

Who Should I Talk to About Him? Guided Cognitive Reframing with Non-Parental Sources About the Father-Child Relationship

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Although conflict increases between parents and children in early adolescence, less is known about how adolescents interpret and cope with such conflict. Previously (Cookston et al., 2015), we found that adolescents commonly seek out non-parental figures to help them understand or reframe their relationships with their co-residential fathers/stepfathers, with mothers being the most commonly sought source. In the current study, we limited our sample to those adolescents (N = 129) who indicated they only spoke to one other reframing agent (versus multiple agents). We assessed two readily categories along which the other sources varied: (1) age (i.e., younger sources such as siblings and friends versus older ones such as aunts and teacher) and (2) whether the source of reframing was related to the child (e.g., siblings, grandparents) or not (e.g., friends, school counselor). Both models followed a novel nine pathway solution that included a link between more frequent reframing and feeling worse about the father-child relationship after reframing. Contrary to our hypothesis, the age model did not show any differences in pathways between older and younger sources. The family relation model supported part of our second hypothesis where two pathways could not be fixed between the two categories, suggesting differences in guided cognitive reframing between related and unrelated sources.