) gains. All in all, friendship challenges children to acquire the skills necessary for building and maintaining intimacy, such as expressing caring and concern, admiration, and affection in appropriate ways (Asher, Parker, & Walker, 1996).

Disagreements between friends

From a social tasks perspective close friends also need to learn how to manage disagreements which arise in the course of normal friendships (Asher et al., 1996). Name-calling by the (best) friend challenged teenagers, for example, to regulate emotions of anger, sadness, hurt feelings, and emotional turmoil or distress which were reported to be more intensive when the provocateur was a best friend than when it was an "ordinary" class-mate. In best friendship emotion regulation may take place at the level of attributions (or appraisals) as when a friend in this study was more likely to be given the benefit of the doubt when attributing blame for the incident than a classmate. In this instance, preadolescents were more likely to endorse explanations involving a misunderstanding or

an unintentional action for a friend than for a class-mate. After the provocation, subjects were more likely to report that they would "talk it over" and "work things out" with the friend and expected that their friendship could become more committed as a consequence. Class-mates were subsequently more often avoided and the relationship was more often expected to deteriorate (Whitesell & Harter, 1996). Thus, the relationship context (best friendship vs. peer relationship) seems to influence the interpretation of meaning for a disagreement (which is related to emotion appraisal) as well as the intensity of subjective feelings, the choice of coping behaviours, and the expected long-term results for the relationship.

Managing anger in conflicts of interest may be particularly important in friendships because they are voluntary relationships which may be dissolved at the discretion of one party at any point in time (Laursen et al., 1996). Thus it is no surprise that fourth and fifth graders who endorsed revenge goals and adopted hostile strategies (such as verbal aggression or the threat to end the friendship) to a number of different hypothetical conflict of interest scenarios quarrelled more often in their best friendships and had fewer reciprocal best friends (Rose and Asher, 1999a).

Another social and emotional task in friendship may be learning to deal with competitive and contemptuous feelings. An empirical demonstration of this task can be found in von Salisch's research in which pairs of friends played a computer game together. The more competitive the friends were, the more they tended to express (and to feel) anger, contempt, and disgust in conflicts which arose in the course of jointly steering an airplane in the computer game. Competitive friends furthermore reported more intense experiences of shame and guilt and—not surprisingly—less fun when playing the computer game than less competitive pairs of friends (von Salisch, 2000d). Another observation study corroborated that female adolescents in disharmonious relationships with their girlfriends (and their mothers) were less adept at sharing power, showed less positive affect, and more jealousy in a planning task and a problem discussion than their age-mates in less conflict-ridden friendships (Gavin & Furman, 1996). When friendships are thus overshadowed by competitiveness or other forms of antagonism, emotional experiences and expressions in conflict situations will be coloured by the underlying emotions, such as anger and contempt. These emotions challenge the friends to evaluate and possibly change their relationship (which they increasingly do in adolescence; von Salisch & Vogelgesang, 2000). In addition, feelings of anger or contempt may stimulate self-exploration, because anger, for example, is a signal from the self that an (implicit) plan was violated or that something did not work out as expected (Oatley, 1992). Knowing about these implicit plans or about one's competitive strivings should be helpful in building a realistic self-concept (Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

Structural limitations for emotional development in friendships

Friendships are fragile because we choose our friends voluntarily. Managing anger, contempt, guilt, shame, envy, or jealousy at the friend may turn out to be so taxing that the friendship deteriorates or is terminated (Campbell & Tesser, 1985). In addition, one or both friends may succumb to sufficiently severe emotional problems that their friendship is compromised (Windle, 1994). Close friendships are also

vulnerable because they tend to be exclusive relationships with one person; that is, one friend can betray the other's trust and tell the other's emotional secrets which exposes her vulnerability before the peers. Threats to do so, as in relational aggression (Grotjeter & Crick, 1996), may also limit emotional development in close friendships.

