

Week 6 Extra Credit
GENDER DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN ADULT
FRIENDSHIPS: CAN WOMEN AND MEN BE BEST
FRIENDS?

Purpose: This exercise is designed to evaluate the nature of same-sex and cross-sex friendships in adulthood.

Instructions: Using the data sheets on the following pages, interview four adults about their friends and their understanding of friendship. Recruit two women and two men who are willing to complete a short questionnaire. Select a variety of participants for this project. Include four people who vary not only by sex but by other social categories (for example, age, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, etc.). Describe each participant by indicating her or his sex, age, and social attributes (for example, race or ethnicity, social class, etc.) at the top of each interview form.

Then, summarize your findings by answering the following questions.

1. Compare and contrast your participants' responses to the research discussed in the text. Do your findings support the research findings? How? Are any responses inconsistent with the research? How would you explain this?

2. What do you conclude? How are men and women's cross-sex and same-sex friendships similar? How do they differ?

3. Elkins and Peterson (1993) found that a substantial proportion of college-aged women (45%) and men (47%) identified their romantic partners as their best friends. Were your results similar?

Reference: Elkins, Leight E., & Peterson, Christopher (1993). Gender differences in best friendships. *Sex Roles*, 29, 497-508.

Participant A

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments _____

This survey asks you to describe two of your closest friendships. The questions will ask you about your relationship with your best female friend and your best male friend. Think for a minute about these two friends, then answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response.

1. How often do you share your personal problems and feelings with your friend?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	

2. How well would you say your friends know the “real you”?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	

3. How would you describe these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	

4. How do you feel about these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	

5. Are you romantically involved with your female friend? Yes No

6. Are you romantically involved with your male friend? Yes No

Participant B

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments _____

This survey asks you to describe two of your closest friendships. The questions will ask you about your relationship with your best female friend and your best male friend. Think for a minute about these two friends, then answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response.

1. How often do you share your personal problems and feelings with your friend?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	

2. How well would you say your friends know the “real you”?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	

3. How would you describe these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	

4. How do you feel about these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	

5. Are you romantically involved with your female friend? Yes No

6. Are you romantically involved with your male friend? Yes No

Participant C

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments _____

This survey asks you to describe two of your closest friendships. The questions will ask you about your relationship with your best female friend and your best male friend. Think for a minute about these two friends, then answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response.

1. How often do you share your personal problems and feelings with your friend?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	

2. How well would you say your friends know the “real you”?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	

3. How would you describe these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	

4. How do you feel about these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	

5. Are you romantically involved with your female friend? Yes No

6. Are you romantically involved with your male friend? Yes No

Participant D

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments _____

This survey asks you to describe two of your closest friendships. The questions will ask you about your relationship with your best female friend and your best male friend. Think for a minute about these two friends, then answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response.

1. How often do you share your personal problems and feelings with your friend?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Seldom					Always	

2. How well would you say your friends know the “real you”?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not very well					Extremely well	

3. How would you describe these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Casual					Very intimate	

4. How do you feel about these two relationships?

Female friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	
Male friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	

5. Are you romantically involved with your female friend? Yes No

6. Are you romantically involved with your male friend? Yes No