THE EXPERIENCE OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT CONVERSATION FROM THE ADOLESCENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by

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Abstract

This study explored the experience of eleven adolescents in the context of having a conversation with his or her parent. The adolescents were interviewed individually using a semi-structured format in order to obtain detailed descriptions of the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with a parent. A phenomenological approach was used for data analysis incorporating horizontalization, transformation, and synthesis, which resulted in individual and general structural descriptions of the experience. Two main categories of meaning were extracted: (1) the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent, and (2) the adolescent’s experience of feeling close and connected to the parent. Within these two main categories, core themes of the experience were also extracted and were as follows: (a) adolescent experiences expressing his or her point of view, (b) adolescent experiences the parent expressing his or her point of view, (c) adolescent experiences making a request, (d) adolescent experiences the parent making a demand, (e) adolescent experiences feeling comfortable talking with the parent, (f) adolescent experiences the parent supporting him or her, (g) adolescent experiences supporting the parent, and (h) adolescent experiences understanding the parent. The findings suggest how parents can help their adolescent children express themselves in appropriate ways, and at the same time, help the adolescent maintain closeness and connection with the parent. Ultimately, the goal is to strengthen the parent-adolescent relationship.
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DEDICATION

To

My three children

Peter, Mark, and Christine,

who gave me the experience of parent-adolescent conversation
CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW

Introduction

Adolescence has been defined as the time between childhood and adulthood beginning with the physical and emotional changes of puberty and ending usually by such events as the adolescent leaving home, beginning a career, or getting married (Noller & Callan, 1991). Because adolescents are going through major developmental and contextual changes in their lives, they are often experiencing a number of concerns, worries, and problems (Benson, Williams, & Johnson, 1987; Violato & Travis, 1995). Parents can be an important source of social support to their adolescent children who are experiencing these concerns. Noller and Callan (1991) state that the quality of family (parent-adolescent) relationships affect (a) the success with which adolescents negotiate the major tasks of adolescence, (b) the extent to which they become involved in problem behaviors, and (c) their ability to establish meaningful close relationships. Therefore, parents remain very important to adolescents as they pass through this stage of life. The quality of the parent-adolescent relationship is crucial to adolescent prosocial behavior (Collins, Gleason, & Sesma, 1997).

Communication is part of a relationship. Effective communication strategies can enhance the development of a positive relationship. Conversation between two people is one way of communicating and conversation between parents and adolescents can be one way of activating the parental support system. Conversation is very important in a relationship. Two people may love each other but if the conversation between them is maladaptive, the relationship can suffer.
Literature Review

Over the last ten years, a large body of mostly quantitative research on adolescents and their parents has accumulated. In the Literature Review section, first adolescent development will be reviewed. This will be followed by a review of the theories of parenting. Next, parent-adolescent relationships will be highlighted.

Adolescents

Holmbeck, Paikoff, and Brooks-Gunn (1995) have summarized the developmental and contextual changes that occur during adolescence as biological changes (puberty), cognitive and social-cognitive changes, emotional and self-definitional changes, and contextual changes such as changes in peer relationships and changes in the school context. Thus, a multitude of changes are taking place for adolescents, which may result in feelings of insecurity and questions about the direction of their lives.

There are a number of important tasks that an adolescent must complete during adolescence. One of the adolescent’s major tasks of successfully negotiating this period is the formation of a solid identity (Erikson, 1963). The negative outcome of not completing this task is role confusion or not knowing who one really is. Achieving an identity requires exploration on the part of adolescents where they must face and question aspects of their personal identity (Marcia, 1980). Noller and Callan (1991) also identify three other tasks for adolescents (a) becoming independent from parents, (b) coming to terms with sexual feelings and establishing a positive sexual identity, and (c) gaining skills necessary for economic independence and for establishing a career.
Because adolescence is accompanied by a number of developmental and contextual changes and the requirement for completing important tasks, adolescents can experience a number of concerns or worries. Boldero and Fallon (1995) reported that most adolescent problems reflected family, interpersonal relationship, education, and health problems. Seiffge-Krenke (1995) states that adolescents deal with a wide variety and high frequency of stressors in their everyday lives and that this may have an impact on adolescents’ well-being. Important classes of stressors for adolescents reported by this author include betrayal by peers, humiliation by peers, striving for autonomy from parents, falling in love or acquiring a new friend, loss of a relationship with a peer, and critical life events. Violato and Travis (1995) have found four main themes underlying the majority of adolescent concerns: future and career, health and drugs, personal self, and social self. Because concerns, worries, or problems can be considered as a source of stress, it is important for the adolescent to develop ways of coping with this particular type of stress.

Boldero and Fallon (1995) found in their study the majority of adolescents seeking some sort of help for problems chose to ask parents and friends for help. Raviv, Sills, Raviv, and Wilansky (2000) found that for minor problems, adolescents were most willing to talk to a friend for help first, their parents for help second, and finally to psychologists, teachers and counsellors. For major problems, adolescents were more willing to talk to either a friend or parent over psychologists, teachers, or counsellors. Schonert-Reichl and Muller (1996) found that relationships with parents continue to be important sources of support for adolescents and that friendships do not replace parent-
adolescent relationship bonds during adolescence. Thus, adolescents consider parents as a good source of help.

To summarize, adolescence is a time full of changes and requires the adolescent to complete a number of important tasks. Concerns, worries, and problems of adolescence are specific to this stage of life. Coping with these concerns or worries is an important part of adolescence. One way of coping adolescents use is seeking support from their parents.

Parents

Parenting style has been defined as a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviors are expressed (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In the early studies of parenting style, Becker (1964) indicated the importance of the two parental dimensions of warmth versus hostility (acceptance versus rejection), and control versus autonomy (restrictiveness versus permissiveness). Baumrind (1967) proposed three categories for parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles). Maccoby and Martin (1983) merged Baumrind's typology with dimensions of parental demandingness (the number and type of demands made by parents) and parental responsiveness (the contingency of parental reinforcement) to result in the development of a four-part typology of parenting styles (authoritarian-autocratic, authoritative-reciprocal, indulgent-permissive, and indifferent-uninvolved styles). Much research has been undertaken on the effect of parenting style and on adolescent outcome. Over many years, research has produced consistent results indicating that the authoritative style of parenting is most conducive to the successful socialization of children (Darling &
Steinberg, 1993). The authoritative style of parenting provides an environment of high demandingness and high responsiveness. Authoritative parents encourage verbal give and take, enforce rules when necessary, have clear expectations for mature behavior, and encourage independence. Achievement of this style requires negotiation and confrontation with children, and parents need to be firm as well as kind and understanding (Maccoby, 1992). Empirical findings suggest that adolescents who are exposed to authoritative parenting are rated as more competent and as having higher levels of self-esteem, moral development, impulse control, and subjective feelings of independence (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

Important parenting constructs for authoritative parenting of adolescents appear to be (a) parental warmth, (b) parental control, and (c) parental encouragement of independence. Other important parenting constructs, in addition to those highlighted in the authoritative parenting style, appear also to be important for adolescent development. These constructs are (a) parental information provision, (b) parental reinforcement, (c) parental flexibility, and (d) parental role-modeling.

**Parental Warmth**

Authoritative parents demonstrate warmth and sensitivity to their children. Parental warmth can be defined as emotional warmth such as the expression of positive emotions, especially love and affection, by the parent to the child. Parental warmth establishes and maintains a positive mood during interactions with children through humour, play, physical affection (such as hugs, kisses, holding), terms of endearment, optimism, or other means of communicating a positive emotional tone (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parental warmth should be given unconditionally to children (Baumrind,
1989; Seligman, 1995). When children grow up in a warm emotional atmosphere they feel more inclined to explore and develop mastery over their environment (Seligman, 1995). Parental warmth consistently predicts favourable developmental outcomes for children, whereas parental hostility consistently predicts unfavourable developmental outcomes for children (Dix, 1991). Chronic negative emotion is both a cause and a consequence of interactions that undermine children's development (Dix, 1991). Parental warmth is an important precursor of successful internalization of parental values by the child (Kochanska & Thompson, 1997). A warm and supportive family atmosphere promotes successful negotiation of disagreements and keeps conflict to low or moderated levels (Kaplan, 1998).

Parental warmth has been viewed as part of the construct of parental responsiveness, where parents are attentive to their children and responsive to their needs (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Low parental involvement and emotional detachment, withdrawal, or indifference have deleterious effects on children's development (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

**Parental Control**

Authoritative parents set clear limits for children's behavior and firmly enforce these limits using confrontation and consistent contingencies (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) in a pattern known as parental demandingness where parents guide their children's activities firmly and consistently (Baumrind, 1989). These parents also share with their children the reasoning behind their policies (Baumrind, 1989). This method of discipline, when parents give explanations or reasons for their rules, is known as induction and has been found to promote prosocial development in children (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).
Induction may be particularly important during adolescence and is associated with many positive outcomes (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

Authoritative parents rarely, if ever, use power without reason, or in other words coercive methods of discipline (Baumrind, 1989). Coercive control (power-assertive control) is based on the use of parental force to accomplish goals, for example hitting, scolding, and threatening, and is associated with conduct problems in children, which tend to persist into adolescence (Holmbeck et al., 1995). Power-assertive techniques such as harsh punishments do not promote internalization of prosocial behaviors in children because of fear generated in the child (Baumrind, 1989; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Authoritative parents are not restrictive, in the sense that they do not impose too many rules, nor are they permissive, meaning that they do not have too few rules (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritative parents are also not intrusive, meaning they do not impose stage-inappropriate restrictions (Baumrind, 1989).

Authoritative parents monitor their children's behavior closely so that both compliance and non compliance can be followed up consistently (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). However, modifications in the degree and nature of supervision are necessary in adolescence (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

Although authoritative parenting involves high parental demands and firm control, it also must be accompanied by the parental warmth dimension (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Effective parenting has evolved from practices valuing strict obedience and a concern with compliance to those emphasizing independence and tolerance and a concern with negotiation and relatedness (Kuczynski & Hildebrandt, 1997).
Parental Encouragement of Independence

Parental encouragement of independence can be viewed as parents having respect for a child's feelings or thoughts. By allowing adolescents to hold particular points of view, parents are granting autonomy and thus allowing independence. Authoritative parents do not control or evaluate the behaviors and attitudes of children in accordance with a set standard of conduct (Baumrind, 1989). Authoritative parents encourage children's independence and individuality by allowing open communication and listening to and being responsive to their children's points of view (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritative parents do not hem their children in with restrictions but rather provide them with intellectual stimulation and encourage them to express their points of view (Baumrind, 1989). Parents who value their children's emotional expressions and who use the child's emotions as an opportunity for intimacy or teaching facilitate an authoritative style of parenting (Gottman, Katz & Hooven, 1997). By actively listening to children's points of view and being non-critical and non-judgmental, parents communicate respect, acceptance, and interest to children (Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer, 1997). When parents are critical and un-accepting of adolescents, the result is a lower self-image for the adolescent (Noller & Callan, 1991).

Parents can also allow children to become independent by allowing them to do things for themselves and to make their own decisions and choices where appropriate (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997; Faber & Mazlish, 1980; Silverberg & Gondoli, 1996). By showing confidence in children by allowing them to work on a particular task, parents communicate that they believe children can succeed (Dinkmeyer, et al., 1997). When
parents take on their children’s problems, children tend to remain dependent on parents (Gordon, 2000).

**Parental Information Provision**

An important parenting construct for adolescent development is parental information provision (Holmbeck et al., 1995), for example in the form of advice, suggestions or teachings from the parent. Although adolescents are often resistant to parental advice-giving, parents are encouraged to express their values and beliefs in constructive ways by avoiding criticism and judgement of the adolescent’s character (Wolf, 2000) or by sharing, offering, and suggesting rather than preaching or demanding (Gordon, 2000). Parents are often valued by adolescents for their remarks and counsel on school and future-related problems (Seiffge-Krenke, 1995).

**Parental Reinforcement**

Parental reinforcement includes parenting practices such as praise, approval, and encouragement and can be viewed as being closely related to the construct of parental warmth. In the parenting literature, there is a distinction between evaluative praise and descriptive praise or encouragement (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997; Faber & Mazlish, 1980). It is recommended that parents restrict their use of evaluative praise (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997; Faber & Mazlish, 1980) and use it contingently in order to generate the feeling of mastery in children (Seligman, 1995). On the other hand, parents are encouraged to use descriptive praise frequently. With descriptive praise, or encouragement, parents show appreciation to their children. Parents also take notice of their children’s strengths or efforts, and communicate these positives to them (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997). Parental reinforcement demonstrates approval and acceptance to adolescents. Parental acceptance
has been found to be related to a variety of positive adjustment outcomes in adolescence (Holmbeck et al., 1995). Parental approval is similar to a communication pattern known as confirming communication where one person is recognized, acknowledged, or endorsed by another person as compared to disconfirming communication where one person is disrespected or ignored by another person (Adler, Towne & Rolls, 2001).

**Parental Flexibility**

The degree to which parents are flexible in altering their parenting approach as the child passes through adolescence is important. Parents of adolescents must understand that some renegotiation of power and control is necessary and be open to becoming less restrictive and intrusive (Kaplan, 1998). Developmental and contextual changes in the child during adolescence require that parenting change in terms of greater flexibility and responsivity of the parent towards the adolescent in a manner that demonstrates sensitivity to the developmental needs of their maturing children (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

**Parental Role-Modeling**

It is important for parents to behave in ways that are congruent to what they are saying. In other words, parents are constantly modeling for their children and demonstrating by their actions what they value (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997; Gordon, 2000). The research is consistent with the view that children model parents’ prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

To summarize the section on parents, an authoritative style of parenting is the most conducive for successful adolescent socialization. Important parenting constructs for authoritative parenting are parental warmth, parental control, and parental
encouragement of independence. Other important parenting constructs are parental information provision, parental reinforcement, parental flexibility, and parental role-modeling.

"Parent-Adolescent Relationships"

The Parent-Adolescent Relationship

When adolescents and parents interact with each other, a relationship develops between them, the parent-adolescent relationship. Routine interactions within families consist of everyday conversations, which can be very powerful (Dixson, 1995). The accumulated impact of positive routine interactions results in the child building a positive self-image and a positive image of the parent-child relationship as well as an internal, secure base from which to explore new experiences (Dixson, 1995). Children are socialized mainly by participating in interactions within close relationships and parental influence, whether it fosters or inhibits children’s development, arises mostly from the nature of the relationship parents co-construct with their children (Maccoby, 1992).

Communication is a crucial aspect of family life, affecting the quality of the relationships in the family as a whole (Noller & Callan, 1991). Barnes and Olson (1985) found that families with better parent-adolescent communication are more close and loving and are more satisfied than families where parent-adolescent communication is poor. Families that have positive parent-adolescent communication are most likely to produce adolescents who can function effectively as independent adults (Noller & Callan, 1991). Thus the quality of everyday communication is important for building positive relationships (Dixson, 1995).
Parent-Adolescent Conversation

Parent-adolescent conversation is one way that parents and adolescent communicate and thus it is important to look at this activity. During a conversation, a change in the relationship between two people can occur, for example residual feelings of pleasure, frustration, satisfaction, or anger can result from conversations (Wardhaugh, 1985). The experience of a good conversation goes beyond the meaning of the words exchanged, gives proof of connection to others, and gives a sense of coherence in the world (Tannen, 1984). Thus, parent-adolescent conversation can be a way of either strengthening or weakening the parent-adolescent relationship.

Young et al., (1997) examined parent-adolescent conversation around career issues. Three patterns of joint actions were identified: exploration, exploration and struggle, and exploration and negotiation. Young et al., (2001) also studied parent-adolescent conversations on health issues and identified five categories of joint actions: sharing and exploring information, values, and beliefs about health; negotiating and struggling about aspects of the adolescent’s independence; providing and receiving guidance; adjusting to family and home issues, and fostering joint understanding by giving voice to the adolescent. Thus, certain constructs of parent-adolescent conversation, called joint actions, were identified in these qualitative studies.

Parent-Adolescent Conflict

Up until about 25 years ago, developmental psychologists accepted the view that adolescence was marked by intense conflict between adolescents and parents. The view now, however, is that many adolescents do not experience this intense conflict with their parents. Rather there is a renegotiation of power and autonomy within the relationship
Conflicts between parents and adolescents do however increase in frequency during adolescence and are usually about day-to-day routines such as household responsibilities, privileges, and relationships (Holmbeck et al., 1995; Noller & Callan, 1991).

Conflicts may serve an adaptive function in the family. An exploration of values is a healthy activity for psychological function and through conflict, as well as other means, adolescents can select information from parents that is important to them (Kuczynski, Marshall, & Schell, 1997). Another way that conflicts may be adaptive is that they provide a signal to parents that their adolescents’ needs and expectations have changed and that a renegotiation of the parent-child relationship is necessary (Holmbeck et al., 1995). Whether the conflicts are adaptive or not depends on how the parent and adolescent respond to the conflict situation. For example, how disagreements are understood, discussed, and resolved all impact on the potential adaptiveness of a given conflict situation (Collins & Laursen, 1992). It is important that parent-adolescent relationships be renegotiated in such a way that adolescents are able to maintain a close relationship with their parents (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

To sum up the section on parent-adolescent relationships, there is a gradual renegotiation between parent and adolescent over issues of autonomy and control, during which time communication becomes increasingly important. Parent-adolescent conversation is one way for parents and adolescents to communicate and is one way to look at parent-adolescent relationships. Parent-adolescent conflict increases during adolescence but not to extreme levels as once thought.
Rationale for Research

What are some research directions for parent-adolescent relationships that have been suggested in the literature? First of all, Kuczynski and Grusec (1997) have stated that an area in great need of study is how parents manage the relationship context of their interactions with their children, more specifically, how parents employ such strategies as play, conversation, and quality time to build, maintain, and repair their relationships with their children. Thus, a study of parent-adolescent conversation from the context of relationship development would be important. Studying the relationship from the perspective of the adolescent would be helpful for parents so that they could understand better how their adolescents perceive the relationship.

Secondly, Holmbeck et al. (1995) note that little is known about the processes that underlie parent-adolescent relationships and by evaluating models of underlying process we will learn more about the mechanisms through which adolescent change impacts on the task of parenting. Darling and Steinberg (1993) also state that little is known about the processes through which parenting style influences the development of children’s competence. Thus a process-oriented approach to the study of parent-adolescent relationships would be beneficial, for example by studying the experience of parent-adolescent conversation.

Third, Henricson and Roker (2000) state that findings in the literature suggest that many families would benefit from help in understanding the stresses associated with adolescence, and in improving communication and managing conflict during the teenage years. Thus a study exploring parent-adolescent conversation with a view to examining what is helpful for strengthening the parent-adolescent relationship would be useful.
Fourth, Noller and Callan (1991) state that issues that need to be examined in future research include gaining actual opinions of adolescents and their perceptions of their parent's attitudes in order to understand better the extent to which parents do influence the types of attitudes adopted by adolescents.

Many research studies have been undertaken exploring adolescents, parenting adolescents, parent-adolescent relationships, and parent-adolescent communication, however most of the studies have been quantitative in nature. Relatively little qualitative research has been done in this area. Therefore, a qualitative study looking at parent-adolescent conversation will provide rich information that will enhance the study of parent-adolescent relationships. Although there are many things that impact the parent-adolescent conversation and make it very complex, such as goals of the conversation, prevailing moods and feelings, behaviors, and settings, there may be certain overarching constructs that facilitate or inhibit parent-adolescent conversation. Exploration of parent-adolescent conversation using a qualitative method may help to clarify these constructs. In addition, much research on adolescents has been undertaken from an adult perspective, thus it is important to listen to the adolescents and hear their stories. The value of this study lies in the use of a qualitative method that draws directly upon the adolescents' perceptions and experience of their conversations. It is hoped that the richness of the data obtained will offer the opportunity for greater understanding of the adolescent's world in the context of the parent-adolescent relationship over traditional quantitative methods.
The Research Question

For this study, the phenomenon being investigated is the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with his or her parent. Thus, the research question for this study is: “What is the adolescent’s experience of parent-adolescent conversation?” The purpose of this study is: (a) to uncover the essential structure of parent-adolescent conversation from the adolescent’s perspective, and (b) to get a better understanding of the adolescent’s experience of interacting with a parent in conversation.
CHAPTER II: METHOD

Research Design

The research question for this study is, "What is the adolescent's experience of parent-adolescent conversation?" with the goal of uncovering the nature of the adolescent's experience of conversation with a parent. This research question was investigated using a phenomenological approach. Methods outlined by Colaizzi (1978), Giorgi (1975), Karlsson (1993), Kvale (1996), Moustakas (1994), Polkinghorne (1989), and van Manen (1990) were used as the basis for the method followed in this study.

History of Method

Traditionally, psychological research has been carried out in the empirical tradition of the natural scientists using quantitative methods of data analysis. This approach to science is based on a philosophy known as positivism, where the belief is that a reality exists that can be discovered, quantified, and explained. However, there has been concern that such approaches do not provide a comprehensive understanding of human nature and actions. Social scientists, in studying human behavior, face different challenges from those of natural scientists. As qualitative researchers argue, social science research must take into account the perceptions of the people being studied, otherwise the science is incomplete (Palys, 1997). To rectify this situation, qualitative methods of analysis were developed. There has been increasing interest in qualitative research methods for the social sciences over the past several decades.
What is observed and studied by the social scientist has meaning to those being observed. One approach to research that expresses this philosophy is known as phenomenology and accounts for the cognitive and perceptive abilities of humans who assign particular meanings to the world around them. In phenomenology, the researcher looks for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations, as would be the case in quantitative research. Phenomenology began to be accepted as a valid approach to research during the 1950s and 1960s and was one of the first qualitative methods to appear after the positivist, empirical approaches popularized by behaviorism.

**Outline of Method**

Phenomenological research is a method of research that explores and describes human experiences or phenomena. Within a human experience, or phenomenon, the phenomenologist believes there are universal structures. Edmund Husserl, in the first half of this century, refers to these structures of experience as the essence of the experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). Phenomenological analysis will uncover these universal structures of human experience. In other words, phenomenological investigation involves identifying and describing those aspects of an experience that are invariant and essential. Researchers believe that by studying the universal structures of human experience, a better understanding of human behavior in daily situations will be obtained. In other words, phenomenology allows us to get closer to the lived world. Phenomenological research methods regard the data of human experience as important in understanding human behavior.
A number of researchers have outlined the purpose or goal of phenomenological research. Moustakas (1994) states that the purpose of phenomenological research is to determine what an experience means for people who have had that experience and to provide a comprehensive description of it. Van Manen (1990) believes that phenomenological research provides insights that bring humans into more direct contact with the world so that a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences is obtained. The aim of phenomenological research, according to Osborne (1990), is to achieve perspectival understanding of a phenomenon and to identify its structure. Polkinghorne (1989) tells us that research based on phenomenological philosophy focuses on describing the structuring activities of experience.

Phenomenological research does not test hypotheses and will not result in a theory to explain the world. In other words, phenomenology does not ask “why” but rather “what is the nature or essence of the experience” so that the researcher, and others, are better able to understand what this experience is like for those who have experienced it (Van Manen, 1990). Osborne (1990) states that the exploration and description of human experience should not be thought of as an inferior first step in explanatory or quantitative science, but rather should be viewed as a science in its own right.

Phenomenological studies can be seen as being either interpretive or descriptive. Interpretive phenomenological studies focus more on the researcher’s interpretation of the underlying meanings of the experience under investigation. Descriptive phenomenological studies focus more on the researcher’s synthesis of descriptions of the invariant structures or essences of the experience being investigated. For this study, the approach taken was more descriptive than interpretive.
There is no "one" phenomenological method and the procedures used depend upon the research question (Osborne, 1990). The initial step, then, is to identify the phenomenon that the researcher wants to explore and describe by presenting it as the research question. For this study, the researcher identified parent and adolescent interactions as the area of study. The researcher was curious to understand the adolescent's experience of interacting with a parent. In other words, the adolescent's perspective on his or her experience of talking to a parent was identified as the area of interest for the researcher. One of the features of phenomenological research is that research questions are formulated that reflect the interest and personal commitment of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology was chosen to explore this research question in order to determine the universal structures of the phenomenon, which was identified as parent-adolescent conversation from the adolescent's perspective. Van Manen (1990) supports the use of phenomenology for studying parents and children. He believes that in studying pedagogy (which he defines as the activity of teaching, parenting, educating, or generally living with children), a phenomenological sensitivity to children's lived experiences is necessary. Van Manen (1990) argues that a parent will react to a child depending on how the parent understands the child's experience, thus by uncovering the structures of the adolescent's experience of parent-adolescent conversation, the parent may be able to better react to the adolescent through greater understanding.
Sample

Sampling, or selecting participants, depends on the research objectives, constraints, theory or philosophy, and the phenomenon under investigation. If the goal is to describe attributes that are invariant or universal, or in other words distributed equally across people or groups of people, then representative, probabilistic sampling techniques are not necessary. In phenomenological research, the goal is to identify a universal structure of the phenomenon in question, thus the structure of the phenomenon obtained from one person should be found in the experience of other persons. In this case, non-probabilistic, purposive sampling is undertaken. Participants are intentionally sought because they meet some criteria for inclusion in the study. For phenomenological studies, research participants should be people who have experienced and can describe the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978).

For this study, adolescent participants were recruited from New Westminster Secondary School, a local public secondary school, by Mr. Fred Langston, the Grade 9 school counsellor. Prospective participants were identified by the school counsellor on the basis of their ability to communicate and whether they fit into the criteria for the study (see below). The school counsellor informed these prospective participants of the study and the need for participants. Interested students were given parental consent forms to be signed at home and returned to the school. A sample of the parental consent form is given in Appendix A. When the school counsellor received the signed parental consent forms, the researcher was notified and given contact information for these students. The signed parental consent forms were collected from the school counsellor by the researcher.
The criteria for participants for this study were as follows: (a) permission granted by the parent, (b) enrolment in Grade 9 at the school, (c) living at home with their biological mother and/or father, and (d) not currently seeking or obtaining psychological or psychiatric help.

A total of eleven adolescents, consisting of nine females and two males, were recruited for the study. The average age of these adolescents was 15.2 years. The range of ages was from 14.8 to 15.8 years. The ethnicity of the adolescents was varied. Six adolescents were Caucasian, were born in Canada and had parents who were born in Canada. One adolescent was Caucasian, was born in Romania and had parents who were born in Romania. One adolescent was born in B.C. and was of First Nations ancestry. One adolescent was born in Canada and had parents who were of Vietnamese ancestry. Two adolescents were born in Canada and had parents who were of Southeast Asian (East Indian) ancestry. The family structure of the adolescents also varied. Eight adolescents lived with both parents, one adolescent lived with her mother, one adolescent lived with her mother and stepfather, and one adolescent lived part-time with his mother and part-time with his father. All of the adolescents had one or more siblings with whom they lived with. Parents’ jobs were generally working class occupations. Several parents were not employed. For a phenomenological study, the somewhat variable sample was desirable. To obtain rich and varied data, sampling for diversity can unearth commonalities of an experience across diverse peoples (Palys, 1997).
Bracketing the Researcher’s Experience

Van Manen (1990) states that the problem with phenomenological research is “not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much” (p. 46). In other words the researcher’s prior beliefs and understandings may distort the way the researcher looks at the data. Phenomenological studies recognize the presence of a human researcher in the research (Osborne, 1990). The process of bracketing is used to identify and make known in written form the values, understandings, beliefs, assumptions, perspectives, and biases of the researcher regarding the phenomenon under question in order that the researcher may suspend these beliefs during analysis. Additionally, bracketing allows the reader of the research report to become aware of the researcher’s perspective and to better understand the reasoning behind the researcher’s interpretation of the data. Moustakas (1994) discusses bracketing using the term “the phenomenological Epoche” where reflective-meditation is undertaken by the researcher allowing preconceptions and prejudgments to enter consciousness and be written down.

I come to this research project as the parent of three children who have gone through or are in the process of going through adolescence. Ever since my children were very young, I have been interested in learning about child development and parenting skills. I was very drawn to the work of Leach (1978), who emphasized parental warmth and responsiveness to the child, and encouraged autonomy and identity development of the child. I was also influenced by the writings of Faber and Mazlish (1980) who emphasised treating the child as an individual and acknowledging the child’s point of view through open communication skills. In addition, the work of Dreikurs (1964)
guided me in developing my parenting skills. His work focused on encouragement and respect for the child and the use of natural and logical consequences as opposed to punishment.

The parenting constructs of parental warmth, encouragement and autonomy granting were very important to me in my own parenting. Within this context, my parenting included limit setting and teaching. Thus, my parenting style included the principles of showing respect for the child, listening to the child's point of view, teaching the child, and allowing the child to make his or her own decisions and to experience natural and logical consequences.

I approached this study by looking at it mainly from the perspective of a parent because I am currently the parent of adolescents. It has been many years since I was an adolescent myself, however being in such close contact with adolescents at present, I feel very familiar with this developmental stage.

**Procedures**

A three-phase interview format was used in this study and consisted of the pre-interview, the data-gathering interview, and the follow-up interview.

*Pre-Interview*

For each of the participants, the researcher conducted a telephone pre-interview. The purpose of the telephone pre-interview was (a) to introduce the researcher to the participant, (b) to build rapport, (c) to explain the purpose and procedures of the study to the participant, (d) to check if the participant met criteria for selection, (e) to prime the participant for the interview, and (f) to set an appointment time for the interview.
Osborne (1990) states that rapport and trust must be established between researcher and participant before the participant is able to give authentic descriptions of experience. The format for the telephone pre-interview is presented in Appendix B.

