Authenticity in Adolescents and Young Adults’ Relationships: The Roles of Emotion Regulation and Perceived Parental Feedback

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Abstract

The current study examined factors that influenced levels of authenticity in relationships with parents and levels of general authenticity. The study explored the associations among perceived parental feedback (support and criticism), emotion regulation (suppression and reappraisal), and authenticity in relationships. An additional goal was to determine if perceived support from parents moderated the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships. A sample of female college students ($N = 124, M_{age} = 19.62$ years) and a sample of female high school students ($N = 31, M_{age} = 15.87$ years) completed self-report questionnaires related to perceptions of parent support and criticism, emotion regulation techniques, and authenticity in relationships. Results indicated that high levels of perceived criticism were associated with low levels of authenticity while high levels of perceived support were associated with high levels of authenticity. Further, suppression was related to lower levels of authenticity. These results were consistent for both samples. Finally, while reappraisal was not associated with higher levels of authenticity with parents, it was associated with higher levels of general authenticity. Results from the moderation analyses indicated that, with the high school sample, support from mothers moderated the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers. However, this result was not replicated for college students. Further, in the undergraduate sample, criticism from mothers moderated the relation between reappraisal and general authenticity. These results have important clinical implications as they indicate the considerable value of parental support for adolescents and young adults in promoting and maintaining authenticity in relationships.

Key words: adolescents, young adults, authenticity, suppression, support, criticism.
Authenticity in adolescents and young adults’ relationships:
The roles of emotion regulation and perceived parental feedback

Researchers have consistently noted that authenticity in relationships is essential for developing well-being and promoting competence in interpersonal relationships (Harter, Marold, Whitesell, & Cobbs, 1996; Heppner, Kernis, Nezleck, Foster, Lakey, & Goldman, 2008). Authenticity involves knowing the self and understanding one’s thoughts, feelings, desires, needs, or beliefs (Harter, 2002). The construct of authenticity also applies to an individual’s behaviors: authenticity implies that one will act in accordance with inner thoughts and emotions. Indeed, expressing the self in ways that are congruent with inner emotions and thoughts (i.e., “saying how you really feel”) is a fundamental component of authenticity.

Much of the literature on the construct of authenticity has focused on lack of authenticity. “False-self” behavior (Harter, 2002), “loss of voice” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), and “silencing the self” (Jack, 1991) involve speaking and acting in opposition to how one really feels. These constructs involve suppressing authenticity and suggest that one is acting in ways that do not match inner emotional experiences (Harter, 2002). The individual enacts behaviors in order to garner approval or to be socially accepted, thereby distancing oneself from true thoughts and feelings. In other words, false-self behavior is most salient when one is trying to gain acceptance or approval. According to Harter (2002), for behaviors to be defined as false-self behaviors, individuals must be aware that their inner experiences do not match their external behaviors. Therefore, one must perceive that he or she is acting in a false manner and that behaviors do not match the emotional experience.

False-self behaviors begin to emerge in late childhood. Jack’s (1991) interviews with elementary school children suggested that most young children would not engage in self-
silencing or false-self behaviors. Indeed, false-self behaviors cannot manifest in young children because one is not yet aware of the distinction between false and true self. Brown & Gilligan (1992) found further support for this claim; in their study, seven and eight-year old girls claimed that they frequently engaged in “true-self” behaviors. In other words, these young girls were authentic in their relationships, even at the cost of creating conflict in their close relationships.

False self behaviors put adolescents at risk for developing mental health problems. For example, adolescents who reported low levels of authenticity also reported symptoms of depression, low self-esteem, and negative affect (Garber & Flynn, 2001; Impett et al., 2008). Brown and Gilligan (1992) reported that suppression of true self behaviors can lead to depressive symptoms because the individual is unable to freely express his or her thoughts and emotions. This finding was confirmed by Harter et al. (1996); they found that individuals who reported high false self behavior also reported a higher likelihood of displaying negative affect and depressive symptoms. In contrast, high level of authenticity in relationships is associated with feelings of confidence and self-worth (Harter, Water, Whitesell, & Kastelic, 1998). These results support the idea that authenticity is an important predictor of well-being in relationships. For this reason, it is important to examine and understand factors that may influence level of authenticity in relationships.

**Early Developmental Precursors to Authenticity**

Precursors to authenticity are found in childhood. One factor leading to the development of authenticity or false-self behavior is parental labeling of emotions (Harter, 1999). Parents need to label emotions for their children as a way of modeling effective (or ineffective) emotion recognition. Children experience emotions and then learn to correctly verbally identify the specific experienced emotion. Through this process, children ultimately learn to match their felt
emotions with appropriate labels. Parents who fail to validate their children’s labeling of their own emotional experiences may inadvertently be diminishing their child’s authentic self behavior (Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1997). Further, parents can misrepresent their children’s inner narratives when they incorrectly interpret their young children’s experiences (Bowlby, 1982). Children then receive subtle signals from their parents that their true inner emotions and thoughts should be forgotten (Harter, 1999). Children who accept the false version of their personal thoughts and beliefs are at risk for accepting a false sense of self. This acceptance of a potentially false personal narrative is the first instance where children may alter emotional expression in order to be accepted by others. Thus, even in young childhood, there is a potential for inner experiences and outer emotional expression to be mismatched (Winnicott, 1963).

Parental acceptance of a child’s own emotion labels supports that child’s sense of authenticity. Accordingly, parental support and acceptance in early childhood promotes a child’s ability to develop a personal narrative (Harter, 2002). Parents who encourage their children to label and define their own emotional experiences are, in fact, validating the child’s own perceptions of his or her emotional experiences (Winnicott, 1963). This ability for the child to creatively explore emotional experiences is essential to later development of good authenticity. Indeed, theorists Deci and Ryan (1995) claimed that young children are most likely to develop an authentic self when parents accept the child’s interpretations of his or her inner experiences.

The Early Stages of Authenticity in Adolescence

Authenticity, and its opposite construct, false-self behavior, become more salient in adolescence, as adolescents actively attempt to discover themselves and begin to try on new roles. One explanation for the increased focus on authenticity and false-self behavior in adolescence is that during adolescence, individuals become more concerned with appearance.
Both physical appearance and social behaviors are essential components necessary for gaining approval and acceptance. Adolescents thus become more conscious of whether or not their behaviors are reflecting their true selves (Harter, 2002). The pressure to behave in a socially appropriate manner produces “multiple selves” or differing personalities based on context and social roles (Harter, 1999). Maintaining a true self becomes more difficult when these varying roles conflict with each other (i.e., behaving sullen with parents and enthusiastic with peers). Researchers claim that in early and middle adolescence, these issues of contradictory behaviors become more stressful as individuals have the ability to recognize false-self behaviors but cannot resolve the discrepancies between behaviors and feelings (Harter, 1999; 2002).

Lack of authenticity in late adolescence is often prompted by a desire to gain the approval of others (Harter et al., 1997; Jack, 1991). Being sincere in relationships with others becomes less important as the adolescent desires social acceptance in order to maintain relationships. Snyder (1987) noted that individuals who separate their inner and outer selves can also be defined as “high self-monitors.” High self-monitors suppress their true feelings and thoughts in order to gain acceptance. Indeed, preoccupation with social acceptance is a common feature in adolescence, leading to inconsistencies between how one really feels and how one behaves. Regardless, Snyder (1987) claimed that high self-monitors actually possess excellent coping skills because they are able to adapt to various social situations. Indeed, theorists agree that false-self behaviors may be a manifestation of normal adolescent self-experimentation (Brown, 1998).

A vast majority of the literature claims that as girls enter adolescence and continue to develop social relationships, they lose a sense of voice (Harter et al., 1997; Harter, 2002; Theran, 2009). This decline in ability to voice opinions and feelings is explicitly linked to false-self behavior (Harter et al., 1997). Brown and Gilligan (1992) argued that young adolescent girls
have difficulty expressing their inner thoughts and emotions because of society’s expectations. This construct, labeled the “good woman” stereotype, suggests that women are supposed to listen and not speak their thoughts (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Adolescents may attempt to hide their true selves if they feel they cannot measure up to the standards and expectations of important others (i.e., parents and peers) (Harter, 1999). As adolescent girls seek acceptance from others, they begin to conform to societal roles for females. Thus, the inability to thoroughly express inner emotions and thoughts diminishes their authenticity.

Brown and Gilligan (1992) claim that many adolescent girls find themselves in a relational impasse. A relational impasse stems from the “good woman” stereotype. This stereotype implies that women are supposed to be connected with others and highlights the importance of close interpersonal relationships for females. Thus, behaviors that threaten close relationships need to be avoided (Brown & Gilligan, 1982). In adolescence, many individuals, particularly females, will engage in false-self behavior in order to maintain their intimate relationships. For example, to express a true opinion that may anger the other person could potentially create conflict in the relationship, threatening the intimate interpersonal bond. The relational impasse, as defined by Gilligan, is the dilemma one experiences as he or she tries to reconcile expectations of having many close relationships with the desire to act authentically in these relationships.

**Authenticity in Adulthood**

Silencing-the-self behaviors have also been demonstrated among populations of female adults (Jack & Dill, 1992; Theran & Han, 2013). Similar to adolescents, many adults will silence certain feelings and behaviors in order to maintain prosperous intimate relationships. Further, for adult women, low levels of authenticity in relationships may lead to a loss of a sense of self (Jack
& Dill, 1992). Previous studies that have found that adolescents who report low levels of authenticity in relationships also experience low self-esteem and self-worth (Harter, Water, Whitesell, & Kastelic, 1998; Theran, 2010). Similarly, low authenticity in relationships in young adulthood is associated with low levels of psychological well-being and negative outcomes (Theran & Han, 2013). Indeed, research suggests that silencing the self behaviors are significantly associated with depression among female adults (Jack & Dill, 1992). In sum, openness and honesty continue to be essential components of authenticity in relationships throughout adulthood. Further research on factors that lead to the development of authenticity in relationships among adult populations is needed. Thus, one of the goals of the current study was to examine how feedback from parents and the way in which one manages emotions may influence authenticity in relationships during young adulthood.

