The relationship between age, sex, self-disclosure, and neuroticism.

Phyllis Evelyn Elliott

University of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

This study was primarily an attempt to investigate the relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism. An additional problem was the examination of age and sex differences in self-disclosure.

Subjects were 103 boys and 110 girls from Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 in a Windsor high school. All subjects were given the Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory and the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. The BIN scores obtained on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory were used to measure neuroticism. Part I of the experiment examined the relationship between high, medium, and low self-disclosure scores and neuroticism for both boys and girls at all age levels. Part II of the experiment investigated differences in self-disclosure scores for both boys and girls at all age levels.

An analysis of variance in Part I of the experiment showed no statistically significant evidence of a relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism. An analysis of variance in Part II of the experiment gave evidence of significant group differences in total self-disclosure scores and in self-disclosure patterns.
PREFACE

This study began indirectly through the author's interest in Rogerian counselling. Since the essence of this therapy involves talking about the "self" in a permissive and accepting situation, it is possible that people who can talk freely in a day-to-day situation are better adjusted than those who cannot. The author was interested in investigating this problem in detail. As investigation of the literature progressed, the author also became interested in the different areas of the "self" which different groups of people are inclined to discuss. It is felt that studies of self-disclosure might be of use in understanding differences in socio-economic groups, racial groups, and perhaps intellectual levels, as well as in exploring personality problems.

The author wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. M. Bunt, her mentor, whose direction and support made this study possible, to her readers, Dr. B. Rourke for his guidance and suggestions in choosing the experimental design, and Dr. R. Nelson for his cogent editorial criticisms, to Dr. A. A. Smith for his cheerful and invaluable aid in the statistical analysis, and to the staff and students of the Vincent Massey Collegiate Institute associated with the study for their ready co-operation.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Jourard (1959b, 1963) has suggested that there is an optimal level of "self-disclosure" associated with the "healthy personality". The concept of self-disclosure is a relatively new one in psychology (Jourard and Lasakow, 1958); consequently, it is not surprising that there are very few studies in this area. On the other hand, if such a relationship exists, an investigation to determine its nature would certainly be in order. As far as the present author was able to determine, no such studies have been carried out to date. In order to conduct such an investigation it is first necessary to select measuring instruments which accurately describe the degree to which mental health and self-disclosure characterize any specified group of people.

History of the Problem
The problem of isolating and measuring various personality traits is not altogether peculiar to the realm of modern psychology. In fact, man throughout history has attempted to establish or define characteristics by which he can "measure" both himself and others. The pace of modern living and the difficulties involved in dealing with large groups of people have made it necessary to devise tests which assess, as accurately as possible, many aspects of the
individual person.

Literally hundreds of such tests have been developed in this century. Of those which measure emotional stability, self-report inventories are probably easiest to administer, to score, and to interpret. Such an inventory usually consists of a number of questions or statements to which the testee can respond in one of several specified ways. For example, in answer to a question about himself, he might reply "yes", "no", or "uncertain".

The history of this type of testing began during World War I. Anastasi (1961) reports that at that time Woodworth attempted to standardize a psychiatric interview and to adapt the procedure for mass testing. The result, the Woodworth Personal Data Sheet, was used as a rough screening device for identifying seriously "neurotic" men who would be unfit for military service.

After the war there were several attempts to revise and refine the above scale for use with the general population. The Thurstone Neurotic Inventory (1930) was an important descendent of the Personal-Data Sheet. Woodworth (1920) had formulated his inventory by comparing the answers of normal people to those previously diagnosed as abnormal; i.e., those under psychiatric care. The Thurstones used much of his scale or modifications of it plus additional questions formulated on a more theoretical basis. The additional questions were based on the definition of the neurotic personality as one which cannot express itself effectively.
in social situations. They thus added a heavy social flavour to this aspect of mental health. Because of this "social" factor it is not surprising that future tests based primarily on the Thurstone Neurotic Inventory found neuroticism to be highly correlated with introversion. That is, if one defines normality as being socially expressive, it becomes theoretically impossible to be a "normal" introvert.

The Bernreuter Personality Inventory (1935-1938) fell heir to this problem. Bernreuter constructed a four scale test of personality variables: B1N - neuroticism, B2S - self-sufficiency, B3I - introversion, and B4D - dominance. The neuroticism and introversion scores correlate .95 with each other. Consequently, much criticism has been leveled at the inventory because the two scales were not "pure" measures of neuroticism or of introversion. Tyler (1953), however, points out that in spite of this problem it is still an acceptable instrument for measuring "personality inadequacies", as long as no advantage could be gained from trying to fake the test.

Neuroticism in this study is defined as the B1N score obtained on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. To some extent it overlaps with introversion. As high scores in either area are considered indicative of undesirable personality traits, then the problem is somewhat reduced. That is, they measure healthy adjustment which is the primary concern of this study.
The concept of self-disclosure came into being with Jourard and Lasakow's (1958) study using the newly formulated Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory. Self-disclosure is defined as the process of making the "self" known to others by means of verbal communication. It implies a willingness to communicate. The concept is not complicated by guess-work as to what the discloser "really means" by his statements. Rather, it connotes a straight-forward estimate of the degree to which a facet of the "self" was discussed. The scoring system of the Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory allows acknowledgement of conscious misrepresentation of the "self" to another person; however, it does not record misrepresentation of which the discloser is not aware. To state the concept simply, self-disclosure measures how much the individual discusses his beliefs about various facets of his "self" with another person. The recipient of this information is defined as a "target person".