**Data-Gathering Interview**

Data in phenomenological studies consist of descriptions of the experience and are commonly gathered by interviewing the participants verbally face-to-face and audio-taping the interviews. Verbal interviewing is preferable to written interviewing (asking participants to write out their experiences) because, as Van Manen (1990) reports, verbally describing experiences to an interviewer is usually much easier for participants than having to write their experiences on paper. The purpose of this interview was to gather experiential narrative material from the participants, which was then used as data. The outcome of the data-gathering interviews in this study was eleven tape-recorded interviews, one for each adolescent interviewed.

Adolescents were interviewed at the New Westminster Counselling Centre in one of the counselling rooms. Interviews were audio-tape recorded. The interviews ranged in length from approximately 45 – 75 minutes. As recommended by Kvale (1996), a briefing took place for each participant at the start of the interview. This briefing consisted of defining the purpose of the interview, explaining the use of the tape recorders, and inviting questions from the participant. In addition, confidentiality and reasons for breaking confidentiality were explained to each participant. The adolescent was then asked to sign a consent form if he or she was agreeable with the conditions. The consent form signed by the adolescent is shown in Appendix A.
Next, demographic data were gathered. This consisted of the adolescent’s date of birth, birthplace, family members he or she lived with, birthplace of parents, and parents’ occupations.

After gathering the demographic data, the main part of the interview began. A semi-structured format, using an interview guide, was used for the interview and was of the type recommended by Kvale (1996). The interview guide was a tool for the researcher to use during the interview to give the interview purpose and structure. It contained a number of examples of open-ended questions and empathic responses that the researcher could use during the interview. Every question was not used in any one interview. The interview guide is given in Appendix C.

For this study, the purpose of the interview was to obtain descriptions of the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with his or her parent. To do this, the researcher explored the conversation from the perspective of the participant’s affect, the participant’s actions (overt behavior), the participant’s thoughts (covert behavior), and the participant’s perceptions of what happened in his or her environment. The following data-gathering guidelines were compiled by the researcher using various sources (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1975; Karlsson, 1993; Kvale, 1996; Moustakas, 1994; Osborne, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1989; van Manen, 1990):

- Get the participant to think of a particular instance and explore it to the fullest.
- Stay close to the experience as lived.
- Get participant to clarify or elaborate on the experience.
• The participant’s awareness should be redirected toward his or her own experiencing.

• Get the participant to describe the experience, not interpret it or explain it.

• Differentiate between the participant’s point of view and what happened.

• General opinions and beliefs of the participant can be elicited, however they are secondary.

• Give special significance to feelings and meanings.

• Allow data to speak for themselves.

• Do not direct or shape the descriptions.

• Be careful about “putting words in the mouths of participants.”

• Do not ask too many questions.

• Use silences.

• Use empathy.

• Repeat the last sentence in an enquiring tone if stuck.

The first question posed to each participant was the introducing question, which was framed as a request to the participant. The introducing question (request) for this study was: “Think of an important conversation you have had with your parent within the last year and describe it to me in as much detail as you can.” The purpose of the introducing question was to elicit spontaneous, rich descriptions where the participants provide what they experience as most important to the phenomenon (Kvale, 1996).

After the researcher posed the introducing question, the participant responded. According to Kvale (1996), it is the researcher’s job to sense the possible horizons of meaning that the participant’s response opens up and to decide which horizon to pursue.
In order to accomplish this task, the researcher responded to the participant most frequently by using (a) open-ended questions, (b) empathic responses, or (c) silences.

Questions posed by the researcher were directed at what had been stated by the participant so that the various horizons of the experience were explored more thoroughly. Questions were generally open-ended “what” and “how” questions especially focusing on what happened in the conversation between parent and adolescent and on the participant’s feelings.

The purpose of using empathic responses by the researcher was to encourage the participants to fully describe their experiences. Egan (1998) states that empathic responding involves listening to others, understanding their experiences, and communicating this understanding back to them. Empathic responding on the part of one person gives permission to others and encourages them to share feelings and information (Shebib, 1991). The basic formula for empathic responding is “You feel _____ because ______.” Although the researcher did not use these exact words in most cases, the idea was to reflect back or paraphrase what the participant said, which had the effect of encouraging the participant to talk about what was most important to him or her. This follows the principles of the person-centered approach, based on the theories of Carl Rogers, where the participant determined to a large part what direction the interview went, thus describing the things that were most important to him or her. Of course, some structure was imposed in this study since the researcher guided the interview to broadly encompass the topic of parent-adolescent conversation. Kvale (1996) recommends that the interview questions ideally should contribute to (a) obtaining knowledge related to the topic of the interview, and (b) promoting a positive interaction between participant and
researcher. Although the questions did promote a positive interaction between participant and researcher, the empathic responses provided by the researcher did seem to have more of an effect of promoting good rapport between researcher and participant.

Van Manen (1990) states that it is not necessary for the researcher to bombard the participant with a large number of questions but rather to use silence as a way of promoting the participant to describe his or her experience. The researcher followed this advice for this study by consciously allowing silences throughout the interviews.

When it appeared to the researcher that the initial conversation described by the participant had been explored in sufficient detail, the researcher asked the participant the introducing question again in order to transition to a different conversation: “Now I would like you to think of another important conversation you have had with your parent within the last year and again describe it to me in as much detail as possible.” The researcher used the same techniques of empathic responding, open-ended questions, and silences to encourage exploration of this next conversation. When this second conversation was explored in sufficient detail, a transition was made to a third, fourth, or fifth conversation.

Frequently however, the adolescent ran out of conversations to tell the researcher after describing one or two conversations and was unable to come up with another conversation to describe. At the point where the adolescent ran out of conversations to talk about, the researcher would ask the participant one of a number of prompting questions to help the adolescent come up with another conversation to describe. Examples of these prompting questions are:
• Sometimes there are certain topics that parents and teenagers talk about, for example like friends, going out places, money, or curfews. Can you describe a conversation you have had about any of those topics?

• Do you have any conversations about school, education, or career because sometimes teenagers and parents have these conversations?

• Can you tell me about any smaller conversations or day-to-day conversations that may not be very important ones?

• Sometimes teenagers have conflicts or arguments with their parents. Could you tell me about any conflicts or arguments you have had with your mom or dad?

• Could you tell me about a conversation you have had with your mom or dad that was really good, that was helpful, or that really strengthened the relationship between the two of you?

• What things do you and your mom or dad usually talk about?

Again, this exploration of the conversation would be followed up with empathic responding, open-ended questions, and silences.

At the end of the interview, final questions were asked in order to ensure the participant had a chance to talk about anything that had not been covered in the interview. These final questions were: “Is this kind of what you expected coming here today? Is there anything that you wanted to tell me that I haven’t asked you about?” Sometimes the participant would not have anything more to add but other times the participant would add something that could be explored a little further.

Kvale (1996) recommends debriefing after an interview because there may be some unpleasant feelings caused by talking about personal and emotional experiences.
For this study, at the end of the interview the adolescent was debriefed by the researcher. The questions asked were as follows: "What was that like for you talking to me today? Did talking about this bring up any upsetting or unhappy feelings? How are you feeling now after telling me all that? Was this an OK experience for you?" The purpose of doing this was to allow the researcher to assess the adolescent to see if he or she required counselling after participating in the research interview. In all eleven cases, the adolescents stated that they were feeling fine after the interview and that the interview had not brought up any persistent negative or upsetting feelings. In some cases the adolescents stated that they liked telling the researcher about the conversations with their parents. All adolescents left the interview in positive moods. This is consistent with what Kvale (1996) discusses. He states that a common experience after research interviews is that the interview experience was enriching for the participant, that the participant enjoyed talking to the researcher, and that the participant may have obtained new insights into his or her life.

A letter was given to each participant at the conclusion of the interview. This letter thanked the participant and encouraged him or her to contact the researcher afterwards if they had any questions or if they thought of anything they wanted to add. An example of this letter is given in Appendix D. In addition, a $10.00 honorarium was given to the participant at this time. None of the adolescents contacted the researcher after their interviews. As recommended by Kvale (1996), the researcher recorded observations and impressions of the participant immediately following the interview.
Follow-Up Interview

Participants were contacted by telephone after analysis of the data for a follow-up interview. The purpose of this follow-up interview, as part of assessing validity, was to allow the participants to review the findings from the data analysis and to confirm that these findings reflected their experiences. Although individual face-to-face follow-up interviews would have been more desirable for rapport-building in order to assess validity and explore in more detail the horizons that were uncovered in the study, because of time limitations, the telephone interview format was chosen for follow-up.

For this interview, the researcher read to each participant their Individual Structural Description, which had been synthesized during data analysis. The researcher then asked the participant if the description fit with his or her experience and if he or she wanted to change anything or add anything to the description. All eleven participants felt that their Individual Structural Description reflected accurately their experience and none of the participants wanted to change anything. One participant suggested a small addition to his description, which was subsequently incorporated.

Organizing the Data

Organization of the data was carried out in two parts: (1) transcription, and (2) idealization.

Transcription

The tape-recorded interviews (raw data) were transcribed verbatim into written texts called protocols. This resulted in eleven verbatim protocols, one for each adolescent interviewed. The following is an example of a section of one verbatim
protocol transcribed directly from the audio-tape. (I is interviewer/researcher; A is adolescent; ... indicates pause in speech).

I 9: Wow that’s a good story that’s great ... that’s great ... so when you were having the conversation the first time, who brought the topic up to start with, can you remember?

A 10: My mom

I 11: Ok and what did she say?

A 12: She called me in and asked me to answer the questions honestly and that she wouldn’t react like she tried not to react in a bad way and then she asked me if I did drugs and I said no and then she asked me if I drank and I said yes

I 13: Ok ... ok ... and how did you feel when she started to say that she wanted some honest answers?

A 14: At first I was scared ... yeah ... but then with the drugs I didn’t so I was like I didn’t understand why and then with the alcohol I said yes

I 15: Right ... ok ... ok ... and what was kind of going through your mind at that time when she was questioning you about that?

A 16: How did she find out ... yeah ... but then with the drugs I didn’t so I was like I can’t get mad because she drank and she understands and I’ve told her many times that even if she says no if I have my mind set on it I’m going to do it it’s just her choice to have it go on behind her back or is she aware and that’s why she doesn’t get mad like when I’m doing something she knows that I’m going to do it and that’s the way she likes it because she knows and it’s not behind her back

I 17: Yeah, yeah, so it sounds like she really values your honesty

A 18: Yeah ... yeah

I 19: So what happened then as the conversation unfolded after you told her yes I did try drinking, what did she say to that?

A 20: Umm ... she just shook her head at first and then she ... just asked me what my experience was like and then ... and then I told her and then she just told me that if I ever needed help if I ever felt that I was losing control when I was drinking that I have many sources and not to be afraid to go to it and that she won’t be upset with me or mad at me

I 21: Umm ... umm hmm, and what was that like for you to hear that from her knowing her certain past history?
A 22: It was good because some people might just be like well why are you doing this I mean you seen how bad I got why would you want to do that too so she understood that I wasn’t like even though I’d seen the bad part of it I still was taking the risk myself and she wasn’t ... she like ... she’s not like allowing me she’s not like oh you go and drink and stuff but ... she’s not going to hassle me about it because then she knows I won’t tell her about it and I’m very honest with my mom on that because I know she won’t get mad at me.

*Idealization*

Each of the verbatim protocols was then idealized into a more readable form. To start with, portions of the interview that did not have a connection to the adolescent’s experience of parent-adolescent conversation were omitted. Next, similar to the procedure Gee (1986) used in modifying his texts, false starts, hesitations, and repairs were removed from the verbatim protocols. In addition, the adolescent’s responses to the researcher were divided into lines according to criteria outlined by Gee as follows: (a) lines are relatively short, (b) lines start with “and” (or some other conjunction or a verb of saying), (c) lines have one pitch glide that terminates the line, (d) lines often terminate with some sort of junctural phenomena – hesitation, syllable final lengthening, a short pause, and so forth, (e) lines tend to be simple clauses, and (f) lines display a good deal of syntactic and semantic parallelism with the lines adjacent or near to them. The purpose of idealization, by making the text more readable and dividing it into lines, was to make it easier to complete the data analysis, in particular to identify the meaning units of the text in the Horizontalization step of the analysis (see below).

The outcome of this step was the production of idealized protocols. The following is an example of part of an idealized protocol ready for analysis.

(interviewer/researcher in italic; adolescent in non-italic)
Think of an important conversation that you’ve had with either your mom or your dad and then just try to describe it to me in as much detail as you can.

I wasn’t doing so well in school
and I talked to my mom first
and she was very mad at me at first
and then after
we just started talking about it
like maybe why I’m doing not so well
and why I should be telling her earlier
and stuff like that
and it took a long time
but once it was over with I felt a lot better

Who started the conversation?
I think it was my mom

What did she say?
She said Adam I guess you’re not doing good in school again
I think

And what did you say to that?
I said sorry mom
I should have told you earlier

Could you describe your feelings when your mom brought up the topic of you not doing so well in school?
I felt very disappointed in myself
for not telling her earlier
and letting her down

Can you tell me a little bit more about that feeling?
I’m not very good in English class
so I’ll not do so well
then I’ll get ahead
and then I’ll not do so well again
so I felt really bad
because it happened again
because it’s not the first time or anything

Then what did she say after you said I should have told you before?
she was saying like
what can I help you
how can I help you
she said so how can I help you Adam if I can’t
like she’ll talk to me
and she’ll try figuring out stuff
and then she’ll try that
and then she’ll say like I guess it’s not working
because it’s happening again

Analyzing the Data

Although there is not one specific method for conducting a phenomenological analysis, a general pattern has emerged (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1975; Karlsson, 1993; Moustakas, 1994; Osborne, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1989; Van Maanen, 1990). The procedure for data analysis used in this study is summarized as follows:

1. **Reading**, where the protocols are read with maximum openness for understanding.

2. **Horizontalization**, where the meaning units or invariant constituents are identified and delineated.

3. **Transformation**, where meanings are formulated and the language of the participant is transformed into the language of the researcher.

4. **Synthesis**, where the invariant constituents are tied together into a description of the phenomenon.

**Reading**

This first step in the analysis of the data involved reading the protocols closely in order to get a good understanding of them. Moustakas (1994) talks about the phenomenological Epoche process of setting aside prejudgments and allowing things to enter consciousness as if it were the first time in order to see things from a fresh perspective. Thus, the protocols were read with maximum openness and the researcher did not take any particular position, but rather remained neutral.

In addition to reading for understanding, a short summary was written for each of the protocols, keeping the research question in mind. These were called the Initial
Summaries. Their purpose was to record the understanding obtained from this initial reading. Later in the analysis, the researcher referred back to these Initial Summaries.

An example of part of an Initial Summary follows. (Adele is the adolescent).

When Adele’s mom is angry, she often makes unreasonable demands in order to make her point. Adele gets angry at her mom for making these unreasonable demands. This often results in a verbal fight where Adele’s mom shouts and is very closed-minded about the situation and Adele may shout back to her mom. Adele’s mom usually stays mad and ignores Adele after the fight. Adele feels annoyed at her mom’s immature behavior of making silly, unreasonable demands and ignoring her after their fight. It turns out that the unreasonable demands that mom makes are never followed through on by Adele because her mom just gives in and doesn’t seem to care later on.

**Horizontalization**

In this step, the meaning units of the text (protocols) were identified. Meaning units are also known as the horizons or the invariant constituents of the experience. Moustakas (1994) has termed this procedure horizontalization where every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and research question is identified. Colaizzi (1978) calls this step extracting significant statements and describes this as a process where phrases or sentences are extracted that directly relate to the investigated phenomenon.

To determine the meaning units, the researcher divided the idealized protocols into statements or expressions. As suggested by Karlsson (1993), the researcher divided the protocols where a change in meaning was sensed. This division did not necessarily follow grammatical rules and was not merely a discrimination of elements of the text, since each meaning unit itself is a part of the contextual wholeness of the protocol (Karlsson, 1993). It should be noted that the Idealization of the protocols (see above) could also be considered as part of Horizontalization. The researcher divided the verbatim protocols into lines according to the procedure of Gee (1986). For identifying lines in text, Gee talks about an idea unit or a single focus of consciousness, which is a short
phrase containing new information. In addition, a modification of Van Kaam's (1966) method proposed by Moustakas (1994) was used to identify the meaning units where each of the statements or expressions in the protocols divided by the researcher was tested for two requirements: (a) it must contain a moment of the experience and (b) it must be possible to label it. Statements or expressions that did not meet these conditions were eliminated leaving only the meaning units.

In this study, the research question was "What is the adolescent's experience of parent-adolescent conversation?" thus the researcher felt it was appropriate to divide the protocols into meaning units when the adolescent's voice changed from his or her voice to that of the parent during the interview. Another place where the researcher divided the protocols into meaning units was when the researcher introduced questions in the interview. In this case, there was often a prompt for the adolescent to describe what happened next or how he or she was feeling, which would subsequently change the direction of the interview. The researcher also divided the protocols into meaning units when the adolescent began talking about a different topic within the interview. For example, the adolescent would be telling the researcher about being patient with her parent and then would tell the researcher about how she felt hopeful because her parent had listened.

Horizontalization was a difficult process and one in which the researcher had to gain some experience by reading and re-reading the protocols so as not to make the meaning units too large or too small. The meaning units were identified by marking in pencil directly on the protocol. This allowed for erasure in order to make changes as the analysis progressed.
Moustakas (1994) states that when undertaking the process of Horizontalization, every statement should be treated as having equal value. The researcher attempted to follow this advice, however it was often found that some of the statements seemed to stand out more than others. The concept of bracketing or phenomenological Epoche as discussed above had relevance here. Thus it was important for the researcher to be aware of her biases and to approach the Horizontalization process (as well as the rest of the data analysis) with as much open-mindedness as possible.

This step resulted in a division of the text into many small expressions, or meaning units. The following is an example of a protocol divided into meaning units. (meaning units separated by ______; interviewer/researcher in italic; adolescent in non-italic).

Who started the conversation?

Well I did
I'm just like so are we going dad

and he was like well I don't know, we can't really this year and stuff

And what happened after he said that?

I'm just like how come we can't go

and he's like because I don't have enough time and like it's just too like hard this year and also it's like too much money
How were you feeling then when your dad was saying no maybe we’re not going to be going?

Well I was kind of like disappointed because I thought we were actually going to go this time

but he was like no

then I was like kind of sad, bummed out

So what did you say back to him then?

just like ohhhh and I just kept asking him why can’t we go, why can’t we go

and he’s just like oh because I don’t have enough time

and I was like can we go next year and stuff

and he’s like probably

and I just keep asking

What was he doing at that time, was he sitting there or talking to you directly or was he doing anything else at the same time?

I think he was writing something down, he was talking to somebody on the phone I think he was writing down like a message or something

and then I asked him

and then he put the phone down
and then we just started talking

*How did that conversation finish off?*

I was kind of like sad that we weren’t going to go

and he was just like oh don’t worry we can go next year

and I’m like ok

because every year they’re like let’s go, we can go but then it always turns out that we can’t

so then I’m just like oh whatever, I bet we’re not going to go next year

and he’s like no don’t worry we’ll

and I was like ok with that, whatever

---

**Transformation**

Transformation involved three parts: (a) labeling the meaning units, (b) consolidation of the meaning units, and (c) formulation of the Transformed Meaning Units.

The first part of the Transformation step involved developing Tag Words to identify each meaning unit and attaching these Tag Words to each meaning unit that had been identified in the Horizontalization step. In other words, each meaning unit was labeled with Tag Words that identified simply and briefly, in five words or less, the
meaning or theme of the expression. The Tag Words were written directly on the
idealized protocols that had been divided into meaning units in the Horizontalization step.

The result was that each identified meaning unit from the Horizontalization step had
specific Tag Words attached to it. An example of labeling the meaning units with Tag
Words follows (meaning units separated by ________; Tag Words in brackets;
interviewer/researcher in italic; adolescent in non-italic).

*If you think of one of the conversations you had, how would one of them have started?*

---

well basically I would be listening to techno or whatever
I'm like this is awesome I just love
I started kind of hinting
like oh my gosh I love this music
and the people are so nice (adolescent convinces)

---

and she would be like kind of hesitant (parent worried)

---

but she would realize how much I loved it (parent understands)

---

so I would just start talking about how much I loved the environment or the people
and give her all the things that I loved about it
just how she would realize that its not such a bad place (adolescent convinces)

---

because they're so stereotyped over the news
and felt that would kind of scare her (adolescent understands)

---

*How did you feel yourself when you were talking with her about how excited you were?*

---

sometimes it frustrated me
because I didn't really like having to wait
and just waiting for her to make up her mind
but it was kind of neat
because I felt like I was kind of getting there (adolescent patient)
So you felt sometimes a bit frustrated because your mom was saying well I don't want you to go to raves until I make the decision, until we have more of a discussion about it.

Yeah, since I gave her both sides of the story (adolescent honest)

whenever I would mention some of the bad points (adolescent tells)

she would get all freaked out again (parent worried)

I had to mention the bad points too (adolescent honest)

How did you feel when you were talking about the bad points?

I felt sort of guilty that I would be going to a place like this but I would then remind her how confident I am in myself (adolescent tells)

and I told her like for drugs for example there's going to be drugs everywhere there's drugs at school dances there's drugs everywhere (adolescent convinces)

and I told her I'd already been offered drugs and I didn't take it and I was already confident with myself that I wouldn't take it again because I'm just not that type of person I don't really care what other people think of me (adolescent reassures)

and I said if I was offered drugs here it would be the same it would be the exact same if I was offered drugs (adolescent convinces)
The second part of the Transformation step involved consolidating the meaning units with the same Tag Words. This resulted in groups of meaning units with the same or similar meanings or themes. It should be noted that the Tag Words were merely identification labels for the meaning units. Because they were short labels consisting of usually two or three words, the full meaning of the meaning unit was not evident from the Tag Words. Often, the Tag Words seemed to identify a behavior when they were meant to identify an experience. For example, the Tag Words “adolescent argues” is a label for the adolescent’s experience of arguing with his or her parent, and the Tag Words “parent approves” is a label for the adolescent’s experience of the parent approving of the adolescent. The following is a list of Tag Words and their more detailed meanings found in this study:

- Adolescent accepting: Adolescent’s experience of accepting parent’s point of view or demand
- Adolescent agrees: Adolescent’s experience of agreeing with parent’s point of view
- Adolescent argues: Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent
- Adolescent convinces: Adolescent’s experience of convincing parent
- Adolescent curious: Adolescent’s experience of being curious about parent
- Adolescent disagrees: Adolescent’s experience of disagreeing with parent’s point of view
- Adolescent disapproves: Adolescent’s experience of disapproving of parent’s actions
- Adolescent expresses opinion: Adolescent’s experience of expressing an opinion to parent
- Adolescent honest: Adolescent’s experience of being honest with parent
- Adolescent open: Adolescent’s experience of feeling open with parent
• Adolescent patient: Adolescent’s experience of being patient with parent
• Adolescent reassures: Adolescent’s experience of reassuring parent
• Adolescent requests: Adolescent’s experience of requesting something from parent
• Adolescent suggests: Adolescent’s experience of suggesting something to parent
• Adolescent tells: Adolescent’s experience of telling parent something
• Adolescent understands: Adolescent’s experience of understanding parent
• Adolescent withdraws: Adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from parent
• Parent angry: Adolescent’s experience of parent being angry with adolescent
• Parent apologizes: Adolescent’s experience of parent apologizing to adolescent
• Parent approves: Adolescent’s experience of parent approving of adolescent
• Parent closed-minded: Adolescent’s experience of parent being closed-minded with adolescent
• Parent comforts: Adolescent’s experience of parent comforting adolescent
• Parent concerned: Adolescent’s experience of parent being concerned about adolescent
• Parent curious: Adolescent’s experience of parent being curious about adolescent
• Parent demands: Adolescent’s experience of parent demanding something from adolescent
• Parent disagrees: Adolescent’s experience of parent disagreeing with adolescent’s point of view
• Parent disapproves: Adolescent’s experience of parent disapproving of adolescent’s actions
• Parent expresses opinion: Adolescent’s experience of parent expressing an opinion to adolescent
• Parent gives information: Adolescent’s experience of parent giving information to adolescent

• Parent grants autonomy: Adolescent’s experience of parent granting autonomy to adolescent

• Parent interested: Adolescent’s experience of parent being interested in adolescent

• Parent listens: Adolescent’s experience of parent listening to adolescent

• Parent offers help: Adolescent’s experience of parent offering help to adolescent

• Parent open-minded: Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded with adolescent

• Parent tells stories: Adolescent’s experience of parent telling stories to adolescent

• Parent understands: Adolescent’s experience of parent understanding adolescent

• Parent withdraws: Adolescent’s experience of parent withdrawing from adolescent

• Parent worried: Adolescent’s experience of parent being worried about adolescent

The third part of the Transformation step consisted of formulating the Transformed Meaning Units. This involved interpreting the meaning given in the participant’s language and transforming it into the researcher’s language. Thus, the meaning units initially given in the participant’s language and identified in the Horizontalization step, were transformed into the language of the researcher. This step involves interpretation by the researcher. The researcher leaps from what the participants say to what they mean (Colaizzi, 1978). Polkinghorne (1989) calls this redescription of the meaning units the transformation. The phenomenological researcher interprets the original descriptions of the experience given by the research participant to determine the underlying structures or essences of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Karlsson (1993) calls this step the transformation of the meaning units through the researcher’s
interpretation and states that the subject's language is transformed into the researcher's language, which should be preferably everyday language as opposed to theory-laden language. Van Manen (1990, p. 79) states that interpreting the meaning of a text of lived experience is a process of "insightful invention, discovery or disclosure."

The researcher must bring forward meanings hidden in the invariant constituents or horizons of the experience. Karlsson (1993) states that the researcher must determine not only the explicit psychological meanings that the participant has lived through and described in the protocol, but also the implicit meanings. Thus, the researcher moves beyond the protocol statements but at the same time stays with them. Colaizzi (1978) calls this process of writing out the meanings of the significant statements (or meaning units) as formulating meanings. Osborne (1990) states that the researcher tries to get at the deep structure of meaning instead of merely reporting the surface linguistic structure.

Colaizzi (1978) also states that statements that refer to specific things can be transposed to a more general form. In other words, the researcher moves from the particular fact that the subject is talking about to the psychological meaning behind what is being talked about (Karlsson, 1993). Osborne (1990) states that the interpretive process depends upon the researcher's sensitivity and perceptiveness in relating to the data. Thus the researcher's experience with the phenomenon under study will shape the interpretive process.

When formulating the Transformed Meaning Units, the researcher looked at each group of meaning units having the same Tag Words. In order to assist in the process of Transformation, the researcher followed a procedure that Giorgi (1975) used for his analysis, which was to interrogate the data in terms of the research question. In this study
the research question, “What is the experience of parent-adolescent conversation from the adolescent’s perspective?” was put to the meaning units. In addition, the researcher also interrogated the data in terms of the more detailed meanings of the Tag Words. For example, for the group of meaning units with Tag Words “parent disapproves” the researcher interrogated the data in terms of the question, “What is the adolescent’s experience of the parent disapproving of the adolescent’s actions?” Through a process of reflection, the researcher interpreted and transformed the implicit and explicit meanings given in the participant’s language into statements of meaning given in the researcher’s language. These were the Transformed Meaning Units. Each Transformed Meaning Unit was related to one group of meaning units with the same Tag Words.

The Transformed Meaning Units could be seen as being written in the adolescent’s voice as a response to a question from the researcher. For example, for the group of meaning units with the Tag Words “parent gives information” the researcher reflected on the question, “What is the adolescent’s experience of the parent giving information to the adolescent?” in the context of the research question. The researcher then reflected on how an adolescent would respond to the question, “What is your experience of your parent giving information to you?” and formulated the Transformed Meaning Unit as a response in the adolescent’s voice as follows, “It helps you when your parent gives you information, for example by making suggestions or giving you advice because you are able to understand things a bit better and have some ideas of what you can do.”

Alternately, the Transformed Meaning Units could be seen as being written in the researcher’s voice as if the researcher was a counsellor and was responding empathically
to the adolescent (who had already described his or her experiences in the meaning units). For example, for the group of meaning units with the Tag Words “adolescent disagrees” the researcher reflected on the detailed meaning of these Tag Words, which was, “What is the adolescent’s experience of disagreeing with his or her parent’s point of view?” and formulated a response in the voice of the researcher/counsellor as follows, “You feel like disagreeing with your parent’s point of view and expressing your point of view to him or her.”

A list of the Transformed Meaning Units found in this study follows. Appendix E contains the relevant parts of the protocols identified for each Transformed Meaning Unit.

- Adolescent’s experience of accepting parent’s point of view or demand: You feel like you should accept your parent’s point of view or your parent’s demand.

- Adolescent’s experience of agreeing with parent’s point of view: You feel like agreeing with your parent’s point of view.

- Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent: You feel like arguing with your parent when he or she has opposing views to you.

- Adolescent’s experience of convincing parent: You want to convince your parent to see things from your perspective by giving your parent logical reasons why he or she should change his or her mind.

- Adolescent’s experience of being curious about parent: You are curious about how your parent thinks or feels about something and you want to question your parent.

- Adolescent’s experience of disagreeing with parent’s point of view: You feel like disagreeing with your parent’s point of view and expressing your point of view to him or her.

- Adolescent’s experience of disapproving of parent’s actions: You want to let your parent know you disapprove of his or her actions.