**Authenticity in a Relational Context**

Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O’Conner (1994) argued that adolescents maintain healthy authentic relationships by combining autonomy and independence with relational connection. While authenticity is often considered a personal construct, the authentic self is most commonly formed in connection with other people (Theran, 2010). Authenticity is produced and maintained by validation and support from others, and thus, authenticity is, in fact, a relational construct. Honest exchanges with others help to develop an individual’s interpersonal skills, enhance the ability for empathy and sympathy, and increase self-awareness (Harter, 2002). Thus, interpersonal relations increase authenticity with the self and with others.

In adolescence, individuals become increasingly aware that they are the object of other people’s evaluations and the opinions of others gain significance in defining the self. Adolescents will try to hide their true selves if those behaviors and emotions do not coincide
adequately with societal standards or the opinions of other important figures (i.e., peers and parents) (Harter, 2002). Level of support and acceptance therefore is a significant predictor of false-self behavior. An adolescent who perceives minimal support and encouragement from peers and parents will mold his or her behaviors in an attempt to gain support and approval (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Harter, Stocker, & Robinson, 1996). Indeed, lack of parental and peer support is a key factor that leads both adolescents and young adults to silence themselves and suppress true self behaviors (Winnicott, 1965). Conversely, good support and validation increases the ability to express opinions honestly (Goldman & Kernis, 2002).

Parental validation and support strengthens authenticity in relationships (Harter et al., 1996). Theran (2009) demonstrated that parental attachment predicts authenticity, specifically with authority figures (such as parents or caretakers). These findings suggest that the origins for authenticity can be found in early childhood attachment relationships (Harter et al., 1997). Unconditional support from parents in early childhood may set the stage for future positive and secure interactions with parents and peers. Harter et al., (1997) demonstrated that high school students who report high levels of support also report high levels of authenticity. In other words, ability to voice opinions and feelings is positively influenced by support. Accordingly, when adolescents perceive support from others, they are more likely to feel comfortable expressing their inner thoughts and emotions, thereby increasing authenticity. Validation, support, and genuine interest from parents are therefore positively linked to authenticity in relationships (Harter, 2002).

The lack of support from parents is a major factor that leads adolescents to suppress their true thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Harter et al., 1997). Winnicott (1965) focused on low levels of support within the child’s immediate family. As mentioned, false-self behavior appears
when parents or caregivers do not validate the child’s true self or inner narrative. Winnicott (1965) claimed that this lack of validation from parents causes the young child to develop a false-self based on the desire to please his or her parents. Additionally, false-self behavior will emerge if the parents make their support contingent upon achievement (Harter et al., 1996). When caregivers make their approval dependent upon adolescents’ success, this conditionality leads to false-self behavior and decreased authenticity between the parent and adolescent (Harter, 2012a). Conditional support (Deci & Ryan, 1995) causes adolescents to suppress their true self when they are unable to meet high parental expectations. Further, Harter et al. (1996) demonstrated that adolescents are more likely to suppress true behaviors if they reported low levels of support from early childhood. Ultimately, research has consistently shown that there is a strong positive association between support for voice and adolescents’ expression of true self (behaviors and emotions) (Harter et al., 1997).

Gilligan, Lyons, and Hammer (1989) argued that girls often use their mothers as role models for authenticity and expression of true self. Mothers who have strong authentic voices (and frequently share their inner emotional experiences) will positively influence their child’s voice through modeling. Adolescents who have parents who both model true expression of opinions and emotions and support true expression of opinions and emotions, report higher levels of authenticity and true-self behavior (Harter et al., 1997).

While parental validation and support set the foundation for authentic self, peer validation and support is a central component for authentic self in adolescence and young adulthood. First, children who engage in authentic self behavior with their parents are also likely to engage in authentic self behavior with their peers (Harter et al., 1996). Later in development, young adolescents who experience unconditional support from their parents will also seek
similar levels of support from their peers. This unconditional support then seems to foster an increased sense of authentic self (Harter et al., 1996).

The relation between social support and authenticity in relationships has also been shown for adults. Perceptions of being socially supported continue to enhance authenticity in relationships throughout adulthood (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998). Further, research suggests that the quality of parental relationships continues to influence social functioning in adulthood (Allen & Hauser, 1996). The positive parental relationships create an internal stability that helps young adults maintain competence in social relationships and minimize internalizing and externalizing problems (Allen et al., 1998). Thus, one of the goals of the current study was to further explore this relation between parental support and authenticity in relationships with parents for young adults.

**Emotion Regulation**

**Defining emotion regulation.** Similar to low levels of authenticity, use of poor emotion regulation processes has also been demonstrated to impair adolescents’ interpersonal functioning with both peers and authority figures (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Emotion regulation refers to the processes that individuals use to influence and monitor their emotions. Emotion regulation has three components: cognitive, behavioral, and physiological (Brenner & Salovey, 1997). The cognitive component refers to one’s perceptions of inner (or “felt”) emotions. The behavioral component refers to the external signs of emotion, such as facial expression and body language. Finally, the physiological component refers to physical states influenced by heart rate or hormone levels.

Emotion regulation involves being able to adjust the intensity of one’s feelings in order to gain awareness about the situation and one’s personal reaction to the situation. Through
awareness of the situation, the individual is better able to respond adaptively to the issue or event (Saarni, 1999). Indeed, many researchers use the terms “coping” and “emotion regulation” interchangeably because both terms reference an ability to manage emotional reactions to stressful events. One’s experiences of emotions guide self-behaviors and thus, the ability to manage a subjective experience of emotion strengthens one’s ability to manage appropriate expression of emotion in a relational context (Saarni, 1999). In this way, emotion regulation contributes to the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Saarni, 1999).

In general, poor emotion regulation predicts decreased social competence and decreased acceptance by peers (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992). Thus, emotion regulation, which is often considered a personal construct, also strongly influences social relationships. Inner experiences of emotions alter behaviors and, in turn, one’s relationships with others and other’s perceptions of the individual. In sum, emotion regulation, similar to authenticity, is a relational construct.

**Emotional experiences in childhood.** The development of emotions in infancy and early childhood establishes a foundation for later emotion expression and experience (Rosenblum & Lewis, 2003). Initially, infants learn to identify the six basic emotions: interest, joy, disgust, sadness, anger, and fear. Through cognitive development, increasingly complex emotional experiences emerge and the young child gains experience understanding their own inner emotional lives. These evaluative skills improve abilities to engage in interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal emotional functioning (Rosenblum & Lewis, 2003). Saarni (1999) calls this process emotional competency in response to social situations.

Even by ages 4 and 5 years, children can understand that outward emotional expression does not always correspond with internal emotional experience. Indeed, many children are aware that self-expression is often governed by societal expectations and appropriate display rules.
Children’s understanding of social rules for emotion expression increases throughout childhood. By adolescence, individuals have sufficiently developed the ability to regulate and control emotional expression (Saarni, 1999), and they are able to articulate when there is incongruence between feeling one thing and expressing another (Harris & Gross, 1988).

**Development of emotion regulation.** Emotion regulation in infancy and early childhood influences the social relationship between parent and child (Thompson, 1994). For example, an infant may experience frustration and subsequently behave in a way that accurately represents this emotion. In turn, the infant’s behavior will elicit a reaction from his or her parent; the parental response is conditional upon the infant’s translation of his or her feelings into a behavioral reaction. Ultimately, the degree to which a parent escalates or soothes the infant’s emotions will influence the ways in which the infant learns to represent his inner emotional experiences. Thus, the social effects of emotion regulation can be seen even during the early stages of development (Saarni, 1999).

Another influence on children’s emotion regulation strategies is the early attachment relationship. Infants learn to effectively regulate their emotions in the context of a secure attachment relationship (Thompson, 1994). Drawing from Bowlby’s work on attachment, in the context of a secure attachment relationship, the infant learns that parents will consistently respond to his or her emotional reactions. Conversely, in the context of an insecure attachment, the parents do not reliably respond to their infant’s signals and the infant may become wary or avoidant of that parent. Indeed, when parents do not reliably respond to their infant’s emotional reactions, they are failing to model effective emotion regulations strategies for their infant. In turn, the infant does not learn effective emotion regulation techniques.
Parents who continue to respond ineffectively to their child’s negative emotions may be inadvertently invalidating their child’s emotions while simultaneously failing to model appropriate regulation of negative emotions. A young child may then engage in avoidant emotion regulation as a result of his or her inability to tolerate his or her negative emotions (Gross, 1998). Avoidant emotion regulation is a less adaptive process and frequently leads to long-term problems, such as internalizing behaviors (e.g., depression and anxiety) (Saarni, 1999). Specifically, avoidance of negative emotions blocks the opportunity to strengthen problem-solving skills and, instead, restricts one’s ability to effectively adapt to a stressor (Gross, 1998). Furthermore, as children age, they are able to use more cognitively oriented emotion regulation strategies. This widening of the breadth of emotion regulation strategies stems in part from a developing ability to shift thoughts away from aversive or stressful situations (Saarni, 1999). Thus, an older child who has a secure attachment and supportive parents will be more likely to engage in effective regulation techniques that involve more complex cognitive processes.

Influence of parental feedback on emotion regulation competence. Children and adolescents emotion regulation styles have been linked to parent support and control (Hardy, Power, & Jaedicke, 1993). Hardy et al. (1993) found that supportive mothers had children who used fewer avoidant regulation strategies in the face of stressors. Indeed, parental supportiveness was found to be significantly related to coping and regulation strategies. This association between parental support and effective regulation strategies is consistent with the association between attachment and effective regulation strategies; both secure attachment and support lead to more exploration of emotion experience and expression.

Alternatively, parental criticism and control are linked to social and emotional deficiencies (Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994). Specifically, perception of parental criticism has been
linked to emotional avoidance strategies (Cheavens, Rosenthal, Daughters, Nowak, Kosson, Lynch, & Lejuez, 2005). Cheavens et al. (2005) demonstrated that individuals who are repeatedly exposed to criticism from parents are more likely to attempt to reduce the intensity of the experienced emotion through avoidance or suppression of emotions. Indeed, exposure to parental criticism is associated with negative affect and psychological distress and thus, over time, these individuals are less likely to use effective emotion regulation strategies. Rather, they suppress their emotions in an attempt to reduce the negative emotional experiences (Cheavens et al., 2005).