Future directions

Research in the future should address the following issues. (1) Documenting the ways in which friends share (distressing) emotions which are usually directed at third parties would be helpful in order to enlighten the mechanism through which friends provide social support for each other (see Rimé, Philippot, Boca, & Mesquita, 1992). A microanalytic study of this kind could provide the "missing link", that is, the mechanisms through which the beneficial effects of a stable and reciprocal friendship in preadolescence for self-esteem and adaptation in early adulthood could be explained (Bagwell, Newcomb, & Bukowski, 1998). However, studying the associations between emotion communication, adaptation, and relationship quality over time may be quite difficult, because reciprocal effects can be assumed between these variables (von Salisch, 2000b). (2) Another useful study would be one that describes how envy, jealousy, anger, or contempt, which threaten to undermine close relationships, are handled within a friendship. Such research would help us in documenting friendship effects on emotion regulation which has not been done so far.

Concluding thoughts

Most of the studies reviewed so far come from the Western industrialised countries. This limits the generalisability of their results. A further limitation is that many studies used self-report measures, especially in the research on emotional development in relationship to peers and friends. Self-reports are subject to reporting biases, such as social desirability. Relevant for the study of emotional development are also concerns over self-presentations which may be influenced by gender role self-concepts or cultural styles of self-presentation. Contrary to the findings of the self-report studies (Zeman & Garber, 1996; Underwood et al., 1992), for example, facial expressions of anger in peer interactions did not become less frequent with age (Underwood et al., 1999), nor was a more subtle expressive variant (such as anger/tension or disgust and contempt) substituted for the full expression of anger (von Salisch, 1997). These and other findings indicate that self-reports need to be supplemented with other measures of emotions, such as behaviour observations (Underwood & Bjornstad, this issue) or physiological measures. In addition, most investigations on emotional development in peer relationships have used hypothetical vignettes which are sometimes of a questionable ecological validity. What is needed, therefore, is research which corroborates self-reports and compares answers to hypothetical situations with experiences and behaviour in emotion-arousing situations in real life. This type of research is especially needed for the study of peer influences (e.g., Denham, Mason, Caverly, Hackney, & Caswell, this issue), and for research on emotional development in middle childhood and adolescence (e.g., Underwood et al., 1999; Zimmermann et al., this issue).

Over the last 10 years we have witnessed a tremendous growth of studies in the field of emotional development. Now it is time to consolidate the field. At the conceptual level it will be necessary to distinguish between the different components of emotions, that is, between cognitive appraisals, subjective experiences and physiological response patterns, as well as nonverbal and verbal expressions of emotions, because each of them follows a partially independent trajectory. Covariations between them may just be as important for emotional development and adaptation as discrepancies, such as display rules. Future studies will also need to consider the development of attention and of physiological components of emotions, both at the level of the ANS and the CNS and how they are regulated in interpersonal relationships (e.g., when a mother comforts her distressed child). On a theoretical level it will be necessary to work out a model on the relationship between the components of emotions when becoming emotionally aroused (e.g., Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). This model should include the physiological processes of emotions. A real theoretical challenge may be posed by the fact that the relationship between the components may not stay the same but may shift with development (e.g., M.D. Lewis, 1995). A comprehensive theory of emotional development still remains quite a challenge.

In the field of social development significant challenges are also evident. When looking at interpersonal influences, it is obviously somewhat artificial to tease apart from the differential influences of parents, peers, and friends on emotional development because there are reciprocal influences between the different relationships, both concurrently and longitudinally. Emotional experiences with parents, for example, tend to inform school-age children's emotional behaviour with their peers (Isley et al., 1999), but among adolescents the reverse may apply. One of the major tasks for the future will be to disentangle this web of relationships and to outline which potentials for emotional development are shared between different relationship types and which can be provided by only one relationship type and not by another. Establishing which challenges (and constraints) for emotional development are common for a subset of relationship types and which are unique for a specific relationship type would not only bring an interpersonal perspective on emotional development a big step forward but would also help in devising strategies designed to foster children's social and emotional competence.

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