

## Background

- Parent-adolescent relationships are one of the first relationships that adolescents form and are important as these relationships last a lifetime. Conflict within a parent-adolescent dyadic relationship is inevitable and is often stressful for both parties.
- Hostility is often perceived as counterproductive and destructive to conflict resolution.
- Previous literature revealed that parents' temperaments have significant influence on their adolescent's perceptions of their relationships with them (Kawaguchi, Welsh, Powers, & Rostosky, 1998).
- The way in which parents present themselves during conflict within a parent-adolescent relationship has a major impact on how teens respond during conflict (Montemayor & Hanson, 1985). Parents who are less hostile and focused more on the problem are more likely to resolve conflict with their adolescent (Marceau et al., 2015). When teens believe that their parents engaged in disputes and conflict first, there is a greater potential for teens to perceive the outcome of the conflict negatively, affecting the ability of the dyad to resolve conflict (Riesch et al., 2003).
- This study aims to analyze the influence and temporal patterning of nonverbal hostile behaviors within the context of conflict resolution.

## Research Hypotheses

- Parents who demonstrate **low hostility** levels at the **beginning** of the discussion task are **more likely** to resolve conflict with their adolescents than parents who exhibit **low hostility** levels towards the **end** of the discussion task.
- We predict that any hostility that becomes apparent towards the end of the discussion tasks will signal to the adolescent that their parent is becoming uncooperative, increasing their accommodation and efforts to resolve a conflict.

## Method

### Participants

- 42 families (parents and their adolescent sons or daughters).
- Families recruited through flyers and community advertisements
- Adolescents ranged from 14-16 years old and have no history of developmental delays and parent had to be employed full time outside of the home (40 hours a week).

### Materials and Measures

- Standard personal computer with Microsoft Excel to record and analyze the data.
- In the video recordings, parents and adolescents participate in two conflict discussion tasks in which they are instructed to resolve two past and/or current issues.
- Each discussion task has a duration of 6 minutes
- The hostile nonverbal behavior for which we will code for are taken from Ehrlich's et al. (2010) parent-teen discussion coding manual.

### Procedure

- The FIRE study is four to five hours and participants go through multiple tasks.
- Participants underwent physiological measures of stress (heart rate, heart rate variability, and subjective reports of arousal) and individually took part in To(may)to-To(mah)to Interview (TTI)
- Participants individually completed stress tasks.
- Randomization of the stress tasks assigned the participants to either a high-stress task or a low-stress task.
- The dyad faced two topics of conflict in discussion and each topic of conflict lasted six minutes
- Once discussion task is over, participants individually completed performance measures which test risk tolerance, memory, etc.

### Coding

- Coders trained to learn the coding scheme.
- Coders compared results in pairs in order to see if reliability was established or not.
- If the pair did not reach reliability their first round, the coders discuss ed discrepancies and then coded an additional three new videos. This process was to be repeated within the pairs until reliability was established.
- Once the pair has established reliability, data collection began.
- Periodic reliability checks occurred to maintain reliability as the process described above.

### Reliability

- The reliability for both pairs for the variable "Parental Hostility Toward Adolescent" was 0.86. For the conflict variable, there was also a reliability score of 1. Both were calculated using Pearson's r coefficient. For the Conflict and Conflict Resolution variables, both pairs had 100% match on inter-rater reliability coding.

# Can Patterns of Parental Hostility Predict Conflict Resolution between Parents and Adolescents?

Average Hostility Displayed by Parents in 30 Second Intervals for Types of Conflict Resolution