**Emotion regulation in adolescence.** While emotion regulation skills develop throughout childhood, they also continue to develop in response to experiences in adolescence. Effective regulation strategies for adolescents are different than those for children. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined adolescent coping and regulation as adapting cognitive, behavioral, and emotion responses in the face of aversive situations in order to minimize negative outcomes. Further, emotion regulation in adolescence focuses on resolving incongruence between the self and the environment, particularly in the face of a stressor (Campos, 2004).

Regulation strategies in adolescence have been divided into two broad categories: *emotional suppression* and *cognitive reappraisal* (Gross & John, 2003). *Cognitive reappraisal* involves modifying the significance of an event in order to change the emotional impact of the experienced emotion (Gross & John, 2003). For example, one might diminish stress inherent in a job interview by using it as an opportunity to find out more about the job as opposed to an evaluation of one’s qualifications. Cognitive reappraisal, or having explicit control over emotional expression, is associated with both better judgment and higher levels of psychological well-being (Campos, 2004). Further, Gross & John (2003) explain that cognitive reappraisal
occurs before the emotion has been truly internalized. Accordingly, reappraisal should be beneficial to one’s psychological well-being because it diminishes the experienced emotion before the emotion has been fully processed.

Conversely, emotional suppression is a form of regulation where one inhibits emotional and behavioral responses (Gross, 1998). For example, one may mask feelings of hurt after being lied to in order to sustain a social relationship. Generally, emotional suppression is associated with poor social interactions and negative affect (Campos, 2004; John & Gross, 2004). In contrast to cognitive reappraisal, suppression occurs in response to a fully realized emotion and primarily alters the behavioral response to the experienced emotion. Indeed, since suppression occurs at such a late point in the emotion processing path, the emotion will have already been experienced before it can be suppressed by the individual.

Suppression has been demonstrated to impair cognitive demands, such as memory (Richards & Gross, 2000). Richards and Gross (2000) found that suppression, but not reappraisal, led to memory deficiencies about social information (i.e., names or facts about other individuals). The results of their study indicate that suppression requires more cognitive focus than reappraisal, and may therefore be a distracter during social interactions. Gross and John (2003) suggest that the cognitive costs of suppression may lead to social costs; a suppressor will not be able to respond appropriately in social situations. In turn, the individual may appear avoidant or withdrawn which can influence the ways in which other individuals react to the suppressor. Indeed, Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Smith, Erickson, & Gross (2003) found that interacting with a suppressor was more stressful than interacting with an individual who uses reappraisal. Therefore, suppression seems to disrupt normal emotional and social communication in relationships (Gross & John, 2003).
Emotion Regulation and Authenticity

Research has consistently confirmed that parent-child relationships are essential to social and emotional development well beyond childhood (Collins & Laursen, 2004). As discussed, emotion regulation skills are an essential component of social relationships in childhood. Similarly, being able to appropriately identify and express emotions in adolescence and young adulthood influences effective social relationships (Brenner & Salovey, 1997). In general, both authenticity in relationships and emotion regulation have primarily been examined on the individual level. However, because authenticity and emotion regulation are relational constructs, the current study investigates relational predictors of authenticity in adolescents’ and young adult’s relationships.

The emotion regulation process of suppression reduces the expression but not the personal experience of emotions, creating a discrepancy between the inner experience and outer display of emotion (English & John, 2012). Thus, a continued use of suppression may lead to feelings of inauthenticity in relationships because the individual is unable to reconcile inner emotional experience with external emotional expression. The term authenticity suggests that one is able to have an emotion and react accordingly. Suppression prevents the process of congruence between emotional experience and expression from occurring correctly and can create miscommunication between partners. In turn, the miscommunication may lead to weakened interpersonal relationships and less social support (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). For example, an individual may suppress feelings of sadness in response to a friend cancelling dinner plans. In turn, the individual is not able to be honest about how she feels in the relationship, leading to decreased levels of authenticity.
Gross & John (2003) examined the relation between suppression and inauthenticity in children’s relationships. More specifically, the researchers demonstrated that individuals who regulated their emotions through suppression were not able to express their true emotions. In turn, this led to incongruence between inner emotional experience and behaviors. These results indicate that a frequent use of suppression as an emotion regulation process is related to lack of authenticity in relationships; individuals behave in ways that are inconsistent with inner emotions in order to gain acceptance or avoid disapproval. However, the Gross & John (2003) study was limited because it did not measure the link between emotion regulation and authenticity in adolescents or young adults. Past research explored associations between children’s emotion regulation techniques and authenticity in relationships. Thus, a goal of the current study was to examine the association between emotion regulation and authenticity in relationships for adolescents and young adults.

**Rationale and Hypotheses**

Few studies to date have explored the factors that may help to account for why some adolescents and young adults, and not others, are at risk for low levels of authenticity in relationships. In particular, emotion regulation and perceptions of parental feedback as supportive or critical may be two essential constructs to explore as they each are theoretically and empirically related to openness and honesty in intimate relationships. There is also a need for further research on emotion regulation style, social support, and authenticity in young adulthood. The majority of the research explores authenticity in adolescents’ relationship with their peers and authority figures (i.e., Harter et al., 1997; Harter et al., 1996; Theran, 2010). The current study expands on previous research by examining authenticity in both adolescents and young adults. Further, the current study focuses on females given that research suggests that
females are more likely to be influenced by lack of authenticity in their relationships with their parents. There are six main hypotheses.

1. Perception of parental feedback as critical will be positively associated with low levels of authenticity in relationships with parents and low levels of general authenticity.
2. Perception of parental feedback as supportive will be positively associated with high levels of authenticity in relationships with parents and high levels of general authenticity.
3. Consistent with the developmental literature, high school students will have higher levels of authenticity in relationships with parents than college students.
4. Use of the emotion regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal will predict higher levels of authenticity in relationships with parents and higher levels of general authenticity.
5. Use of the emotion regulation strategy of suppression will predict lower levels of authenticity in relationships with parents and lower levels of general authenticity.
6. The relations between emotion regulation strategy and level of authenticity in relationships with parents will be moderated by perception of parental feedback (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Further, the relations between emotion regulation strategy and general authenticity will be moderated by perception of parental feedback.

Highest levels of authenticity will be expected when adolescents regulate emotions through cognitive reappraisal and perceive parental feedback as supportive. Suppression without the mitigating influence of supportive parental feedback will lead to the lowest levels of authenticity.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were recruited from two samples. Sample one participants were 124 undergraduate students recruited from a small women’s liberal arts college in the Northeast (\(M_{age} \))
= 19.62; SD = 2.78 years). Of these participants, 39.5% were Caucasian, 31.5% Asian, 9.7% Black/African descent, 7.3% biracial, 2.4% Hispanic, 2.4% Latina, 2.4% Middle Eastern, .8% identified as “other,” and 4% preferred not to answer. 13.7% of participants’ mothers and 12.1% of participants’ fathers had a high school education or less, 7.3% of participants’ mothers and 11.3% of participants’ fathers had some college education, and 79% of participants’ mothers and 71% of fathers graduated from college.

Sample two participants were 31 female high school students from a private high school in the Northeast (M_age = 15.87; SD = 1.27 years). Of these participants, 64.5% were Caucasian, 12.9% Asian, 9.7 biracial, 6.5% Latina/o, 3.2% African-American, and 3.2% identified as “other.” Six percent of participants had mothers who had a high school education or less, 3.2% of participants’ mothers had some college education, 25.8% of participants’ mothers and 22.6% of fathers graduated from college, and 64.5% of participants’ mothers and 77.4% of fathers had attended at least some graduate school.

Participants were eligible for the study if they were either in grades 9 through 12 at the time of recruitment or attending the participating college. Forty-one participants were excluded from the undergraduate sample because the students did not complete all of the questionnaires correctly. Seven male participants were excluded from the high school sample because the current study examined associations between study variables among females.

Procedure

One hundred and twenty-four undergraduate students who responded to posted advertisements participated in this study. Emails were sent to students in the Psychology Department’s research participation pool and to the class Google groups to advertise the study. Subjects gave informed consent prior to completing the questionnaire packet. Students
completed a computer-based questionnaire in a psychology lab classroom during assigned time slots. The sessions were supervised by an undergraduate researcher. The testing session took approximately one hour for the students to complete. After participants completed the measures, the researcher thanked the participants, debriefed them, answered any follow-up questions, and dismissed the participants. Participants either received course credit or $10 for their participation. All students’ participation was completely voluntary and they were free to withdraw, at any point, without any penalty. Additionally, students’ participation was completely confidential.

High school students who had parental consent and who also provided assent completed a paper and pencil set of questionnaires at one assessment point in December, 2013. The response rate was 26%. It is likely that there was a low response rate because of the many demands placed upon the students during the end of their academic term. Additionally, the questionnaires were not given during a class period and perhaps created an extra time demand for the students. Questionnaires were completed during the school day and in an area of the school determined by the school staff. The researcher administered the questionnaires. Students’ participation was completely voluntary and they were free to withdraw, at any point, without any penalty. Additionally, students’ participation was completely confidential. The testing session took approximately 25 minutes for students to complete. After participants completed their packets, the researcher thanked and debriefed them, answered any follow-up questions, and dismissed the participants. All students received a $5 gift certificate to Amazon for their participation.
Measures

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to report their date of birth, year in school, ethnic or racial background, as well as information about their mother and father’s level of education.

**Authenticity.** Authenticity in relationships was measured through two scales. Each scale was administered to both the undergraduate and high school sample. The first was the Saying What I think Questionnaire (SWIT; Harter et al., 1998) (see Appendix I). The SWIT is a 20-item measure that assesses authenticity with parents (mother, father) and non-parents (teachers, classmates, and friends). Items are rated on a 4-point scale. Each item consists of two contradicting statements. Participants choose the one statement that most applies to them, and then chose if the statement is “really true for you” or just “sort of true for you”. A sample question is “some teenagers are able to express their opinions to their mother” BUT “other teenagers have trouble expressing their opinions to their mother”. Higher scores indicate greater levels of authenticity within each context. Since the current study evaluates adolescents’ relationships their parents, only the “mother” and “father” subscales were included in the current study. In the undergraduate sample, the alpha coefficient for mothers and fathers were .81 and .89 respectively. In the high school sample, the alpha coefficients were .90 for both mothers and fathers.