- Adolescent’s experience of expressing an opinion to parent: You feel like being independent and you want to do things or say things based on what you value and
find important; in other words you feel like expressing yourself, and your views may be in opposition to those of your parent.

- Adolescent’s experience of being honest with parent: You want to be honest with your parent when you talk to him or her.

- Adolescent’s experience of feeling open with parent: You feel open with your parent and you feel like you can communicate easily and can talk about most things with him or her.

- Adolescent’s experience of being patient with parent: You feel you need to be patient when your parent is trying to make a decision that involves you.

- Adolescent’s experience of reassuring parent: You feel like reassuring your parent that you will be safe and that his or her fears are groundless.

- Adolescent’s experience of requesting something from parent: You feel like requesting from your parent permission to do something you think you should be allowed to do or to get something that you think you should have; in other words you want to express a need or want.

- Adolescent’s experience of suggesting something to parent: You feel like making a suggestion to your parent in order to help him or her feel better.

- Adolescent’s experience of telling parent something: You feel like telling your parent or describing to your parent something about your life, such as your problems, friends, schoolwork, or activities.

- Adolescent’s experience of understanding parent: You feel you are able to understand how your parent feels and thinks and this helps you to understand his or her behavior.

- Adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from parent: You feel like withdrawing from interacting with your parent; in other words you don’t want to talk to your parent.

- Adolescent’s experience of parent being angry with adolescent: You don’t like it and you feel upset when your parent is angry at you.

- Adolescent’s experience of parent apologizing to adolescent: You like it when your parent apologizes to you.

- Adolescent’s experience of parent approving of adolescent: When your parent approves of you or encourages you, it feels good and you feel close to your parent.
• Adolescent’s experience of parent being closed-minded with adolescent: You don’t like it when your parent is closed-minded, for example when he or she won’t listen to your perspective, is critical of you, or is rigid in his or her perspective.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent comforting adolescent: It feels good to you when your parent comforts you or reassures you and stays calm in order to try to make you feel better.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent being concerned about adolescent: It feels good when your parent is concerned about your well-being because it feels like he or she cares about you.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent being curious about adolescent: When your parent is curious about your life and questions you about your experiences or opinions, you like it because it seems like he or she is interested in you.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent demanding something from adolescent: When your parent demands something, for example by setting limits, denying a request, or stating rules, and you feel that these demands are unreasonable and unfair, then you feel like arguing with your parent.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent disagreeing with adolescent’s point of view: You feel like expressing your point of view when your parent disagrees or argues with your point of view or denies your request.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent disapproving of adolescent’s actions: You don’t like it when your parent disapproves of your actions and you would rather that he or she approve of you.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent expressing an opinion to adolescent: Sometimes you feel like agreeing and sometimes you feel like disagreeing when your parent expresses an opinion.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent giving information to adolescent: It helps you when your parent gives you information, for example by making suggestions or giving you advice because you are able to understand things a bit better and have some ideas of what you can do.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent granting autonomy: You like it and it feels like your parent trusts you when he or she lets you make your own choices.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent being interested in adolescent: You like it when your parent is interested in you and gives you his or her full attention, listens to you, asks questions, and is not busy, distracted, or tired.
• Adolescent’s experience of parent listening to adolescent: It feels good and you like it when your parent lets you talk and listens to what you say.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent offering help to adolescent: You like it when your parent offers to help you either for something that is happening right now or for something that might happen in the future.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded with adolescent: You feel good when your parent is open-minded and tries to understand things from your perspective, for example by respecting what you say, acknowledging your point of view, not getting angry at you, and being flexible in his or her point of view.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent telling stories to adolescent: You like it and you feel close to your parent when he or she tells stories about when he or she was younger.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent understanding adolescent: It feels good when you feel your parent understands what things are like from your perspective.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent withdrawing from adolescent: You don’t like it when your parent withdraws attention and is not interested in you or when he or she is too busy or tired; then it seems like he or she does not care about you.

• Adolescent’s experience of parent being worried about adolescent: When your parent is worried about your safety and well-being, you feel like your parent may be over-reacting and you want to reassure your parent that you will be fine.

**Synthesis**

Polkinghorne (1989) states that synthesis involves tying together and integrating the list of transformed meaning units into a description of the phenomenon being studied. Synthesis calls for the researcher to read through the transformed and redescribed meanings and then to formulate a description of the structure underlying the meanings. In this study, a description of the structure of the experience for each individual participant was first synthesized. This was followed by a synthesis of a more general structure that combined the experiences of all participants.
Synthesis of Individual Structural Descriptions

According to Karlsson (1993), this step involves synthesizing the transformed meaning units for each participant into a summary called a Situated Structure. For this study, an Individual (Situated) Structural Description was synthesized for each protocol, or in other words for each of the eleven research participants. To synthesize these structures, the researcher returned to the original protocols and re-read them with the research question in mind, “What is the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with a parent?” Keeping in mind the Transformed Meaning Units, which were identified in the previous Transformation step, the Individual Structural Descriptions were written as a series of statements that described the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with a parent. In addition, the Initial Summaries, which were written in the earlier Reading step, were re-read and were used to assist in the synthesis of the Individual Structural Descriptions.

Synthesis of General Structural Description

The final step is to synthesize a General Structural Description of the experience, which incorporates protocols from different participants. Colaizzi (1978) recommends that analysis from all protocols be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, which is a statement of its fundamental structure.

Colaizzi (1978) recommends that the meaning units or invariant constituents that are related be clustered into themes. In this step then, the Transformed Meaning Units, which were identified in the previous Horizontalization and Transformation steps, were clustered into themes of related meaning units. To do this the researcher reflected on the original protocols, the Individual Structural Descriptions, and the Transformed Meaning
Units. There was an attempt here to allow for the emergence of themes that were common across all protocols. The various common themes identified were called the Core Themes of the experience. As Colaizzi (1978) recommends, these Core Themes were referred back to the protocols and the questions were asked whether (a) there is anything in the protocols not accounted for in the identified core themes, or (b) there are any Core Themes identified that were not found in the protocols.

After the Core Themes were identified, the General Structural Description was written. To do this the researcher reflected on the original protocols, the Individual Structural Descriptions, the Core Themes, and the Transformed Meaning Units in the context of the research question. The General Structural Description was written as a series of statements that combined the Core Themes into one description.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability is synonymous with consistency and repeatability. For phenomenology, the major concern for reliability stems from the interpretive process. As Osborne (1990) states, there is no absolute interpretation of the data and different interpretations can result in both contradictory as well as complimentary meanings. Van Manen (1990) reiterates this, stating that with phenomenological research there is no conclusion or summary and that full or final descriptions are unattainable. He states that a description is only one interpretation with the possibility of other, complementary descriptions. However, Osborne (1990) states that although there may be multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon, a unified description of a shared phenomenon
(reliability) can be achieved since phenomenological research focuses upon stable meaning rather than variable facts. To deal with reliability in phenomenological research then, it is up to the researcher to argue as persuasively as possible for a particular interpretation.

Validity

Osborne (1990) states that there are four major ways to assess the validity of a phenomenological study:

1. The reader will be able to understand how the researcher arrived at the interpretation if the researcher brackets his or her orientation and describes the procedure and data analysis.

2. The researcher can check interpretations of the data by asking the participants if these interpretations, in the form of a general description of the experience synthesized by the researcher, fits with their experience.

3. The researcher should present coherent and convincing arguments of his or her interpretations to the research community.

4. The interpreted structure of the phenomenon should match experiences of other people not in the study who have experienced the phenomenon.

For this study, the first three methods of assessing validity were undertaken with one exception. With the second method, the researcher, in asking the participants about the interpretations of the data, used the Individual Structural Descriptions for each participant as opposed to the General Structural Description. The fourth method of assessing validity would be something that could be done in future to increase the validity of this study.
CHAPTER III: FINDINGS

The findings that emerged from the research question for this study, “What is the adolescent’s experience of parent-adolescent conversation?” consisted of Individual Structural Descriptions of the adolescent’s experience as well as a General Structural Description of the experience. Core Themes were also uncovered in the analysis.

Individual Structural Descriptions

The following are the Individual Structural Descriptions written for each of the eleven participants.

Participant #1

- Female; 15.1 years; born in Canada; parents born in Southeast Asia; lives with father, mother, and brother.

It seems like your parent is interested in your life when he or she asks you questions about your activities, friends, school, worries, problems, thoughts, or feelings. You then feel like talking to your parent and telling him or her about yourself. In other words, you feel open with your parent.

You like it when your parent is concerned about your well-being and is interested in and listens to what you have to say. It seems like your parent cares about you then. From your perspective, it is best when you and your parent are alone together, there are no distractions, and your parent is not busy or tired.

Often, you feel better after telling your parent about yourself. You like it when your parent supports you by making suggestions because it gives you some ideas of what you could do. Also, you understand things better after your parent has given you some information about something.
You feel like supporting your parent when he or she is anxious or upset by talking with him or her or by agreeing with his or her opinion.

In your experience, after talking with your parent, it seems as if you get a better understanding of each other. You feel that your parent understands you better because you have told him or her your experiences and he or she has listened to you. You often feel curious about your parent’s thoughts and feelings and you can understand your parent better after talking with him or her.

It may feel strange and awkward at first talking about things with your parent that you normally don’t talk about, but afterwards, you feel like communication is more open between the two of you and that it will be easier in future to talk with your parent.

When you disagree with your parent, it seems like your parent respects your opinion and trusts your judgment when he or she lets you make your own decisions and does not put pressure on you to do what he or she wants.

Participant #2

• Female; 15.8 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; lives with father, mother, and brother.

You feel like you want to express yourself by doing things that are consistent with your values, even though your parent may disapprove. It seems to you that it is because he or she is concerned for your well-being. Sometimes you feel frustrated when your parent disapproves of your actions or disagrees with you. It seems like your parent doesn’t understand things from your perspective then. You feel like expressing your point of view to your parent, and you want to convince him or her to see things your way.
You like it when your parent lets you talk, listens openly to your opinions, and asks you questions. It feels like your parent is interested then. You also feel good when your parent is open-minded and says he or she will think about what you said. This helps you to be patient. You feel respected and it seems that what you have to say is important. You also feel understood by your parent. It is important as well for you that your parent does not always think he or she is right.

When you tell your parent about your thoughts and feelings, it seems like he or she gets a better understanding of you. It is very important for you to be honest and open with your parent. You feel your parent trusts you, so you don’t want to break that trust by being dishonest with your parent.

Participant #3

- Female; 14.8 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; lives with father, mother, and brother.

You want to ask your parent for something that you believe you should be getting at your age. You feel comfortable approaching your parent because, in your experience, your parent listens openly to what you say and understands you. It is important to you to try to convince your parent to see your perspective and to give your parent good reasons why you need what you are asking for. You feel impatient so you put some pressure on your parent to try to convince him or her to agree with you, but you still try to be patient.

You feel good when your parent approaches you to discuss something that you want to do. You like it when your parent is interested in what you want and asks you questions to get your opinion about certain things. When your parent is open-minded and
agrees with your suggestions or grants autonomy and lets you do things your own way, you feel as though your parent accepts and respects you.

It seems like you and your parent become closer when your parent tells you stories of being in similar situations when he or she was your age.

*Participant #4*

- Female; 15.0 years; born in Europe; parents born in Europe; parents separated; lives with mother and sister.

Sometimes you are curious about what your parent thinks or feels about a particular topic and you ask them about it. When your parent expresses an opinion, sometimes you feel like you want to disagree with that opinion, so you feel it is important to express your point of view so that your parent knows how you see the situation. You and your parent may argue with each other in order to try to convince yourselves that each of you is right.

It is frustrating for you when your parent doesn’t agree with your perspective. It bothers you to think that if you did what she disapproved of, then she would disapprove of you. Sometimes you just have to accept your parent’s point of view because you know it is hopeless to try to change his or her mind, but you still feel uncomfortable.

You feel motivated when your parent encourages you and supports you in what you want to do. You can think ahead of what it would be like if you achieved your goal and you can imagine your parent being proud of you.

When your parent asks that you do something or demands something from you, sometimes you don’t agree with his or her demand and you feel like talking to your parent and expressing your point of view. Sometimes you feel annoyed and frustrated
because you believe the demands that your parent makes are unreasonable, so you and your parent argue.

You don’t like it and you feel angry when your parent is rigid and not open-minded, for example when your parent doesn’t want to listen to anyone else’s point of view, or when he or she gets angry when things are not done his or her way. You don’t like it when your parent gets angry when things don’t go his or her way.

Participant #5

- Female; 15.4 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; parents separated; lives with mother, stepfather, and brother.

You feel it is important to tell your parent the truth when he or she asks you something. It helps and you feel more open with your parent if you know your parent will listen to you and not get angry at you when you tell him or her something he or she may disapprove of. That way your relationship can be very open and honest and you will be more likely to talk to your parent about problems or concerns or ask for help in the future.

You feel good when your parent supports you in a number of different ways. One way is by offering to help you if you ever need help. It helps to know that your parent will not get angry at you when you ask for help, because then you won’t be afraid to ask for help.

You feel relieved after telling your problems to your parent and your parent supports you just by listening to your story. It seems like your parent cares about you when he or she listens to you.
It also helps when your parent supports you by giving you a few brief suggestions about what you could do about something. It seems like sometimes the suggestions are based on your parent’s past experiences so that you will not make the same mistakes that he or she did.

You feel better after you tell a problem to your parent and he or she responds supportively by reassuring you that your concerns are groundless and that he or she approves of you. Even though you have heard your parent tell you good things about yourself in past, you like to hear it again and it helps you to feel better.

Sometimes you are curious about your parent’s thoughts and feelings. You feel better after you have talked with your parent because you have a better understanding of what he or she wants and does not want.

When your parent demands something from you that you think is unfair or unreasonable, you feel upset and you want to disagree with your parent and tell him or her why you think the demand is unfair. Sometimes you feel like arguing with your parent. You don’t like it when your parent doesn’t listen to you and try to see your perspective. You also don’t like it and then you feel angry when your parent gets angry at you. When your parent gets angry at you and says hurtful things to you, you don’t feel like talking to him or her in the future.

Participant #6

- Male; 15.3 years; born in Canada; parents-born in Canada; lives with father, mother, and brother.

When you want something or want to do something, you ask your parent. If your parent says no, you feel disappointed. Sometimes you can accept the decision and you
don't argue with your parent. But sometimes you feel like you need to argue with your parent to try to change his or her mind. If you argue too much, and your parent gives in, then you feel guilty for nagging your parent too much.

You don't like to tell your problems to your parent if you know he or she will get angry at you or punish you when you tell him or her your problem. Sometimes you don't even feel like telling good things to your parent because you feel he or she will over-react.

When your parent is interested in your accomplishments and supports you by congratulating you, you feel good and proud of yourself.

Participant #7

- Female; 15.3 years; born in Canada; parents born in Southeast Asia; lives with father, mother, and two brothers.

You want to ask your parent permission to do something that you feel you should be allowed to do. You feel nervous about asking him or her because your parent disapproves of the activity and is concerned for your well-being. You feel that it is important to express your point of view so that your parent will understand you.

You feel proud of yourself for stating good reasons why you should be allowed to participate in the activity and for convincing your parent in a way that you both felt satisfied at the end of the conversation.

You feel good when your parent listens to your point of view, is open-minded towards your point of view, and acknowledges your perspective. You also feel more open with your parent. In other words, it seems as if it will be easier to talk to your parent about yourself in the future. On the other hand, if your parent had not listened to
you and had not allowed any discussion regarding your request, you would have felt angry and would have felt less likely to talk to him or her about your activities.

When you disapprove of something that your parent does, you feel like expressing your point of view to your parent, because you think it will help him or her. You feel frustrated when your parent keeps disagreeing with you and does not see your perspective, because it seems like he or she is too rigid.

Sometimes your parent warns you of the negative consequences of something that you want to do, but leaves the decision up to you about whether to go ahead with your actions. You feel confused because you know your parent is right, and yet you want to go ahead with what you want to do.

You like to support your parent when he or she is worried or upset about something. You feel it is important to make a suggestion to your parent about what might be helpful to him or her.

You feel special and cared for when your parent is concerned about your well-being and tells you he or she has done something special for you. You appreciate the special interest your parent has shown and what he or she has done for you.

Sometimes it seems like your parent is very concerned about your well-being. You want to support your parent and make your parent feel better and not so worried about you by telling him or her about yourself and by reassuring him or her that you are fine and that nothing bad is going to happen to you.

You want to be honest with your parent by telling him or her things about yourself so that your parent won't hear it from somebody else and become concerned and
upset. By doing this, you feel relieved because it is as if you don’t have to hide anything from your parent.

Participant #8

- Female; 15.3 years; born in Canada; parents born in Southeast Asia; lives with father, mother, two sisters, one brother, and four cousins

When your parent says no to an activity you were excited about and looking forward to, you feel disappointed and angry. You want to ask questions to your parent because you want to know the reasons behind why he or she said no. Sometimes the reason your parent gives seems unfair to you and you feel angry. When your parent disagrees with you or disapproves of your activity, you feel like arguing with your parent to try to convince him or her to see your point of view.

Even when you are angry at something, you like it when your parent can stay calm, explain things to you, and reassure you that things will get better. It seems like it is easier for you to get over your anger and to accept your parent’s decision when your parent is like that.

You like it when your parent puts aside what he or she is doing and pays attention to you. You feel like your parent is actually listening to you.

Sometimes your parent asks you to do something you don’t really want to do, but you do it anyway. When your parent notices and compliments you on what you did, you feel glad that you did it, because you like it when your parent approves of you. You feel closer to your parent afterwards.
**Participant #9**

- Male; 15.1 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; parents separated; he and his brother live half-time with father and half-time with mother.

You feel much better and more hopeful about your problem after having a conversation with your parent where he or she is concerned about you and takes an interest in helping you figure out ways for you to do better in future and to prevent problems from developing.

You feel disappointed in yourself for not telling your parent earlier about a problem you have been having, and then she finds out about it from someone else. You feel like your parent has lost some trust in you.

Sometimes you are curious about something and you ask your parent for information. You feel interested in what your parent tells you and you feel like you understand things better from the information your parent gave to you.

It seems like your parent shows interest in you by asking how you are doing in activities outside the house. When your parent tells you of similar situations in their life, you feel like he or she is supporting you.

You feel closer to your parent when she tells you about a problem in her life and you are able to talk about it together. You feel interested in what your parent is saying and you want to support him or her by making helpful suggestions. You also feel like you get a better understanding of your parent during these conversations. On the other hand, you sometimes feel frustrated when your parent starts to tell you their problem, and you have other things that you want to do.

When your parent disapproves of something you do, you feel like arguing with your parent and stating your point of view.
Participant #10

- Female; 15.2 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; lives with father, mother, and brother.

When your parent offers to help, it makes you feel good about your parent.

When you talk about something with your parent that you normally don’t talk about, it seems like future conversations with your parent will be easier. It is like the relationship becomes more open.

When your parent gives you advice, at first you feel bored and annoyed, and you feel like you don’t want to hear it because you’ve heard the advice before. It also seems like your parent doesn’t know what he or she is talking about. But afterwards, when you think about what your parent said to you, it seems to make sense and you start to think that what they said is probably right. Even though you get frustrated by your parent’s advice-giving, you really do feel glad that your parent is interested in you and is concerned about your well-being.

You like it when your parent tells you stories of his or her childhood and of being in similar situations that you are going through. You think your parent does it in order to help you in your life so that you won’t make the same mistakes that he or she did. You like to hear stories of your parent’s childhood because it makes you feel closer to your parent.

Sometimes, when your parent is angry, he or she won’t let you express yourself, and you feel very frustrated and angry with your parent.

When your parent apologizes to you after a fight, you like it and you feel better because you think that your parent is taking some responsibility for the fight. You feel like it’s easier to get over your anger after your parent apologizes. It makes you feel
better to know that your parent is not mad at you anymore. It also seems like you are supporting your parent by accepting his or her apology.

Things you find helpful are when you and your parent talk about things that interest you, when you and your parent laugh together, when you and your parent are alone together, and when your parent is interested in you.

*Participant #11*

- Female; 15.2 years; born in Canada; parents born in Canada; lives with father, mother, and brother.

It's really hard on you and you feel upset yourself when your parent is upset about something. You feel like supporting your parent and trying to make him or her feel better. You feel close to your parent when you can comfort him or her.

When your parent decides that you won't be able to do something you really wanted to do, you feel disappointed and upset and want to talk with your parent about the reasons behind his or her decision. You feel angry when your parent won't let you express your point of view, and when he or she make a decision about you and you have no input. Sometimes when you get angry, you feel like not talking to them because of what they did.

You feel upset when your parent isn't interested in asking about you or your activities. You feel like you want to be able to talk to your parent about important things in your life and you don't want to have to hide anything from your parent. It seems like your parent is not concerned when he or she doesn't talk to you about important things, but you would rather he or she still support and encourage you to do the right thing rather than assuming you will do the right thing.
You feel angry when you tell your parent about something you feel he or she would be proud of, and he or she doesn't respond in a positive way. You think maybe what you did is not good enough and you feel like your parent is not interested in you and doesn’t care about you.

Sometimes when you tell your parent about your career hopes you feel your parent is interested when he or she gives you advice about your career choice. Sometimes your parent disagrees with your choice, but you feel that your parent has had more experience than you have had so you listen with an open mind.

**General Structural Description**

*Core Themes*

The first part of this step involved the clustering of Transformed Meaning Units into Core Themes or clusters of meaning. There appeared to be two overarching Core Themes found across all eleven protocols. These were called the primary Core Themes. The first involved the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent and the second involved the adolescent’s experience of feeling close and connected to the parent. Within each of these primary Core Themes, secondary Core Themes were identified. Sub-themes were also identified within the secondary Core Themes. The following shows the categorization of the primary and secondary Core Themes and the sub-themes. It should be restated at this point that the Transformed Meaning Units were the basic structures of the Core Themes and sub-themes.
1. Adolescent’s Experience of Expressing Independence From Parent

   a. Adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view.
      i) Adolescent’s experience of expressing opinions or disagreeing with
         or disapproving of parent
      ii) Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent
      iii) Adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from parent
      iv) Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded and
          understanding or closed-minded and withdrawing

   b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent expressing his or her point of view.
      i) Adolescent’s experience of parent expressing opinions or
         disagreeing with or disapproving of adolescent
      ii) Adolescent’s experience of expressing opinions or disagreeing with
          or disapproving of parent
      iii) Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent
      iv) Adolescent’s experience of parent feeling worried
      v) Adolescent’s experience of parent being angry at adolescent
      vi) Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded and
          understanding or closed-minded and withdrawing
      vii) Adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from parent

   c. Adolescent’s experience of making a request to the parent.
      i) Adolescent’s experience of making a request to parent
      ii) Adolescent’s experience of parent disagreeing with adolescent
      iii) Adolescent’s experience of convincing parent
      iv) Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent
      v) Adolescent’s experience of accepting parent’s decision
      vi) Adolescent’s experience of being patient

   d. Adolescent’s experience of the parent making a demand to the adolescent.
      i) Adolescent’s experience of parent making a demand
      ii) Adolescent’s experience of accepting parent’s demand
      iii) Adolescent’s experience of arguing with parent

2. Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Close and Connected to Parent

   a. Adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent.
      i) Adolescent’s experience of telling parent something
      ii) Adolescent’s experience of expressing opinions to parent
      iii) Adolescent’s experience of making a request to parent
      iv) Adolescent’s experience of being curious about parent
      v) Adolescent’s experience of feeling open with parent
      vi) Adolescent’s experience of being honest with parent
      vii) Adolescent’s experience of parent understanding
b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent supporting him or her.
   i) Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded, listening understanding, and granting autonomy or closed-minded, angry and withdrawing
   ii) Adolescent’s experience of parent being interested, listening, being concerned and being curious or withdrawing
   iii) Adolescent’s experience of parent approving, expressing similar points of view, comforting, and apologizing
   iv) Adolescent’s experience of parent giving information and telling stories
   v) Adolescent’s experience of parent offering help

c. Adolescent’s experience of supporting the parent.
   i) Adolescent’s experience of parent feeling worried
   ii) Adolescent’s experience of agreeing with parent and expressing similar points of view
   iii) Adolescent’s experience of telling parent something
   iv) Adolescent’s experience of reassuring parent
   v) Adolescent’s experience of suggesting something to parent

d. Adolescent’s experience of understanding the parent.
   i) Adolescent’s experience of understanding parent

What follows is a brief outline of the components of each Core Theme along with examples taken from the protocols.

1. Adolescent’s Experience of Expressing Independence From Parent

1.a. Adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view. One theme that emerged and that reflected the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent was the adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view. The adolescents frequently spoke of this experience and it seemed important to them to express themselves so their parents could get a better understanding of their values and opinions.

Sometimes the adolescents would express an opinion to their parent. Often, the opinion was an expression of independence or autonomy and reflected values the
adolescent found important. The following statements illustrate an adolescent’s experience of expressing her opinion to her parent.

... and I’ve told her many times that even if she says no, if I have my mind set on it, I’m going to do it ... I just tell her like if you want the honest truth mom, even if you say no, I’m still going to do it, and there’s really not much you can do except for be there when I need you ...

The adolescents expressed themselves to their parents frequently with opposing points of view, which can be viewed as expressions of independence. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of disagreeing with her mother.

... and she said like you know you should do it with the person that you’re going to be with the rest of your life, and I told her like I don’t think like that’s how it should be; because I mean yeah you’re supposed to love the person and everything, but like if you’re not going to spend the rest of you’re life with them then that’s ok too ... I was like I don’t agree ... it doesn’t matter ... it doesn’t mean your life will turn out bad or anything if you knew that you weren’t going to live with that person or something ... and I just didn’t agree with that ...

Sometimes the adolescents would express their independence by disapproval of their parents’ actions. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of disapproving of her mother’s way of thinking.

... sometimes I would spazz out at her and just go oh why don’t you just see this, it’s so obvious, it’s like right underneath your nose, how come you just pick the bad points ...

The adolescents also spoke of withdrawing from conversations or interaction with the parent. This can be seen as a way of the adolescent expressing independence from the parent as well. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from her parents after an argument.

... I was really upset ... I didn’t even want to talk to my parents, they completely didn’t even give me the opportunity to talk about it, they were just like you’re not going, that’s it, so I just ignored them for a while ... I was just really upset and didn’t even want to talk to them for a few days ...
1.b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent expressing his or her point of view.

Closely interwoven with the theme of the adolescent experiencing expressing his or her point of view to the parent was the theme of the adolescent experiencing the parent expressing his or her point of view. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her mother expressing her opinion of her daughter’s desire to get her lip pierced and dye her hair.

... and then I started talking about maybe sometime I wanted to get my lip done sometime when I had my braces off and I wanted my hair purple, and she’s like you do realize Adele if you go to a new school you will be attracting some unwanted attention from teachers, and maybe your grades would go down ... and she’s like well if you do that thing to your hair people might stereotype you and not really like that ... and she thought I would be hanging around people who do drugs, she’s like yeah but you’ll hang around them, and they’ll offer you drugs, and you’ll have to because you’re part of them, and you’ll have all these piercings ... and it was like offensive again ... the only time where I really find it offensive is when she stereotypes my friends ...

Frequently the parents’ expressions were expressions of opposition. When the parent expressed an opposing point of view to the adolescent, the adolescent usually felt compelled to express his or her opposing point of view back to the parent. The following statements illustrate an adolescent’s experience of her parent disagreeing with her and the adolescent’s subsequent disagreement and frustration with her mother.

... her sisters and stuff, they will just be like oh but your living room looks smaller than theirs, or your kitchen is too small and theirs is bigger, and they just say little negative things, and she’s telling me about this... and she was like oh no, it’s not a big deal, and I was like, it is ... she’s just like no, no you’re wrong, and I’m like no I’m not wrong, like you just don’t see it, and ahhh it just makes me frustrated ...

Sometimes the parent would express opposition by disapproving of the adolescent’s action. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of her parent expressing disapproval towards her. The adolescent then expressed disapproval back to her parent.
... she's like man you talk so much ... and I was like I'm just letting you know like you
never step out and like say what's right and what's wrong ... I'm just like god, why do
you put up with this, like I would tell her, but then my mom would get mad and she'd
[be] like god she's a nosy little kid ...

The expression of opposing points of view by both adolescent and parent often
led to arguing between the two of them. The following comments illustrate the
adolescent's experience of arguing with her mother when her mother expressed an
opposing point of view, or in other words, denied the adolescent's request.

... I just asked her if I could go out, and she's like no I couldn't, but I was like well why
couldn't I go, because I haven't been out for like a week or so, or for like a long time, and
she's just like no you have to stay home, and I'm like well what is there to do around
home, like why do I have to stay home, and we just had an argument over that, and she's
like oh I have to see your grades first or whatever before you go out, and I'm like well
that's like at the end of June right, so like why can't I just go out with my friends just this
one time, and she's like no, no, no you can't ... and she's like oh you always ask me for
money and stuff, and I'm like well I won't ask you for money next time we go out, and
she's like no ...

Adolescents spoke about how they did not like it when their parents expressed
anger towards them. The following example illustrates an adolescent's experience of her
mother expressing anger at her.

