How Teens Who Are At Risk for Suicide and Who Have Conflict with Parents Characterize Their Parents' Communicative Behavior

Marian Huhman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2002

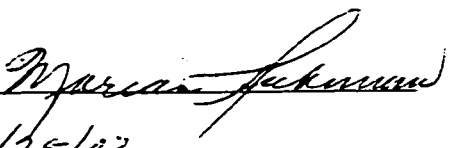
Program Authorized to Offer Degree: Communication

UMI Number: 3072095

UMI Microform 3072095

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral degree at the University of Washington, I agree that the Library shall make its copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that extensive copying of the dissertation is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for copying or reproduction of this dissertation may be referred to Proquest Information and Learning, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346, to whom the author has granted "the right to reproduce and sell (a) copies of the manuscript in microform and/or (b) printed copies of the manuscript made from microform."

Signature 

Date 10/25/02

University of Washington
Graduate School

This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a doctoral dissertation by

Marian Huhman

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

Chair of Supervisory Committee:

Gerry Philipsen

Gerry Philipsen

Reading Committee:

Gerry Philipsen

Gerry Philipsen

Brooke Randell

Brooke Randell

Valerie Manusov

Valerie Manusov

Date: 10/25/02

University of Washington

Abstract

How Teens Who Are At Risk for Suicide and Who Have Conflict with Parents Characterize Their Parents' Communicative Behavior

Marian Huhman

Chair of the Supervisory Committee

Professor Gerry Philipsen
Department of Communication

To better understand how troubled teens perceive their parents' communicative behavior, 77 interviews with teens were analyzed. All of the teens met criteria for being at risk for suicide and all identified conflict with parents as a major stressor in their lives. The data analyzed were the teen's responses to questions posed during a semi-structured interview. The responses about the communicative relationship with parents were transcribed and analyzed using methods of ethnography of communication and discourse analysis. Findings focused on the teens' use of three linguistic devices--linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, direct reported speech--and the teens' perspectives on the consequences for them of their parents' communicative behavior. Linguistic action verbials (LAVs) that were prominent in the teens' discourse were "yell," "fight," "argue," "talk," "tell," and "get along/not get along." The analysis of the LAVs supported that the LAV selected by the teen was constitutive of the teen's social reality. The teens used extreme case formulations (ECFs) to characterize qualitites of the LAVs, to reflect the emotional tension associated with the teens' perceptions of parents' communicative conduct, and as a way of marshaling support for the teen's position by "invoking a universal audience" of all other teens. The teens used direct reported speech (DRS) to recount a parent's words prompted by the teen's disclosure to the parent of suicide thoughts and behaviors. DRS

gave the teen access to a painful event that allowed the teen to communicate the hurt of a parent's words without having to interpret (describe) the emotional effect it had. Part of the therapeutic effect of the interview may lie in the alignment with the interviewer around the re-telling of these speech events. The fourth major finding was that teens presented two constructs of effects of their parents' communicative behavior. One construct comprised negative emotional states they experienced–for example, depression, "feeling like I don't matter"–and second, what they wanted from parents–as a construct of caring and compassion. The findings are presented as concepts that can sensitize and inform the work of researchers and practitioners in the fields of both communication science and adolescent suicide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES iv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
Overview of the Current Study 3
An Interpretive Perspective to Studying Adolescent Suicide 6
Ethnography of Communication 7
Discourse Analysis 8
Focus on Communicative Phenomena 10
Research Questions 11
Value of Doing this Study 11
Value of Asking These Research Questions 13
Preview of Chapters 14
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW 16
Risk and Protective Factors in Adolescent Health 16
Family Risk Factors in Adolescent Suicide Risk 17
Family Conflict 19
Parenting Styles and Adolescent Suicide Behaviors 21
Family Support Factors in Adolescent Suicide 23
Mediating Factors with Family Influence on Adolescent Suicide Risk 24
Depression 24
Substance Use 25
Personal Competency 25
Hopelessness 25
Summary of Family Factors Related to Suicide 26
The Study of Communicative Practices 27
Perspectives on Language: Ethnography of Communication and Discourse Analysis 28
Frameworks of Discourse Analysis and Ethnography of Communication 30
Components of Discourse Analysis 30
Components of Ethnography of Communication 33
Communicative Phenomena 35
Linguistic Action Verbials 35
Extreme Case Formulations 37
Discourse and Language in Adolescent-Parent Relationships 41
Adolescent-Parent Communication 42
Discourse Analysis and Ethnography of Communication Applied to Adolescent Discourse 46
Parent Adolescent Interactions Specific to Suicide Behavior 47
Summary of the Literature Review 49
CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS 50
Part I: Data Collection and Methods of Analysis 50
Research Program in which Current Study Data were Collected 50
The Current Project 52
Instruments Used for Data Collection 54