Although the existing information about self-disclosure is limited and not related to mental health directly, it is extremely interesting in its own right. For example, Jourard (1958) found that men in our culture are inclined to tell less about themselves than are women. A further difference between the sexes is manifest in differential disclosure to different "target persons". Men talk about themselves to others who disclose similar things in return (Jourard & Landsman, 1962). That is, men tend to barter information, rather than disclosing themselves merely because they like
the "target person". Women reverse the emphasis (Jourard, 1959), talking about themselves to people whom they like, rather than to people whom they know. Of course, as one might expect, there is usually a high correlation between "liking" and "knowing". That is, both sexes usually, but not always, like the people with whom they exchange personal information.

It has been shown that both unmarried males and unmarried females at the college level are inclined to discuss themselves with a friend of their own sex or with their mothers in preference to a friend of the opposite sex or with their fathers (Jourard, 1958). That is, females talk to their mothers and girlfriends, while males talk to their fathers and boyfriends.

There are significant differences in the areas of the "self" which are disclosed (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). Table 1 lists categories of self-disclosure and corresponding symbols. The categories will henceforth be referred to by the symbols shown in the table. People are more inclined to discuss what are termed "public" aspects of the "self" \( (C_1, C_2, C_3) \) than they are to discuss "private" affairs \( (C_4, C_5, C_6) \). They did not completely investigate possible differential sex responses to the various categories of disclosure. An attempt will be made in this study to state the relationships more clearly.
Table 1
Categories of Self-disclosure and Corresponding Symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes and Opinions</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tastes and Interests</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Culture" evidently influences self-disclosure in some respects. Jourard (1961b) found that American college women disclose more than do English college women. Melekian (1962), in a study of Middle Eastern male students, discovered differences from American male students in preferred target persons and in increased sensitivity to discussing financial matters. As Jourard (1961a) has shown, even religious denomination can be associated with small but significant differences in self-disclosure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold. Jourard (1959b, 1963) felt that many neurotic and psychotic symptoms were smokescreens to avoid knowledge of the "self". In the more traditional forms of therapy the individual comes to know himself through self-disclosure to the counsellor. Thus, self-disclosure is both a symptom of the "healthy personality" and a way of achieving it. In another experiment
however, Jourard (1959a) noted that those who obtained very high and very low scores on the self-disclosure inventory were least liked by their confrères. He suggested that this could be due to interpersonal and, perhaps, to personal maladjustment. On one hand then, self-disclosure seems theoretically desirable. On the other hand, empirical evidence would seem to suggest that a statement of self-disclosure as a linear function of mental health is not adequate. That is, both high and low self-disclosure scores could be equally indicative of "unhealthy personality". As previously stated, no controlled examination of this hypothesis has been conducted. Consequently, the first section of this study deals with the problem of investigating the nature of the relationship between self-disclosure scores and one aspect of mental health, viz., neuroticism scores obtained on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory (1935-1938).

Most publications to date have dealt with college students. Consequently, it seems presumptuous to make generalizations about other segments of the population from these few studies. Does age make a difference in self-disclosure? Do male-female differences hold in non-college groups? What is the relationship between the various categories in another sample group of subjects? The second section of the study attempts to answer these questions. More specifically, an investigation is conducted to examine all possible relationships between self-disclosure.
scores, age, and sex in a group of Canadian high school students.

Hypotheses are summarized as follows:

1) There is a relationship between scores obtained on the Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory and scores obtained on the B1N scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. The subjects obtaining self-disclosure scores near the mean are expected to have low neuroticism scores while the subjects obtaining very high or very low self-disclosure scores are expected to have high neuroticism scores.

2) There will be significant differences in the scores obtained by the four age groups.

3) Girls will obtain higher self-disclosure scores than will boys.

4) Some categories of self-disclosure will be significantly higher than others; specifically, $C_1$, $C_2$, and $C_3$, will be higher than $C_4$, $C_5$, and $C_6$ (cf. Table 1).
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were Canadian-born Caucasians whose native language was English. All subjects were students from Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 academic classes in the same Windsor high school. They were divided by sex and grade level. Since all subjects except those in Grade 9 were in non-terminal course work (i.e. working towards Senior Matriculation), very few of them had failed a grade. Therefore, the grade level should be indicative of their relative ages. Those few subjects who had repeated a year or more were discarded. This procedure was also followed in the selection of subjects from Grade 9, although they had not at that stage been directed towards a particular academic plan. The entire experiment involved a total of 103 males and 110 females.

Testing Materials

Jourard's 60-point Self-disclosure Inventory was used (cf. Appendix A). This inventory consists of a list of statements divided into six categories (cf. Table 1). There are 10 statements in each category. Subjects denoted the degree to which they had talked about themselves by marking 0, 1, or 2 points for each statement.
was shown by marking an "X". "X" was valued as zero. The total score is found simply by adding the numbers. Since there are six categories with 10 statements in each, it is theoretically possible to obtain any score between 0 and 120, a high score indicating a high level of self-disclosure.