... and she's like fine, you don't have to go, but then you're not allowed to go out, and
then I'm like oh that's not fair, and we got into a fight about that, and usually what it is, is
she's yelling and I'm crying and she's crying and she's swearing, and at first I talk back
to her, like if she says something, I'm like but mom, but then she doesn't listen, when me
and my mom fight, she does not listen to me, I'll be like mom, and she cut me off, and
I'll be mom don't cut me off ... and then I'll yell cause she's raising her voice, and she
gets mad at me for yelling, and then I'll be like well mom you stop yelling, and she'll be
like well I'm the parent and I don't have to stop yelling, and at the beginning, I keep on
trying to get the message to her because she's not listening, and I'm like mom I don't
want to go, she's like I don't care you're going, and she doesn't understand what I'm
saying, it doesn't get into her head, so I have to repeatedly tell her, and then she still
doesn't listen, and then near the end, every time we fight, near the end I just stop talking,
because I'm tired of fighting ... I'll be freaking out because she usually makes character
judgments on me when we're in a fight, she'll be like you just want to go party don't you,
and that's when it hurts me, and I'm like well mom I told you I'm honest with you why
are you throwing that back in my face, and so she throws stuff like that in my face, and
when I try to throw stuff in her face, she gets very mad at me, like she always brings up
her childhood when we’re in a fight … and then she gets mad, she thinks I’m just trying to be smart, and so in fights she makes very low blows on me, and then I’m like ohhh … and then that’s when I usually snap, is when she says something very hurtful about me, like not about my actions but about my character, about me, and so then I get upset …

When parents expressed opposing points of view, it was frequently the feeling of worry for their adolescents’ well-being that was behind the disapproval. Often, the adolescents felt that the parents were over-reacting and they would try to reassure their parents that they were in no danger. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her mother being worried about her safety at a particular event.

… and my mom was sort of concerned about that when I went like oh I want to go to a rave … oh she was just … just her eyes … and her eyebrows were raised and everything they were kind of … she was worried … it was frustrating again because I just didn’t understand why she didn’t get all these positive things … like I understood that she wasn’t me, she didn’t know all these things, I was looking on the internet a lot, and she didn’t know these people as well as I did, and she had seen the news specials on them … she was just concerned I guess for my safety, I understood that she was just concerned for my safety, but it was the news specials that got to her, they said oh people get raped, well you go downtown at night obviously, but there’s security around … but it was just hard for her …

1.c. Adolescent’s experience of making a request to the parent. Connected to the theme of the adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view was the theme of the adolescent’s experience of requesting something from his or her parent. This can be viewed as an expression of independence since the adolescent expressed a need or want to the parent. This was a frequent theme noticed in this study where the adolescent asked permission from the parent to do something or to get something. The following illustrates an adolescent’s experience requesting permission from her mother and then getting turned down by her.

… I just asked her if I could go out … I’m just like mom, cause my friend phoned, my friend was on the phone, and she [my friend] was like do you want to go out, and I’m like
yeah hold on a second, so I went to the kitchen and asked my mom, like mom can I go out with my friends to a movie, and she’s just like oh no, not today …

Sometimes the adolescent would accept the parent’s decision if the parent had denied the request. The following quote illustrates the adolescent’s experience of accepting his parent’s decision.

... [I feel] a little bit disappointed [when they say no to a request] ... [I say] can I please go, or like sometimes I’m fine with that but disappointed, and other times, come on, please, please ... [and they say] no, no, no, unless sometimes they continue saying no, and then I go and I say ok ...

On the other hand, frequently the adolescent would not accept the parent’s decision and would argue with him or her. Sometimes the adolescents would try to convince their parents to grant them their request by giving them logical reasons why they thought the request should be granted. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of trying to convince her parents to give her permission to attend a particular event when the parents were initially not willing to give her permission.

... and then I was like oh but you know I’m not going to be doing that, you know I’m just having a little sleepover, and they’re just like true, true, and I was like you can’t just be scared of something that’s not really going to happen, and I was just like there are so many chances, like even if I cross the street, who knows what’s going to happen, you can’t just always be scared, and then they’re like that’s right, that’s right ...

The adolescents talked about their experiences of being patient while waiting for their parents’ decision regarding their request. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of being patient while her mother is in the process of making a decision about whether or not she would be allowed to attend an event.

... of course you want to go somewhere, you want to go there right away, but I had to be patient, but it wasn’t a bad kind of patient, it wasn’t like oh she won’t let me go, she actually listened to me ... I was hopeful ... sometimes it frustrated me because I didn’t really like having to wait, and just waiting for her to make up her mind, but it was kind of neat because I felt like I was kind of getting there ... I would usually feel pretty good
with myself because I think I made some pretty good points, so it was just the basic thing of waiting ...

1.d. Adolescent’s experience of the parent making a demand to the adolescent.

Connected to the theme of the adolescent experiencing the parent expressing his or her point of view was the theme of the adolescent experiencing the parent demanding something. In other words, the parent was expressing a need or a want to the adolescent. In this study, the adolescents often felt the parents’ demands were unfair or unreasonable. When this happened, the adolescents felt like disagreeing and arguing with their parents. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent making a demand by setting a limit for her and the subsequent angry reaction by the adolescent.

... she’d be like no, just let them finish their show whatever, and you can have it after that, and I’d be like well before I came from school they had like so many shows, they’ve been sitting here all day, and she’s like oh it doesn’t matter, they’re smaller than you, just let them have their show ... so that’s why I get pissed off ... I’m like that’s not fair ... 

2. Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Close and Connected to Parent

2.a. Adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent. One Core Theme that emerged from this study that revealed closeness and connection between adolescent and parent was the adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with his or her parent. For the adolescents, feeling comfortable talking with their parents often meant that they would tell their parents about their life experiences. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of telling her mother about her friends and sharing with her mother what was going on in her life.

... and then I was talking about some of my really close friends, and how their life was right now, and kind of struggles that they were having, and we talked about my best friend ...[I said] some of them were doing really good in school and some were having a bit of struggles ... like they were having troubles like doing like certain subjects like
math or stuff and I was having trouble with it too ... I felt like very relieved, and it felt good to tell her about my friends and stuff so she’d know a bit more about the different kind of people that I was with ...

When the adolescents felt comfortable talking with their parents, they would also tell their parents their problems. The following example illustrates the adolescent’s experience of telling her mother about a problem in her life.

... we’ll talk about probably social problems in school, like friends and boys and stuff ... like I’ll tell her the situation, what’s going on, like what’s happening, and why I’m upset ... it’s kind of just me telling her so I can tell somebody, because you don’t want to tell somebody at school because it becomes rumours and gets spread around, and my mom’s obviously not going to spread it around, so I just tell her so I can get relieved ... like at school I’m like why is he doing this right, but I won’t say it right, well I will but I won’t totally freak out, but then at home I can just tell her the whole story, and then I don’t know, it just feels better, because I’ll be like oh he did this and that ... it just lets it out so it’s not all in here ...

Sometimes, the adolescents felt curious about their parents’ thoughts, feelings, or opinions and would question their parents in order to get a better understanding of them. The following comments by an adolescent illustrate her experience of feeling curious towards her mother’s thoughts on premarital sex.

... I think I started it [the conversation] cause I just wanted to know what she thought, cause I mean she never really told me ... my sister and her boyfriend, they were talking about it, and she told my mom that they were going to do it like one day soon, and I was just like so do you think that’s bad or something ... and my mom said that was like not right, that you should spend the rest of your life with him or whatever, and then I just got into the conversation ...

When the adolescents felt comfortable talking about most things with their parents, they felt open towards their parents. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of feeling open towards her mother.

... I’m really open with my mom, which is really awesome, I basically tell her everything, and so it’s kind of hard to go behind her back, and I’d feel very bad if I ever did ...
Being honest to their parents seemed to be important for the adolescents and was also connected to the theme of the adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent. The following example illustrates the adolescent’s experience of being honest with her parent.

... well I want her to know what’s going on, and me be able to tell her what happened, and not have to hide anything from her, or lie or anything, I just want us to be honest ... because I don’t mind talking about it, I’d rather her know the truth ...

2. b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent supporting him or her. Another theme that emerged in this study that revealed closeness and connection between parent and adolescent was the adolescent’s experience of being supported by his or her parent. In this study, the adolescents revealed many different ways in which their parents supported them.

When parents were open-minded, the adolescents felt comfortable talking with them. For this study, being open-minded meant that the parent would respect and try to understand the adolescent’s point of view. It did not necessarily mean agreeing with or approving of what the adolescent said, but it did mean the parent would respond in a calm and non-judgmental manner and allow the adolescent to hold a particular point of view that was important to him or her. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent being open-minded towards her views.

... we had really good conversations ... it wasn’t like oh she won’t let me go, she actually listened to me ... usually it [the conversation] would end off she would kind of think about what I had said, and she’d say I’ll think about it Adele ... I know she’s thinking about it, at least she’s not just saying no, and she’s respecting my opinion ... I don’t feel like she knows she’s right and she won’t listen to anything else but herself, she doesn’t do that, she will listen to me and I know she is listening to me, which is really nice, because some parents like my dad, they won’t really listen to you ... if that’s not going to happen, it won’t happen, if they’re right, they’re right ... and what he [my dad] does is he
doesn’t listen like my mom does, he’s always right, like he’s always been right, no one else can be right except him ...

When parents were open-minded, the adolescents felt understood by their parents. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of feeling understood by her mother.

... [I felt understood] cause she was actually listening and not busy ... [I felt she was listening] because when she started asking questions, I replied, and then after, she asked some more questions on what I had just told her ... and she understood and knew what I was going through ...

When parents were closed-minded, or in other words when they would not listen to their adolescent, when they were rigid in their points of view, or when they were angry or judgmental of their adolescent’s thoughts or feelings, the adolescents did not feel comfortable talking with their parents and would feel angry and frustrated. The following comments illustrate the adolescent’s experience of not feeling comfortable talking to his parents.

... and I think the reason that I don’t really tell them a lot of things is that, like you know problems or whatever, is because, not that they’re harsh, but it’s just that like they don’t really let me do stuff at certain times, I feel that I don’t have enough freedom I guess ... so that’s sort of why I don’t go to them a lot ... like if I maybe skipped school or whatever, and they found out, they’d get mad at me, and I don’t like it when they get mad at me ...

Adolescents felt comfortable interacting with their parents when the parents granted some level of autonomy to the adolescents by allowing them to make choices. In other words, the parents who granted autonomy allowed the adolescents a certain amount of freedom and were not overly rigid or controlling. The adolescents felt their parents trusted them then. The following illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her father granting autonomy by allowing her to make some choices.
... he explained like where my bedroom would be, he showed me where it was going to be and stuff, and he asked me like what I wanted, cause we’ve got like a bar down there, and he was going to take it out, and then I said if he could leave it in there so I could use it for storage, so he agreed with me for that ...

Adolescents felt supported when their parents were interested in them. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent being interested.

... there wasn’t really any distractions, and it was just me and her, and she was interested, and she wasn’t like busy or anything ... it was just me and her ... because usually when we’re at home, or other places, she’s usually busy, and she doesn’t really care, and she always has stuff to do at home, and then she doesn’t really have time to talk to me ...

Parents demonstrated interest when they listened to their adolescents. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent letting her talk and just listening to her.

... she doesn’t talk too much because usually those are the times when I’m freaking out, and I’ve had enough, and I need to vent, and so I just like talk, talk, talk, talk, talk and she kind of just listens, and she doesn’t really say too much ... she just lets me talk and she just listens, and then that’s all I need ... so I kind of just need to tell her the story, cause my friends are sick of hearing it, so I get to tell her, and she doesn’t really say too much ... but it’s good ...

Another way the adolescents felt supported was when the parents expressed concern for the adolescents’ well-being. The adolescents then felt that their parents cared about them. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of her parent being concerned about her.

... lately I’ve been like just kind of mad and stuff and cranky, and so then he asked me what was wrong lately, and then I just told him like a lot of schoolwork and it was hard ... I felt kind of relieved, because I was getting the anger a bit out, I also felt a bit better maybe, because someone else actually understood what I was feeling like ... it really felt good [that my dad was concerned about me], cause it felt like somebody actually cared and stuff, and it felt better ...

Generally, the adolescents felt supported when their parents showed interest in them by being curious and asking questions. Although there is a danger of being too
intrusive by parents asking too many questions, there is also the opportunity for parents to express their interest in their adolescent by questioning. The following example illustrates the adolescent’s experience when her mother asks questions out of interest and curiosity.

... and then I started wearing a whole bunch of bracelets, which in raves, I’m a candy raver, so bracelets are like friendship, if you meet a person, you give them a bracelet, and they meet you, you get a bracelet, so I have bracelets all the way up to here, so she asked me why do you wear so much bracelets ... and I told her the whole friendship aspect, and friends have always been very important to me, and she realized that was important too, so we just started talking about friends, and how these people were different than the people at school, and that they were actually true friends ... and she would ask questions, like she would always ask questions ... and she started to understand a bit ...

Adolescents did not like it when their parents did not show interest in their lives or did not pay attention to them, or in other words, when their parents withdrew from interacting with them. The following comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of her mother not being interested in her school marks.

... well lately she’s been frustrating me, because our teachers are giving us our marks, cause there’s only a week left, and I told her I was getting the highest mark in socials ... and she’s just like umm that’s good ... [and then] she walked away, she was doing the laundry ... and I was expecting a good job or a hug or something ... but it’s just like a nod or something like that ... well it just makes me angry kind of, I hope that that’s good enough, like I don’t want her to think that that’s not good enough ... and it just kind of makes me wonder if she understands ... it seems like I don’t get the response I want back

When parents expressed themselves by approving of their adolescents, the adolescents felt supported and good feelings were generated in the adolescent. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent approving of her actions.

... I’m like I feel that you don’t look up to me because I drink, and then she told me that she didn’t respect me any less, that she respected me even more because I had the courage to tell her and be honest with her, and she told me that she respects me even more, and that she’s jealous of my maturity that I have at this age ... It was good, I kind of knew it, but I just needed to hear it again, cause she’s told me lots of times ...
Another way the adolescents in this study felt supported by their parents was when the parents comforted or reassured the adolescent. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her parent comforting her.

... I was kind of like sad that we weren’t going to go, and he was just like oh don’t worry, we can go next year, and I’m like ok ... so then I’m just like oh whatever, I bet we’re not going to go next year, and he’s like no don’t worry we’ll [go], and I was ok with that ... he always tells me we’ll do it for sure and stuff ...

The adolescents felt supported when their parents apologized to them after a fight. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of the parent apologizing to her.

... well she always has this look on her face, and I just know what she’s going to say, and I’m like I know what you’re going to say, and she doesn’t say anything at first, and then she’s like really quietly I’m sorry, and I’m just like yeah it’s ok whatever, and then she’ll be like today at work blah, blah, blah my boss is blah, blah, blah or PMS blah, blah, blah or something like that, and I’ll just be like yeah mom it’s ok whatever, and then that’s about it ... she always apologizes after, but then if she didn’t apologize, if she didn’t do what she usually does, I would feel like where’s my apology ... I like it when she apologizes to me, it’s good cause it makes me think like wow she actually does feel bad you know, and she actually would say sorry, so that’s good ...

Adolescents experienced parents supporting them when the parents gave information, suggestions, help or advice to them. Although there is a danger here of parents becoming too directive and controlling by giving too much advice, in general, the adolescents in this study appreciated the ideas or help from their parents. The following statements illustrate an adolescent’s experience of her parent offering advice.

... he’s like oh yeah you should go to work, and he’ll give me the whole talk like get ahead, go to work, don’t be a slacker, blah, blah, blah and that kind of stuff, and when he just says that then I’m just like oh whatever, you always say that to me, shut up, and then when I think about it, I’m like he’s right ... when he says oh go work, I’m like oh god I don’t want to go work, but then I’m just like aww, he’s right, and then I feel glad that he actually cares kind of thing, or that he’ll actually make the effort to say something ...
Information for the adolescents sometimes came in the form of stories told by the parent of his or her younger days. The following illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her father telling her about his younger years.

... cause he'll tell me what happened, like he'll be like yeah I got a job when I was just about your age, but all my friends were just going to parties you know, and like it's ok to go have fun, but like you've got to realize when work was good ... and then he'll say then when I was older I had money to buy my own things and they're just scrambling to get a job and they need their parents' help, so he's just trying to help me get ahead ... so just hearing him tell me like all those kind of stories, I'm like wow this is pretty cool, like listening to their childhood kind of things, I like that too ...

Adolescents felt supported when their parents offered to help them. Sometimes this offer of help would be for the future if the adolescent ever required it. The following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of her mother offering help to her.

... she told me that if I ever needed help I could go to her, and like if I was ever in trouble because I got too drunk or something, just to call home, and she won't get mad at me, like if I need a place to stay, to call her so she'd come pick me up ... and that worked because about two months later, I got really [drunk] and I didn’t know where to sleep, and I was going to sleep at a friend’s house, but I couldn’t anymore, so I called her, not being scared, I wasn’t scared that she was mad at me, and then she came, and she picked me up, and she didn’t get mad at me ... I was very emotional at the time, I was crying and stuff, and she was fine, and the next day, she asked me how it was, and I told her I didn’t like it, and I told her that the only reason why I called her is because I remember her telling me in the conversation that she wouldn’t get mad, and she’d be there to help me, so I called her, and I wasn’t scared when I called her, and I wasn’t scared when I seen her, I was ashamed, but I wasn’t scared ...

2.c. Adolescent’s experience of supporting the parent. An interesting theme that emerged in this study was the theme of the adolescent experiencing giving support to his or her parent. The adolescents did not like to see their parents in distress and felt compelled to do something to alleviate this distress. Just as their parents had supported them, the adolescents in this study supported their parents in different ways. The
following example illustrates the adolescent’s experience of supporting her mother by
engaging in conversation with her and agreeing with her mother’s perspective.

... it was about like these people that moved into our basement suite recently, like about a
week ago, and she didn’t really like them, and neither did I, and then we just talked about
that ... the people below, they were making this really loud racket and stuff, and she was
getting kind of mad and stuff, and she didn’t really appreciate them ... I agreed on her
opinion, and so I just kind of added some more stuff about why I didn’t like them and
things that they do ... probably felt better afterward, cause then both of us had the same
feelings ... and we like agreed on our frustrations ... she was feeling kind of mad and
stuff, and probably she wanted somebody to talk to, and I just joined in the conversation

Some adolescents supported their parent by becoming more verbally interactive
with their parent, for example by telling the parent details about his or her activities. The
following statements illustrate the adolescent’s experience of supporting her mother by
giving her mother more information on an activity she is interested in but that her mother
disapproved of.

... and another point that I brought up about raves with her was since everyone’s about
peace and love and everything, they also focus on the bigger issues like the middle east
and stuff, we actually sit down and just talk, sometimes we meet friends and we talk
about what’s going on, and you don’t do that with people in school, you just do that in
socials class when you have to, but this concerns us ... a bigger picture that people don’t
usually see ... I told her that, and that made her think a bit more, and she liked that ...

Some adolescents would also support their parents by reassuring them that they
would be safe. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of
reassuring her mother that she is fine and not in any danger.

... I came home late, and she was like oh where were you, and I was like I was talking to
the counsellor, and then she’s all like oh what happened, and she was all worried, and I
was like oh nothing happened, and like my friend or my ex-friend and we were just
talking, and I told her everything that happened, and I was just like oh I hate her so much,
like I really don’t like that girl, and she was all like oh well are you getting bullied, and
she just went on, and I was like no, no nothing’s wrong, and she’s like well if there’s
anything wrong, she just got overreacted, and I was like oh my god there’s nothing, and
she’s like oh I don’t like talking to you like this, she’s like oh really are you sure, are you
fine, and I’m like no nothing happened to me, calm down ... and my mom’s like oh no
Occasionally the adolescents would make a suggestion to their parents in order to try to help them in some way. The following example illustrates an adolescent’s experience of suggesting something to her father in order to help him become closer to her brothers.

... I was just letting him know that maybe he should go like take them on a camping trip, just like the three of them, and get some bonding time and stuff, and he’s like yeah that’s true ... and I guess they feel jealous of me, and I know they do, cause they always try to put me down, like they go oh she did that wrong, and my dad’s like ahhh ... and I was just like maybe you should just go on a trip, just a little one ... I told him that they should spend time together ... so I’m like maybe you should go like take them on a trip, like on a bonding trip, like that’s what you should do ...

2.d. Adolescent’s experience of understanding the parent. Another interesting theme that arose in this study was the theme of adolescents’ experience of understanding their parents’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, or in other words of being able to take their parents’ perspectives. By taking their parents’ perspectives or understanding their parents, the adolescents were then able to feel closer and more connected to their parents.

In this example, the following quote illustrates an adolescent’s experience of understanding the reasons why he believes his parents are the way they are.

... my parents are older, a lot older, and they went through the same things, but different, because they grew up in a different time period ... like a different decade ...

The following statements illustrate an adolescent’s experience of understanding her father by being able to take his perspective.

... I know it’s not really his fault, like he doesn’t have enough time, but like he always tries to make things for us, like make trips for our family, but like sometimes it doesn’t work out ... I think he was kind of like disappointed that he had to tell me that, he knew that I really wanted to go, and I was always talking about it, so he didn’t really want to tell me, I could tell he was just like oh sorry no ...
In this example, the comments illustrate an adolescent’s experience of understanding the reasons why her mother denied her request.

... I also knew that I had to stay at home, because that’s more important to take care of the kids than go out and have fun, you know like just sometimes at least, and like she was really busy, if she wasn’t really busy, if she didn’t have that much to do, then I guess she would have let me go out ... at the beginning I was like really pissed off ... but then I think like you know, whoa, my mom like she works a lot and stuff, so I guess she gets tired too you know, so I was like whatever, like I should just stay at home ...

**General Structural Description**

The General Structural Description was synthesized as a general description of the essence of the adolescent’s experience of having a conversation with a parent. Osborne (1990) states that all aspects of the structure of the experience may not appear in each participant’s description, however, the general description must fit for all participants, even though some participants may have omitted particular aspects of the phenomenon during data collection. The following is the synthesized General Structural Description.

1. **Adolescent’s Experience of Expressing Independence From Parent**

   1.a. **Adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view.** In general, you feel like doing and saying what you want now and it is important for you to express yourself either by actions or words in a way that will reflect your values and beliefs. You want your parent to know these values and beliefs and to understand the reasons why you think and feel the way you do.

   It is important for you to be more independent from your parent now and your opinions may be in opposition to those held by him or her. Sometimes you want to express yourself by disagreeing with your parent’s point of view or disapproving of his or
her actions. You also feel like arguing with your parent in order to get your point of view across.

Sometimes you feel like you don’t want to talk to your parent so you say very little or nothing at all to him or her. You also may withdraw from the conversation by leaving.

When you express your point of view and your parent is open-minded and respects your point of view, you feel that what you have to say is important. Although your parent may not agree with your point of view, you like it when he or she will listen, stay calm, and acknowledge what you are saying in a non-judgmental way. This makes you feel like your parent understands you. You like it when your parent is not rigid in his or her point of view and is flexible enough to be able to see your point of view. When you express your point of view and your parent is angry or critical you feel angry and frustrated and you feel that your parent doesn’t understand you.

When you express a similar point of view to your parent, you feel close to your parent (see Section 2).

1.b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent expressing his or her point of view.

When your parent expresses his or her opinion, sometimes you feel like agreeing with it and sometimes you feel like disagreeing with it based on your own values. When your parent expresses a point of view opposing to yours by disagreeing with you or disapproving of your actions, you feel like expressing yourself by stating your opinion or disagreeing with or disapproving of your parent. You usually feel like arguing with your parent in order to get him or her to understand your point of view. You may feel angry or frustrated with your parent for not being able to see your perspective or not being able to
understand you. You don’t like it when your parent opposes your point of view and you feel like explaining your perspective to your parent. You would rather that your parent agree with you or approve of you rather than disagree with you or disapprove of you.

When your parent expresses opposition to your point of view, sometimes it is because he or she is worried about your safety or well-being. Sometimes you can understand his or her concern, but often you feel frustrated with your parent and you believe that he or she is over-reacting.

When your parent expresses anger towards you, you don’t like it and it makes you upset. Then you feel like arguing with your parent or withdrawing from him or her. You like it when your parent expresses his or her point of view without criticizing or judging your point of view. Then you feel like your parent respects your point of view.

When your parent expresses agreement or approval of you, you feel close to your parent (see Section 2).

1.c. Adolescent’s experience of making a request to the parent. Sometimes you feel like requesting from your parent permission to do something you think you should be allowed to do or to get something you think you should have. When your parent disagrees with you and denies your request, you feel disappointed and frustrated, but you like it when your parent stays calm and explains his or her reasons for saying no. You may accept your parent’s decision, but usually you feel like putting pressure on your parent by arguing with him or her or trying to convince your parent to change his or her mind. Sometimes when you are trying to convince your parent to see your point of view, you need to be patient while you are waiting for your parent’s decision.
1.d. Adolescent's experience of the parent making a demand to the adolescent.

When your parent demands something from you or sets limits, sometimes you feel like accepting these limits and that you should do what your parent asks you to do, but often you feel the rules or demands are unreasonable or unfair and you feel like disagreeing and arguing with your parent to let him or her know your point of view.

2. Adolescent's Experience of Feeling Close and Connected to Parent

2.a. Adolescent's experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent. You like to feel close to your parent. You feel close to your parent when you are comfortable talking with your parent. Sometimes you feel like telling your parent something about yourself. You may want to tell him or her about your activities or your friends, or you may have a problem you are struggling with and you feel like telling your parent about your problem. Sometimes you may want to express an opinion to your parent, or you may want to request something from your parent. You also may be curious about something and may want to question your parent.

You feel open with your parent when it is easy and comfortable to tell your parent something, express yourself, request something, or ask about something. In other words, there is open communication. You like it when you can talk openly with your parent and it makes you feel close to your parent.

Sometimes it is awkward at first talking with your parent about a particular topic, but then afterwards you feel more comfortable talking with your parent and it seems that future conversations will be easier. In other words, the relationship becomes more open and you feel more likely to talk to your parent about your life, opinion, needs, or problems.
You feel it is important to be honest with your parent because you don’t like to go behind your parent’s back. Often, you feel relieved after telling your parent something about yourself because you feel your parent understands your situation a bit better and you feel you are not hiding something from your parent.

2. b. Adolescent’s experience of the parent supporting him or her. You like it and feel close to your parent when he or she supports you. You feel that your parent has many different ways of supporting you.

Because it is important for you to express yourself to your parent, it is also important for your parent to be open-minded and to listen to what you have to say. You feel closer to your parent and you feel understood by your parent when he or she lets you talk and gives you a chance to express your point of view. It is important for you that your parent acknowledges and respects your point of view and tries to understand things from your perspective. You like it when your parent lets you have your own point of view and does not criticize it or get angry. You feel like what you have to say is important and you feel respected by your parent. You feel like you want to talk with your parent then. In other words you feel like being honest and open with your parent. It feels good when your parent is flexible in his or her point of view and is sometimes able to change it and accept your point of view.

When your parent is closed-minded and does not allow you to express yourself, or does not respect your point of view and gets angry at you or critical of your perspective, you feel angry and frustrated. You don’t like it when your parent is rigid and can only see his or her perspective. You feel like your parent does not understand you then.
When your parent acts like this, you don’t feel like talking to him or her and your relationship becomes less open and less close.

It is also important for you that your parent allows you to make your own decisions and take responsibility for yourself in certain situations. You feel like your parent trusts you when he or she does this. You feel good when your parent trusts you to make good choices.

You also like it when your parent is interested in you or concerned about your well-being because it feels like he or she cares about you. Your parent shows interest by listening to what you say and by being curious about your life and asking you questions. You feel close to your parent and more likely to talk to him or her when he or she pays attention to you. You like it when you are alone together with your parent because your parent can give you his or her full attention. When your parent is interested in you and respects your point of view, you feel open and comfortable talking with your parent, and then you feel like you and your parent understand each other much better.

You don’t like it and you don’t feel like talking with your parent when your parent withdraws from you, either by not being interested in you or by being too busy with other things. It feels like your parent doesn’t care then.

When your parent approves of you, agrees with you, or encourages you, it makes you feel good about yourself and about your parent. Even if you have heard the good things about yourself before from your parent, it always feels good to hear it again from him or her. It feels good to you when your parent comforts you or reassures you. When your parent apologizes to you for something that he or she did, you feel better and closer to your parent.
When your parent gives you information or advice, at first you may feel annoyed or bored and you feel like you don’t want to hear it because the advice doesn’t apply to you or you’ve heard it all before. But later, you may feel like your parent’s information is useful and helpful to you. Then you can appreciate his or her ideas and you feel glad he or she cares enough about you to give you some advice. When your parent tells you stories from his or her childhood or when he or she was younger, you enjoy hearing these stories and it brings you closer to your parent because it reminds you that he or she was young once too. You also feel that your parent wants you to gain some of his or her experience and to learn from his or her mistakes.

When your parent offers to help you in some way, either now or in the future, you feel supported, safe, and secure knowing that you can count on your parent for help.

2.c. Adolescent’s experience of supporting the parent. When your parent is worried or upset about something, you don’t like to see him or her like this and you feel like doing something to support your parent or help him or her feel better. In other words, you feel upset when your parent is upset. You feel good and close to your parent when your parent appreciates your involvement and he or she feels better after your support.