Authenticity in relationships was also measured through a general measure of authenticity (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008) (see Appendix II). A sample question is “I always stand by what I believe in”. This scale is a 12-item measure that assesses dispositional authenticity. The scale is designed to measure self-alienation, accepting external influence, and authentic living. Items are rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *does not describe me at all*
and 7 = describes me very well). Higher scores indicate greater levels of authenticity. The alpha coefficient for the authentic living subscale was .83 in the undergraduate sample. In the high school sample, one item was negatively associated with general authenticity. Accordingly, this item was removed from the alpha coefficient calculation. This produced an alpha coefficient for the authentic living subscale of .62 in the high school sample.

**Perceived parental criticism.** The Family Emotional Involvement and Criticism Scale was used to evaluate perceptions of parental criticism (FEICS; Shields, Franks, Harp, Campbell, & McDaniel, 1994) (see Appendix III). The FEICS is a 14-item measure of parental emotional involvement and criticism from the subject’s perspective. A sample item is “I am upset if this person is upset”. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very false and 5 = very true). The measure produces two subscales: emotional involvement and perceived criticism. Since the current study evaluates perception of parental criticism, only the criticism subscale was included in the study. Higher scores represent greater perceived criticism. In the undergraduate sample, alpha coefficients for perceived criticism were .73 for mothers and .76 for fathers. In the high school sample, alpha coefficients for perceived criticism were .83 for mothers and .88 for fathers.

**Perceived parental support.** All undergraduate students completed the Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI; Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991) (see Appendix IV). The QRI is a 25-item measure that assesses quality of relationships. The scale measures relationship support, depth, and conflict. Since the current study evaluates parental support, only the support subscale was included in the study. Participants rated their perception of support from two sources: mother and father. A sample item is “to what extent do you turn to this person for advice about problems?” Each item is measured on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all and 4 = very much). Higher
scores indicate higher levels of perceived parental support. Alpha coefficients for the mother and father support subscale were .71 and .88 respectively.

In order to account for developmentally appropriate measures of parental support, perception of parental support in the high school sample was measured through the Social Support Scale for Children – Parent Support Subscale (Harter, 2012b) (see Appendix V). The SSSC-P is a 6-item measure of perceived parental support. Participants rate their perception of support from two sources: mother and father. Each item consists of two contradicting statements. Participants chose the one statement that most applies to them, and then chose if the statement is “really true for you” or just “sort of true for you”. The responses were scored on a four-point scale (1 = least supportive and 4 = most supportive). Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived parental support. Internal consistency alphas for mothers and fathers were .78 and .79 respectively.

**Emotion regulation.** All undergraduate student participants completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) (see Appendix VI). The ERG is a 10-item measure of emotional regulation (6 items measure reappraisal and 4 items measure suppression). A sample item is “When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I’m thinking about.” Each item measures a specific regulatory process (reappraisal or suppression) and is measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicate a greater use of the corresponding emotion regulation strategy. Items are carefully constructed to avoid confounding implications for affect, well-being, or social functioning. An example of reappraisal is “When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I’m thinking about.” An example of suppression is “I keep my
emotions to myself”. The measure produces two subscales: degree of suppression and degree of reappraisal. Alpha coefficients were .87 for Reappraisal and .79 for Suppression.

All high school students completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire-Youth (ERG-Y; Gullone & Taffe, 2012) (see Appendix VII). The ERQ-Y is a 10-item measure of emotion regulation (6 items measure reappraisal and 4 items measure suppression) adapted from the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for adults (Gross & John, 2003). A sample item is “When I want to feel happier, I think about something different”. Each item measures a specific regulatory process (reappraisal or suppression) and is measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicate a greater use of the corresponding emotion regulation strategy. An example of reappraisal is “When I am faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.” An example of suppression is “I keep my emotions to myself”. The measure produces two subscales: degree of suppression and degree of reappraisal. The scale was found to have high internal consistency; alpha coefficients were .82 for Reappraisal and .78 for Suppression.

**Results**

**Parental Feedback and Authenticity**

In order to test the first and second hypotheses, that perception of parental criticism and support would be associated with levels of authenticity in relationships with parents, Pearson’s correlations were performed. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson’s correlations for emotion regulation scores, perceived parental support and criticism, and authenticity in relationships are presented for the total undergraduate sample in Table 1 and the total high school sample in Table 2. All data were recoded so that parent 1 = mother and parent 2 = father.
As shown in Table 1, results from the undergraduate sample confirmed hypothesis one that as perceptions of criticism from mothers and fathers increased, levels of authenticity decreased (mothers: \( r(122) = -.41, p < .001 \) and fathers: \( r(109) = -.31, p < .001 \)). Additionally, results confirmed hypothesis two that as support from mothers and fathers increased, so did levels of authenticity (mothers: \( r(122) = .57, p < .001 \) and fathers: \( r(109) = .77, p < .001 \)).

Tests of the first and second hypotheses with the high school sample indicated that as perceptions of criticism from mothers and fathers increased, levels of authenticity decreased (mothers: \( r(28) = -.60, p < .001 \) and fathers: \( r(29) = -.64, p < .001 \)). Additionally, for hypothesis two, as perceptions of support from mothers and fathers increased, so did levels of authenticity (mothers: \( r(28) = .74, p < .001 \) and fathers: \( r(29) = .79, p < .001 \)). These results confirmed the first hypothesis, that there would be a negative relation between parental criticism and authenticity in relationships, and the second hypothesis, that there would be a positive relation between parental support and authenticity in relationships.

As perceptions of criticism and levels of authenticity were measured with the same scales in both the high school and undergraduate samples, a Pearson’s correlation between authenticity in relationships and parental criticism was performed for the full sample. Consistent with the individual findings from the undergraduate sample and the high school sample, as perceptions of criticism from mothers and fathers increased, levels of authenticity decreased (mothers: \( r(148) = -.43, p < .001 \) and fathers: \( r(136) = -.33, p < .001 \)).

Finally, to test the third hypothesis and to compare high schoolers’ authenticity with mothers and undergraduates’ authenticity with mothers, a two group independent sample t-test was performed. There was a significant difference in the mean scores for high schoolers (\( M = 3.40, SD = .68 \)) and undergraduates (\( M = 3.16, SD = .70 \)) authenticity with mothers (\( t(152) = \).
A two group independent sample t-test was also conducted to compare high schoolers’ authenticity with fathers and undergraduates’ authenticity with fathers. There was no significant difference in the means scores for high schoolers ($M = 2.94, SD = .84$) and undergraduates ($M = 2.78, SD = .88$) authenticity with fathers ($t(140) = .884, p = .38$).

**Emotion Regulation and Authenticity in the Undergraduate Sample**

For the undergraduate sample, in order to test the fourth hypothesis, that there would be a significant positive relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships, we conducted a correlational analysis. There was no relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships with mothers ($r(122) = .09, p = .15$) or fathers ($r(109) = .04, p = .32$). Therefore, regression analyses were not performed to examine the moderating role of criticism on the relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships.

For the undergraduate sample, in order to test the fifth hypothesis, that there would be a significant negative relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships, we conducted a correlational analysis. There was a significant negative relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers ($r(122) = -.26, p < .001$) and fathers ($r(109) = -.30, p < .001$). Thus, as emotional suppression increases, authenticity with parents decreases. Accordingly, regression analyses were performed to examine the extent to which perception of parental feedback as supportive moderated the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with parents.

**Suppression, Support, and Authenticity in the Undergraduate Sample**

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the sixth hypothesis in the undergraduate sample: the extent to which perceived parental feedback moderated the relation between emotion regulation and levels of authenticity. Specifically, the moderation model
proposed and tested that perception of parental support would moderate the link between suppression and authenticity in relationships (see Figure 1). Suppression scores were centered and entered in the first step, average support scores were centered and entered in the second step, and the interaction term and entered in the third step. Each combination of variables was performed twice, once for predicting authenticity with mothers and once for predicting authenticity with fathers, for a total of two regression analyses.

Based on standardized beta coefficients, in the first step, suppression was significantly related to low levels of authenticity in relationships for both mothers ($\beta = -.26, t(120) = -2.93, R^2 = .066, p = .004$) and fathers ($\beta = -.30, t(108) = -3.25, R^2 = .089, p = .002$), without accounting for parental support. Further, support was related to high levels of authenticity in relationships, after controlling for suppression for both mothers ($\beta = .55, t(120) = 7.55, R^2 = .37, p < .001$) and fathers ($\beta = .74, t(108) = 12.0, R^2 = .61, p < .001$). However, the interaction terms were not significant for mothers ($\beta = -.02, t(120) = -.22, R^2 = .37, p = .82$) or fathers ($\beta = .01, t(108) = .19, R^2 = .61, p = .85$). Thus, support did not moderate the results of suppression on authenticity with mothers and fathers, and the sixth hypothesis was not confirmed (see Table 3 for Mothers and Table 4 for Fathers). These finding suggests that while support did not moderate the relation between suppression and authenticity, when suppression and support are considered individually, they significantly predict authenticity in relationships with both mothers and fathers.

**Emotion Regulation and Authenticity in the High School Sample**

In the high school sample, in order to test the fourth hypothesis, that there would be a significant relation between reappraisal and authenticity, we conducted a correlational analysis. There was no relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships with mothers ($r(28) = .10, p = .62$) or fathers ($r(29) = .18, p = .32$). Therefore, regression analyses were not performed
to examine the moderating role of criticism on the relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships.

In the high school sample, in order to test the fifth hypothesis, that there would be a significant negative relation between suppression and authenticity, we conducted a correlational analysis. There was a significant negative relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers ($r(28) = -.45, p = .012$). There was a trend for suppression to be associated with low levels of authenticity in relationships with fathers ($r(29) = -.30, p = .10$). Accordingly, regression analyses were performed to examine the extent to which perception of parental feedback as supportive moderated the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers and fathers.

**Suppression, Support, and Authenticity in the High School Sample**

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the sixth hypothesis in the high school sample: the extent to which perceived parental feedback moderated the relation between emotion regulation and levels of authenticity. Specifically, the moderation model proposed and tested that the perception of parental support would moderate the link between suppression and authenticity in relationships (see Figure 1). Suppression scores were centered and entered in the first step, average support scores were centered and entered in the second step, and the interaction term and entered in the third step. Each combination of variables was performed twice, once for predicting authenticity with mothers and once for predicting authenticity with fathers, for a total of two regression analyses.