To insure that there would be a wide range of scores for the purpose of analysis the target person was given as the best friend of the same sex, since Jourard & Lasakow (1958) reported that this condition elicited higher scores with a greater distribution. Reliability scores ranging from .75 to .92 were reported by Mullaney (1962) when the best friend was used as target person. One of the main problems with self-report inventories is to evaluate the honesty of the subjects who take the test. Jourard & Landsman (1960) reported a significant correlation between self-disclosure output and the degree to which individuals were reported "known" by their confrères. This discovery supports the validity of the inventory. That is, the subjects were accurate or truthful in their statements about how much they had disclosed to each other.

The Bernreuter Personality Inventory (1935-1938) was employed to determine neuroticism (cf. Appendix B). Coefficients of reliability and validity for the BIN scales of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory are recorded in the test manual as .88 and .90 respectively. Bernreuter (1965) emphasized the need to distinguish between "statistical and psychological significance" of results. The latter term

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provides some justification for treating the groups in different ways, while the former merely indicates the probability of getting results in the same direction if the study were repeated. A difference of 50 points in raw scores would be indicative of "psychological significance". Both these factors were considered in interpretation of the results.

Procedure

Subjects were assured that all information obtained was to be completely confidential and that their names were to be used only for the purpose of pairing results from the two tests which were to be taken. All subjects except those in Grade 10 were tested in their usual classroom periods. Because of the inflexibility of the high school timetable, it was necessary in the Grade 10 class to solicit volunteer participants during their only "free" period. Tests were administered to these volunteers in a large annex of the school cafeteria.

The Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory was administered first. Instructions as recorded in the Appendix A were read to the students while they followed them on their own questionnaires. Questions were answered by rereading pertinent parts of the instructions.

One week later the same students were given the Bernreuter Personality Inventory (cf. Appendix B). Instructions were read and questions answered in the same manner.
In order to examine the relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism, the recorded scores were treated in the following way in the primary analysis. The subjects were divided into three groups on the basis of their self-disclosure scores: high, medium, and low. The high group in each grade was composed of those five subjects of each sex with the highest self-disclosure scores; the low group in each grade, the lowest five of each sex; and the medium group in each grade, the five of each sex closest to the mean. Because the range of scores for males and females differed, a within sex criterion for distinguishing the low, medium, and high self-disclosure scores was adopted. Similarly, each age group had its own criterion for high, medium, and low scores.

In the secondary analysis the scores of all subjects were used regardless of whether or not their scores were employed in the first analysis. The purpose of the second analysis was to determine the relationship between age, sex, and self-disclosure.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

The experimental results are presented in two sections. The first deals with the relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism for boys and girls at each age level; the second, with self-disclosure for boys and girls at each age level.

Neuroticism, Age, Sex, and Self-Disclosure

The neuroticism scores obtained on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory by the three self-disclosure groups of each age and sex were treated as the dependent variable. Since the lowest BIN score in any group was -188, a constant of +188 was added to all scores to facilitate computation.

Mean neuroticism scores in high, medium and low self-disclosure groups for boys and girls at each age level are shown in Table 2. Inspection of the table reveals the following: the highest self-disclosure group obtained the lowest neuroticism scores; the mean self-disclosure group, the highest neuroticism scores; the lowest self-disclosure group, neuroticism scores falling between the other two.

An analysis of variance of neuroticism scores was carried out with age, sex, and self-disclosure level as main effects. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.
### Table 2

Mean Neuroticism Scores in High, Medium, and Low Self-disclosure Groups for Boys and Girls at each Age Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-disclosure level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 3

Analysis of Variance of Neuroticism Scores with Age, Sex, and Self-disclosure Level as Main Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (age level)</td>
<td>24156.37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8052.12</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| B (self-disclosure level) | 11572.27 | 2  | 5786.13| 1.05*
| C (sex)             | 28274.70 | 1  | 28274.70| 5.11*|
| AB                  | 33462.53 | 6  | 5573.76| 1.01|
| AC                  | 33743.83 | 3  | 11247.94| 2.03|
| BC                  | 68.60    | 2  | 34.30  | .01|
| ABC                 | 18437.27 | 6  | 3072.88| .56|
| Within cell (error term) | 531236.40 | 96 | 5533.71|    |
| Total               | 680951.97| 119|        |    |

* Significant beyond 0.05 level
The F ratio for sex was significant at the 0.05 level, thus indicating that girls have higher neuroticism scores than boys. The F ratio for the other main effects and interaction were not significant.

Analysis of trend and orthogonal comparisons were performed for grade level and for self-disclosure level. The analysis failed to indicate any statistically significant trend or differences.