You can support your parent in a number of different ways. If your parent is worried about your well-being, you can reassure your parent that his or her fears are groundless and that you will be fine. You can also support your parent by telling him or her about your activities and friends to help reduce his or her worries. Other ways of supporting your parent include expressing a similar opinion to your parent’s or agreeing with him or her or suggesting something to your parent that might be helpful.
2.d. Adolescent's experience of understanding the parent. You want to try to understand how your parent feels and thinks and this helps you to understand his or her behavior. Usually, you have some ideas about why he or she thinks, feels, or acts a certain way even if you are not told. Even though you feel frustrated or angry with your parent, you can often understand the reasoning behind his or her actions. You feel that when you and your parent talk together, you can understand each other better.
CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings of this research study in light of the research question, "What is the experience of parent-adolescent conversation from the adolescent’s perspective?" The findings of this study consist of the General Structural Description and the Core Themes.

In this study, there appeared to be two main categories of meaning or Core Themes found across all eleven protocols. The first involved the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent and the second involved the adolescent’s experience of feeling connected to the parent.

Generally in our society, it seems that we are familiar with the first category of meaning where the adolescent expresses independence from his or her parent. It is common to hear about adolescents wanting to separate from their parents and develop their own individual identity. It seems that we are not so familiar in our society with the second category of meaning found in this study where the adolescent feels close and connected to the parent. Closeness and connection is something we don’t always think about with adolescents in relation to their parents.

In a search of the entire PsycINFO database, when the search terms “parent” and “adolescent” and “connectedness” were entered, 41 references were retrieved. When the search terms “parent” and “adolescent” and “conflict” were entered, 684 references were retrieved. Similarly, the search term “parent-adolescent conflict” retrieved 137 references while “parent-adolescent connectedness” retrieved zero references. “Adolescent autonomy” retrieved 56 references and “adolescent connectedness” again retrieved zero references.
Adolescent's Experience of Expressing Independence

In this study, the primary Core Theme of the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from his or her parent was very common and was not surprising. The theme of the adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view was shown in this study by the adolescents expressing their opinions, disagreeing with, disapproving of, arguing with, or trying to convince their parents. This theme, along with the theme of the adolescent’s experience of making a request to the parent can be viewed as the adolescents’ striving for autonomy and independence during the task of identity formation as discussed in Chapter 1. Frequently in this study, the adolescent’s expressions of independence would be initiated after the parent had denied an adolescent’s request or when the adolescent felt that a parent’s demand was unreasonable or unfair.

The themes that emerged in this study of the adolescent’s experience of the parent expressing him or herself and the adolescent’s experience of the parent making a demand can be viewed as being related to the parenting construct of parental control as discussed in Chapter 1. In this study, the adolescents generally felt frustrated or angry when the parent demanded something that the adolescent felt was unreasonable or unfair. The adolescent then would usually argue with the parent or try to convince the parent to change his or her mind. As well, when parents expressed opposing points of view, the adolescents felt as if they wanted to express their points of view back to their parents. This illustrates the dynamics behind parental control. Parents are encouraged to set clear limits and to firmly enforce these limits. The findings from this study suggest that when parents do this, adolescents feel that they want to argue with the limits set or the points of
view expressed by the parents and they feel it is important to express themselves so that
they can be understood by their parents.

From this study, it was found that adolescents wanted to be understood by their
parents, or in other words it was very important to them that they explain their points of
view to their parents and be acknowledged. This often led to arguing between parent and
adolescent. In this study arguing was found to be very common. Arguing can be viewed
from either a positive or a negative perspective. Arguing can be seen as being negative if
there is hurtful criticism and anger involved. In this study this pattern of interaction was
seen when the adolescents told of their experiences of having conflicts with their parents.
But arguing can also be viewed as being positive if it is an expression of opinions by both
parent and adolescent with no character judgments, fighting, or verbal insults. This
pattern of respectful sharing of opposing points of view was also seen in this study and
was appreciated by the adolescents. This supports the view that conflicts can be adaptive
in that they allow expression of values by the adolescent (Kuczynski, Marshall & Schell,
1997).

When the adolescents expressed themselves, how their parents reacted was
important to the adolescents. If the parents reacted in an open-minded way and listened
and respected what their adolescents were saying, then the adolescents felt understood.
The adolescents liked it when their parents responded this way thus they felt closer to
their parents. Subsequent conversations between parent and adolescent would seem to be
more likely. When adolescents expressed themselves and parents reacted in a closed-
minded manner by being critical of the adolescents' points of view and rigid in their own
perspectives, the adolescents felt angry and frustrated. Subsequent conversations would
seem to be less likely in this case. Thus it would be important for parents to realize that part of the reason why adolescents argue when limits are set is that they may want to express their points of view in order to be understood. This points to the importance of parents being able to allow their adolescents to express themselves and of trying to understand the adolescents' perspectives. Further discussion on parental open-mindedness follows in the next section.

The pattern found in this study where adolescents and parents express opposing points of view is consistent with the literature on parent-adolescent conflict as discussed in Chapter 1. Conflicts between parents and adolescents increase during this developmental period and one of the overarching conflicts of adolescence involves different perspectives between parents and adolescents of how much control parents should have over their adolescents (Holmbeck et al., 1995; Noller & Callan, 1991). When an adolescent's goal is to gain power and control over a parent, a power struggle between parent and adolescent may develop (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997). This was illustrated a number of times in this study.

Although the adolescents in this study often expressed opposition towards their parents, they did not like it and felt frustrated or uncomfortable when their parents expressed opposition such as disapproval or disagreement towards them. These findings are consistent with the literature. Parents have inherent power over their children because of attachment bonds, therefore when parents are disapproving or displeased with their child, the child feels uncomfortable and wants the parent to stop being upset (Wolf, 2000). This is the principle behind the method of discipline recommended to parents known as assertive confrontation or giving "T" messages where parents describe their
feelings of disappointment or disapproval of the child’s behavior (Faber & Mazlish, 1980; Gordon, 2000; Wolf, 2000).

One interesting thing that emerged from this study was that from the adolescent’s perspective, when he or she expressed a need or want to the parent, it seemed to be in the form of requesting permission, whereas when the parent expressed a need or want to the adolescent it seemed to be in the form of a demand such as limit setting or stating a rule. This was not explicitly expressed by the adolescents, but does indicate the underlying power imbalance inherent in the parent-adolescent relationship. From the findings in this study, it seems that parents may need to be more sensitive in making requests to their adolescents. Because adolescents are sensitive to control issues with parents, perhaps a more requesting stance versus a demanding stance by parents would be more appropriate for management and control in adolescence. This is in line with Maccoby’s (1992) perspective when she says that although parent-child relationships are unique because of their asymmetry and that parents need to carry out managerial and control functions in family life, they should adapt themselves to the child’s developmental stage and current state.

Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Close and Connected

This study revealed many themes of the adolescent experiencing closeness and connection with his or her parent, which was surprising in light of the focus in our society on adolescent independence from parents. There were many instances in this study where the adolescents felt their parents did something that they liked or that was helpful to them in the context of having a conversation. In other words, the adolescents approved
of their parents when they acted in certain ways. In this study, the things that parents did in the context of having a conversation that their adolescents approved of were clustered under the theme of the adolescent’s experience of parental support. The various different ways in which the adolescents experienced their parents’ support were identified as the adolescent experiencing the parent doing the following: being open-minded, granting autonomy, being interested, listening, being concerned, being curious, expressing approval or agreement, comforting, apologizing, giving information, telling stories, and offering help. This is likely not an exhaustive list of all ways in which adolescents can experience support from parents.

In this study, no matter how the parental support was given, it appeared that this support was important for and appreciated by the adolescents. Parents are often encouraged to support their adolescents, but it is not always understood how much this support is noticed or appreciated by the adolescents. In this study, it seemed that adolescents did notice their parents’ efforts to support them and they did appreciate this support. It would have been interesting to know if the parents were aware of their adolescent children’s approval of their support. Coming from the researcher’s experience as a parent, it seems likely that the parents were probably not fully aware of this approval from their children. It may be that adolescents, just like adults, are reluctant to express compliments or approval and are more willing to express opposing points of view.

Themes of parental support that seemed particularly important for the adolescents in this study were the adolescent’s experience of parental open-mindedness and the adolescent’s experience of parental autonomy-granting. These themes can be viewed as being related to the parenting construct of parental encouragement of independence as
discussed in Chapter 1. In this study, parental open-mindedness meant respect of the adolescent’s point of view. It did not necessarily mean agreement or approval of the adolescent’s point of view, but it meant that the adolescents were able to hold a particular point of view without expression of anger or criticism by the parent. The adolescents spoke frequently of how they wanted their parents to listen openly to what they said. When parents were open-minded, the adolescents felt that the parents were trying to understand them. When parents were closed-minded, or in other words were rigid and inflexible in their points of view and were not able to see things from the adolescents’ perspective, then the adolescents felt frustrated. By being closed-minded, parents did not allow their adolescents a chance to talk or did not listen to them when they did talk. Parents who were open-minded communicated acceptance of their adolescents. The importance of parental acceptance has been well documented in the literature and parents are encouraged to treat each child as an individual and to accept and respect each child’s unique differences (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Turecki, 1994).

Parental open-mindedness can be viewed as being related to parental autonomy-granting. When parents are open-minded they allow their adolescents to hold their own points of view or to have their own feelings. When parents grant autonomy, they allow their adolescents to make their own choices and decisions. By being open-minded and granting autonomy, parents allow their adolescents to take responsibility for themselves. The adolescent feels that the parent trusts him or her, thus making the adolescent feel closer to the parent. In a way, it seems paradoxical that by parents granting autonomy to their adolescents, the adolescents feel closer to the parents.
The themes of parental open-mindedness and autonomy-granting seemed important to the adolescents, likely because these themes allowed the adolescents to express themselves and develop independence and their own identities. As discussed in Chapter 1, development of identity is important in adolescence and is one of the tasks that needs to be completed before a person can truly form an intimate relationship with another person (Erikson, 1963).

In this study, the adolescents did not like it when their parents expressed anger towards them. This seemed to either cause the adolescents to want to argue or fight back with their parents or to withdraw from interaction with their parents. In other words, the adolescents had a “fight or flight” reaction to parental anger. This is consistent with Chamberlain and Patterson’s (1995) discussion of inadequate parent discipline where these authors talk about irritable-explosive discipline. In this situation, yelling and humiliating statements by the parent often result in a counterattack by the child. Frequent use of parental coercion, usually including parental expressions of anger, leads to mutually coercive cycles between parent and adolescent, which does not allow children to gain experience in sustained joint activities (Maccoby, 1992). Thus it is important for parents to realize that expressions of anger and hostility are not accepted by adolescents and are not conducive to good parenting. One way that parents can reduce their use of anger is through parent training. Patterson (1997) states that an important part of parent training is learning to control negative parental emotions.

The themes of the adolescent’s experience of the parent being interested, concerned, and curious and of the parent listening were very important to the adolescents in this study. These themes can be seen as similar to the parenting construct of parental
warmth, and in particular parental responsiveness, as discussed in Chapter 1. For the adolescents in this study, parental interest was often equated with their parents' ability to listen to them with full attention. Adolescents seemed particularly appreciative of parental listening and parental interest and expressed anger and frustration when parents did not give them a chance to talk or when parents were not interested in what they were saying.

Parental interest or attention has been described in the literature as being very important for children's and adolescents' well-being. For example, the theme of the adolescent's experience of parental interest that emerged in this study can be compared to Direct Interaction Time as described by Brazelton and Greenspan (2000), which is time when the parent interacts directly with the child for periods of time ideally up to twenty minutes in length. These authors describe this time as very important not only for children, but also for adolescents. Although Direct Interaction Time can become more difficult in adolescence, conversations and discussions, where the adolescent takes the lead in the interaction, are considered by these authors as excellent ways to promote warmth and closeness between parent and adolescent. These authors describe Direct Interaction Time as a way of providing a child or adolescent with ongoing nurturing relationships, which they describe as one of the irreducible needs of children. Gordon (2000) recommends that parents use active listening, and when they do this they communicate the following to the child or adolescent: "you have the right to express how you feel", "I respect you as a person with ideas and feelings", "I am interested in you", and "your ideas are worthy of being listened to".
In this study, adolescents did not like it when their parents withdrew from interacting with them, or in other words did not show interest in them. This parenting pattern can be compared to the indifferent-uninvolved parenting style as discussed in Chapter 1. This is a style of parenting that is less than optimal (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). The indifferent-uninvolved parent is often involved in activities other than parenting and has little time or attention to spare for the child. There has been evidence that some parents are more fully committed to their parenting role than others, and that the degree of commitment may be more important than the manner with which the commitment is expressed (Maccoby, 1992). Commitment may be seen as a deep and lasting obligation to behave so as to promote the best interests of the child, even when this means setting aside certain parental self-interests (Maccoby, 1992). The findings in this study show that parental attention and interest is very much noticed and appreciated by adolescents.

In this study, the theme of the adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent appeared to arise out of certain themes of the adolescent’s experience of the parent supporting him or her. Parental support, in the form of open-mindedness, autonomy-granting, and interest, led to adolescent approval, which in turn led to the adolescent feeling comfortable talking with the parent and feeling close to the parent and understood by the parent. It seemed that by the adolescent experiencing parental support, the parent-adolescent relationship was strengthened and consequently the adolescent felt more comfortable talking with the parent. These findings support the parenting literature, which encourages parents to actively listen to children and
adolescents and to respond empathically and with respect (Dinkmeyer et al., 1997; Faber & Mazlish, 1980; Gordon, 2000).

One thing that emerged from this study that ties in to the theme of the adolescent experiencing feeling comfortable talking with the parent was that conversations between parents and adolescents on a particular topic or within a certain subject area appeared to become easier and more comfortable for the adolescent after an initial conversation, which may have been experienced as being difficult or awkward for the adolescent. In other words, talking about a particular topic may have been difficult at first for the adolescent, but the outcome was that the adolescent felt that future conversations would be easier. Willingness to talk about various things, on the part of both adolescent and parent, seemed to result in more open communication and an increase in the comfort level of adolescents engaging in conversations with their parent.

Themes of parental support that also seemed important were the adolescent’s experience of the parent approving of, agreeing with, comforting, and apologizing to him or her. These themes can be viewed as being related to the parenting construct of parental reinforcement as discussed in Chapter 1. Parental approval in the form of praise has been a somewhat controversial issue in the parenting literature. Parents are often instructed to be cautious with their praise and to distinguish between evaluative praise and descriptive praise or encouragement (Dinkmeyer, et al., 1997; Faber & Mazlish, 1980). Evaluative praise is usually the initial natural reaction of a parent to a child who has done something that has pleased the parent. For example phrases such as “that’s great,” “terrific,” and “you did a good job” are examples of evaluative praise. Instead of evaluative praise, parents are often encouraged to use descriptive praise, which would
include phrases such as “it looks like you worked hard on that,” “that was thoughtful of you,” “I notice you put extra effort into that,” and “I’m impressed, you figured out how to fix it.” In this study, the adolescents seemed to appreciate evaluative praise when it was given to them and it seemed to help them feel closer to their parents. Even though parents are usually cautioned against using too much evaluative praise, it is important that parents not become too discouraged from praising their adolescents in this enthusiastic and natural way. The danger of discouraging parents against using evaluative praise is that parents may become afraid to express themselves to their adolescents using any form of praise or approval. It seems unwise to limit something that parents can do to help their adolescents feel closer to them.

The themes of the adolescent experiencing the parent giving information, telling stories, and offering help can be considered as being related to the parenting construct of parental information provision as discussed in Chapter 1. In this study, the adolescents generally seemed to appreciate brief suggestions or ideas of what they could do from their parents and liked it when their parents let them make their own choices. However, when the parents became more directive and gave advice, then the adolescents felt frustrated and irritated and perceived the advice-giving as being controlling and intrusive. The result was that the adolescents resisted this kind of parental information giving. One explanation of this dynamic is given by Tannen (2001). On one hand, parents feel the need to protect their adolescents and teach them what they need to know to function in society, but on the other hand, adolescents are at an age when they are least open to instruction. Thus when parents provide information or assistance in the context of being
caring, adolescents often interpret this as parental control or criticism, which then results in parent-adolescent conflict.

The themes that emerged in this study on the adolescent’s experience of the parent giving information support the literature on parental advice giving. Faber and Mazlish (1980) state that when parents try to help a child by giving immediate advice, the child’s reaction is often to feel resentful or irritated. Faber and Mazlish propose that a better way to help a child is to listen first, then offer a few brief suggestions that show respect for the child’s autonomy. Although it is important for parents to realize that directive styles of advice-giving are not well-accepted by adolescents, there may be a danger of cautioning parents too much against giving advice to their adolescents. Some parents may take this principle too far and fail to give much needed guidance to their adolescents. Gordon (2000) offers a good model for teaching and helping and suggests that parents can act as consultants to their adolescents.

In a study on the effectiveness of seeking help for coping with personal problems, Rickwood (1995) found, surprisingly, that the help-seeking behavior of adolescents did not appear to effectively alleviate their psychological distress. This researcher postulated that seeking help by talking about one’s problems in a way that focuses on feelings and self may not be an adaptive form of coping for adolescents. The authors suggest that adolescents need coping strategies that act to reduce their level of arousal, possibly through directing their focus away from themselves and their problems. Thus parents could help adolescents develop adaptive coping strategies.

A theme that emerged in this study that revealed closeness between adolescent and parent was the adolescent’s experience of wanting to support his or her parent.
Again this seemed surprising since adolescents are often thought of as being concerned primarily with themselves (Kaplan, 1998). This study did show that the adolescents felt that it was important to support their parents when they were feeling upset, and to strive to help them feel better. Supporting the parent was generally carried out by the adolescent talking or listening to the parent and by the adolescent reassuring the parent or relieving him or her of worries. It seemed that the adolescents didn't like to see their parents upset or worried and seeing these emotions in their parents made the adolescents themselves feel uncomfortable. This is consistent with some reports in the literature. Adult conflict has been found to result in children's prosocial behavior such as comforting or helping behaviors towards a parent, which may be a coping mechanism for the child to reduce distress (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Often, the adolescents believed that the feeling behind their parents' disagreement or disapproval was worry or concern for his or her well-being. Parental worry led to parental opposition, which then led to the adolescent wanting to convince the parent that he or she was in no danger. This often took the form of the adolescent reassuring the parent that he or she would be fine and by the adolescent providing the parent with more information in order to reduce the parent's concern. Although the adolescents often felt that the parents were over-reacting or catastrophizing, they did try to understand the parent's perspective and try to support the parent.

An interesting theme that emerged in this study was the adolescent's experience of understanding their parents' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, or in other words of being able to take their parent's perspective. This can be viewed as being connected to the cognitive developmental changes in adolescence. Adolescents are capable of
perceiving the world as other people do (Kaplan, 1998). Adolescents’ thinking about parent-adolescent relationships changes with improved abilities for understanding social reciprocity and multiple perspectives (Holmbeck et al., 1995).

The adolescents’ understandings of their parents were elicited through certain questions posed to them in the interview. These questions were asking for the adolescents’ interpretations of their parents’ thoughts and feelings, for example, “How do you think he/she was feeling? What do you think he/she was thinking? What do you think was your parent’s goal or purpose for having the conversation?” Frequently, however, the adolescents came up spontaneously with insights about their parents and did not require prompting.

The adolescents in this study were consistently able to take their parents’ perspectives and were able to explain and understand their parents’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. All of the adolescents in this study made insightful comments about their parents’ thoughts and feelings and were able to provide explanations as to why they thought their parents acted the way they did. This is important in the socialization of adolescents because it is not what parents think, but what adolescents think their parents think that is critical. The opinions adolescents attribute to their parents are strong predictors of the adolescents’ own attitudes (Noller & Callan, 1991).

It would have been interesting to know if the parents were aware of their adolescents’ understandings and how the parents would have commented on the adolescents’ insights. The researcher believes that most of the adolescents’ insights were probably not expressed to the parent.
Themes of Independence and Connectedness

The finding in this study that there are two main Core Themes is related to the literature. Expressions of both individuality and connectedness appear to be critical for adaptive adolescent development (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). In other words, independence and remaining connected can be viewed as being complementary rather than opposite processes.

Grotevant and Cooper (1985), in the context of studying identity exploration in adolescents, developed a model of individuation in family relationships that focused on communication processes. In this model, individuation, or identity formation, is comprised of two components: individuality and connectedness. Individuality is reflected by two dimensions: separateness and self-assertion. Connectedness is also reflected by two dimensions: mutuality and permeability.

In family relationships, individuality is regarded as a healthy quality because it allows family members to have opinions that may differ from those of others. Separateness can be seen in the expressions by family members of the distinctiveness of self from others. For example, requests, demands, expressions of disagreement, disapproval, or opposing points of view can be regarded as falling into the dimension of separateness. Self-assertion can be seen in the awareness and clear expression of one’s own point of view. For example, expressions of thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes, needs, and wants can be seen as falling into the dimension of self-assertion.

Connectedness is also regarded as a healthy quality in family relationships. Mutuality can be seen in an individual’s sensitivity to and respect for the views of others. For example, empathic responses, compromising, supportive suggestions, and providing
information to questions all fall under the dimension of mutuality. Permeability can be seen as the openness and responsiveness to the views of others. For example, acknowledgment, agreement, interest, and compliance can be regarded as falling into the dimension of permeability.

The findings from this study seem to complement Grotevant and Cooper’s (1985) model. The primary Core Theme found in this study of the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent can be viewed as being related to the individuality component of the model. In this study, within the primary Core Theme of the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence, themes of the adolescent’s experience of expressing his or her point of view, the adolescent’s experience of the parent expressing his or her point of view, the adolescent’s experience of making a request to the parent, and the adolescent’s experience of the parent making a demand emerged. These themes that emerged in this study can be seen as being very close to the dimensions of separateness (requests, demands, expressions of disagreement, disapproval, or opposing points of view) and self-assertion (expressions of thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes, needs, and wants) that were outlined in the model.

Looking at the other primary Core Theme that emerged in this study of the adolescent’s experience of feeling close to the parent, this theme can be viewed as being related to the connectedness component of the model. Within the primary Core Theme of the adolescent’s experience of feeling close to the parent, themes of the adolescent’s experience of feeling comfortable talking with the parent, the adolescent’s experience of the parent supporting him or her, the adolescent’s experience of supporting the parent, and the adolescent’s experience of understanding the parent emerged. These themes that
emerged in this study can be viewed as being close to the dimensions of mutuality (empathic responses, compromising, supportive suggestions, and providing information to questions) and permeability (acknowledgment, agreement, interest, and compliance).

Grotevant and Cooper (1985) noted that adolescents who had a greater identity development had parents who seemed to allow individuality in the adolescents and showed less individuality themselves, for example by disagreeing or expressing themselves infrequently in order to discourage conflict and encourage the adolescent’s self expression. These authors also noted that in adolescents with high identity development, connectedness seemed to be expressed primarily from parent to adolescent.

In this study, the adolescents appeared in many cases to prefer to express their own opinions and have their parents listen to them open-mindedly, rather than have their parents express their own opinions. It seemed that the adolescents did not like it when the parents disagreed with them. This is consistent with Grotevant and Cooper’s (1985) remarks about parents who disagreed or expressed opinions infrequently in order to encourage the adolescent’s self expression. However, in some cases, the adolescents in this study were curious about their parents’ points of view and would question their parents and be interested when the parents expressed an opinion. In other cases, the adolescents were found to be supportive when the parents expressed a particular point of view.

In this study, the adolescents received support from their parents and also gave support to their parents. This is different that what Grotevant and Cooper (1985) found in their study when they expressed that the connectedness component was expressed mainly
from parent to adolescent. It is likely however that by being supportive themselves, parents elicit supportiveness towards themselves from their adolescents.

**Summary**

In this study, the following were perceived as positive experiences by the adolescents within the context of parent-adolescent conversation:

- Parents being open-minded and respectful of adolescents' points of view.
- Parents allowing adolescents to express themselves and listening to what the adolescents say.
- Parents being interested in the adolescents without being controlling or intrusive.
- Parents being empathic in the sense that they try to understand the adolescents' perspectives.
- Parents approving of their adolescents, praising their adolescents, or encouraging their adolescents.
- Parents offering suggestions, information, help, or ideas to adolescents and allowing the adolescents to make their own choices.
- Parents telling adolescents stories from their younger days.

In this study, the following were perceived by the adolescents as negative experiences within the context of parent-adolescent conversation:

- Parents being rigid in their perspectives and not being able to acknowledge the adolescents' perspectives.
- Parents not giving their adolescents a chance to express themselves or not listening to what the adolescents say.
• Parents not giving attention to or not being interested in their adolescents.

• Parents disapproving of or criticizing their adolescents.

• Parents expressing anger or hostility towards their adolescents.

• Parents making demands that seem unreasonable or unfair to the adolescent.

The following figures show diagrammatic representations of the themes that emerged in this study and their relationships to each other. Figure 1 illustrates the adolescent’s experience of expressing independence from the parent. When parents expressed opposing points of view, disagreed, disapproved, or demanded something, the adolescents generally felt as if they wanted to express their points of view, disagree with, disapprove of, argue with, convince, or request something back to their parents. It seemed that the adolescents’ main concern was to be understood by their parents because of their striving for autonomy and independence. These opposing points of view between parents and adolescents often led to either positive or negative interactions between parent and adolescent. The interactions were negative when parents reacted in a closed-minded manner or there was hurtful criticism and anger on the part of the parent. This often resulted in fights and led to the adolescent feeling angry, frustrated, and wanting to withdraw from interaction. On the other hand, the interactions between parent and adolescent were positive when the parent reacted in an open-minded manner and listened and acknowledged what the adolescent said. This led to a respectful sharing of views between parent and adolescent. The adolescents generally felt accepted and understood and more inclined to engage in future conversations with their parents. Therefore, how the parent reacted when the adolescent expressed him or her self seemed to be important.
Adolescent’s Experience of Parent Expressing Point of View
Adolescent’s Experience of Parent Disagreeing
Adolescent’s Experience of Parent Disapproving
Adolescent’s Experience of Parent Making a Demand

↑↓

Adolescent’s Experience of Expressing Point of View
Adolescent’s Experience of Disagreeing
Adolescent’s Experience of Disapproving
Adolescent’s Experience of Arguing
Adolescent’s Experience of Convincing
Adolescent’s Experience of Making a Request

↓

Adolescent’s striving for autonomy/identity
Adolescent feels need to express self when parent expresses opposing view
Adolescent wants to be understood and acknowledged by parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Interactions</th>
<th>Positive Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent closed-minded</td>
<td>Parent open-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent angry</td>
<td>Parent attentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent hurtful</td>
<td>Parent listens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent critical</td>
<td>Parent acknowledges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respectful sharing of opposing views</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents felt angry</td>
<td>Adolescents felt accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents felt frustrated</td>
<td>Adolescents felt understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent conversations less likely</td>
<td>Subsequent conversations more likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of Adolescent’s Experience of Expressing Independence from Parent
Figure 2 illustrates diagrammatically the adolescent’s experience of feeling close and connected to the parent. Parental support, especially parents being open-minded and respectful, being able to listen, and being interested in what the adolescent said, seemed to be very important to the adolescents. When adolescents were supported in this way, they felt understood and accepted. This resulted in the adolescents feeling comfortable and open talking with their parents, which then resulted in the adolescents feeling close and connected to their parents. Closeness with parents can be seen as being likely to increase the chances of the adolescents understanding their parents and thus wanting to support their parents. In the end, there would be a circular effect with both adolescent and parent being supported by each other.
Parental Support

↓

Adolescent’s Experience of Parent:
- Being Open-Minded and Respectful
- Granting Autonomy
- Being Interested
- Listening
- Being Concerned
- Being Curious
- Approving
- Comforting
- Apologizing
- Giving Information
- Telling Stories
- Offering Help

↓

Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Comfortable Talking With Parent
Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Open With Parent
Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Close and Connected to Parent

↓

Adolescent’s Experience of Understanding Parent
Adolescent’s Experience of Supporting Parent

Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation of Adolescent’s Experience of Feeling Close and Connected to Parent
Implications of the Study

This study examined the adolescent's perception of having a conversation with his or her parent. By getting a better understanding of the adolescent's experience in this situation, a better understanding of the adolescent is obtained. Van Manen (1990) states that phenomenology helps people become increasingly thoughtful and better able to act tactfully in situations. Thus, when adolescents describe the essential structure of having a conversation with a parent, the parent can understand better what it is like for the adolescent and thus can provide adolescents with a more positive experience when interacting in conversation.

How can parents develop a stronger relationship with their adolescents through conversations? This study has shown that certain approaches to parenting that can be applied within the context of parent-adolescent conversation are liked and appreciated by adolescents, thus promoting closeness and connection to the parent or in other words resulting in a strengthening of the parent-adolescent relationship. These approaches can be viewed as being similar to parenting constructs of parental warmth, parental responsiveness, parental reinforcement, parental encouragement of independence, and parental assistance. As discussed in Chapter 1, these constructs have been found to be important in adolescent development. Parents can be encouraged to increase the use of these approaches knowing that adolescents appreciate them and that they are consistent with the literature on parenting.

Parents can show warmth through expressions of positive affect such as love, affection, happiness, and satisfaction by verbal and non-verbal means. Parents can be responsive by giving attention or in other words by showing interest, listening, being
curious, and showing concern. This means that parents need to be committed to their role as parents and to be available to be responsive. Parents can provide reinforcement by giving praise and offering encouragement. Parents can encourage independence by being accepting and open-minded. This means being able to listen and being respectful and acknowledging of their adolescents' feelings and thoughts. It also means being empathic or in other words being able to understand the perspectives of their adolescents. Parents can also encourage independence by granting autonomy and allowing their adolescents to make choices and decisions. Parents can provide assistance to their adolescents by teaching them, giving them information, offering to help them, and passing on the parents' own values.