For the high school sample, based on standardized beta coefficients, in the first step, suppression was significantly related to low levels of authenticity in relationships for mothers, ($\beta = -.45, t(27) = -2.68, R^2 = .20, p = .012$). There was a trend for suppression to be related to low
levels of authenticity in relationships with fathers ($\beta = -.30$, $t(28) = -1.70$, $R^2 = .09$, $p = .10$). In the second step, support was related to high levels of authenticity in relationships, after controlling for suppression for mothers ($\beta = .67$, $t(27) = 5.23$, $R^2 = .60$, $p < .001$) and fathers ($\beta = .76$, $t(28) = 6.89$, $R^2 = .66$, $p < .001$). Results of the moderation analysis demonstrated that the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers was moderated by support ($\beta = .47$, $t(27) = 4.92$, $R^2 = .80$, $p < .001$) (see Table 5). Simple slopes for the association between suppression and authenticity with mothers were tested for low (1 SD below the mean) and high (1 SD above the mean) levels of support from mothers. The simple slope for low levels of support was significant, ($t(27) = -5.56$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant negative association between suppression and authenticity with mothers. That is, at low levels of support, as emotional suppression increases, authenticity in relationships with mothers decreases. In contrast, the simple slope for high levels of support was not significant, ($t(27) = .50$, $p = .62$). Thus, at high levels of support, as emotional suppression increases, level of authenticity in relationships with mothers remains constant. This finding suggests that support does moderate the relation between suppression and authenticity for mothers among high school aged adolescents. In other words, receiving high levels of support from mothers buffered the negative effects of suppression on authenticity in relationships with mothers (see Figure 3). In contrast, the interaction term for fathers was not significant ($\beta = .22$, $t(28) = 2.03$, $R^2 = .71$, $p = .05$). Thus, support did not moderate the results of suppression on authenticity with fathers, and the sixth hypothesis was only partially confirmed (see Table 6).

**Analyses with General Authenticity**

**Parental Feedback and General Authenticity in the Undergraduate Sample.** In order to test the relations among parental feedback, emotion regulation, and general authenticity, all
analyses were performed with a general measure of authenticity. Results from the undergraduate sample confirmed hypothesis one that as perceptions of criticism from mothers increased, levels of general authenticity decreased ($r(122) = -.27, p < .001$). However, the relation between perceptions of criticism from fathers and general authenticity was not significant ($r(109) = .06, p = .56$). Additionally, results confirmed hypothesis two that as perceptions of support from mothers and fathers increased, so did levels of general authenticity (mothers: $r(122) = .26, p < .001$ and fathers: $r(109) = .25, p < .001$).

**Parental Feedback and General Authenticity in the High School Sample.** Tests of the first hypothesis with the general measure of authenticity among the high school sample indicated that as perceptions of criticism from mothers increased, levels of authenticity decrease ($r(28) = -.46, p = .011$). However, as perceptions of criticism from fathers increased, levels of authenticity did not significantly decrease ($r(29) = -.31, p = .092$). Further, tests of the relation between support and the general measure of authenticity did not confirm hypothesis two: as perceptions of support from mothers and fathers increased, levels of authenticity did not significantly increase (mothers: $r(28) = .25, p = .19$ and fathers: $r(29) = .29, p = .12$).

As perceptions of criticism and general authenticity were measured with the same scales with both the high school and undergraduate samples, a Pearson’s correlation between general authenticity and parental criticism was performed for the full sample. However, for the full sample, as perceptions of criticism from mothers and fathers increased, levels of authenticity did not significantly decrease (mothers: $r(148) = -.12, p = .20$) and fathers: $r(136) = -.004, p = .97$).

**Emotion Regulation and General Authenticity in the Undergraduate Sample.** In the undergraduate sample, in order to test the fourth and fifth hypotheses, that there would be a significant relation between emotion regulation and general authenticity, we conducted a
correlational analysis. There was no relation between suppression and general authenticity in relationships \((r(122) = -0.02, p = .842)\). Therefore, regression analyses were not performed to examine the moderating role of support on the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships. However, high levels of reappraisal were associated with high levels of general authenticity in relationships \((r(122) = 0.31, p < .001)\). Accordingly, regression analyses were performed to examine the extent to which perception of parental criticism moderated the relation between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships with parents.

**Reappraisal, Criticism, and General Authenticity in the Undergraduate Sample.** A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the sixth hypothesis in the undergraduate sample: the extent to which perceived parental feedback moderated the relation between emotion regulation and general authenticity. Specifically, the moderation model proposed and tested that the perception of parental criticism would moderate the link between reappraisal and general authenticity (see Figure 2). Reappraisal scores were centered and entered in the first step, average criticism scores were centered and entered in the second step, and the interaction term was entered in the third step. Each regression analysis was performed twice, once for perceived criticism from mothers and once for perceived criticism from fathers, for a total of two regression analyses.

For the undergraduate sample, based on standardized beta coefficients, in the first step, reappraisal was significantly related to high levels of general authenticity for both mothers \((\beta = 0.31, t(121) = 3.56, R^2 = .095, p = .001)\) and fathers \((\beta = 0.28, t(108) = 3.03, R^2 = .08, p = .003)\) without accounting for parental criticism. In the second step, criticism from mothers was related to lower levels of general authenticity, after controlling for reappraisal \((\beta = -0.30, t(121) = -3.65, R^2 = .19, p < .001)\). However, criticism from fathers was not related to low levels of general
authenticity after controlling for reappraisal ($\beta = .03, t(108) = .27, R^2 = .08, p = .79$). Results of the moderation analysis demonstrated that the relation between reappraisal and general authenticity was moderated by criticism from mothers ($\beta = .18, t(120) = 2.16, R^2 = .22, p = .033$) (see Table 7). Simple slopes for the association between reappraisal and authenticity with mothers were tested for low (1 SD below the mean) and high (1 SD above the mean) levels of criticism from mothers. The simple slope for high levels of criticism was significant ($t(120) = 3.72, p < .001$), indicating a significant positive association between reappraisal and general authenticity. That is, at high levels of criticism from mothers, as emotional reappraisal increases, general authenticity increases. In contrast, the simple slope for low levels of criticism was not significant ($t(120) = 1.35, p = .18$). Thus, at low levels of criticism from mothers, as emotional reappraisal increases, level of general authenticity remains constant. This finding suggests that those who are at risk for low levels of authenticity are those who receive high criticism from mothers and have low reappraisal strategies (see Figure 4). In contrast, the interaction term for fathers was not significant ($\beta = .12, t(107) = 1.32, R^2 = .09, p = .19$). Thus, criticism from fathers did not moderate the results of reappraisal on general authenticity (see Table 8).

**Emotion Regulation and General Authenticity in the High School Sample.** In the high school sample, in order to test the fourth and fifth hypotheses, that there would be a significant relation between emotion regulation and authenticity, we conducted a correlational analysis. For the high school sample, there was no relation between reappraisal and general authenticity ($r(29) = .22, p = .24$). Further, there was no relation between suppression and general authenticity ($r(29) = .05, p = .81$). Therefore, regression analyses were not performed to examine the moderating role of parental feedback on the relation between emotion regulation and general authenticity in the high school sample.
Discussion

The goal of the current study was to examine the relations between parental feedback and emotion regulation on authenticity in relationships with parents and authenticity in general. The results, derived from an investigation of high school and college-aged students, highlight the importance of understanding authenticity in a relational context. As hypothesized, the findings demonstrated that perceiving parents as critical was related to low levels of authenticity in relationships with parents while perceiving parents as supportive was related to high levels of authenticity in relationships with parents. Using the emotion regulation strategy of suppression was related to lower levels of authenticity in relationships with both mothers and fathers. Further, while reappraisal was not associated with higher levels of authenticity with parents, it was associated with higher levels of general authenticity. The results also provided preliminary support that positive parental support buffered the effects of emotional suppression on authenticity in relationships with mothers among high school students. This study contributes to the literature by examining factors that influence levels of authenticity in relationships in late adolescence and young adulthood.

Criticism and authenticity in relationships with high school and college students

When both high school and college students perceived higher levels of criticism from mothers and fathers, they reported significantly lower levels of authenticity with both mothers and fathers. This result is consistent with prior research and confirms the hypothesis that criticism is associated with withdrawal from relationships and promotes lower levels of openness and honesty. The pattern of an association between high levels of criticism and low levels of authenticity in relationships was also consistent when high school and college students were considered together. In other words, the negative relation between criticism and low levels of
authenticity for the combined sample were robust across a wide range of ages (14 to 22 years). Harter (1999) found that young adolescents who internalize criticisms from others are at risk for low self-esteem and symptoms of depression. The current study confirms Harter’s (1999) findings and demonstrates that there is a trend for suppression and criticism from both mothers and fathers to be associated among late adolescents. Criticism may cause individuals to suppress their true thoughts and options, further decreasing the level of authenticity in the relationship. In sum, the results of the current study indicate that perceptions of criticism from both mothers and fathers may continue to form the foundation for a less authentic parent-child relationship in mid-adolescence and young adulthood.

Support and authenticity in relationships with high school and college students

Consistent with prior research, parental support was positively associated with authenticity in relationships with parents for both high school and undergraduate individuals (Harter et al., 1997; Theran, 2010; Tolman & Porche, 2000). These results suggest that approval and support from parents are associated with the degree of openness and honesty that develops in relationships with parents. Previous research found that young adolescents who received more support from their primary caregiver had better social functioning (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Harter et al., 1999). Thus, social support is a strong predictor of the individual’s ability to have positive authenticity in intimate relationships with parents. Authenticity is formed and sustained by validation and support from others, particularly from parents. Accordingly, due to the emphasis on feedback from others on functioning in relationships, the results indicate the importance of examining authenticity in a relational context.