Self-disclosure, Age, and Sex

The mean self-disclosure scores for each category of self-disclosure for both sexes at each age level are presented in Table 4. An analysis of variance was carried out with age, sex, and category of self-disclosure as main effects. As shown in Table 5, F ratios were significant at the 0.01 level for sex and for categories. The interaction between sex and categories and between age, sex, and categories was also significant at the 0.01 level. Figure 1 depicts the differences in category scores for girls and boys showing that girls had a higher incidence of self-disclosure on everything except money, which was approximately the same for both sexes. Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the mean category scores showing patterns for boys and girls at each age level. F ratios for age differences and for other interactions were not significant. Although category scores are nominal, lines join the points in both figures to avoid confusion in following the scores for each group.
### Table 4

Mean Self-disclosure Score for each Category of Self-disclosure for both Sexes at each Age Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C₁  C₂  C₃  C₄  C₅  C₆</td>
<td></td>
<td>C₁  C₂  C₃  C₄  C₅  C₆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>11.97 13.94 12.13 7.50 12.34 11.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.18 10.29 9.71 6.00 8.76 7.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>12.36 14.23 13.32 7.86 12.86 10.95</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.09 10.64 9.85 7.55 7.21 7.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>12.15 14.00 12.54 8.92 12.50 11.62</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.40 10.50 11.45 9.65 7.80 7.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 5

Analysis of Variance for Differences in Self-disclosure with Age, Sex, and Category of Self-disclosure as Main Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26375.67</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>39.50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1789.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1789.25</td>
<td>39.26 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>48.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.08</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error score</td>
<td>9344.21</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>45.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2833.75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>566.75</td>
<td>38.24 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>290.75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.38</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>746.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>149.25</td>
<td>10.07 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>12770.00</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8051.33</td>
<td>543.27 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error score</td>
<td>15188.78</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>14.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant beyond 0.01 level

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Figure 1. Mean category scores for boys and girls.
Figure 2. Mean category scores for boys and girls at each age level.
An analysis of trend was carried out for total self-disclosure scores in the four age groups. The analysis failed to reveal any significant trend, or differences, further verifying that total self-disclosure for all age levels was approximately the same.

A Newman-Keuls procedure was carried out for girls, revealing that the categories of self-disclosure were not significantly different, except for $C_4$, which was lower than the others, and $C_2$ which was higher. $C_1$, $C_3$, $C_5$ and $C_6$ were not significantly different. Differences were significant at the 0.05 level. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

The same procedure revealed that scores for males fell into two groups. $C_1$, $C_2$, & $C_3$ constituted the high group; $C_4$, $C_5$, & $C_6$, the low group. Differences were significant at the 0.05 level. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.
Table 6
Newman-Keuls Comparison of Self-disclosure Category Scores for Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories in order of totals</td>
<td>C₄</td>
<td>C₆</td>
<td>C₁</td>
<td>C₅</td>
<td>C₃</td>
<td>C₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>31.35</td>
<td>44.93</td>
<td>46.85</td>
<td>49.60</td>
<td>50.59</td>
<td>56.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level
Table 7
Newman-Keuls Comparison of Self-disclosure Category Scores for Boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories in order of totals</td>
<td>C6</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>C5</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>C1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>29.87</td>
<td>30.87</td>
<td>31.74</td>
<td>41.83</td>
<td>42.85</td>
<td>43.79</td>
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</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The hypotheses underlying the study were stated as follows in Chapter I:

1) There is a relationship between scores obtained on the Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory and scores obtained on the B1N scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. The subjects obtaining self-disclosure scores near the mean are expected to have low neuroticism scores while the subjects obtaining very high or very low self-disclosure scores are expected to have high neuroticism scores.

2) There will be significant differences in self-disclosure scores for the four age groups.

3) Girls will obtain higher self-disclosure scores than will boys.

4) There will be significant differences in the categories of self-disclosure; specifically, $C_1$, $C_2$, and $C_3$, will be higher than $C_4$, $C_5$, and $C_6$ (cf. Table 1).

As examination of the results indicated, the first two hypothesis had to be rejected, the third accepted, and the fourth accepted for boys but not for girls. These results will be examined now in greater detail.

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Neuroticism, Age, Sex, and Self-disclosure

The primary concern of this study was to investigate and define the nature of any relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism. As stated in Hypothesis 1, subjects whose self-disclosure scores were near the mean in each group were expected to obtain low neuroticism scores while those subjects with self-disclosure scores at either extreme were expected to obtain high neuroticism scores. Investigation of Table 2 reveals that there was no evidence to support the contention that there exists a relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism. This is true for both girls and boys and for all age levels.

The author did not feel that the current study gave adequate grounds for completely rejecting the possibility of a relationship between the variables. There are other factors which should be considered: one of these involves the best friend as the target person selected. Perhaps self-disclosure to another figure, such as the mother or father, would have resulted in significant differences between groups. It is felt that additional investigation of the hypothetical relationship between self-disclosure and mental health is justified.

As Bernreuter (1965) pointed out, a statistically significant difference in neuroticism scores does not necessarily imply a "psychologically" significant difference in the subjects tested. In this study, the average differences in neuroticism scores for the various groups is so small that,
if what he suggests is true, these specific groups can be regarded as comparable in this aspect of mental health, for all practical purposes. Here again, it cannot be concluded that self-disclosure is not related to adjustment. The experiment might have produced significant results if the experimenter had used a much larger sample group and controlled neuroticism scores, with self-disclosure scores as the independent variable. In this way, the experimenter would have insured getting a sample which contained some subjects who definitely did not fall within the range of "healthy personalities". In other words, "unhealthy personalities" might show significantly different self-disclosure scores, whereas low or high disclosers might not necessarily be maladjusted. Perhaps there are reasons other than neuroticism for obtaining high or low scores in self-disclosure; on the other hand, perhaps neurotics tend to get consistently immoderate self-disclosure scores.