The findings from this study revealed that parental control, such as setting limits, making demands, and expressions of disapproval and disagreement, were generally not appreciated in the same way by the adolescents as the other parenting constructs mentioned above. This is consistent with the literature discussed in Chapter 1 that finds adolescents react negatively to parental control. However, the literature also reveals that parental control is an important construct for adolescent development, therefore it is important for parents to find methods of control that minimize resistance and anger from their adolescents. Although parental control is necessary, parental control applied inappropriately can result in the weakening of the parent-adolescent relationship. Parents can use natural and logical consequences, assertive confrontations, and inductive methods of discipline to reduce levels of anger and frustration in adolescents when parental control is necessary.
Other areas in which parents can improve their relationship with their adolescents, but will not be discussed in detail in this study because these areas have a less direct effect on parent-adolescent conversation, include parental flexibility, parental role-modeling, parental well-being, and parental knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 1, parental flexibility and role-modeling are important constructs for adolescent development. Parental well-being can be viewed as the mental health of the parents and the quality of the marital relationship, which have an enormous impact on adolescent development. It is important for parents to ensure their well-being by developing sound approaches to their individual mental health and within their marital relationships. Finally, parent training can assist parents in their knowledge of parenting and thus provide parents with effective parenting strategies to improve the parent-adolescent relationship.

Looking at the field of counselling psychology, the information from this study would be important for counsellors when working with families around issues of parent-adolescent conflict. A better understanding of parent-adolescent conversation would be important for developing a positive parent-adolescent relationship. In addition, what is important in parent-adolescent conversation may also be important in counsellor-adolescent conversation and subsequently the development of a good relationship between adolescent and counsellor:

**Future Research**

Future research could focus on the parent’s perspective of the experience of parent-adolescent conversation. It would be interesting to see if parents are able to take
the perspective of adolescents as well as adolescents were able to take the perspective of parents in this study. It would also be interesting to see if parents feel appreciated, supported, and approved of by their adolescents, since these themes were revealed in this study.

**Limitations of the Study**

One limitation to this study is that it did not consider gender. There are four possible dyad gender structures: mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son. Differences in parent-adolescent communication patterns according to gender have been noted in the literature (Henricson & Roker, 2000; Noller & Callan, 1991; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996). Another limitation was that the age of the adolescent was limited to 14-15 year olds. Younger or older adolescents were not included. Ethnicity was also not considered as a separate variable. Environmental variables that could affect the parent-adolescent relationship and that were not taken into consideration included family and individual stressors such as marital conflict of the parents or mental health issues of the participants. This was partially controlled for by requiring participants not to be undertaking psychological or psychiatric treatment concurrently. However, as discussed previously, for a phenomenological study it is advantageous to obtain a heterogenous sample since commonalities or universals of an experience can be uncovered across a diverse sample.
Personal Reflections

I found that what the adolescents said in this study had an impact on my parenting with my own adolescent children, especially with my daughter, who reached the same age as the adolescents I had interviewed during the time I was analyzing the data for this study. Many times I would recall something that one of the adolescent participants had said and I would connect that with what my daughter or sons were doing or saying.

I felt that the adolescent participants’ own words seemed to help me to understand the perspective of adolescents better and was more meaningful to me than words about adolescents coming indirectly through an adult, for example from a parenting book. As a parent, I felt that the adolescent participants’ words had a very powerful effect on me.

Conclusion

This research provided information on parent-adolescent relationships, specifically on parent-adolescent conversations. This study shed light on the perspectives of the adolescents, and provided information on how adolescents experience conversation with their parent. In other words, we can understand a little better now what it is like for adolescents when they interact with their parent in conversation. Information from this study could be used to improve parent-adolescent relationships. It could help parents to better understand and react to their adolescent, thus resulting in smoother and more meaningful interactions between parent and adolescent. Kuczynski and Grusec (1997) state that management of the parent-adolescent relationship can be viewed as a possible area of intervention. They believe that the experiences that take place in the context of the parent-adolescent relationship impact both parents and adolescents such that parental
strategies may be important not so much for their direct effects as for their role in maintaining a positive relationship, which then mediates the effects of other parental strategies.

Van Manen (1990) states that with phenomenological research, there is no conclusion or summary and that a full or final description is unattainable. He states that a description is only one interpretation with the possibility of other, complementary descriptions. This study then is one interpretation of the adolescent's perspective of having a conversation with a parent.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF CONSENT FORMS
Parental Consent Form

The Experience of Parent-Adolescent Conversation From the Adolescent's Perspective

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Richard Young, Professor
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and
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(604) 822-6380

Co-Investigator:
Kathy Eugster, MA Candidate
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and
Special Education
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-6380

This research will be undertaken to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the parent-adolescent relationship by studying adolescents' experiences of having a conversation with their parents. The goal of the study would be to find out what might be helpful or not helpful in building a strong parent-adolescent relationship.

Study Procedures:
Your son or daughter will be expected to attend one interview lasting approximately 45 - 60 minutes. In this interview, the co-investigator will interview your son or daughter regarding his or her experience of having a conversation with a parent. The interviews will be audio-taped and will take place at the New Westminster Counselling Centre, which is located at New Westminster Secondary School. After the data is analysed, adolescents will be contacted by telephone, presented with the results (a general description of having a conversation with a parent), and asked for their comments and feedback on what was found.
Consent:
I understand that my son's or daughter's participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that he or she may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to class standing.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent/I do not consent (circle one) to my child's participation in this study.

________________________________________
Name of Child (Please Print)

______________________________  __________
Parent Signature                        Date

________________________________________
Signature of a Witness                     Date

Version 02/05/09
The Experience of Parent-Adolescent Conversation From the Adolescent’s Perspective

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Consent:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to my class standing.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Subject Signature               Date

Signature of a Witness            Date

Version 02/03/14
APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF TELEPHONE PRE-INTERVIEW FORM

Pre-Interview

Hello. Could I speak to ________?

Hi, _________. This is Kathy calling from UBC. Your counsellor Mr. Langston phoned me to let me know that you would be interested in participating in my research project about parents and adolescents having conversations together.

Thank you very much for offering to participate. Did your counsellor tell you a bit about the project?

I’m a student at UBC doing a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology. This research project is for my thesis. What I’m doing is looking at what it’s like for teenagers to talk with their parents. From this, hopefully I can find out what’s good and what’s not so good when a teenager talks to a parent. In the end, I’m hoping to provide more information on helping parents and adolescents develop better relationships.

To start with I just need to ask you a couple of questions to see if you would fit in to the study? Is that OK?

First of all, because I would like to talk to adolescents who are not currently experiencing serious problems, I need to ask you if you are seeing or needing to see a counsellor, a psychologist, or a psychiatrist right now?

If the answer is yes to this question:
- get more information about the adolescent’s problem
- if minor or if condition under control, then admit to the study
- if major and out of control, then say, “What I would like to do at this point is take your name off the list. I am doing this study with adolescents who are not currently having serious problems, so I’m not sure if I would be able to use your information in this study. Is that OK with you? Do you have any questions? Thank you for volunteering in any case.

Secondly, because I would like to talk to adolescents who are living with their own parents, I need to ask you if you are living with foster parents or adoptive parents at all?

If answer to this question is yes:
- get more information about adoptive or foster parents
- get more information about biological parents
- say, “What I would like to do at this point is to take your name off the list. I am doing this study with adolescents who are living with their biological parents, so I’m not sure if I would be able to use your
information in this study. Is that OK with you? Do you have any questions? Thank you for volunteering in any case.

OK. It sounds like you would fit in to my study. What I would like from you is if you could come in to talk to me one day for about 45 min to 1 hour and describe to me in detail two or three important conversations you have had with your parent within the last year. I'll help you by asking you some questions, if you get stuck about what to say. Is that kind of what you were expecting?

I'll be interviewing about 9 other students from your school and getting them to describe their experiences with their parents. The interviews will be tape-recorded. After I have done all the interviewing, I will see if there are any similarities in the experiences described to me and I will write a general description that would fit for any adolescent about what it is like to have a conversation with a parent. I'll phone you at this point and read you the general description I have written combining all the interviews I had with the students and I will ask for your comments on this description. How does that sound to you?

Hopefully we can learn some things from this general description about what is helpful and what is not helpful when parents and adolescents talk with each other. Your descriptions of your experiences would be an important part of the research. You would be helping other teenagers. You would also get $10.00 for participating in this project. Does that sound OK to you?

I would like to set up a time for our interview. Do you know where they will be held? It is not at your school counsellor's office, it is at the New Westminster Counselling Centre, which is underneath your school gym and just across from the ice rink.

What would be a good time for you? Do you want to come in at lunch or after school, or can you afford to miss one period of a class that's not too important for you?

I can get a reminder notice sent to you from the Counselling Centre. Would you like that?

Over the next week and before our meeting, I would like you to try to remember two or three important conversations you have had with either your mom or dad alone, but not both of them together, over the past year. Also, be aware of the conversations you have with your parent this coming week. These conversations with your parent are what we will be talking about in the interview. Do you have any questions?

OK, so I will see you on ____________________________.

I'm going to give you my phone number in case you need to change the appointment.

Thanks again.
Interview Guide

**Introduction and Informed Consent:**

Hi __________. I'm Kathy. Welcome and thanks for coming. Would you like something to drink? I've got pop, juice, coffee, tea, or hot chocolate.

Let's go into our room.

Have a seat here and make yourself comfortable. Help yourself to some cookies and popcorn.

I have tape recorders here to tape our conversation so that I will be able to listen to what we talked about later. I have two of them just in case one of them fails. Let me turn them on now.

To start with, I would like to go over the purpose of the project and some other items and then get you to sign a form if you feel it is ok. This is similar to the form that your parent signed and that you returned to your counsellor.

As we talked about over the phone, this project is for my thesis for a Master's degree at UBC in counselling psychology. I am interested in adolescents and their relationships with their parents. I will be asking you to describe your experience of having a conversation with your parent. I will also be interviewing 10 other students from your grade to get their descriptions as well. I will be looking at all the descriptions and coming up with one general description that will describe the experience of having a conversation with a parent that could apply to all teenagers your age. From this, I hope to determine what is helpful and not helpful in conversations between adolescents and parents. My final goal is to help parents and adolescents have better conversations and to improve their relationships. I would also like to phone you in 2 – 3 months to get your comments on the description I have written. Is that OK?

The details about what we talk about here are confidential. That means I won’t tell other people like your school counsellor or your teachers about what we talked about and I won’t use your name to identify you when I write up my report. But if you do tell me about wanting to hurt yourself or other people, then there is a rule that I will have to tell your parents and the school counsellor. Is that OK with you?

Please sign your name here and I will give you a copy to keep.
Demographic Component

As part of the research, I would like to ask you a few general questions to start with so that I have a record of who I talked to.

Could you tell me your date of birth? So that makes you _____ years old?

Where were you born?


Where was your dad born?

Where was your mom born?

What's your dad's job?

What's your mom's job?
Data Gathering Component

Introducing Question:

Think of an example of an important conversation you have had with one of your parents within the past year and describe it to me in as much detail as possible.

Can you think of another example of an important conversation you have had with either your mom or dad within the past year and describe it to me in as much detail as possible.

Prompting Questions:

Sometimes there are certain topics that parents and teenagers talk about, for example like friends, going out places, money, or curfews. Can you describe a conversation you have had about any of those topics?

Do you have any conversations about school, education, or career because sometimes teenagers and parents have these conversations?

Can you tell me about any smaller conversations or day-to-day conversations that may not be very important ones?

Sometimes teenagers have conflicts or arguments with their parents. Could you tell me about any conflicts or arguments you have had with your mom or dad?

Could you tell me about a conversation you have had with your mom or dad that was really good, that was helpful, or that really strengthened the relationship between the two of you?

What things do you and your mom or dad usually talk about?

Follow-up Questions:

How did the conversation start?
Who started the conversation?
What was happening before the conversation?

How did you feel?
Describe how you felt.
What was it that made you feel _______?

What was that like for you?
What did you experience?
What did that mean to your?
What were you thinking?
What thoughts were going through your mind?

Can you tell me about _______
Can you give me an example of ________?

Can you give me an example of how you responded?
What did you say?
What did you tell him/her?

What did you do?

What did he/she say?
How did he/she respond?
What questions did he/she ask?
What did he/she do?

What did you feel/think/do when he/she did/said that?
What did he/she say/do when you did/said that?
What happened?
Who said what?
What did you notice?
How did that influence the conversation?
Do you remember some of the things that were going on during this conversation?

Could you tell me a bit more?
Can you say a little more about that?
Could you give me an example.
Could you describe ________?
What do you mean by/when/that ....?
I'm not clear about ____?

Where did the conversation take place?
Where were you?

How did the conversation finish off?
What happened after the conversation?

Did the conversation strengthen the relationship, weaken the relationship, or do nothing to the relationship between the two of you?
What happened to strengthen or weaken it?
What was the effect of that conversation on your relationship with your mom/dad?

What was helpful about this conversation?
What was not helpful about this conversation?
What made this an important conversation for you?
What one thing stands out for you about this conversation?
Did you feel understood?

What was your goal or purpose for having the conversation?
What did you want to get out of having that conversation?

How do you think he/she was feeling?
What do you think he/she was thinking?
What do you think was your parent's goal or purpose for having the conversation?

Empathic Responses:

It sounds like ______.
So you felt ______ because ______.
From what you're telling me, ________.
What you're saying is ________.
You mean ________.

Is that right?
Do I have that right?
Is that your experience?
Am I understanding you correctly?

Ending of Discussion on a Particular Conversation:

We've talked about this particular conversation quite a bit. Have you shared with me all that is significant about this conversation or is there anything else you would like to add?

Final Question:

Is this kind of what you expected coming here today?
Is there anything that you wanted to tell me that I haven't asked you about?
Is there anything else you would like to add or to tell me?
Debriefing:

We’re finished the interview now. What was that like for you talking to me today?

Did talking about this bring up any upsetting or unhappy feelings? How are you feeling now after telling me all that?

If negative feelings were brought up:
   What was it about the interview that was upsetting?
   What would help you? Who could you talk to?
   Could I tell Mr. Langston that you are feeling upset by this interview?
      Maybe he could help.
   What will you do to feel better?
   I’ll call you tomorrow and see how you are doing. Would that be OK?

Was this an OK experience for you?

Closure:

You did a very good job of telling me what it was like for you. Thank you so much. Your information is very valuable and important. It’ll take me a few months now to go over the tapes and listen to everybody’s stories. After I have done that, I will call you on the phone and see what you think of the results that I have found and if there is anything you feel should be changed. Is that OK with you?

Thank you and here is your money.

If you think of anything else you want to add to your story you told me or if you or your parents have any questions, please phone me. My phone number is inside the envelope.
APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE OF THANK-YOU LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Kathy Eugster, M.A. Candidate
Dept. of Educational and
Counselling Psychology, and
Special Education
University of British Columbia.

June 13, 2002

Dear __________,

Thank you for your interest in my thesis research on the experience of parent-adolescent conversation from the adolescent’s perspective. I have greatly valued your participation in this research study and your willingness to share your experience. If you have anything you would like to add to what you have told me today, please feel free to call me. In addition, if either you or your parents have any questions or concerns arising from this research study, please call me. I look forward to talking to you again in a few months to review the results with you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Eugster
APPENDIX E: RELEVANT SECTIONS FROM ORIGINAL PROTOCOLS

Adolescent's experience of accepting parent's point of view or demand:

... he suggested a few things that I could do ... I felt kind of convinced like yeah maybe I should do that and stuff ...

... so like why can't I just go out with my friends just this one time, and she's like no, no, no you can't, so I had to stay at home ... she's like well I don't have enough money to like to give you all the time, and I'm like ok ... and I was like I'll ask dad for the money or something, and she's like no, no, no his money is our money so it doesn't matter, and I was like ok ... I was kind of like pissed off, and then she's like no you cancel, and I was like whatever, I'll just stay home ... I also knew that I had to stay at home because that's more important to take care of the kids than go out and have fun, like you know like just sometimes at least ...

... I feel like she is right and stuff, but I still don't feel that I should have done that, like I still feel like kind of mad that they always get what they want, and I'm always the one that has to give in, but still I think, I don't know, I'm just like whatever, I'm glad that I did it [what parent requested] ...

... she was saying like get cracking and start doing your work, and I sat down and started typing ...

... [she says] just don't talk on the phone for so long next time, and I'm like I'll try not to ...

... I want to be a teacher, but he doesn't want me to be a teacher, so we kind of disagree sometimes about it, and I try to listen to what he says, cause he knows a lot about that stuff, so I'm kind of confused ... well, if I was talking about being a teacher, he would say oh well teachers don't get paid enough and they get too many holidays, and he'd be negative about the situation, and I'd start thinking oh ok maybe I shouldn't be a teacher ... and at the same time I think maybe he is right, maybe he has more experience, and he's more knowledgeable than I am right now ...

Adolescent's experience of agreeing with parent's point of view:

... after a while he suggested a few things that I could do ... I felt kind of convinced, like yeah maybe I should do that ... I liked one of his suggestions better than the other ones ...

... like I agreed on her opinion, and so I just kind of added some more stuff about like why I didn't like them and things that they do and stuff ... she didn't really like them, so she was thinking of going to my dad and telling him and stuff, I knew she was right ... I wasn't too happy with them either, and like both of us were feeling the same thing, probably felt better afterward cause then both of us had the same feelings, and she understood, and we like agreed on our frustrations ...
... and my mom talked to me after school and said that him and her decided that I was old enough and ready for an allowance, and she asked me if five dollars would be enough, and I said yes, and she said that every week if I did all my chores and everything and I'd behave then I'd get my five dollars on Monday ... I agreed with her cause it sounded fair

... I asked her what would she do if I did drugs tomorrow or something, and she's like it's fine, it's your choice, like you're old enough to know what you're doing, but she told me that it would ruin my life, and like I'd get addicted and stuff, and I know that, and I will not be stupid, I wouldn't ... I didn't want to do that, so I wasn't like trying to convince her of anything, cause like I knew that, I was just kind of like oh, ok ... like I was kind of agreeing with what she was saying ...

... I told her that I knew that and I told her that I would tell her [if I needed help] ...

... they said yeah sure, you can ride your bike to school, but you have to bring your helmet and lock up and blah, blah ... I said oh, ok ...

... like my closest friends, which were like really important for sleepovers, I can go for sure, it doesn't matter, cause they know them and they know their families, but the other ones, like my other friends, they got to know them first, and I was like all right, that's fair enough ...

... he's like oh yeah you should go to work, and he'll give me the whole talk like get ahead, go to work, don't be a slacker, blah, blah, blah and that kind of stuff, and when he just says that then I'm just like oh whatever, you always say that to me, shut up, and then when I think about it, I'm like he's right ... when he says oh go work, I'm like oh god I don't want to go work, but then I'm just like aww, he's right, and then I feel glad that he actually cares kind of thing, or that he'll actually make the effort to say something ... when they tell me advice, I'm just like oh no, another advice talk you know, don't do this, don't do that, but then I think about it, and I'm like yeah they're right, yeah it's good when they give me advice ... when I actually think about it, I'm like wow she actually does know what she's talking about, and she is right, parents are right, they are ...

Adolescent's experience of arguing with parent:

... I'd just be like why did he come last night ... she was just like oh why do you always do this, and I'm like don't you understand, he's not nice or whatever ... she's totally like oh he's not, but you know why, and we have to help him, and stuff like that, and I'm like if you want to help him you can help him ...

... she wanted me to go visit family and I didn't want to that weekend because I just saw them the weekend before ... and she's like fine, you don't have to go, but then you're not allowed to go out, and then I'm like oh that's not fair ... at first I talk back to her, like if she says something I'm like but mom, but then she doesn't listen ... I'll be like mom, and
she cut me off, and I’ll be mom don’t cut me off ... and then I’ll yell cause she’s raising her voice, and she gets mad at me for yelling, and then I’ll be like well mom you stop yelling, and she’ll be like well I’m the parent and I don’t have to stop yelling, and at the beginning I tell her mom, I keep on trying to get the message to her because she’s not listening, and I’m like mom I don’t want to go, she’s like I don’t care you’re going, and she doesn’t understand what I’m saying, it doesn’t get into her head, so I have to repeatedly tell her, and then she still doesn’t listen ...

... and if I don’t get my way, then I sort of argue sometimes, sometimes I get my way after that, but sometimes I don’t ... [I say] can I please go, like sometimes I’m fine with that [when he/she says no] but disappointed, and other times [I say] come on, please, please ... [then he/she says] no, no, no, ... sometimes they continue saying no, and then I go and I say ok, but sometimes it just gets to the point where I nag too much and they say yes ...

... and I just kept asking him why can’t we go, why can’t we go, and he’s just like oh because I don’t have enough time, and I was like can we go next year and stuff, and he’s like probably, and I just keep asking ...

... I just asked her if I could go out, and she’s like no I couldn’t, but I was like well why couldn’t I go, because I haven’t been out for like a week or so, or for like a long time, and she’s just like no you have to stay home, and I’m like well what is there to do around home, like why do I have to stay home, and we just had an argument over that, and she’s like oh I have to see your grades first or whatever before you go out, and I’m like well that’s like at the end of June right, so like why can’t I just go out with my friends just this one time, and she’s like no, no, no you can’t ... and she’s like oh you always ask me for money and stuff, and I’m like well I won’t ask you for money next time we go out, and she’s like no ...

Adolescent’s experience of convincing parent:

... well basically I would be listening to techno or whatever, I’m like this is awesome, I started kind of hinting like oh my gosh I love this music, and the people are so nice ... so I would just start talking about how much I loved the environment, or the people, and give her all the things that I loved about it... I would then remind her how confident I am in myself, and I told her like for drugs for example, there’s going to be drugs everywhere, there’s drugs at school dances, there’s drugs everywhere, and I told her I’d already been offered drugs, and I didn’t take it, and I was already confident with myself that I wouldn’t take it again, because I’m just not that type of person, I don’t really care what other people think of me, and I said if I was offered drugs here, it would be the same, it would be the exact same if I was offered drugs ... then I would just give her some more points, saying that this would be a one time thing, I have a lot of confidence in myself, and if I ever did anything bad, I am so open with you, I would tell you right away, I couldn’t just keep it from you, it would eat me up inside, this could just be a one time experience, because you only live once, and I told her that I could at least try once, and if I liked it, and if it was a safe environment that I saw, then maybe I could go again ... and another
point that I brought up about raves with her was since everyone’s about peace and love and everything they also focus on the bigger issues like the middle east and stuff, we actually sit down and just talk, sometimes we meet friends and we talk about what’s going on, and you don’t do that with people in school, you just do that in socials class when you have to, but this concerns us ...

... well he would ask me why I would like an allowance, the reasons for why I would need it, and if they are good enough reasons, then he would agree with me for it ... I would tell him like the way I want the money was so I could be able to go shopping with my friends, to go to like dances and stuff, and just a little bit of extra spending money, since they [my friends] always do have spending money, so I wouldn’t be left out ...

... so I had to try and push him in a way, but not really, to get him to understand why I needed this ...

... and then I was like oh but you know I’m not going to be doing that, you know I’m just having a little sleepover ... and I was like you can’t just be scared of something that’s not really going to happen, and I was just like there are so many chances, like even if I cross the street, who knows what’s going to happen, you can’t just always be scared ... I was kind of like maybe if I keep pushing they’ll maybe ... so I was kind of scared, like oh they might say no, but I had to act like I was not going to back down ...

... so I had to try and push him in a way, but not really, to get him to understand why I needed this ...

... and then I was like oh but you know I’m not going to be doing that, you know I’m just having a little sleepover ... and I was like you can’t just be scared of something that’s not really going to happen, and I was just like there are so many chances, like even if I cross the street, who knows what’s going to happen, you can’t just always be scared ...

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... I was kind of like maybe if I keep pushing they’ll maybe ...

... I had to like gain their perspective of my perspective, so that they knew ...

Adolescent’s experience of being curious:

... I [wanted] to know what my dad felt about it, and if he really wanted my brother to go or not, and to see what he was thinking about it, and how he felt about it ...

... I probably wanted to know like reasons why she didn’t like them either, and how she was feeling ...

... I think I started it [the conversation] cause I just wanted to know what she thought, cause I mean she never really told me ... my sister and her boyfriend they were talking about it, and she told my mom that they were going to do it like one day soon, and I was just like so do you think that’s bad or something ...

... I asked her what would she do if I did drugs tomorrow or something ...
I always wondered what she wanted to know, and what was too much information, and just the other day I went mom, what do you want to know, what do you want me to tell you ... and then I asked her if she wanted to know if I was going to parties and there was going to be drinking there ... I always feel guilty after drinking, I'm like well should I tell her that I was drinking and stuff ... and then I just figured right there why don't I ask her, like what does she want to know, like does she want to know if there is going to be drinking before I go, or after, or what, and so then I asked her what she wanted to know ...

... and I was like confused and stuff, and I wonder if he actually like wants to, like if he's happy with it, but I didn't mention it ... he doesn't really want to move in to the house, then why are we you know, but I think I will ask him about that, do you really want to move into this house, just talk with him and I'll see what happens ...

Adolescent's experience of disagreeing with parent's point of view:

... and then he also had another suggestion that he liked more but I didn't really like it that much ... I just said that I don't think it was that great of an idea ...

... and she said like you know you should do it with the person that you're going to be with the rest of your life, and I told her like I don't think like that's how it should be, because I mean yeah you're supposed to love the person and everything, but like if you're not going to spend the rest of you're life with them then that's ok too ... I was like I don't agree ... it doesn't matter ... it doesn't mean your life will turn out bad or anything if you knew that you weren't going to live with that person or something ... and I just didn't agree with that ...

... her sisters and stuff, they will just be like oh but your living room looks smaller than theirs, or your kitchen is too small and theirs is bigger, and they just say little negative things, and she's telling me about this... and she was like oh no, it's not a big deal, and I was like, it is ... she's just like no, no you're wrong, and I'm like no I'm not wrong, like you just don't see it, and ahhh it just makes me frustrated ...

... and my mom was just kind of like you guys were so close, like friends and stuff, and I was just like no, that wasn't even friendship, I don't even know why I was with her ...

... she was saying you've been out for a long time, and I was like I haven't been out for so long ...

... I'd talk about like oh you talk on the phone too a lot, and she'd be like yeah but they're not so long, and I'd go well sometimes they are ...
Adolescent’s experience of disapproving of parent’s actions:

... sometimes I would spazz out at her and just go oh why don’t you just see this, it’s so obvious, it’s like right underneath your nose, how come you just pick the bad points ...

... [my mom said] what if you go there, and all your friends, they are only your friends because they want you to do drugs ... so I would get defensive and I’d be like how come you think that [way], because my friends are so nice, and they wouldn’t just be after me for the drugs ...

... with her saying all those really not so nice things about raves, that sort of hurt me, and how she was sort of saying that about my friends, it was sort of like she was saying that about my friends ... the only time where I really find it offensive is when she stereotypes my friends ...

... so like she just kind of goes overboard sometimes where she’s trying to prove a point, and she just over exaggerates what she’s actually trying to say ... and it’s just kind of like, I don’t feel mad or anything, but she’s just kind of like silly ...

... and whenever people like say stuff to her, and I’m like why do you put up with this stuff ... and I was like why, why don’t you say anything ... you never say anything to them whenever they say something to you, you never say stop ... and I was like I’m just letting you know like you never step out and like say what’s right and what’s wrong ... and I’m just like god, why do you put up with this, like I would tell her ...

... when we got the keys, like my mom invited her brothers and her sisters to come see, and I was just like, why did you do that ...

... with those conversations, I get like pissed off with my mom because like she like hardly ever says anything [to the siblings] ... I don’t know, like I don’t think it’s fair even though they’re younger ... they shouldn’t get what they want always ...

... I was like oh my god, you shouldn’t care what people think ... don’t worry, you’re always worrying ...

... I was just like oh mom, don’t say that, or something like that, I’m just like oh mom, I don’t know if that’s any of your business ...

... he’s like oh yeah, you should go to work, and he’ll give me the whole talk like get ahead, go to work, don’t be a slacker, blah, blah, blah, and that kind of stuff, and when he just says that then I’m just like oh whatever, you always say that to me, shut up ... I’d tell him I’m like you know I don’t need to hear it, you tell me all the time ...

... I guess she was having a bad day you know, whatever, and she just got mad at me, and she wouldn’t let me talk, and I’m like but he, and she was like no, I don’t want to hear it, and then she’d yell, and I’m just like oh my god I hate it, cause I get so frustrated when
she won't let me talk ... [she says] I don't want to hear it, and if I hear, if you say one more thing, you're grounded, and then it's kind of like forcing me to be quiet when I need to talk, like it's really stupid, she doesn't give me a chance to say something ...

... she actually didn't even ask me if I was drinking or anything, and I kind of I want her to be able to talk to me about it, cause I want there to be that trust there, but I guess she trusts me, I don't know ... I was actually a little upset, cause I just wanted her to be able to talk to me a little bit about it, and know that it's not my thing ...

... well lately she's been frustrating me because our teachers are giving us our marks, cause there's only a week left, and I told her I was getting the highest mark in socials ... and she's just like umm, that's good, and I was expecting a good job, or a hug, or something, but it's just like a nod or something like that ... well it just makes me angry kind of, I guess, I hope that that's good enough, like I don't want her to think that that's not good enough ...

Adolescent's experience of expressing an opinion to parent:

... let's just say I go to my new school and I happen to have some piercings and stuff; I know the people who have piercings and have dyed hair that are really nice people, and it's on the outside, its not what people look like on the outside, it's the inside, and I think she should have known that ...