Emotion regulation and authenticity in relationships
In the undergraduate sample, the emotion regulation style of suppression was significantly associated with low levels of authenticity with both mothers and fathers. These findings are consistent with the theory that suppression will lead to an inability to express true inner emotional experiences (Gross & John, 2003; Hardy et al., 1993). Those who use suppression mask true feelings, thereby decreasing the levels of openness and honesty in relationships. Thus, the current study confirms that lack of authenticity in relationships is associated with an incongruence between inner emotional experience and emotional expression formed by engaging in suppression.

Prior research suggests that suppression may have short-term benefits (i.e., conflict avoidance or not hurting someone’s feelings) (English & John, 2013). However, a long-term reliance on suppression prevents the individual from being able to both experience and process honest and accurate emotional responses. Continual use of suppression is therefore particularly harmful in a relational context as individuals are not able to be honest with themselves or with others. Indeed, suppression has consistently been linked to lower levels of social functioning (English & John, 2013; Gross & John, 2003). The present study extends the link between suppression and social functioning, by specifically linking suppression to lower levels of authenticity in relationships. Of particular importance is the fact that all relations between suppression and authenticity across the two samples with mothers and fathers were only moderately, though significantly, correlated. This suggests that suppression and authenticity are distinct constructs, despite overlapping features.

Among high school individuals, suppression was not associated with low levels of authenticity for fathers. Given the small sample size, the lack of significance is not entirely surprising. Regardless, one explanation is that the high school sample was composed of all
female students and given their developmental level, perhaps female adolescents are more inclined to be open and honest with their mothers. The results of the current study confirm that adolescent girls report significantly higher levels of authenticity with mothers than female young adults ($M = 3.41$ and $M = 3.16$, respectively). Therefore, it is likely that the high school participants may have identified strongly with their mothers and were therefore more susceptible to the effects of their suppression techniques with mothers. Indeed, Gilligan (1989) suggests that adolescent girls will use their mothers as role models and rely on their mothers’ emotional reactions for a model of appropriate responses and behaviors. For this reason, suppression techniques used in relationships with fathers may not be as salient. In sum, the results suggest that due to the stronger identification and intimacy in relationships with the mother, suppression will have a more detrimental effect on the authenticity in that particular relational context.

In contrast, the emotion regulation style of reappraisal was not associated with authenticity in relationships among adolescents and young adults. This suggests that being able to alter the emotional impact of an event does not influence the quality of the relationships with parents. Thus, while reappraisal helps the individual to reduce immediate experiences of negative emotions, the results indicate that the behavioral changes caused by reappraisal do not significantly change the quality of relationships. Research on the social benefits of reappraisal is inconsistent as previous research indicates that reappraisal can have either a neutral influence (Butler et al., 2003) or a positive influence (Gross & John, 2003) on social interactions and functioning. However, prior research does explain that reappraisal, unlike suppression, is not associated with any social costs (Gross & John, 2003). The results of the current study also confirm that the regulatory process of reappraisal does not influence, either negatively or positively, the individual’s immediate behaviors and experiences.
Another explanation for the lack of association between reappraisal and authenticity in relationships is that reappraisal is a cognitive process that involves changing one’s emotional reactions to an event (Gross & John, 2003). Reappraisal can occur either before an emotion has been experienced or after the emotion has been fully experienced (English & John, 2013). Researchers have demonstrated that reappraisal employed before the emotion has been experienced is a more effective method of regulation (Sheppes & Meiran, 2007). However, unlike regular use of suppression, those who consistently use reappraisal will not necessarily have better long-term social outcomes (Butler et al., 2003). The current study chose to examine suppression and reappraisal because these are two strategies commonly used in everyday life. However, because one form of reappraisal occurs at an early point in the emotion processing pathway, it may have less of an external behavioral presence and thus a minimal effect on behaviors. The results of the current study suggest that authentic interpersonal outcomes may not be influenced by cognitive reevaluation of a situation and the associated emotional reaction. Accordingly, reappraisal may not be an appropriate emotion regulation strategy to examine in a relational context.

**Suppression, support, and authenticity in relationships with undergraduates**

As previously discussed, suppression was related to lower levels of authenticity in relationships with mothers and fathers. Interestingly, in the regression analyses, both suppression and support individually influenced levels of authenticity in relationships with both mothers and fathers. However, parental support did not moderate the relationship between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers or fathers in the undergraduate sample. One explanation for this finding is that it is possible that students who do not live at home are currently less influenced by parental support and criticism. Undergraduates may perceive their
parents as being supportive, however, they do not receive daily exposure to this support. Thus, the negative influence of suppression on authenticity is not buffered by parental support because parental support is a less consistent component of the individuals’ lives. Rather, the individuals are reflecting on past perceptions of parental feedback which may not be as salient in their current everyday experiences. The effects of parental feedback may be more relevant to examine among students who live at home and are in daily and direct contact with parental figures. Alternatively, perhaps perception of feedback from peers may be a more salient variable than parents among college students because these students live in an environment surrounded by their peers. Future research should examine the influence of peer support and criticism on the relation between suppression and authenticity with peers.

Children learn how to regulate their emotions through parental modeling of appropriate emotional reactions (Gilligan et al., 1989). Mothers who are inauthentic in their relationships and do not share intimate emotional experiences may tend to model this type of behavior for their children. Therefore, it is likely that individuals who use suppression will have parents who also use suppression. In turn, parents who use suppression may be less likely to clearly express support and praise. Thus, while individuals who use suppression will have low levels of authenticity in relationships, as confirmed by this study, perhaps the lack of authenticity is also partially attributed to their parents’ own use of suppression. Therefore, support does not moderate the relation between suppression and authenticity because suppressors experience less perceived support due to their parents’ own suppression techniques. The current study did not examine parents’ emotion regulation style. Future research should examine the emotion regulation style of the parent and how parental suppression may also decrease level of authenticity in relationships.
Suppression, support, and authenticity in relationships with high schoolers

In the high school sample, support from mothers moderated the relationship between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers. At high levels of suppression, high school students with higher levels of support from mothers had greater levels of authenticity with mothers. This suggests that parental support can protect against the negative influence of suppression on authenticity in relationships with mothers.

Prior research found that adolescents consider lack of approval from others to be a main reason for “false-self” behavior (Harter et al., 1996). Further, lack of authenticity in adolescence is encouraged by a strong desire to gain approval from others (Jack, 1991). An adolescent will strive to obtain social acceptance and thus, being authentic in relationships becomes less important. Consistent with these findings, the current study demonstrated that high levels of approval and support will minimize inauthenticity in relationships. However, adolescents who receive low levels of support will suppress their true emotions in order to gain acceptance. Indeed, there was a trend for criticism and suppression to be correlated in the high school sample. This trend suggests that suppression may lead to inconsistencies between what one really feels and behaviors in a relational context. In sum, while suppression leads to low levels of authenticity, high levels of support can buffer the detrimental effects of suppression on the openness and honesty in relationships.

Parental support did not moderate the relationship between suppression and authenticity in relationships with fathers in the high school sample. As previously explained, this suggests that young females may be more influenced by feedback from mothers. Previous research found that girls will imitate their mothers’ behaviors (Gilligan et al., 1989). Thus, adolescent girls are sensitive to approval and support from mothers. Indeed, girls report feelings of closeness and
dependence on support from mothers (Rich, 1989). The results of the current study confirm that adolescent girls are strongly influenced by support specifically from mothers and that this support can buffer the effect of suppression on authenticity in relationships with mothers.

**General authenticity**

The general measure of authenticity examined authenticity as it related to self-alienation behavior, authentic living, and acceptance of external influence (Wood et al., 2008). According to Wood et al., (2008) authentic living refers to being true to oneself and living in accordance with one’s beliefs. Therefore, the measure focuses primarily on the individual and personal components of authenticity. In this measure, authenticity is not examined in a specific relational context, which may explain why there was no relation between perceptions of father criticism and general authenticity or perceptions of parental support and general authenticity in the high school sample, as support and criticism are interpersonal constructs.

In the college sample, high level of perception of parental support was associated with high levels of general authenticity. One explanation for finding an association between support and general authenticity in the college sample, and not in the high school sample, is that the general measure of authenticity was developed for an adult population. The measure does not target adolescents’ developmental level. Thus, this may account for the lack of association between parental support and general authenticity in the high school sample. The general authenticity measure may be more appropriate to use with young adults rather than with high school students.

In the undergraduate sample, reappraisal was positively associated with general level of authenticity. In other words, while reappraisal was not associated with authenticity in specific
relational context (i.e., with mothers or with fathers), those with high levels of reappraisal had high levels of general authenticity. One explanation is that, as indicated, the measure of general authenticity explores authenticity with the self (Wood et al., 2008). Thus, the items more closely examine “false-self” behavior, such as acting and speaking in opposition to how one really feels (Harter, 2002). There is less of an emphasis in the general measure of authenticity on congruence between emotional experience and behaviors in an interpersonal context. When using reappraisal, an individual will, independently, try to cognitively reconstruct their emotions in order to behave in a way that is congruent with those emotions. Reappraisal is a cognitive construct, and thus, it may be highly associated with authenticity with one’s self, which is also a cognitive construct.