The only statistically significant difference between groups in the first section of the experiment was that which was found in neuroticism between girls and boys. This difference however, merely indicated that the high school boys and girls in the present study were reacting much the same way as the original standardization groups (Bernreuter, 1935-1938). It is predicted that the score obtained by girls will be higher than that obtained by boys. The mean score for males in this study is 30 points lower than the
mean score for females. In the original standardization
groups, the difference was approximately 35 points. This
implies that the inventory is not completely balanced for
sex differences, not necessarily that females are more
neurotic. The statistically significant difference in scores
must be interpreted as supporting the reliability of the
BIN scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory.

Self-disclosure, Age, and Sex

An analysis of variance (cf. Table 5) revealed a
number of significant differences in self-disclosure. The
total self-disclosure scores for girls differed from that
of boys. There were significant differences in the self-
disclosure categories. Furthermore, girls not only talked
about themselves more than boys, but they emphasized different
areas of self-disclosure. Age has some influence on self-
disclosure scores for both sexes insofar as they change in
the area of the "self" disclosed.

The difference between girls and boys is in the
same direction as that of Jourard and Lasakow's (1958)
college students. Evidently, teen-age girls are much like
adult women in that they talk about themselves more than
do men of the corresponding age group.

It is interesting to note that the mean scores for
girls and boys fell below the corresponding scores for college
men and women (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). The means for
college men and women were 69.89 and 80.10 respectively;
for high school boys and girls, 55.24 and 65.20 respectively. Because of insufficient data from the college study it is impossible to tell whether or not this difference is significant. If it were significant, there would be some indication that self-disclosure increases near the end of adolescence or in the early stages of adulthood. Of course, it is possible that the difference could be due to other variables; e.g. intelligence or socio-economic status. Again, there is not enough information available to state with any degree of certainty the cause of the apparent difference.

Some categories of self-disclosure had significantly higher scores than others. This discovery becomes more meaningful when sex differences are examined. Jourard and Lasakow (1958) found that the category scores could be divided into two sections, "public" and "private". A Newman-Keuls procedure (cf., Table 6) revealed that this description was not accurate for girls in the present study. Tastes and interests received more attention than all the other categories; money, the least. A Newman-Keuls procedure showed that the category scores for boys, unlike the category scores for girls, fell into the two classes "public" and "private".

The mean score for "money" is almost identical for both sexes. Perhaps this can be accounted for by the social status of the groups concerned. Since the high school was
located in a predominately middle class area, it is possible that money was not a problem to the subjects; i.e., they might simply have been disinterested. On the other hand, the low scores might indicate greater sensitivity in this area. That is, perhaps the subjects were avoiding the topic rather than ignoring it. Of course, a third possibility is that the scores for boys and girls were alike, but for different reasons.

Accounting for the low scores which boys obtain on "personality" and "body" is also an interesting problem. Again, it could be a matter of disinterest or of heightened sensitivity. It is quite possible that boys find it too painful or threatening to discuss very personal areas of the "self" with others. Perhaps this partially accounts for the tendency of men to cautiously barter information about themselves (Jourard and Landsman, 1962). In addition to insecurity, it is possibly not acceptable for the male in our society to express explicit concern with or involvement in matters relating directly to his physical and personal development; i.e., he must remain the "strong, silent type."

The analysis of results (cf., Table 5) revealed that categories were scored differently by each sex and that this difference changed somewhat according to age level. Although significant at the 0.01 level the difference is somewhat misleading. Examination of Figure 2 reveals a rather striking change in the profile of self-disclosure scores.
on the categories for the Grade 10 boys. As noted in Chapter II; subjects in this grade volunteered for the experiment whereas subjects in other classes participated at the request of their teachers. A large female sample was obtained; however, a relatively small percentage of males was interested. The inadequate sample of boys could account for much of the significant difference in category scores for both sexes over the four age levels. The selection procedure seems to have had no effect on the profile of the girls' scores.

Allowing for the selection problem with the Grade 10 boys it would seem that age level has little to do with changes in self-disclosure. Perhaps age differences would have become apparent if the experiment had not been confined to a teen-age population.

Part II of the present study was analysed somewhat differently than Jourard & Lasakow's (1958) college study. Because of this there is a striking difference in the pattern of category scores for girls in this study. Perhaps the classes of "public" and "private" categories was inadequate for women in the original college study, but was not apparent because the analysis of category scores was carried out with the combined totals of men and women. In the present study the scores of the sexes were separated for purposes of analysis. Consequently, the results of the present study should be viewed as an elaboration, not necessarily a distinction.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary problem in the present study was to investigate the nature of any possible relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism for both sexes in a high school population. A secondary interest was the examination of sex and age differences in total self-disclosure and in the categories of self-disclosure.