... I told her that she's stereotyping my friends, and I'm like I don't know what situation I'll be put in at my new school but I know I won't take drugs, cause I've already been to raves and stuff, and you're worried about this, this is school ... and I don't know, maybe I'll be a drifter again ...

... and then she's like well you say you're going to meet a whole bunch of new people ... I go that's the point, new people are exciting, you can't just pick out everybody's flaws, you have to accept everybody for who they are, and if they are really your friends, even if they ask you once if you want to try drugs, you say no, they'll respect that ...

... I just got my nose pierced like a couple of days ago, and she really didn't want me to get my nose pierced, but I was going to do it anyway ... so we went to this place downtown, and I got it done, and she was sort of like mad the whole time, I don't think she really wanted me to get it done cause she wanted my picture taken first or something, but I got it done, and I think she realized that I would do it anyway, and it was better for her to agree with it ... and then I started talking about maybe sometime I wanted to get my lip done sometime when I had my braces off and I wanted my hair purple ...

... and I'm like if you want to help him, you can help him, but you can see him on your own time, and not bring him into our house, and act like nothing happened, and act like everything's normal ...
... and I’ve told her many times that even if she says no, if I have my mind set on it, I’m going to do it... I just tell her like if you want the honest truth mom, even if you say no, I’m still going to do it, and there’s really not much you can do except for be there when I need you...

... if she doesn’t listen, then she won’t know, and I won’t tell her, and then we’ll come into bad stuff, because I’ll be in trouble because I won’t have somebody to go to, and she’s aware of that, cause I tell her...

... then we were talking and I was like it’s not fair cause I need my freedom I need to sleep over... I was like you can’t just be scared of something that’s not really going to happen, and I was just like there are so many chances, like even if I cross the street, who knows what’s going to happen, you can’t just always be scared... and I’m just like anything can happen, you have to live life to the fullest, and you can’t just always be scared, oh I wonder if I cross the street I might get hit by a car or something like that, I’m just like so you’ve just got to live and experience life...

... and I was like even if they are your sisters, they don’t have the right to like hurt your feelings... I was like well if you have someone that puts you down, you shouldn’t just be like oh yeah, that’s ok, like you should say like you know what, you’ve been really annoying all this time, and if you don’t like this house, then there’s the door... and I was like, ok you know what you should have been like, ok if you don’t like this you can get out of my house...

... and she was like you have to stay home with the kids, and I’m like well the kids are old enough to take care of themselves...

... she’d be like no, just let them finish their show whatever and you can have it after that, and I’d be like well before I came from school they had like so many shows, they’ve been sitting here all day...

... I’ll talk about well you don’t know what that person’s going through, like she might not know, maybe my friend had a really bad day or something like that, and I need to talk to her...

... I at least wanted to have the opportunity to talk about it with you and he said oh well I didn’t know that...

Adolescent’s experience of being honest with parent:

... so I didn’t want to just destroy that trust and go behind her back and do something... basically it’s worked out to this level where she has a lot of trust in me, and I would never ever want to break that...
... I gave her the good points, and I gave her the bad points, so I gave her both sides of the story ... and I could have given her all the positive points, but of course in every single positive situation there is not so good stuff, so I gave her both points ...

... so then she asked me if I drank, and I told her the truth, because I did ...

... like when I’m doing something, she knows that I’m going to do it, and that’s the way she likes it, because she knows, and it’s not behind her back ... she’s not going to hassle me about it because then she knows I won’t tell her about it, and I’m very honest with my mom on that because I know she won’t get mad at me ...

... because I really don’t like, I really don’t want to lie to my parents ...

... she didn’t bring it [drugs] up, but I was like mom I didn’t do anything with her, you know ... and I was like I didn’t do anything and don’t even think, because I knew she was going to get to that ... [I wanted to] just clear everything and go no I didn’t do anything with her ... I told her the whole story ... like I was doing something right, and I didn’t want her to hear it from anyone else, and I was like I might as well tell you right now and just get it out in the open ...

... and I said well lately it seems like you’ve been upset about something, I was just being honest with her ... and I just kind of gave her an honest answer, but I didn’t want to hurt her feelings ...

... well I want her to know what’s going on, and me be able to tell her what happened, and not have to hide anything from her, or lie or anything, I just want us to be honest ... because I don’t mind talking about it, I’d rather her know the truth ...

Adolescent’s experience of feeling open with parent:

... [I felt] very relieved and stuff, and it felt good to tell her about my friends and stuff so she’d know a bit more about the different kind of people that I was with, and it felt just like maybe a little more open with my mom, like I was able to communicate with her more easier ...

... I’m really open with my mom, which is really awesome, I basically tell her everything, and so it’s kind of hard to go behind her back, and I’d feel very bad if I ever did ...

... I can talk to my dad about anything cause he’s sort of the one that understands it more and he listens to my conversations openly ...

... she asked me if I drank, and I told her the truth because I did, but she didn’t get mad at me because she understands, because she’s been through the same thing, and she knows that even if she gets mad at me I’m still going to do it, but this way it is very open between us ... it’s opened it [the relationship] up a lot since then, like I tried drinking a
... I tell my mom everything ... there's some stuff that kids have to keep to themselves but I tell my mom everything that she needs to know ...

... not right away it [the relationship] got any better, but just like a month after [the conversation] I started feeling more comfortable talking to her about like guys and like that kind of stuff, cause I realized that she was normal, or she was a teenager too, even though I knew that I just didn't really realize it ...

Adolescent’s experience of being patient:

... of course you want to go somewhere, you want to go there right away, but I had to be patient ... sometimes it frustrated me because I didn’t really like having to wait, and just waiting for her to make up her mind, but it was kind of neat because I felt like I was kind of getting there ... I would usually feel pretty good with myself because I think I made some pretty good points, so it was just the basic thing of waiting ...

... I was sort of impatient for it but at the same time, I knew he was going to say yes eventually, I just waited a long time for him ...

... but you see, like I brought my bike to school today, and I asked them two days ago, and then they say talk about it, and then I asked them last night ... I asked them the day before and last night ... I asked her two days ago, and she said I’ll talk to dad about it, blah, blah, blah ...

Adolescent’s experience of reassuring parent:

... and I told her I’d already been offered drugs and I didn’t take it, and I was already confident with myself that I wouldn’t take it again, because I’m just not that type of person, I don’t really care what other people think of me ... and I said if I was offered drugs here it would be the same, it would be the exact same if I was offered drugs ...

... she was all like oh well are you getting bullied, and she just went on, and I was like no, no nothing’s wrong, and she’s like well if there’s anything wrong, she just got overreacted, and I was like oh my god there’s nothing, and she’s like oh I don’t like talking to you like this ... she’s like oh really, are you sure, are you fine, and I’m like no, nothing happened to me, calm down ... and my mom’s like oh no, please, I don’t want you to, you guys are going to fight aren’t you guys, and I’m like no, we’re not going to fight, there’s nothing wrong ... I just wanted to let her know don’t worry ...

... I was like mom I didn’t do anything with her you know ... I told her the whole story
... then she’s like really quietly I’m sorry, and I’m just like yeah it’s ok whatever, and then she’ll be like today at work blah, blah, blah my boss is blah, blah, or PMS blah, blah, or something like that, and I’ll just be like yeah mom, it’s ok whatever, and then that’s about it ... I let her apologize and she feels better afterward then ... it makes her feel better to know that I’m not mad at her anymore, and it makes me feel better to know that she’s not mad at me anymore I guess ...

... and then she was crying and stuff ... she’s like oh I don’t want you to feel like I’m always mad at you and stuff like that ... she was just talking about I hope that we don’t have a lot of problems, and she’s like I want you guys to be able to talk to me about stuff, and I don’t want you to think I am always mad, and I don’t want us to have a bad relationship between us ... I was really upset, cause I didn’t want her to feel like that, I didn’t want her to think that’s what we thought, because it wasn’t ...  [I] just wanted to let her know that we really appreciate everything ... after I knew how upset she was, I just wanted to change her mind, let her know how much she meant to me ...

Adolescent’s experience of requesting something from parent:

... I went like oh I want to go to a rave, and its so amazing, and the people are so nice ... and like yeah so uh maybe uh maybe I could go to a rave sometime, because I really like the music, and my favorite DJ is going to play maybe on Saturday night, and Ian would drive me home ...

... I always go like to the movies or swimming or something with my friends on weekends, or we go shopping, and I’m always the one that never has the money ... so we got into the conversation of getting an allowance ...

... [I ask for] what I want for supper, maybe I want to ask for something, or if I can do something, or stuff like that, or if I want to start doing something ... and I sort of know my parents, and I ask one of them, and they say yes [then] they usually say go check with the other, but if that one says no, I just go to the other one anyway, to try, you know what I mean ... like for example I ask my mom ... so like say for the past while now, like two weeks, I’ve been wanting to ride my bike to school ...

... It was one of my friend’s birthday parties, it was a sleepover party, and I was like oh there’s a birthday and I want to stay the night ...

... like I wanted to colour it [my hair] purple but not like a harsh punk kind of purple but it was like a nice purple ... and I was asking [my mom] for that ... yeah she was getting her hair cut and I was like yeah I want to get my hair coloured ...

... I’m just like so are we going dad ...

... I just asked her if I could go out ... I’m just like mom, cause my friend phoned, my friend was on the phone, and she [my friend] was like do you want to go out, and I’m like
yeah hold on a second, so I went to the kitchen and asked my mom, like mom can I go out with my friends to a movie ...

Adolescent's experience of suggesting something to parent:

... when there's something wrong with her and my dad, or her, sometimes I just let her know how I see it ... so I try to open it up a little more and let her know like well dad's just mad or something right, and I let her know so that she kind of understands it a little more than what she's seen before ...

... with my dad though, we have like conversations about my brothers ... and then, we just talk about oh what are we going to do with them ... I was just letting him know that maybe he should go take them [my brothers] on a camping trip, just like the three of them, and get some bonding time and stuff, and he's like yeah, that's true ... and I guess they feel jealous of me, and I know they do, cause they always try to put me down, like they go oh she did that wrong, and my dad's like ahhh ... and I was just like maybe you should just go on a trip, just a little one ... he was just like that's a good idea, and he's like I think we should ... I told him that they should spend time together ...

... my mom she's pretty open to me, so when she's having a problem she'll talk to me about it too, so I guess that kind of strengthens our relationship, talking about stuff like that ... if I'm not doing anything, I can get so much into the conversation ... one time my mom was having trouble with her friend, like she got into a fight with her friend, and she wanted to talk to me, and I had time, so I talked to her, I think it was like just after dinner and I was finished doing my chores and she was cooking up something for tomorrow or something like that, and we were talking then, and it was really good, and we were talking, and I got to know more about her friend and stuff like that, cause I know her too ... I think I was more ... like attentive, like I was listening, and interested in what she was saying and stuff like that, cause like I know her friend too, cause she's like a family friend, so it was nice getting to know her a little better through that ... I'd either give her examples of how I am with my friends ... I'd give other examples, cause you don't see some stuff compared to someone whose from the outside looking into it ... I think it was helpful, like some of the things might not be right, but it was still good ... I guess I got to know her better that way too ...

Adolescent's experience of telling parent something:

... and then I was talking about some of my really close friends, and how their life was right now, and kind of struggles that they were having ...[I said] some of them were doing really good in school and some were having a bit of struggles ... like they were having troubles like doing like certain subjects like math or stuff and I was having trouble with it too ... and it felt good to tell her about my friends and stuff so she'd know a bit more about the different kind of people that I was with ...

... and so then he asked me what was wrong lately, and then I just told him like a lot of schoolwork, and it was hard ...
... he just kind of asks me ... what kind of things do you want to do when you're older ...
[Then I say] I'm not too sure and stuff cause like there's still a long time to go and they
[my ideas] always change ...

... so we just started talking about friends and how these people were different than the
people at school and that they were actually true friends ... and then I told her the
friendship aspect [of raves] ... in school it's like the popular group and the computer
people and the band geeks, which I am sort of, it's a whole bunch of different groups, and
somehow they can't come together, but this way everyone has something in common,
they're all happy or they all like the same music, so I just told my mom that ...

... so then she asked me if I drank, and I told her the truth ... she asked me how it was,
and I told her it wasn't that great ... and then she just asked me what my experience was
like, and then I told her ...

... the people that used to think I was perfect don't think I'm perfect anymore, so it was
really harsh on me, and I was telling her that, and I was like certain friends who used to
look up to me don't look up to me anymore, and my teachers don't look up to me as
much as they used to, and I'm like and I feel that you don't look up to me because I drink

... we'll talk about probably social problems in school, like friends and boys and stuff,
cause she knows all my friend problems, and she knows all my boy problems ... she
doesn't know every little detail of the boys right, cause there are things that your mom
doesn't need to hear ... like I'll tell her the situation what's going on, like what's
happening, and why I'm upset ... it's kind of just me telling her so I can tell somebody,
because you don't want to tell somebody at school because it becomes rumours and gets
spread around, and my mom's obviously not going to spread it around, so I just tell her so
I can get relieved ... like at school I'm like why is he doing this right, but I won't say it
right, well I will but I won't totally freak out, but then at home I can just tell her the
whole story, and then I don't know it just feels better because I'll be like oh he did this
and that ... it just lets it out so it's not all in here ...

... she's all like oh what happened, and she was all worried, and I was like oh nothing
happened, and like my friend or my ex-friend and we were just talking, and I told her
everything that happened ... I don't know how I felt, like ok I told you everything, I kind
of felt like oh I don't have to keep this from my mom kind of, like I kind of felt a little
better about myself ...

... she'd be like so how's your guitar practice, and I'd be like oh it was hard my fingers
are tired and hurt and I want to chop them off ...

... I just came home that night and I told her there was drinking ... I told her it kind of
got out of control around ten o'clock, and she said well did the cops show up or anything,
and I said no, and she said oh because there was drinking there, and I said yeah ...
... and I told her I was getting the highest mark in socials, and I’m getting 89%

Adolescent’s experience of understanding parent:

... probably she wanted to know more about my friends, cause recently I’ve been having lots of different friends and stuff, and she just wanted to know more about them and how close I was with them ... she just probably had a better understanding, and she probably understood like what I was feeling with my friends ...

... I think his goal was to get to know what I was thinking about it, and what I thought about like my brother going away and stuff, and what I would feel like, and the struggles that I’d be having without my brother there, I guess he wanted to know a bit more about how much my brother helped me, and how much I’d have to be like depending on myself if he were gone ...

... like lately I’ve been like just kind of mad and stuff and cranky, and so then he asked me what was wrong lately, and then I just told him like a lot of schoolwork and it was hard and stuff ... he probably felt maybe a little bit worried ... probably about my schoolwork ... he was probably more worried about how he could solve the problem ...

... like I understood that she wasn’t me, she didn’t know all these things [about raves] ... I was looking on the internet a lot, and she didn’t know these people as well as I did, and she had seen the news specials on them ... she would go Adele I’m really not sure blah, blah, blah, she was just concerned I guess for my safety, I understood that she was just concerned for my safety ... but it was the news specials that got to her ... it was just hard for her ... at first I think her goal was to convince me not to go, and then as it went on, I think her goal was to understand what raves were about more from my perspective ...

... for him I think he was a little glad [to build me a room], because he’d be able to do some more work around the house, cause he likes to build things ... it would be easy for him cause it gives him something to do ...

... the first time he’s like oh they’re finally asking me something, cause he didn’t do that good in school, he didn’t concentrate, so he’s going oh my gosh they’re actually asking me something, and now it’s like oh no they’re asking me another one, another thing ... and when I don’t do it, he’s like you guys didn’t ask me anything today ... he sort of wants the conversation now, but he doesn’t ...

... she tells us not to bring people over every day, cause we tend to do that sometimes, cause she says like they stay a while, so we have to feed them, and like she’s not trying to be mean or anything, but it wastes money ... and I see what she’s saying ...

... I think she was probably trying to get me to think her way, well probably, like I don’t know, and she probably knew that I wouldn’t think that way too ...
... she kind of just listens and she doesn’t really say too much, because it’s kind of hard for a mother, somebody at the age of 38, to talk about a boy who is 15 years old, and why he’s doing that ...

... I think they’re a bit disappointed [when I get my way], like they don’t want me to go but then, like I got my way, they gave in because of all my nagging ...

... my parents are older, a lot older, and they went through the same things, but different, because they grew up in a different time period ... like a different decade ...

... I’m just like so you’ve just got to live and experience life, and they were just like yeah, I guess when they were little, they probably felt like this ...

... they were like scared ... when they read the newspapers how there’s like 15, 16 year old kids that are dying in car crashes, and I think they were just trying to get me into thinking like don’t be stupid and like go out in the middle of the night, and I think that’s what their point was, but they didn’t make it as clear, but I kind of figured that’s probably what they were talking about ...

... like she doesn’t want to admit it to herself, I guess she doesn’t want to stand up and be like you know what, stop ... I guess it’s like big respect for her sister because her sister has done a lot for her ... me and my mom, we are like kind of the same people, but we totally act different, like our responses, like if someone said something mean to me I’d say it back, I’d be like whoa, but she would keep it inside, and she would probably tell someone, but I don’t think she likes to make a big deal out of stuff you know, she’s like oh it was nothing ... but my mom, she’s kind of like shy ... she doesn’t want to make a big deal, she doesn’t want like a fight or an argument ...

... I know it’s not really his fault, like he doesn’t have enough time, but like he always tries to make things for us, like make trips for our family, but like sometimes it doesn’t work out ... I think he was kind of like disappointed that he had to tell me that, he knew that I really wanted to go, and I was always talking about it, so he didn’t really want to tell me, I could tell he was just like oh sorry no ...

... I also knew that I had to stay at home, because that’s more important to take care of the kids than go out and have fun, you know like just sometimes at least, and like she was really busy, if she wasn’t really busy, if she didn’t have that much to do, then I guess she would have let me go out ... at the beginning I was like really pissed off ... but then I think like you know, whoa, my mom like she works a lot and stuff, so I guess she gets tired too you know, so I was like whatever, like I should just stay at home ...

... maybe he wants me to realize more than what I did before, like understand ... like say if I did something bad, I know it’s bad myself; but maybe he thinks I don’t know that it’s as bad as it seems ... like this didn’t happen, but for example, say if I robbed a store or something like that, I’d say oh no I robbed a store and I’m in trouble, and he’d be like do you know why you robbed the store, and I’d be like no, and he’d be like well why don’t
you, do you see the effects of it, or something like that ... and even sometimes I know why I did it, he doesn’t think I know, or I don’t know why I did it, but I know all the effects of it, and he doesn’t think I know the effects ...

... I think she was trying to show that she could be there for me, and other people, and that she felt comfortable talking about that kind of stuff with me, and that she’d be not only a mom to me, but a mom to my friend too if they needed it ...

... then he’ll talk to me about you know, go get a job and stuff, stop being lazy, clean your room, he just wants me to be organized and stuff ... he’s just trying to help me get ahead ...

... I think they’re actually like, wow she actually cares about our childhood, and I think they like expressing how they grew up I guess, cause they know that they had a good childhood, and they just want me to learn from their mistakes instead of learning from my own ...

... when she tries to give me the sex talk, I don’t know, usually I’m just like oh don’t go there kind of thing, she’ll talk about some guys that I know, like oh my friend, you know he’s really nice, or he’s a nice boy, and I’m like mom stop it, so she always tries and talks about that with me, but then usually it doesn’t get there cause either I’m like mom, I already know about it, like just kind of leave me alone, and I walk away ... but she does try, cause she just wants to be a good mom, and she wants to make sure that I’m not going out and going where I’m not supposed to be ...

... I just think that people, like teenagers, need to talk to their parents, and like they need to feel comfortable around them more, like even me, I’m not even that comfortable like as much as I could be with my dad or my mom, like it’s still growing I guess, but I just think that people who don’t talk to their mom as much, or their dad, I just think they need to, cause they were kids too once, and they know what it’s like, and talking to your parents is good, cause you learn a lot of stuff, like when I didn’t talk to my mom before, I didn’t know that when she was younger she did all this stuff, and I didn’t know that ...

... I think it was to let us know that she wasn’t really upset, and it wasn’t always us that she was upset about, it was other things, and she just wanted to let us know ...

Adolescent’s experience of withdrawing from parent:

... oh she’d keep on going [fighting] and I’d leave, and she’d be yelling ...

... and then near the end, every time we fight, near the end I just stop talking, because I’m tired of fighting, and it’s been like two hours, and I’m just tired of fighting, so I just stop talking ... and then I just stand there, and I don’t talk, and I don’t look at her, and I just sit there and like with tears running down ... and if I go to bed after this I’m like I’ll never tell my mom anything yeah, I tell her and she throws it in my face, I can’t believe
she did that, if she wants a bad kid I’ll give her a bad kid ... or I’m not going to tell her anything, I’m going to be so secretive ...

... and I think the reason that I don’t really tell them a lot of things is that, like you know problems or whatever, is because, not that they’re harsh, but it’s just that like they don’t really let me do stuff at certain times, I feel that I don’t have enough freedom I guess ... so that’s sort of why I don’t go to them a lot ... like if I maybe skipped school or whatever, and they found out, they’d get mad at me, and I don’t like it when they get mad at me ...

... I went off pissed off, and I left the room, and I went back on the phone and I’m like no I can’t go sorry ... and then mom was like cooking something in the kitchen, and so I went to my room, and that was it and I closed the door ...

... I didn’t even want to talk to my parents, they completely didn’t even give me the opportunity to talk about it, they were just like you’re not going, that’s it, so I just ignored them for a while ... I was just really upset and didn’t even want to talk to them for a few days ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent being angry with adolescent:

... cause I get mad right, cause she starts yelling ... and when it’s not done her way, she’s just kind of like fighting or whatever, and then I say something that’s just like not nice or whatever ...

... and we got into a fight about that, and usually what it is, is she’s yelling, and I’m crying, and she’s crying, and she’s swearing ... and then I’ll yell cause she’s raising her voice, and she gets mad at me for yelling, and then I’ll be like well mom you stop yelling, and she’ll be like well I’m the parent and I don’t have to stop yelling ...

... like if I maybe skipped school or whatever, and they found out, they’d get mad at me, and I don’t like it when they get mad at me ...

... I wasn’t doing so well in school, and I talked to my mom first, and she was very mad at me at first ... I felt very disappointed in myself for not telling her earlier and letting her down ...

... and then she came in, and I guess she was having a bad day you know whatever, and she just got mad at me, and she wouldn’t let me talk, and I’m like but he, and she was like no I don’t want to hear it, and then she’d yell, and I’m just like oh my god I hate it, cause I get so frustrated when she won’t let me talk ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent apologizing to adolescent:

... but then the next day [after the fight] she’ll come down and apologize to me for what she said to me ... and then she doesn’t follow with what she said, like I was supposed to
be grounded and I won’t be grounded any more ... like she wins the fight, but I kind of win the battle in the end ... we usually just try to pretend that nothing is wrong, and then after like I pretend that nothing is wrong, and then she comes up to me and she apologizes to me ... and then everything is fine ... well usually I just try to forget about it, like the next day I’m like hey mom, morning, and then she’s still holding it, and then she apologizes to me, and then I think it makes her feel like everything is back to normal again ... it helps me but not as much as she benefits from it ... it helps me obviously, cause she apologizes and she admits she was wrong, then that means that I didn’t do anything wrong ...

... but then after [the fight] she’ll come to me, and she’ll be like I’m sorry, and she’ll give me the whole I’m sorry thing ... well she always has this look on her face, and I just know what she’s going to say, and I’m like I know what you’re going to say, and she doesn’t say anything at first, and then she’s like really quietly I’m sorry, and I’m just like yeah it’s ok whatever, and then she’ll be like today at work blah, blah, blah my boss is blah, blah, blah or PMS blah, blah, blah or something like that, and I’ll just be like yeah mom it’s ok whatever, and then that’s about it ... she always apologizes after, but then if she didn’t apologize, if she didn’t do what she usually does, I would feel like where’s my apology ... I like it when she apologizes to me, it’s good cause it makes me think like wow she actually does feel bad you know, and she actually would say sorry, so that’s good ... cause a lot of people don’t even apologize or kind of like don’t talk to each other, like I know I go to my friend’s house and I’m like oh is the phone busy or something, and she’s like oh I don’t know go ask my mom, and I’m like why don’t you do it, and she’s like oh we’re in a fight right now, and I’m like ok, I never do that, I never not talk to my mom, I just can’t do it ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent approving of adolescent:

... and my mom talked to me after school and said that him and her decided that I was old enough and ready for an allowance ...

... I remember when I was talking about my future or whatever and what I should do and stuff, and she supports me and stuff ... I’m like interested in cosmetology and that type of stuff, and she kind of encourages me, and she says like oh yeah go to like UBC and whatever, you know since she supports me, like in what I want to do, it makes me feel better about it, like if she didn’t, then I’d be like that’s not fun or anything ... it would just give me more of a reason to want to do it, because she’d be proud if I actually made it, and then I’d be like I did this ...

... I’m like I feel that you don’t look up to me because I drink, and then she told me that she didn’t respect me any less, that she respected me even more because I had the courage to tell her and be honest with her, and she told me that she respects me even more, and that she’s jealous of my maturity that I have at this age ... It was good, I kind of knew it, but I just needed to hear it again, cause she’s told me lots of times ...
... I ran the 5k fun run ... [they said] good job, like what was your time, how did you do ... I felt great, something I accomplished, something I'd like to do again ...

... when she said I'm ok [with getting your hair streaked] I was like ohhh ... she's like yeah, yeah, and I'm like ok maybe I could get it like next week ...

... sometimes I'm just like whatever, I'm getting frustrated, so I'm just like whatever you guys, I like be nice, and I'm like oh you guys can do this and whatever, and then my mom's like good job, like I'm glad that you did that and stuff like that ... she'd be like wow that's good, I'm glad you didn't start a fight over that, you just settled everything calmly and stuff, and now your sister will see that you let her have what she wanted, like the show or something, and then next time whenever you want something she'll do the same thing back to you, like give you something whatever you want, so she's just like good job, I'm glad you didn't start a fight over it ... usually she's always like talking, like complimenting my siblings and little ones, and like giving them what they want all the time, but this time like she actually said something to me, and like complimented me, so I'm like ok good ...

... when I talk about like oh today at school I got an A on my test, and I like it when they praise me or whatever, like oh good job, that's what I like a lot ...

Adolescent's experience of parent being closed-minded with adolescent:

... because some parents like my dad, they won't really listen to you ... if that's not going to happen, it won't happen, if they're right, they're right ... and what he [dad] does is he doesn't listen like my mom does, he's always right, like he's always been right, no one else can be right except him ...

... she doesn't want to listen to anyone else's point of view, she's totally stuck on her way of thinking, and when it's not done her way she's just like fighting or whatever ... she's so fixed on her point of view, she just won't let it go ...

... and at the beginning I tell her mom, I keep on trying to get the message to her, because she's not listening, and I'm like mom I don't want to go, she's like I don't care you're going, and she doesn't understand what I'm saying, it doesn't get into her head, so I have to repeatedly tell her, and then she still doesn't listen ...

... she wasn't seeing it from my way, she was in her little block, like she was in her little area, and she's not going to come out and be like oh yeah, she's just like no, no, you're wrong ...

... I guess she was having a bad day you know whatever, and she just got mad at me, and she wouldn't let me talk, and I'm like but he, and she was like no I don't want to hear it, and then she'd yell, and I'm just like oh my god I hate it, cause I get so frustrated when she won't let me talk, [she says] I don't want to hear it, and if I hear if you say one more...
thing you’re grounded, and then it’s kind of like forcing me to be quiet when I’m like I
need to talk, like it’s really stupid, she doesn’t give me a chance to say something ...

... [I said] will you at least give me the opportunity to talk about it, about going, and she
said well that’s it, me and your dad have decided ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent comforting adolescent:

... and I’m like and I feel that you don’t look up to me because I drink and then she told
me that she didn’t respect me any less, that she respected me even more because I had the
courage to tell her and be honest with her and she told me that she respects me even more
... so she was like letting me know that I was just thinking that she was doing that, and
that’s not really what was happening ...

... she couldn’t really say too much about my friends ... so she didn’t talk too much
about them, she just said that they’re just silly for not seeing that ...

... ... I was kind of like sad that we weren’t going to go, and he was just like oh don’t
worry, we can go next year, and I’m like ok, cause every year they’re like let’s go, we
can go, but then it always turns out that we can’t, so then I’m just like oh whatever, I bet
we’re not going to go next year, and he’s like no don’t worry we’ll [go] ... he always
tells me we’ll do it for sure and stuff ...

... when he’d leave, my mom would come in and talk to me, and then we’d talk about it,
my dad’s fight ... she’d be like oh what happened, and I’d just tell her what happened,
and she’d be like oh don’t worry about it, don’t get upset about it, and I’m like ok ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent being concerned about adolescent:

... lately I’ve been like just kind of mad and stuff and cranky, and so then he asked me
what was wrong lately, and then I just told him like a lot of schoolwork and it was hard
... it really felt good, cause it felt like somebody actually cared and stuff, and it felt better

... he jumps to little conclusions and stuff, and my mom’s just sitting there going oh I
feel so sorry for her, she comes up to me and says are you ok, do you want me to go up
and stop him, and I’m like no it’s ok ...

... [I] know he cares and he always wants to see me happy, it’s like it’s so sweet, like
what if he doesn’t like the house, like why is spending so much money if he doesn’t even
want it ...