Clinical Implications

Results of the current study suggest that criticism from parents and the use of suppression are associated with low levels of authenticity in relationships. There are important clinical implications for adolescents and young adults who use suppression and/or perceive their parents as critical, particularly given that low levels of authenticity may lead to low self-esteem and depressive symptomology (Theran, 2010). To better explore this pathway, future studies might examine how family therapy interventions that focus on increasing parental support might increase authenticity, even when suppression and/or criticism are present. Such interventions may help to promote social functioning in the context of intimate relationships, given that high levels of authenticity in relationships have been shown to promote well-being and adjustment (Harter et al., 1996). Further, it may be worthwhile to explore other moderators, such as self-esteem and academic achievement, to better evaluate how the association between suppression and authenticity is most likely to change.
Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of this study is that it explored cross-sectional associations between emotion regulation, perceived parental feedback, and authenticity in relationships. Accordingly, while the results are consistent with theories on support, suppression, and authenticity, the findings do not establish the causal direction of the associations between variables. It is possible that low authenticity in relationships may predict higher levels of parental criticism or that low authenticity promotes the development of suppression techniques. Exploring these associations in a longitudinal study may further illuminate how authenticity develops from early childhood to early adulthood. Second, the current study used an all-female sample. While the literature does emphasize that authenticity in relationships is an essential component of female adolescent development, it is also important to consider males. Future research should examine the relations among emotion regulation, parental feedback, and authenticity with male adolescents and young adults. Perhaps we might expect gender differences, as adolescent boys may be less likely to be open and honest with their mothers as a result of a possible lack of identification with mothers. Third, the current study uses only self-report measures to explore adolescent’s perceptions of their relationships with their parents. However, perception of level of support and criticism may not match actual support provided and criticism given to the individual. Given the biases associated with self-report measures, assessing parents’ perceptions of their support, criticism, and level of authenticity may allow researchers to determine discrepancies between parent and child perceptions of the same variables. Fourth, only one of the four multiple regression analyses was significant. Furthermore, the multiple regression analysis that was significant was performed with a small sample of high schools students, which limited the power of the multiple regression analysis. Future research should examine how feedback from parents moderates the relation
between suppression and authenticity with parents among a larger sample of high school students. Comparisons between the views of adolescents’ and young adults would also be possible if a larger sample of adolescents is included. Fifth, it is possible that associations between variables might have differed in a clinical sample. Individuals with clinically significant mental health problems may be more likely to have high levels of suppression and to have lower levels of authenticity in relationships. Thus, support may have a larger effect on levels of authenticity for these individuals. Perhaps individuals in a clinical population may be more receptive to interventions, such as an increase in parental support. Indeed, future studies might assess whether increasing parental support is an effective intervention for suppressors with low levels of authenticity in a clinical sample.

Conclusion

The current study increases our understanding of authenticity in relationships with parents and clarifies our understanding of some factors that influence authenticity. The findings confirm that perceived feedback from parents significantly influences the quality of the relationship with both mothers and fathers. Further, the results confirm that the way in which one manages emotions has a significant influence on the quality of relationships with parents. The use of suppression in everyday life can impair one’s ability to be authentic in relationships. While there are short-term benefits of using suppression (such as minimizing conflict), routine use of suppression has interpersonal consequences and leads to low levels of authenticity in relationships. Overall, the results suggest that, among adolescents, perceptions of support from mothers can moderate this relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers. In other words, the present research provides preliminary support that while suppression can lead to low levels of authenticity with parents, parental support, particularly
from mothers, can reduce the long-term social consequences of suppression among adolescents. These results have important clinical implications; for adolescent girls who commonly suppress their emotions, increasing support from mothers may lead to better outcomes in the quality of the parent-child relationship. Thus, the results of the current study may help caregivers, clinicians, and researchers further explore the considerable value of parental support for adolescents and young adults.
References


criticism, negative affect, and borderline personality disorder features: The role of thought suppression. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 43*, 257-268.


Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Pearson’s Correlations among Variables in the Undergraduate Sample (For Mother, N = 124; For Father N = 111)*

| Variable                          | M   | SD  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. General Authenticity          | 5.63| 1.05| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Authenticity with Mother      | 3.16| .70 | .33**| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Authenticity with Father      | 2.78| .88 | .20* | .34**| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Support from Mother           | 3.39| .47 | .26**| .57**| .20*| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |     |     |
| 5. Support from Father           | 3.06| .76 | .25**| .22* | .77**| .25**| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |     |
| 6. Perceived Criticism from Mother| 2.06| .65 | -.27**| -.41**| -.10| -.48**| -.07| 1.00| -   |     |     |     |
| 7. Perceived Criticism from Father| 2.02| .66 | .06  | -.20* | -.31**| -.26**| -.22*| .52**| 1.00| -   |     |     |
| 8. Suppression                   | 3.60| 1.31| -.02 | -.26**| -.30**| -.08 | -.18| .01  | .05 | 1.00| -   |     |
| 9. Reappraisal                   | 4.76| 1.24| .31**| .09  | .04  | .02  | .19*| .09  | .10 | .11 | 1.00|     |

*p < .05, **p < .01
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics and Pearson’s Correlations among Variables in the High School Sample (For Mother, N = 30; For Father, N = 31)*

| Variable                        | M     | SD    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. General Authenticity         | 5.18  | .70   | 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 2. Authenticity with Mother     | 3.40  | .68   | .46**| 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 3. Authenticity with Father     | 2.94  | .84   | .28  | .52**| 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 4. Support from Mother          | 3.58  | .42   | .25  | .74**| .30  | 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |      |      |
| 5. Support from Father          | 3.41  | .50   | .29  | .46* | .79**| .39* | 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |      |
| 6. Perceived Criticism from Mother | 1.93  | .56   | -.46*| -.60**| -.29 | -.60**| -.39*| 1.00 | -    |      |      |      |
| 7. Perceived Criticism from Father | 2.05  | .71   | -.31 | -.42*| -.64**| -.25 | -.64**| .54**| 1.00 | -    |      |      |
| 8. Suppression                  | 2.55  | .77   | .05  | -.45*| -.30 | -.32 | -.11 | .29  | .29  | 1.00 | -    |      |
| 9. Reappraisal                  | 3.43  | .67   | .22  | .10  | .18  | -.01 | .19  | -.37*| -.30 | -.16 | 1.00 |      |

* *p < .05, **p < .01
### Table 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Support as a Moderator of Authenticity and Suppression with Mothers in Undergraduate Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$F$ for $R^2 \Delta$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average suppression</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>8.61**</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average mother support</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>57.03**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$p < .01$**
Table 4

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Support as a Moderator of Authenticity and Suppression with Fathers in Undergraduate Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$F$ for $R^2 \Delta$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average suppression</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>10.55**</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average father support</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>143.98**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$p < .01$**
Table 5

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Support as a Moderator of Authenticity and Suppression with Mothers in High School Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F for R² Δ</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average suppression</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>7.17*</td>
<td>-.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average mother support</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>27.32**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>24.24**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, ** p < .01
Table 6

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Support as a Moderator of Authenticity and Suppression with Fathers in High School Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>F for $R^2 \Delta$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average suppression</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average father support</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>47.43**</td>
<td>.76**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
Table 7

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Mother Criticism as a Moderator of General Authenticity and Reappraisal in Undergraduate Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$F$ for $R^2 \Delta$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average reappraisal</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>12.69**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average mother criticism</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>13.31**</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>4.65**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
Table 8

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Father Criticism as a Moderator of General Authenticity and Reappraisal in Undergraduate Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F for R² Δ</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Average reappraisal</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>9.21*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Average father criticism</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Interaction term</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * p < .05, ** p < .01
Figure 1. Hypothesized model testing the effects of perceptions of parental support on the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships. Authenticity in relationships is predicted by suppression and support.
Figure 2. Hypothesized model testing the effects of perceptions of parental criticism on the relation between reappraisal and general authenticity. General authenticity is predicted by reappraisal and criticism.
Figure 3. Support from mothers moderates the relation between suppression and authenticity in relationships with mothers.
Figure 4. Criticism from mothers moderates the relation between reappraisal and general level of authenticity in relationships.
Appendix of Measures

Appendix I

The Saying What I Think Scale (Parent/Guardian 1)

Read each statement all the way across. Each statement describes two kinds of teenagers, one on the left, and one on the right. **First** decide which kind of teenager **YOU are most like**, the one on the left or the one on the right. Pick one. Then for each kind of teenager, check whether that description is really true for you or just sort of true for you. So for each numbered item you will be checking only one box. Sometimes it will be on the left, sometimes on the right. DO NOT check both sides. Just put a check on the side that is most like you.

**SAMPLE SENTENCE**

Really True
Sort of True
For me for me

1. ☐ ☐ Some people like to go to the movies in their spare time **BUT** Other people would rather go to sports events.

Please answer the following questions about your mother or the guardian who acts as your mother. If you do not have a mother you may move on to the next part. If you have two same sex parents or guardians then fill out the questionnaire for parent or guardian 1 and indicate their relationship to you below. You will answer questions about your second parent or guardian later.

Parent/Guardian 1 (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc.):__________________

Really True
Sort of True
For me for me

1. ☐ ☐ Some people share what they are really thinking with their mother. **BUT** Other people find it hard to share what they are thinking with their mother.

2. ☐ ☐ Some people usually don’t share what’s on their mind around their mother. **BUT** Other people do say what’s on their mind around their mother.

3. ☐ ☐ Some people are able to express their opinions to their mother. **BUT** Other people have trouble expressing their opinions to their mother.

4. ☐ ☐ Some people are able to let their mothers know what’s important to them. **BUT** Other people are not able to let their mother know what’s important to them.

5. ☐ ☐ Some people have a hard time expressing their point of view to their mother. **BUT** Other people can express their point of view to their mother.
Saying What I Think Scale (Parent/Guardian 2)

Read each statement all the way across. Each statement describes two kinds of teenagers, one on the left, and one on the right. First decide which kind of teenager YOU are most like, the one on the left, or the one on the right. Pick one. Then for each kind of teenager, check whether that description is really true for you or just sort of true for you. So for each numbered item you will be checking only one box. Sometimes it will be on the left, sometimes on the right. DO NOT check both sides. Just put a check on the side that is most like you.

**SAMPLE SENTENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True</th>
<th>Sort of True</th>
<th>Really True</th>
<th>Sort of True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. □ □ Some people like to go to the movies in their spare time BUT Other people would rather go to sports events.

Please answer the following questions about your father or the guardian who acts as your father. If you do not have a father you may move on to the next section. If you have two same sex parents or guardians then fill out the questionnaire for parent or guardian 2 and indicate their relationship to you below.

Parent/Guardian 2 (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc. ): ________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True</th>
<th>Sort of True</th>
<th>Really True</th>
<th>Sort of True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. □ □ Some people share what they are really thinking with their father. BUT Other people find it hard to share what they are thinking with their father.

2. □ □ Some people usually don’t share what’s on their mind around their father. BUT Other people do say what’s on their mind around their father.

3. □ □ Some people are able to express their opinions to their father. BUT Other people have trouble expressing their opinions to their father.

4. □ □ Some people are able to let their fathers know what’s important to them. BUT Other people are not able to let their father know what’s important to them.

5. □ □ Some people have a hard time expressing their point of view to their father. BUT Other people can express their point of view to their father.
Appendix II

General Authenticity Measure:

Please circle the following questions on a scale from 1 ("does not describe me at all") to 7 ("describes me very well").