Subjects were 103 males and 110 females from a Windsor high school. All subjects were tested with the Jourard Self-disclosure Inventory and, one week later, with the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. Only the neuroticism scale on the latter inventory was utilized. Part I of the experiment examined the relationship of neuroticism to self-disclosure for both sexes in all grades. Each group was divided into three sections on the basis of their self-disclosure scores: the five highest scores, the five scores closest to the mean, and the five lowest scores. An analysis of variance was carried out using these groups with neuroticism as the dependent variable. In Part II of the experiment the relationship of total self-disclosure and categories of self-disclosure to age and sex was examined. In Part II of the experiment, an analysis of variance was carried out using the self-disclosure scores of all subjects.
The analysis in Part I indicated that there was no significant relationship between self-disclosure and neuroticism. The only significant difference was in neuroticism scores for males and females. This merely served to assert the reliability of the neuroticism scale. Analysis of Part II indicated significant differences in total self-disclosure scores between males and females. It also showed that the sexes differed in what type of thing they discussed about themselves. It is unlikely that self-disclosure changed with age in this sample group.

In conclusion, the following modifications are suggested for further research:

1) An increase in sample size and a repetition of the first part of the experiment with neuroticism as the independent variable and self-disclosure as the dependent variable.

2) Repetition of Parts I and II of the experiment with a change in target person.

3) Repetition of Part II of the experiment with controls for intelligence.

4) Repetition of Part II of the experiment controlling for socio-economic status.

5) Repetition of Part II of the experiment allowing for a greater age range, perhaps including pre-adolescents and adults.
APPENDIX A

JOURARD SELF-DISCLOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions to subjects:

Please read each item on the following questionnaire. Indicate in the blank space beside each question the extent to which you have talked about that item to someone of your own age and sex whom you consider to be your best friend; that is, the extent to which you have made yourself known to him or her.

Use the rating scale that you see below to describe the extent that you have talked about each item to him or her.

RATING SCALE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE:

0 Have told this person nothing about this aspect of me.
1 Have talked in general terms about this item. He (she) has only a general idea about this aspect of me.
2 Have talked in full and complete detail about this item. He (she) knows me fully and could describe me accurately in this respect.
X Have misrepresented myself to him (her) so that he (she) has a false picture of me.
ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

1. What I think and feel about religion, my personal religious views.

2. My personal opinions and feelings about religious groups other than my own, e.g. Protestants, Jews, atheists.

3. My views on communism.

4. My views on the present government: the prime-minister, government policies, etc.

5. My views on racial problems.

6. My personal views on drinking.

7. My views on sexual morality - how I feel that I and others ought to behave in sexual matters.

8. My personal standard of beauty and attractiveness in the opposite sex - what I consider to be attractive in them.

9. The things that I regard as desirable for a member of my own sex.

10. My feelings about how parents ought to deal with children.

TASTES AND INTERESTS

1. My favorite foods, the way I like food prepared, and my food dislikes.

2. My favorite beverages, and the ones I don't like.


3. The kinds of movies that I like to see best; the TV shows that are my favorites.

6. My tastes in clothing.

7. The style of house, and the kinds of furnishings that I like best.

8. The kind of party or social gathering that I like best, and the kind that would bore me, or that I wouldn't enjoy.

9. My favorite ways of spending spare time, e.g. reading, cards, sports, dancing, parties, etc.

10. What I would appreciate most for a present.

STUDIES

1. What I find to be the greatest pressures and strains in my studies.

2. What I find to be the most boring and unenjoyable aspects of my studies.

3. What I enjoy most and gives me the most satisfaction in my studies.

4. What I feel are my shortcomings and handicaps that prevent me from getting ahead.

5. What I feel are my special strong points and qualifications.

6. How I feel my work is appreciated by others: fellows, students, teachers, etc.

7. My ambitions and goals in my work or studies.

8. My feelings about the rewards I get for my studies: grades, etc.
9. How I feel about a choice of career.
10. How I really feel about my fellow-students and teachers.

**MONEY**

1. How much money I make at my work, or get as an allowance.
2. Whether or not I owe money; if so, how much.
3. Whom I owe money to at present, whom I have borrowed from in the past.
4. Whether or not I have savings, and the amount.
5. Whether or not others owe me money; the amount and who owes it to me.
6. Whether or not I gamble; if so, the way I gamble, and the extent of it.
7. All of my present sources of income: wages, allowance, dividends.
8. My total financial worth, including property, savings, bonds, insurance, etc.
9. My most pressing need for money right now: bills, some major purchase that is desired or needed.
10. How I budget my money: the proportion that goes to necessities, luxuries, etc.

**PERSONALITY**

1. The aspects of my personality that I dislike, worry about, that I regard as a handicap to me.
2. What feelings, if any, that I have trouble expressing or controlling.
3. My attitudes towards the opposite sex and the problems involved in this area.

4. Whether or not I feel that I am attractive to the opposite sex; my problems, if any, about getting favorable attention from them.

5. Things in the past or present that I feel ashamed and guilty about.

6. The kinds of things that just make me furious.

7. What it takes to make me feel depressed and blue.

8. What it takes to get me worried, anxious, and/or afraid.

9. What it takes to hurt my feelings deeply.

10. The kinds of things that make me especially proud of myself, elated, full of self-esteem, or self-respect.

B O D Y

1. My feelings about the appearance of my face, things that I don't like, and things that I do like, about my face, head, nose, eyes, hair, teeth, etc.