... when he says oh go work, I’m like oh god I don’t want to go work, but then I’m just
like aww he’s right, and then I feel glad that he actually cares kind of thing, or that he’ll
actually make the effort to say something ...
when he’d leave, my mom would come in and talk to me, and then we’d talk about it, my dad’s fight ... she’d be like oh what happened, and I’d just tell her what happened ... cause when she takes my side, like oh I know, don’t listen to him that kind of thing ... or if she says oh your father’s right, then I get like upset, like don’t take sides you know ... but I’m glad that at least somebody came to talk to me about it ... sometimes I just want to be alone, sometimes, but usually when she talks about it it’s ok ... cause if she didn’t come and talk to me, it’d make me more upset, so that wouldn’t be good ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent being curious about adolescent:

... we were taking a walk, like just me and my mom, and then she just started asking me about how school was and my friends ... and then she asked me about like the different kinds of people that I hang around with mostly, and then she asked me about what they were like ... she just like asked more questions about them ... like what kind of things do I do with them at school, and out of school, during lunch time and stuff ... and she asked like about how they did in school too ...

... and then I started wearing a whole bunch of bracelets, which in raves, I’m a candy raver, so bracelets are like friendship, if you meet a person, you give them a bracelet, and they meet you, you get a bracelet, so I have bracelets all the way up to here, so she asked me why do you wear so much bracelets ... and I told her the whole friendship aspect, and she would ask questions; like she would always ask questions ...

... [I can tell she’s listening when] she asks me questions ...

... well he would he would ask me why I would like an allowance, the reasons for why I would need it ...

... my dad and my mom were talking a while ago, and they were thinking of making my room into a dining room, and he was going to build me a room downstairs near my brother’s, so he came into my room and asked me what I felt about that ...

... I wasn’t doing so well in school, and I talked to my mom first, and she was very mad at me at first, and then after we just started talking about it, like maybe why I’m doing not so well ...

... he’ll give me confusing, no not confusing questions, but difficult questions to answer, and he’ll expect me to answer them properly even if I don’t have an answer right then and there, I’ll have to find it, and he’ll wait for me to find it, and it feels very long, because there’ll be silent moments when I’m trying to figure out the answer ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent demanding something from adolescent:

... she tells us not to bring people over every day ... but like I don’t bring people over every day, like not at all you know, so if I bring a friend over or two or something like a
couple of times a week, or not even, I don’t even do that, like it’s not so big of a deal, so like she just kind of goes overboard sometimes where she’s trying to prove a point, and she just over exaggerates what she’s actually trying to say, so she’s sometimes like don’t bring any friends over for a whole month or something, it’s just kind of like whatever ...

... she has said don’t bring any friends over, and she’s going out this weekend, or for like the whole week or something, and she’s going to be gone, and she’s like don’t bring anyone over, and we probably will, and it just won’t matter, because she’ll be like yeah whatever, we just kind of do it and she just doesn’t ... cause it’s not reasonable, so we’re not going to, and she probably knows that we’re not going to ... like she’s serious at the time when she’s saying it but, like we usually we do what she says, it’s just not so much what she says, like a month or whatever like, no I don’t think so ...

... she wanted me to go visit family, and I didn’t want to that weekend, cause I just saw them the weekend before, and then she said no your going, and then I got upset, and she’s like fine you don’t have to go but then you’re not allowed to go out, and then I’m like oh that’s not fair ...

... [I feel] a little bit disappointed [when they say no] ... like sometimes I’m fine with that but disappointed, and other times, come on, please, please ... [then they say] no, no, no, unless sometimes they continue saying no and then I go and I say ok, but sometimes it just gets to the point where I nag too much and they say yes ... after, if it’s approved, I sort of feel like, you said no though, like I got my wish but then they said no and I nagged them and then I got my way, like I sort of feel, I can’t find the word, but you know what I mean ... yeah regret that’s it ... maybe not regret but you know what I mean ...

... I’m just like so are we going dad, and he was like well I don’t know, we can’t really this year and stuff ... I’m just like how come we can’t go, and he’s like because I don’t have enough time, and like it’s just too like hard this year, and also it’s like too much money ... I was kind of like disappointed cause I thought we were actually going to go this time, but he was like no, then I was like kind of sad, bummed out ...

... I went to the kitchen and asked my mom like mom can I go out with my friends to a movie, and she’s just like oh no not today, and I’m like why not, and we just started having the conversation ... she was like you have to stay home with the kids, and I’m like well the kids are old enough to take care of themselves, I was kind of like pissed off, and then she’s like no you cancel ...

... she’d be like no, just let them finish their show whatever, and you can have it after that, and I’d be like well before I came from school they had like so many shows, they’ve been sitting here all day, and she’s like oh it doesn’t matter, they’re smaller than you, just let them have their show ...

... like I go home, and my mom and my dad are like I never see you do any work, or you never get any homework, so they go you’re always watching TV, or on the computer, and I’m like cause I don’t have any work, and they’re like well do some extra, do some extra
work at home, and they usually don’t let me go out or anything until they see me get good marks, or they like see me do work I guess ...

... she was like no I don’t want to hear it ... I don’t want to hear it, and if you say one more thing, you’re grounded, and then it’s kind of like forcing me to be quiet when I need to talk ... like it’s really stupid ...

... well I had an opportunity to go on a trip this year, and my mom told me a week before the day you had to have your money in that I could go if I made the team and everything, and then a week passed, and then she said oh it’s going to cost too much money, it’s not going to be worth it, you can’t go now ... I was really upset ... I didn’t even want to talk to my parents, they completely didn’t even give me the opportunity to talk about it, they were just like you’re not going, that’s it, so I just ignored them for a while ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent disagreeing with adolescent’s point of view:

... the person you’re going to spend the rest of your life with, it doesn’t have to be like your first, or it doesn’t have to be your like second, or anything, like even if it’s like your twentieth or whatever, it still doesn’t mean anything, and she didn’t agree with that ... [I felt] just kind of like frustrated, cause it’s not like she has to give me permission, cause even if I did, it wouldn’t matter to her, like she’d still like treat me the same, but she just doesn’t agree, and it just kind of, it just bothered me, cause I want her to agree with, you know, cause I don’t want to be like, not that she would be mad at me or anything, she would just be like thinking I did something wrong or something ... like, that’s why I was trying to convince her ... like she doesn’t agree with me, she doesn’t see my point ... like she’s fine, she wouldn’t care, but I would know that she would be like thinking that I did something that she wouldn’t do, so then it’s kind of, mmm...

... I was like why, why don’t you say anything, and I was like even if they are your sisters they don’t have the right to like hurt you, like hurt your feelings, and she was like oh no it’s not a big deal, and I was like it is, you never say anything to them, whenever they say something to you, you never say stop ... she’s just like no, no you’re wrong, and I’m like no I’m not wrong, you just don’t see it, and ahhh it just makes me frustrated ...

... I’d talk about like oh you talk on the phone too a lot, and she’d be like yeah but they’re not so long, and I’d go well sometimes they are ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent disapproving of adolescent’s actions:

... she’s like well if you do that thing to your hair people might stereotype you and not really like that ...

... and she thought with the drugs I would be hanging around people who do drugs ... she’s like yeah but you’ll hang around them, and they’ll offer you drugs, and you’ll have to because you’re part of them, and you’ll have all these piercings, and it was like
offensive again ... she was sort of like, do you realize if you get a whole bunch of piercings and you are going to go to a new school, and automatically the drug users in your school will assume that you are one of them, and that was sort of a racist comment to me because like just because people have piercings doesn't mean that they are drug users ...

... with her saying all those really not so nice things about raves, that sort of hurt me, and how she was sort of saying that about my friends, it was sort of like she was saying that about my friends ... the only time where I really find it offensive is when she stereotypes my friends ...

... I was like why, did he come and stuff like that ... she was just like oh why do you always do this, and I'm like don't you understand he's not nice ...

... she's like man you talk so much, blah, blah, blah, and I was like I'm just letting you know like you never step out and like say what's right and what's wrong ... I'm just like god, why do you put up with this, like I would tell her, but then my mom would get mad and she'd [be] like god she's a nosy little kid ...

... and she was just like oh you act so old, like you just act like you're opinion is the only one that's right, and she's all like you don't know, you're just little, you don't know anything, and I'm like ahhhh ... like I was just like, god can you just not see that, god are you like blind or something, like look at them ...

... like this term I had such easy classes, and usually I get my homework done at school, so like I go home, and my mom and my dad are like I never see you do any work or you never get any homework, so they go you're always watching TV or on the computer, and I'm like cause I don't have any work ...

... I wasn't doing so well in school, and I talked to my mom first, and she was very mad at me at first, and then after we just started talking about it, like maybe why I'm doing not so well, and why I should be telling her earlier and stuff like that ... I felt very disappointed in myself for not telling her earlier and letting her down ...

... sometimes she thinks it's weird that I'll talk on the phone for a really long time ...

Adolescent's experience of parent expresses and opinion to adolescent:

... I was in my room and then she just came in and, like the people below they were making this really loud racket and stuff, and she was getting kind of mad and stuff, and she didn't really appreciate them ... she didn't really like them ... I wasn't too happy with them either and like both of us were feeling the same thing ... we agreed on our frustrations ...

... and she's like you do realize Adele if you go to a new school, you will be attracting some unwanted attention from teachers, and maybe your grades would go down ...
said] my grades are awesome right now, my grades are fine ... I was sort of mad, I don’t know ...

... and she said like you know you should do it with the person that you’re going to be with the rest of your life, and I told her like I don’t think like that’s how it should be ...

... and she’s like I was happy, and I just want everyone to share my happiness, and I was like well if you have someone that puts you down, you shouldn’t just be like oh yeah that’s ok ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent giving information to adolescent:

... then he started talking about like education and my brother going away ... and then he said that it would be really different around the house ... I probably had like a better understanding of what was going on ... and I probably kind of understood what it would be like around the house ... and probably what he was thinking too about the situation ...

... he just kind of sat and like listened, and after a while he suggested a few things that I could do ... he said like maybe try other suggestions, and then if they don’t really work and I’m still having trouble at school, then maybe just take a shot at it and try that one ... I probably felt like much better, cause I had some things that I could do about my problem that he had suggested to me, and yeah I felt better ...

... she’s like it’s fine, it’s your choice, like you’re old enough to know what you’re doing, but she told me that it would ruin my life, and like I’d get addicted and stuff ...

... then she just told me that if I ever needed help, if I ever felt that I was losing control when I was drinking, that I have many sources, and not to be afraid to go to it, and that she won’t be upset with me or mad at me ... the last thing she just said is to never keep it in, if I need help, never try to cover it up ...

... so I tell her the stuff, but she doesn’t really comment on it too much until it’s happened a lot, and then she’s just like you don’t need him, like if you want to stop talking to him, don’t acknowledge him right ... but we don’t go to in depth to it ...

... well they said ... maybe go to your counsellor, or maybe do this or do that ...

... I’m just like how come we can’t go, and he’s like because I don’t have enough time, and like it’s just too like hard this year, and also it’s like too much money ... like he never really gets mad, it’s just like I get mad, but he’s like good, he explains it good ...

... with my siblings I usually fight with them all the time, and my mom’s like just cause they’re smaller, just give in, who cares, like it doesn’t really matter right, they’ll learn, they’re like oh yeah my sister is being so nice and stuff, and so they’ll keep that in their mind, and they maybe do something for you after ...
... and he's like oh yeah, you should go to work, and he'll give me the whole talk, like get ahead, go to work, don't be a slacker, blah, blah, blah and that kind of stuff ... he'll talk to me about you know go get a job and stuff, stop being lazy, clean your room, he just wants me to be organized and stuff pretty much ...

... she'd always give me that kind of talk, like you don't have to listen to your friends if they tell you to do this ...

Adolescent's experience of parent granting autonomy:

... he also had another suggestion that he liked more, but like I didn't really like it that much ... I just said that I don't think it was that great of an idea ... he said like maybe try other suggestions, and then if they don't really work and I'm still having trouble at school, then maybe just take a shot at it and try that one ...

... he explained like where my bedroom would be, he showed me where it was going to be and stuff, and he asked me like what I wanted, cause we've got like a bar down there, and he was going to take it out, and then I said if he could leave it in there so I could use it for storage, so he agreed with me for that ...

... I asked her what would she do if I like if I did drugs tomorrow or something, and she's like it's fine, it's your choice, like you're old enough to know what you're doing, but she told me that it would ruin my life, and like I'd get addicted ...

... It was good, because some people might just be like well why are you doing this, I mean you seen how bad I got, why would you want to do that too, so she understood that even though I'd seen the bad part of it, I still was taking the risk myself ... she's not like allowing me, she's not like oh you go and drink and stuff, but she's not going to hassle me about it, because then she knows I won't tell her about it, and I'm very honest with my mom on that, because I know she won't get mad at me ...

... it was about me coloring my hair, like streaking it, like I wanted to colour it purple ... and I was asking for that, and she's just like well I really don't mind ... and she's like if I let you get streaks, they [my relatives] are going to be like oh well she's just going to school just to like show herself off and stuff, like they'll just say little things, like oh you know school is for work, not to like attract anyone or just to look good ... and I knew she was right, cause I knew they'd say something like oh how old are you, oh but you're acting like a 21 year old, and I'd just feel like ohh ... she's like you know I'm ok with it you know, but she's like you'll just have to handle everyone [else] ... then she was like oh you'll have to handle everyone, and I'm like no, I don't want to go through all that with everyone ... and maybe it [my hair] does look bad, and I'll just keep thinking that ... and maybe she did it on purpose, cause she knew, she's like oh go ahead, and she'd get my hopes high, and then, but you'll just have to handle everyone else ... [she kind of left the decision] up to me, so I could get it, but then I'd have to handle everyone else with the comments about my hair ...
Adolescent’s experience of parent being interested in adolescent:

... she just started asking me about how school was, and my friends ... and then I was talking about like some of my really close friends, and how like their life was right now, and kind of struggles that they were having, and we talked about my best friend ... and then she asked me about like the different kinds of people that like I hang around with mostly, and then she asked me about what they were like ... she just like asked more questions about them ... she just asked like what kind of things do I do with them at school, and out of school, during lunch time ... and she asked like about how they did in school too ... I felt like very relieved and stuff, and it felt good to tell her about my friends and stuff so she’d know a bit more about the different kind of people that I was with ...

... there wasn’t really any distractions, and it was just me and her, and she was interested, and she wasn’t like busy or anything ... [I felt understood] cause she was actually listening and not busy ... [I knew she was listening] because when she started asking questions, I replied, and then after, she asked some more questions on what I had just told her, and she understood and knew what I was going through ...

... he was in the mood to talk about it, cause normally he’s either busy or just tired ... I guess he wanted to know a bit more about how much my brother helped me, and how much I’d have to be like depending on my self if he were gone ...

... he was going to build me a room downstairs near my brother’s, so he came into my room and asked me what I felt about that ... he explained like where my bedroom would be, he showed me where it was going to be and stuff, and he asked me like what I wanted and stuff ... and he showed me some other things downstairs that I’d be able to use to make my room and stuff, so it will be a lot easier for me ...

... I ran the 5 k fun run, and they talked like how did you do, and just talked a little bit about it ... I met my parents in front of somewhere to watch the parade, and we sort of talked about it for a few minutes ... [they said] good’job, like what was your time; how did you do ... I felt great, something I accomplished, something I’d like to do again ...

... he was writing something down, he was talking to somebody on the phone, I think he was writing down like a message or something, and then I asked him, and then he put the phone down, and then we just started talking ... I like it [when he puts things aside] cause then I feel like he’s actually listening to me and stuff ...

... and she’d be like so how’s your guitar practice ...

... usually we’ll talk about music like on the radio, she’s like oh do you know the name of this song, and I think it’s really good, and I’m like oh yeah, and she’ll be like oh I think you’ll like it, and just like that kind of stuff ... usually her music isn’t the best I guess but it’s ok, I’m just like mom you’re such a loser, but then I think about it and I’m like my mom’s pretty cool, cause I look at other moms and like they don’t even like talk
to their kids about like music, or they don’t even listen to like any radio at all or whatever, but she does, so my mom is pretty cool I guess ...

... usually I’m like mom look what I did on my math test or my whatever, and she’ll be like oh, and she actually looks interested, and that makes me feel good ... sometimes I’ll show her the test, and she’ll actually look through it, and then she’ll be like oh that’s great or whatever ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent listening to adolescent:

... [I felt understood] cause she was actually listening and not busy ... [I knew she was listening] because when she started asking questions, I replied, and then after, she asked some more questions on what I had just told her, and she understood and knew what I was going through ...

... [when I told him] he just kind of sat and listened ...

... I had to be patient, but it wasn’t a bad kind of patient, it wasn’t like oh she won’t let me go, she actually listened to me ...

... [one thing that stands out for me is] that she was able to listen ... I don’t feel like she knows she’s right and she won’t listen to anything else but herself, she doesn’t do that, she will listen to me, and I know she is listening to me, which is really nice because some parents, like my dad, they won’t really listen to you, if they say something, if that’s not going to happen, it won’t happen, if they’re right, they’re right ...

... she listens, and she actually listens ...

... well it was really easy to go to my dad first, because I can talk to my dad about anything, because he’s sort of the one that understands it more, and he listens to my conversations openly ...

... she doesn’t talk too much because usually those are the times when I’m freaking out, and I’ve had enough, and I need to vent, and so I just like talk, talk, talk, talk, and she kind of just listens, and she doesn’t really say too much ... she just lets me talk and she just listens, and then that’s all I need, cause I don’t really need to talk about it, because I’ve already talked about it with all my friends and stuff, so I kind of just need to tell her the story, cause my friends are sick of hearing it, so I get to tell her, and she doesn’t really say too much ... but it’s good ...

... I think he was writing something down, he was talking to somebody on the phone, I think he was writing down like a message or something, and then I asked him, and then he put the phone down, and then we just started talking ... I like it because then I feel like he’s actually listening to me and stuff ...
Adolescent’s experience of parent offering help to adolescent:

... she told me that if I ever needed help I could go to her, and like if I was ever in trouble because I got too drunk or something, just to call home, and she won’t get mad at me, like if I need a place to stay, to call her so she’d come pick me up ... and that worked because about two months later, I got really [drunk] and I didn’t know where to sleep, and I was going to sleep at a friend’s house, but I couldn’t anymore, so I called her, not being scared, I wasn’t scared that she was mad at me, and then she came, and she picked me up, and she didn’t get mad at me ... I was very emotional at the time, I was crying and stuff; and she was fine, and the next day, she asked me how it was, and I told her I didn’t like it, and I told her that the only reason why I called her is because I remember her telling me in the conversation that she wouldn’t get mad, and she’d be there to help me, so I called her, and I wasn’t scared when I called her, and I wasn’t scared when I seen her, I was ashamed, but I wasn’t scared ...

... so she said the same thing for me, that if I ever feel that there’s too much drinking around me, we can change our location ... 

... [if I had a problem] maybe they’d help me out somehow ...

... she was saying like what can I help you, how can I help you ...

... my friend just got her first boyfriend or whatever, and my mom she asked me oh has her mom given her the sex talk, and I’m like oh I don’t think so, cause they’re not as close, and she’s like oh if she ever needs somebody she can always count on me ... I was surprised, I was surprised she said that, I didn’t think she’d say something like that, but then after a while I was like oh that’s pretty cool ... I think she was trying to show that she could be there for me, and other people, and that she felt comfortable talking about that kind of stuff with me, and that she’d be not only a mom to me, but a mom to my friend too if they needed it kind of a thing ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent being open-minded with adolescent:

... it wasn’t like oh she won’t let me go, she actually listened to me ... she had to listen she had to think about it for a while ... usually it [the conversation] would end off she would kind of think about what I had said, and she’d say I’ll think about it Adele ... I know she’s thinking about it, at least she’s not just saying no, and she’s respecting my opinion ... she was able to listen ... I don’t feel like she knows she’s right and she won’t listen to anything else but herself, she doesn’t do that, she will listen to me and I know she is listening to me, which is really nice, because some parents like my dad, they won’t really listen to you ... if that’s not going to happen, it won’t happen, if they’re right, they’re right ... and what he [dad] does is he doesn’t listen like my mom does, he’s always right, like he’s always been right, no one else can be right except him ...

... I can talk to my dad about anything, cause he’s sort of the one that understands it more, and he listens to my conversations openly ...
... she called me in and asked me to answer the questions honestly and that she wouldn’t react ... in a bad way, and then she asked me if I did drugs, and I said no ... then she asked me if I drank, and I told her the truth because I did, but she didn’t get mad at me because she understands ... she’s not like allowing me, she’s not like oh you go and drink and stuff, but she’s not going to hassle me about it because then she knows I won’t tell her about it, and I’m very honest with my mom on that because I know she won’t get mad at me ... I tell her a lot more now too because it was kind of like the tester, and now I realize that she’s not going to get mad at me for my decisions, she won’t be happy with me, but she never tells me she’s mad at me, she says she’s disappointed in my actions, but she never tells me that she’s mad at me, so now I tell her a lot, so it’s kind of opened it [the relationship] up even more than it was already open ...

... I was like oh but you know I’m not going to be doing that, you know I’m just having a little sleepover, and they’re just like true, true, and I was like you can’t just be scared of something that’s not really going to happen, and I was just like there are so many chances like even if I cross the street who knows what’s going to happen, you can’t just always be scared, and then they’re like that’s right, that’s right, and then it just ended up compromising ... well they didn’t want me to sleep over at all, and I kind of got like my closest friends so I can sleep over at their houses, but they kind of have to get to know them so that’s kind of their advantage they get to know my friends first ... I was like ok I can talk to them, you know I can just be like yeah I’m going to go to this birthday, and they’ll go like oh they can feel like asking me like oh where are you going, and I could just like tell them, cause I really don’t like, I really don’t want to lie to my parents, I’ll just let them know and they’ll just be fine with it ... but like if they did say no and like no sleepovers, I’d kind of be like I don’t want to talk to you guys right now you know, so it would kind of change my mood, and if they’d ask me oh where are you going, I’d be like it’s none of your business, like you don’t even need to know ... so that’s how it kind of strengthened my relationship, I was able to talk to them, like even if they had any questions I’d be like oh sure, I’ll let you know, we’re just doing nothing, and who’s coming ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent telling stories to adolescent:

... my dad and I, when we were talking about everything, and I was talking about how I could go out with my friends and stuff, he had sort of the same thing when he was a kid, so he was telling me his stories about when he was a kid; so I sort of felt closer to him then ...

... she asked me how it was, and I told her it wasn’t that great, and then she said yeah, she related and said that when she did it the first time it wasn’t that great either ...

... when she finally did clean up, it was because of the help of a family member, so she used it as an example, like you know I didn’t do it just on my own, I had the support of my family ...
... and she’d be like so how’s your guitar practice, and I’d be like oh it was hard, my fingers are tired and hurt, and I want to chop them off... she’d be like oh I remember when my friends used to play guitar and they’d be complaining too ...

... cause he’ll tell me what happened, like he’ll be like yeah I got a job when I was just about your age, but all my friends were just going to parties you know, and like it’s ok to go have fun, but like you’ve got to realize when work was good ... and then he’ll say then when I was older I had money to buy my own things and they’re just scrambling to get a job and they need their parents’ help, so he’s just trying to help me get ahead ... so just hearing him tell me like all those kind of stories, I’m like wow this is pretty cool, like listening to their childhood kind of things, I like that too ... I’d be like wow that’s pretty cool, like I didn’t realize you were such a kid, and he still is right ... I don’t know, I find it really interesting you know ...

Adolescent’s experience of parent understanding adolescent:

... when she started asking questions, I replied, and then after, she asked some more questions on what I had just told her, and she understood and knew what I was going through ...

... I felt kind of like relieved [after telling him] cause I was like getting the anger a bit out, I also felt a bit better maybe like cause someone else actually understood what I was feeling like ...

... she would be like kind of hesitantly, but she would realize how much I loved it ...

... my mom knows me well enough that I don’t go along with everybody, I’m not a follower, I’m more like a leader, so she sort of knew that, and I think that sort of helped with the decision ...

... yeah, I had these glow sticks and I made really awesome shapes with them, and she was realizing how much I loved this and everything ...

... I told her the whole friendship aspect, and friends have always been very important to me, and she realized that that was important too ...

... I usually talked to my dad about the allowance thing cause as I said before my mom never got one so she didn’t understand about it ... I can talk to my dad about anything cause he’s sort of the one that understands it more ...

... but she didn’t get mad at me because she understands, because she’s been through the same thing ...

... she understands that if she doesn’t listen to what I have to say, I’m not going to tell her again, and that she’s not going to know, so it’s kind of her choice, she has a choice to listen, and she knows that she’ll benefit ... if she doesn’t listen, then she won’t
know, and I won’t tell her, and then we’ll come into bad stuff, because I’ll be in trouble because I won’t have somebody to go to, and she’s aware of that, cause I tell her …

… they were just like alright, I understand your point of view, and then they were like yeah I’ve met your friends, and they’re all nice people, and their family’s are nice, and they don’t do any bad like drugs and stuff, and they were like so I know those are good girls and you won’t do anything bad …

… sometimes I’m in that mode where you [my parents] don’t know what I’m going through, you don’t know how it is, that kind of thing … but they actually do, when I actually think about it, I’m like yeah they do …

Adolescent’s experience of parent withdrawing from adolescent:

… she gets upset and then she doesn’t talk to you or whatever, so you’re kind of like talking and she’s like ignoring you, and it’s so annoying, like I don’t do that, like I’m more mature, like the conversation is over, don’t be so like oh you’re not going to talk to me cause we fought … it’s really, I don’t want to say annoying, but it is, like I got your point you know, we’ve fought about it, so I got your point, you don’t have to make a whole scene, that’s for like little kids, like I get it, so let’s go on with our lives, it’s over, it just makes me like not mad just kind of like angry, if there’s a difference …

… and so it seemed like she just stopped caring, if I told her I’m like oh he said hi to me again today, and she’s all like yeah whatever, she didn’t care, because she’s like sick of it, she’s like what are you doing about it, just get over him right, so when I don’t get it [the attention] it’s really hard, cause I was like ok thanks, thanks for listening, thanks for caring … she just nods her head, or just says yes right … or she’ll be like on the computer and I’ll tell her, and she won’t even stop, she’ll be like oh yeah … and you can tell just by the way, like her face and everything, you can just tell that she’s just not interested …

… I told her it kind of got out of control around ten o’clock, and she said well did the cops show up or anything, and I said no, and she said oh because there was drinking there, and I said yeah, but she actually didn’t even ask me if I was drinking or anything, and I kind of I want her to be able to talk to me about it, cause I want there to be that trust there, but I guess she trusts me, I don’t know … I was actually a little upset, cause I just wanted her to be able to talk to me a little bit about it and know that it’s not my thing … and she didn’t talk to me about it … and she was just, I guess she wasn’t worried about it, which is kind of nice for me, but at the same time it would be nicer if she said I trust you, you’re smart …

… well lately she’s been frustrating me, because our teachers are giving us our marks, cause there’s only a week left, and I told her I was getting the highest mark in socials, and I’m getting 89%, and she’s just like umm that’s good, and I was expecting a good job or a hug or something, but it’s just like a nod or something like that … it just makes me angry kind of I guess, I hope that that’s good enough, like I don’t want her to think that that’s
not good enough ... it just kind of makes me wonder if she understands ... yesterday I
told her I was getting the highest mark in socials ... and she's like oh that's good ...
[then] she walked away, she was doing the laundry ...

Adolescent's experience of parent being worried about adolescent:

... and my mom was sort of concerned about that when I went like oh I want to go to a
rave ... oh she was just, just her eyes, and her eyebrows were raised and everything, she
was worried ... she would go Adele I'm really not sure ... she was also worried that I
was also getting into this like hard core, and I hadn't even gone to raves yet ... [she said]
what if you go there and all your friends they are only your friends because they want
you to do drugs ... she's like well if you do that thing to your hair people might
stereotype you and not really like that ... she's like yeah but you'll hang around them,
and they'll offer you drugs, and you'll have to because you're part of them, and you'll
have all these piercings, and it was like offensive again ... I would kind of get defensive,
because I knew these people, and everyone just thinks that they're there for the drugs, but
there's people who don't do drugs there, there's a lot of people who don't do drugs there,
the stupid people do drugs and they're not able to enjoy the music ...

... my dad, once his friend like died cause he went to a party ... and so he's kind of
scared that I'll go do something, you know how there is this speed racing and stuff, and
then we were talking, and I was like it's not fair cause I need my freedom I need to sleep
over and stuff ... and they're all like oh yeah it's just because of my friend like he passed
away, and I'm kind of scared of that, and I don't want anything to happen to my
daughter, and my dad's like this, and then I was like oh but you know I'm not going to be
doing that, you know I'm just having a little sleepover

... I came home late, and she was like oh where were you, and I was like I was talking to
the counsellor, and then she's all like oh what happened, and she was all worried, and I
was like oh nothing happened, and like my friend or my ex-friend and we were just
talking, and I told her everything that happened, and I was just like oh I hate her so much,
like I really don't like that girl, and she was all like oh well are you getting bullied, and
she just went on, and I was like no, no nothing's wrong, and she's like well if there's
anything wrong, she just got overreacted, and I was like oh my god there's nothing, and
she's like oh I don't like talking to you like this, she's like oh really are you sure, are you
fine, and I'm like no nothing happened to me, calm down ... and my mom's like oh no-
please I don't want you to, you guys are going to fight aren't you guys, and I'm like no
we're not going to fight, there's nothing wrong ...