1. I always stand by what I believe in.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I feel as if I don’t know myself very well.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I usually do what other people tell me to do.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Other people influence me greatly.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I am strongly influence by the opinions of others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I feel out of touch with the “real me”.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I am true to myself in most situations.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

10. I feel alienated from myself.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

11. I live in accordance with my values and beliefs.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

12. I don’t know how I really feel inside.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Appendix III

Family Emotional Involvement and Criticism Scale (Parent/Guardian 1):

Please choose your parent/guardian #1 and answer the following questions about parent/guardian #1.

What is his/her relationship to you (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc)?

Please think about your relationship with this person when answering the following questions. Circle VERY TRUE, TRUE, SORT OF TRUE, FALSE, OR VERY FALSE, depending on how well the statement describes your relationship with this person.

1. I am upset if this person is upset.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. This person approves of most everything I do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. This person knows what I am feeling most of the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. This person finds fault with my friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
5. This person gives me money when I need it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. This person complains about the way I handle money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. This person knows how I am feeling before I tell him/her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. This person approves of my friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. I usually know what this person is thinking before he/she tells me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. This person complains about what I do for fun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. If I am upset, this person gets upset too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. This person is always trying to get me to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
13. If I have no way of getting somewhere, this person will take me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. I have to be careful what I do or this person will put me down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Family Emotional Involvement and Criticism Scale (Parent/Guardian 2):

Please choose parent/guardian #2 and answer the following questions about parent/guardian #2. If you do not have a second parent/guardian, you may move on to the next section.

What is his/her relationship to you (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc.)?

Please think about your relationship with this person when answering the following questions. Circle VERY TRUE, TRUE, SORT OF TRUE, FALSE, OR VERY FALSE, depending on how well the statement describes your relationship with this person.

1. I am upset if this person is upset.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. This person approves of most everything I do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. This person knows what I am feeling most of the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
4. This person finds fault with my friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. This person gives me money when I need it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. This person complains about the way I handle money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. This person knows how I am feeling before I tell him/her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. This person approves of my friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. I usually know what this person is thinking before he/she tells me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. This person complains about what I do for fun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. If I am upset, this person gets upset too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
12. This person is always trying to get me to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. If I have no way of getting somewhere, this person will take me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. I have to be careful what I do or this person will put me down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>SORT OF TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
<th>VERY FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix IV

Quality of Relationships Inventory (Parent/Guardian 1):

Please choose your parent/guardian #1 and answer the following questions about parent/guardian #1.

What is his/her relationship to you (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc)?

____________________________________________________________

Please think about your relationship with this person when answering the following questions and circle the following questions on a scale from 1 (“not at all”) to 4 (“very much”).

1. To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems?

   1  2  3  4

2. How often do you have to work hard to avoid conflict with this person?

   1  2  3  4

3. To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem?

   1  2  3  4

4. How upset does this person sometimes make you feel?

   1  2  3  4

5. To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback, even if you might not want to hear it?

   1  2  3  4

6. How much does this person make you feel guilty?

   1  2  3  4
7. How much do you have to “give in” in this relationship?

1  2  3  4

8. To what extent can you count on this person to help you if a family member very close to you died

1  2  3  4

9. How much does this person want you to change?

1  2  3  4

10. How positive a role does this person play in your life?

1  2  3  4

11. How significant is this relationship in your life?

1  2  3  4

12. How close will your relationship be with this person in 10 years?

1  2  3  4

13. How much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month?

1  2  3  4

14. How critical of you is this person?

1  2  3  4
15. If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that this person would be willing to do something with you?

1  2  3  4

16. How responsible do you feel for this person’s well-being?

1  2  3  4

17. How much do you depend on this person?

1  2  3  4

18. To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry at someone else?

1  2  3  4

19. How much would you like this person to change?

1  2  3  4

20. How angry does this person make you feel?

1  2  3  4

21. How much do you argue with this person?

1  2  3  4

22. To what extent can you really count on this person to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?

1  2  3  4

23. How often does this person make you feel angry?

1  2  3  4
24. How often does this person try to control or influence your life?

1  2  3  4

25. How much more do you give than you get from this relationship?

1  2  3  4

Quality of Relationships Inventory (Parent/Guardian 2):

Please choose your parent/guardian #2 and answer the following questions about parent/guardian #2.

What is his/her relationship to you (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc)?

____________________________________________________________

Please think about your relationship with this person when answering the following questions and circle the following questions on a scale from 1 (“not at all”) to 4 (“very much”).

1. To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems?

1  2  3  4

2. How often do you have to work hard to avoid conflict with this person?

1  2  3  4

3. To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem?

1  2  3  4

4. How upset does this person sometimes make you feel?

1  2  3  4
5. To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback, even if you might not want to hear it?

1 2 3 4

6. How much does this person make you feel guilty?

1 2 3 4

7. How much do you have to “give in” in this relationship?

1 2 3 4

8. To what extent can you count on this person to help you if a family member very close to you died?

1 2 3 4

9. How much does this person want you to change?

1 2 3 4

10. How positive a role does this person play in your life?

1 2 3 4

11. How significant is this relationship in your life?

1 2 3 4

12. How close will your relationship be with this person in 10 years?

1 2 3 4

13. How much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month?

1 2 3 4
14. How critical of you is this person?

1  2  3  4

15. If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that this person would be willing to do something with you?

1  2  3  4

16. How responsible do you feel for this person’s well-being?

1  2  3  4

17. How much do you depend on this person?

1  2  3  4

18. To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry at someone else?

1  2  3  4

19. How much would you like this person to change?

1  2  3  4

20. How angry does this person make you feel?

1  2  3  4

21. How much do you argue with this person?

1  2  3  4

22. To what extent can you really count on this person to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?

1  2  3  4
23. How often does this person make you feel angry?

1                        2                          3                        4

24. How often does this person try to control or influence your life?

1                        2                          3                        4

25. How much more do you give than you get from this relationship?

1                        2                          3                        4

Appendix V

People In My Life Scale (Parent/Guardian 1):

Read each statement all the way across. Each statement describes two kinds of teenagers, one on the left, and one on the right. First decide which kind of person YOU are most like, the one on the left, or the one on the right. Pick one. Then for each kind of person, check whether that description is really true for you or just sort of true for you. So for each numbered item you will be checking only one box. Sometimes it will be on the left, sometimes on the right. DO NOT check both sides. Just put a check on the side that is most like you.

SAMPLE SENTENCE

Really          Sort of     Really          Sort of
True           True       for me         for me
For me          for me

1. □ □ Some people like to do fun things with a lot of other people. BUT Other people like to do fun things □ □ with just a few people.

Please answer the following questions about your mother or the guardian who acts as your mother. If you do not have a mother you may move on to the next part. If you have two same sex parents or guardians then fill out the questionnaire for parent or guardian 1 and indicate their relationship to you below. You will answer questions about your second parent or guardian later.

Parent/Guardian 1 (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc.): ________________________________

Really          Sort of     Really          Sort of
True           True       for me         for me
For me          for me

1. □ □ Some people have mothers who don’t understand them. BUT Other people have mothers □ □ who really do understand them.
2. □ □ Some people have mothers who don’t seem to want to hear about their children’s problems. BUT Other people have mothers who do want to hear about their children’s problems.

3. □ □ Some people have mothers who care about their feelings. BUT Other people have mothers who don’t seem to care very much about their feelings.

4. □ □ Some people have mothers who treat their child like a person who really matters. BUT Other people have mothers who don’t usually treat their child like a person who matters.

5. □ □ Some people have mothers who like them the way they are. BUT Other people have mothers who wish their children were different.

6. □ □ Some people have mothers who don’t act like what their children do is important. BUT Other people have mothers who do act like what their children do is important.

People In My Life Scale (Parent/Guardian 2):

Please answer the following questions about your father or the guardian who acts as your father. If you do not have a father you may move on to the next section. If you have two same sex parents or guardians then fill out the questionnaire for parent or guardian 2 and indicate their relationship to you below.

Parent/Guardian 2 (e.g., mother, father, grandmother etc.): ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really</th>
<th>Sort of</th>
<th>Really</th>
<th>Sort of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
<td>for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. □ □ Some people have fathers who don’t understand them. BUT Other people have fathers who really do understand them.

2. □ □ Some people have fathers who don’t seem to want to hear about their children’s problems. BUT Other people have fathers who do want to hear about their children’s problems.

3. □ □ Some people have fathers who care about their feelings. BUT Other people have fathers who don’t seem to care very much about their feelings.

4. □ □ Some people have fathers who treat their child like a person who really matters. BUT Other people have fathers who don’t usually treat their child like a person who matters.
5. □ □ Some people have fathers who like them the way they are. **BUT** Other people have fathers who wish their children were different.

6. □ □ Some people have fathers who don’t act like what their children do is important. **BUT** Other people have fathers who do act like what their children do is important.

Appendix VI

Emotion Regulation Scale

We would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is, regulate and manage) your emotions. The questions below involve two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. Although some of the following questions may seem similar to one another, they differ in important ways. For each item, please answer using the following scale 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”)

1. When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I’m thinking about.
   
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. I keep my emotions to myself.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I’m thinking about.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. When I am feeling positive emotions, I am careful not to express them.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

5. When I’m faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

6. I control my emotions by not expressing them.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

7. When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I’m thinking about the situation.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

8. I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I’m in.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
9. When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them.

10. When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I’m thinking about the situation.
Appendix VII

Emotion Regulation Scale – Youth

These 10 questions are about how you feel inside, and how you show your emotions/feelings. Some of the questions may seem similar to one another, but they are different in important ways. Please read each statement, and then circle the choice that seems most true for you. Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, this is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. We really want to know what you think.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Half and Half</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strong Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When I want to feel happier, I think about something different.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I keep my feelings to myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When I want to feel less bad (e.g., sad, angry or worried), I think about something different.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When I am feeling happy, I am careful not to show it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When I’m worried about something, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me feel better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I control my feelings by not showing them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When I want to feel happier about something, I change the way I’m thinking about it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I control my feelings about things by changing the way I think about them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. When I’m feeling bad (e.g., sad, angry, or worried), I’m careful not to show it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When I want to feel less bad (e.g., sad, angry, or worried) about something, I change the way I’m thinking about it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>