2. How I wish I looked, my ideals for my overall appearance.

3. My feelings about different parts of my body: legs, waist, chest, weight, etc.

4. Any problems and worries that I had with my appearance in the past.

5. Whether or not I now have any health problems; e.g. trouble with sleep, digestion, heart, allergies, headaches, etc.

6. Whether or not I have any long-range worries or concerns about my health; e.g. cancer, ulcers, heart trouble.

8. Whether or not I now make special efforts to keep fit, healthy; e.g. exercises, diet, etc.

9. My present physical measurements; e.g. height, weight, etc.

10. My attitudes towards and feelings about sexual matters.
APPENDIX B
BERNREUTER PERSONALITY INVENTORY

The questions on this blank are intended to indicate your interests and attitudes. It is not an intelligence test, nor are there any right or wrong answers.

In front of each question you will find: "Yes No ?"

If your answer is "Yes," draw a circle around "Yes."
If your answer is "No," draw a circle around the "No." If you are entirely unable to answer either "Yes" or "No" to the question, then draw a circle around the question mark.

1. Yes No ? Does it make you uncomfortable to be "different" or unconventional?
2. Yes No ? Do you day-dream frequently?
3. Yes No ? Do you usually work things out for yourself rather than get someone to show you?
4. Yes No ? Have you ever crossed the street to avoid meeting some person?
5. Yes No ? Can you stand criticism without feeling hurt?
6. Yes No ? Do you ever give money to beggars?
7. Yes No ? Do you prefer to associate with people who are younger than yourself?
8. Yes No ? Do you often feel just miserable?
9. Yes No ? Do you dislike finding your way about in strange places?
10. Yes No ? Are you easily discouraged when the opinions of others differ from your own?
11. Yes No ? Do you try to get your own way even if you have to fight for it?
12. Yes No ? Do you blush very often?
13. Yes No ? Do athletics interest you more than intellectual affairs?
14. Yes No ? Do you consider yourself a rather nervous person?
15. Yes No ? Do you usually object when a person steps in front of you in a line of people?
16. Yes  No  ? Have you ever tried to argue or bluff your way past a guard or doorman?
17. Yes  No  ? Are you much affected by the praise or blame of many people?
18. Yes  No  ? Are you touchy on various subjects?
19. Yes  No  ? Do you frequently argue over prices with tradesmen or junkmen?
20. Yes  No  ? Do you feel self-conscious in the presence of superiors in the academic or business world?
21. Yes  No  ? Do ideas often run through your head so that you cannot sleep?
22. Yes  No  ? Are you slow in making decisions?
23. Yes  No  ? Do you think you could become so absorbed in creative work that you would not notice a lack of intimate friends?
24. Yes  No  ? Are you troubled with shyness?
25. Yes  No  ? Are you inclined to study the motives of other people carefully?
26. Yes  No  ? Do you frequently feel grouchy?
27. Yes  No  ? Do your interests change rapidly?
28. Yes  No  ? Are you very talkative at social gatherings?
29. Yes  No  ? Do you ever heckle or question a public speaker?
30. Yes  No  ? Do you very much mind taking back articles you have purchased at stores?
31. Yes  No  ? Do you see more fun or humor in things when you are in a group than when alone?
32. Yes  No  ? Do you prefer travelling with someone who will make all the necessary arrangements to the adventure of travelling alone?
33. Yes  No  ? Would you rather work for yourself than carry out the program of a superior whom you respect?
34. Yes  No  ? Can you usually express yourself better in speech than in writing?
35. Yes  No  ? Would you dislike any work which might take you into isolation for a few years, such as forest ranging, etc?
36. Yes  No  ? Have you ever solicited funds for a cause in which you were interested?
37. Yes  No  ? Do you usually try to avoid dictatorial or "bossy" people?
38. Yes  No  ? Do you find conversation more helpful in formulating your ideas than reading?
39. Yes  No  ? Do you worry too long over humiliating experiences?
40. Yes  No  ? Have you ever organized any clubs, teams, or other groups on your own initiative?
41. Yes  No  ? If you see an accident do you quickly take an active part in giving aid?
42. Yes  No  ? Do you get stage fright?
43. Yes No ? Do you like to bear responsibilities alone?
44. Yes No ? Have books been more entertaining to you than companions?
45. Yes No ? Have you ever had spells of dizziness?
46. Yes No ? Do jeers humiliate you even when you know you are right?
47. Yes No ? Do you want someone to be with you when you receive bad news?
48. Yes No ? Does it bother you to have people watch you at work even when you do it well?
49. Yes No ? Do you often experience periods of loneliness?
50. Yes No ? Do you usually try to avoid arguments?
51. Yes No ? Are your feelings easily hurt?
52. Yes No ? Do you usually prefer to do your own planning alone rather than with others?
53. Yes No ? Do you find that telling others of your own personal good news is the greatest part of the enjoyment of it?
54. Yes No ? Do you often feel lonesome when you are with other people?
55. Yes No ? Are you thrifty and careful about making loans?
56. Yes No ? Are you careful not to say things to hurt other people's feelings?
57. Yes No ? Are you easily moved to tears?
58. Yes No ? Do you ever complain to the waiter when you are served inferior or poorly prepared food?
59. Yes No ? Do you find it difficult to speak in public?
60. Yes No ? Do you ever rewrite your letters before mailing them?
61. Yes No ? Do you usually enjoy spending an evening alone?
62. Yes No ? Do you make new friends easily?
63. Yes No ? If you are dining out do you prefer to have someone else order dinner for you?
64. Yes No ? Do you usually feel a great deal of hesitancy over borrowing an article from an acquaintance?
65. Yes No ? Are you greatly embarrassed if you have greeted a stranger whom you have mistaken for an acquaintance.
66. Yes No ? Do you find it difficult to get rid of a salesman?
67. Yes No ? Do people ever come to you for advice?
68. Yes No ? Do you usually ignore the feelings of others when accomplishing some end which is important to you?
69. Yes No ? Do you often find that you cannot make up your mind until the time for action has passed?
70. Yes No ? Do you especially like to have attention from acquaintances when you are ill?
71. Yes No ? Do you experience many pleasant or unpleasant moods?
72. Yes No ? Are you troubled with feelings of inferiority?
73. Yes No ? Does some particularly useless thought keep coming into your mind to bother you?
74. Yes No ? Do you ever upbraid a workman who fails to have your work done on time?
75. Yes No ? Are you able to play your best in a game or contest against an opponent who is greatly superior to you?
76. Yes No ? Have you frequently appeared as a lecturer or entertainer before groups of people?
77. Yes No ? Are people sometimes successful in taking advantage of you?
78. Yes No ? When you are in low spirits do you try to find someone to cheer you up?
79. Yes No ? Can you usually understand a problem better by studying it out alone than by discussing it with others?
80. Yes No ? Do you lack self-confidence?
81. Yes No ? Does admiration gratify you more than achievement?
82. Yes No ? Are you willing to take a chance alone in a situation of doubtful outcome?
83. Yes No ? Does your ambition need occasional stimulation through contact with successful people?
84. Yes No ? Do you usually avoid asking advice?
85. Yes No ? Do you consider the observance of social customs and manners an essential aspect of life?
86. Yes No ? If you are spending an evening in the company of other people do you usually let someone else decide upon the entertainment?
87. Yes No ? Do you take the responsibility for introducing people at a party?
88. Yes No ? If you came late to a meeting would you rather stand than take a front seat?
89. Yes No ? Do you like to get many views from others before making an important decision?
90. Yes No ? Do you try to treat a domineering person the same as he treats you?
91. Yes No ? Does your mind often wander so badly that you lose track of what you are doing?
92. Yes No ? Do you ever argue a point with an older person whom you respect?
93. Yes No ? Do you have difficulty in making up your mind for yourself?
94. Yes No ? Do you ever take the lead to enliven a dull party?
95. Yes No ? Would you "have it out" with a person who spread untrue rumors about you?