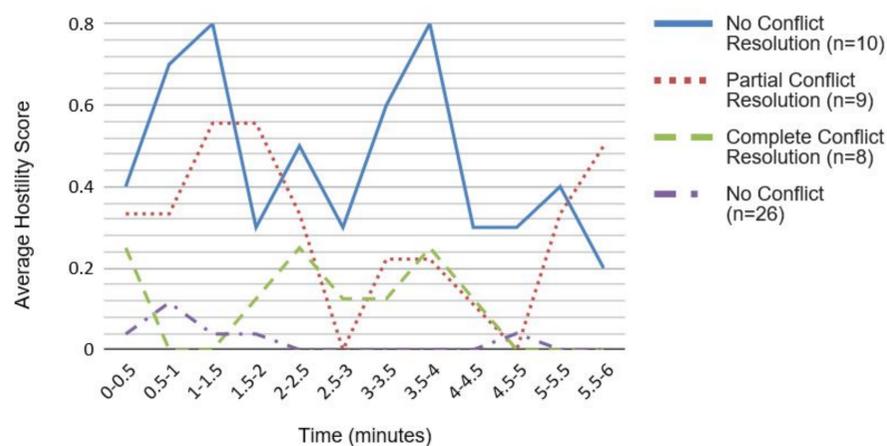
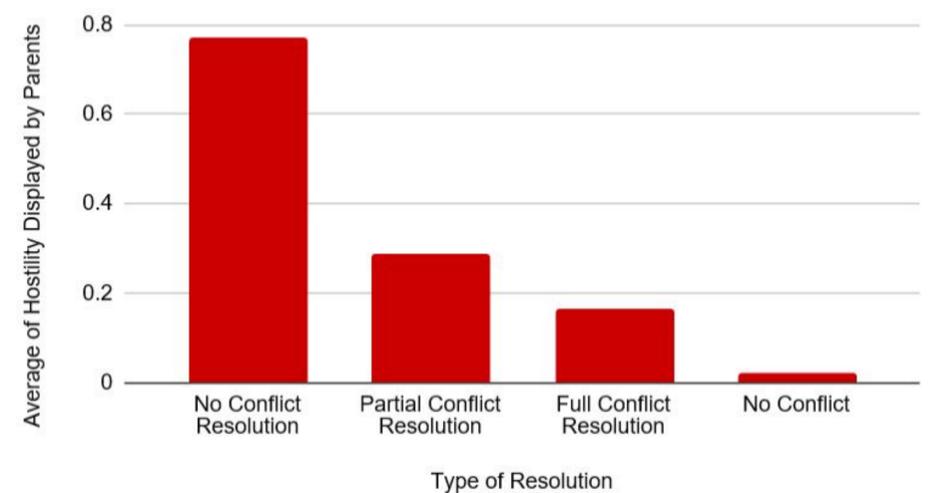


Figure 2. Average of Hostility Displayed by Parents



## Results

- Parental hostility scores obtained in the four conflict resolution groups were significantly different from each other,  $F(3, 49) = 8.411, p < .01$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean hostility scores obtained by No Resolution ( $M = 5.60, SD = 5.54$ ) were significantly higher than the parental hostility score obtained by Complete Resolution ( $M = 1.29, SD = 2.56$ ). In addition, the mean hostility scores obtained by No Resolution were significantly higher than scores obtained by No Conflict ( $M = 0.28, SD = 0.89$ ). Hostility scores were not significantly different between No Conflict Resolution and Partial Conflict Resolution, Partial Conflict Resolution and Complete Conflict Resolution, and Complete Resolution and No Conflict.

## Discussion

### Interpretation

- The ANOVA test indicated that the data analyzed was statistically significant due to the correlation of parental hostility.
- The average of hostility displayed by parents is differ from one another based on conflict resolution type
  - No conflict resolution had the highest average hostility whereas full conflict resolution had the lowest level of average hostility displayed when conflict was displayed
- There were low levels of hostility present at the beginning and hostility tends to increase as the discussion progresses
- Parents attempt to start the conversation in a civil manner before becoming hostile, possibly as a way to gain the teen's trust
- Dyad may become caught up in the moment and have a discussion that is not hostile, even if the body language and language makes it appear as so
- Presence of cameras and knowledge of recording may alter dyad's behavior and produce altered data

### Strengths

- Our topic, the progression of hostile behavior, has not been heavily researched
- Use of a micro-behavioral and global coding schemes together
- Blind study

### Limitations

- Coding will only come from the video discussion
- Many dyads did not experience conflict to begin with
- Dyad may have conflict outside of the topics they are comfortable talking about in front of cameras and researchers

### Implications

- Search for the "right" or "best" parenting method
- Counselors, therapists and related practitioners can use knowledge to assist with communication and mediation within dyadic relationships
- Studying hostility may provide insight on finding appropriate balance between accommodation, authority, and discipline exhibited by parents

### Future Studies

- Participants in this study are under controlled conditions and may feel the need to put on a "performance"
- A more naturalistic form of observation can reveal a clearer picture of how conflict resolution unfolds over time
- Previous studies have ruled out and labeled hostile approaches as destructive and aggressive
- It's important to understand why some parents choose certain behaviors over others
- Rather than disparage certain behaviors, it's important to conduct further research to understand behavior

Table 1

Descriptive Analytics for Overall Data Collected

Coding Unit	Mean	Median	Mode	Variance	St. Dev.
Parental Hostility Toward Adolescent	0.16	0	0	0.22	0.46
Conflict	0.51	1	1	0.25	0.51
Conflict Resolution	0.93	1	0	0.69	0.83

## References

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