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96. Yes No ? At a reception or tea do you feel reluctant to meet the most important person present?
97. Yes No ? Do you find that people are more stimulating to you than anything else?
98. Yes No ? Do you prefer a play to a dance?
99. Yes No ? Do you tend to be radical in your political, religious, or social beliefs?
100. Yes No ? Do you prefer to be alone at times of emotional stress?
101. Yes No ? Do you usually prefer to work with others?
102. Yes No ? Do you usually work better when you are praised?
103. Yes No ? Do you have difficulty in starting a conversation with a stranger?
104. Yes No ? Do your feelings alternate between happiness and sadness without apparent reason?
105. Yes No ? Are you systematic in caring for your personal property?
106. Yes No ? Do you worry over possible misfortunes?
107. Yes No ? Do you usually prefer to keep your feelings to yourself?
108. Yes No ? Can you stick to a tiresome task for a long time without someone prodding or encouraging you?
109. Yes No ? Do you get as many ideas at the time of reading a book as you do from a discussion of it afterward?
110. Yes No ? Do you usually face your troubles alone without seeking help?
111. Yes No ? Have you been the recognized leader (president, captain, chairman) of a group within the last five years?
112. Yes No ? Do you prefer making hurried decisions alone?
113. Yes No ? If you were hiking with a group of people, where none of you knew the way, would you probably let someone else take the full responsibility for guiding the party?
114. Yes No ? Are you troubled with the idea that people on the street are watching you?
115. Yes No ? Are you often in a state of excitement?
116. Yes No ? Are you considered to be critical of other people?
117. Yes No ? Do you usually try to take added responsibilities on yourself?
118. Yes No ? Do you keep in the background at social functions?
119. Yes No ? Do you greatly dislike being told how you should do things?
120. Yes No ? Do you feel that marriage is essential to your present or future happiness?
121. Yes No ? Do you like to be with people a great deal?
122. Yes No ? Can you be optimistic when others about
you are greatly depressed?
123. Yes No ? Does discipline make you discontented?
124. Yes No ? Are you usually considered to be indifferent
to the opposite sex?
125. Yes No ? Would you feel very self-conscious if you
had to volunteer an idea to start a
discussion among a group of people?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Thurstone, L. L., & Thurstone, T. G. *A Neurotic Inventory*. *J. soc. Psychol.*, 1930, 1, 3-30.


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**VITA AUCTORIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Born in Chipman, New Brunswick, to Lloyd A. and Beatrice I. Elliott.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Graduated from New Brunswick Teachers' College, Fredericton, New Brunswick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Registered as a full-time student at Mount Allison University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Graduated with the degree of B.A., Mount Allison University. Registered as a full-time student at the University of Windsor.</td>
</tr>
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