The Counselors-CARE (C-CARE) Protocol 54
High School Questionnaire: Profile of Experiences 56
Data Analysis Process 58
Assembly of the Materials 59
Selection of Data for Analysis 59
Display of Data 65
Role of the Researcher 66
Part II: Description of the Youth Whose Discourse was Analyzed 67
Demographics and Living Arrangement 68
Suicide Risk Factors and Related Risk Factors 68
Suicide Risk Behaviors 68
Related Risk Factors 69
Drug Involvement 69
Protective Factors 70
Family Factors 70
Summary and Observations on the Characteristics of the Current Study Teens 71
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS 77
Part I. Linguistic Action Verbials 77
Yell, Fight, and Argue 78
Yell 78
Fight 83
Argue 87
Comparisons of Yell, Fight, and Argue 89
Summary of "Yell," "Fight," and "Argue" 93
Tell and Talk 94
Tell 94
Talk 100
Talk versus Tell 107
Get Along/Not Get Along 108
Summary of Linguistic Action Verbials 110
Overview 113
Emotional Pressure 114
Using ECFs to Invoke a Universal Audience 117
Summary 125
Part III: Characterizing Linguistic Action by Using Direct Reported Speech 126
Features of the Teens' Reported Speech 126
Reported Speech and Discourse about Self-Harm 128
Perspectivizing the Parent Who Says "Do it" 129
Perspectivizing the Dismissive Parent 135
Direct Reported Speech–Discussion 138
Summary 142
Part IV: How the Teens Experience Their Parents' Communicative Action 143
Consequences of Yelling, Fighting, and Arguing 143
When the Outcomes of Parent Talk Relate to Substance Use 146
Anticipated Consequences of Disclosures about Suicide 152
Teens Reflect on the Ideal and the Real Outcomes of Parents' Communicative

Behavior 156
Discussion 165
Summary of Chapter 4 166
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 194
Summary of the Path of the Study 194
Limitations 205
Recommendations for Future Research 207
Discourse Analysis 207
Ethnography of Communication 209
Adolescent-Parent Communicative Behavior 210
Conclusion 212
REFERENCES 214
Appendix A
Measurement of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS) Interview Questions Used in Current Study 234
Appendix B.
Description of Scales for Suicide Risk Screen and Suicide-Related Risk Factors 236
Appendix C
Description of Scales for Protective and Family Factors 237
Appendix D
Description of Scales for Substance Use and Involvement 238

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 List of All Linguistic Action Verbials from the Corpus..... 74

Table 3.2 Demographic Characteristics for Current Study Participants.....75

Table 3.3 Comparison of Groups by Risk and Protective Factors.....76

Table 3.4 Comparison of Groups by Family Factors.....77

Table 4.1 List of "Yell" Utterances with Co-occurring Terms.....168

Table 4.2 Utterances with "Fight/Fought".....170

Table 4.3 Utterances with "Argue".....173

Table 4.4 Comparisons of Directionality and Syntactic Form for Yell, Fight, Argue.....175

Table 4.5 List of Tell Utterances with Co-Occurring Terms.....178

Table 4.6 List of Talk Utterances with Co-Occurring Terms.....182

Table 4.7 List of Utterances with "Get along/Not get along".....184

Table 4.8 Utterances with DRS that Relate to Interactions with Parents about Suicide.....185

Table 4.9 Consequences of the LAVs Yell and Fight.....187

Table 4.10 Utterances about Substance Use.....192

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was funded by a training grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (5 T32 DA07257-04 through -07). Data for this study were drawn from a research grant awarded to Dr. Leona Eggert (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Elaine Thompson (Co-Principal Investigator) funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research (ROI NR 03550) as part of the Reconnecting Youth Research Program. I am indebted to the teachers, staff, and administrators of the high schools who supported the Reconnecting Youth Research Program. I am especially thankful for the students who shared their time and experiences.

I would like to thank my supervisory committee for their assistance and support. I want to especially thank my committee chairperson, Dr. Gerry Philipsen, for his encouragement through the challenges I faced to complete my doctoral study and especially to complete this dissertation. I am grateful to Dr. Philipsen for his patience, humor, and marvelous ability to bring clarity to my purposes and analyses. I have enormous respect for Dr. Brooke Randall for the excellence, dedication, and caring she brings to her work as a researcher, teacher, and clinician. I am thankful for Dr. Randell's approachability, her advocacy, and especially the time and resources she continuously shared with me. Dr. Valerie Manusov was an important teacher throughout my doctoral study, providing essential expertise at multiple points, always with warmth and kindness. I am thankful for the Graduate School Representative, Dr. Ilse Cirtautus, who has been helpful and available throughout the span of this project.

I am grateful to the Reconnecting Youth Research Team whose members supervised, collected, and made available the data I analyzed for this dissertation. I am particularly thankful for the clinicians who conducted the interviews of the students, for Dr. Kenneth Pike who helped me at critical times with data analysis, and for Dr. Elaine Walsh whose support and sense of humor made tough times a great deal easier. I want to thank Dr. Leona Eggert whose expertise in

communication inspired me to pursue doctoral study in the (then) Department of Speech Communication..

I am grateful to Dr. Shirley Murphy for selecting me for the Research Training in Substance Abuse grant, which provided financial support and learning opportunities throughout my graduate study.

I would like to thank my entire family and many friends for their support and encouragement. To Bonnie for helping with my children, to Sam and Wanda for their friendship, and to Grace and Terry for their focused interest, I am especially appreciative. And to my sons, Jonathan and Derek, and my husband, David, thank you for enduring with patience my long walk through this doctoral program.

DEDICATION

To my mother, Zita Adrian Huhman (1911-2001),

whose curiosity about the world and love of learning

is a legacy manifested in this dissertation.

And to my friend, Cheryl Dillard,

whose sense of humor, unfailing support,

and unwavering belief in me sustained me throughout this project.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> Because my mom and I don't get along. We kinda have bad communication. She often doesn't say good things to me, really puts me down. We fight about everything: money, going out, just everything, college. I think "feeling like I don't matter" has to do with my mom. She's always told me that I 'm not smart enough or good enough to do things. Plus, like I'm always compared to my older sister and that makes it really hard. She's perfect--extremely smart, never ever disobeys my mom. She's just a mother's dream.
>
> (Statement by a 15 year old female)

This statement was made by a young woman who was participating in a study of teens at risk for suicide. She was describing to an interviewer one of the main stressors in her life: conflict with her mother. A close look at her words reveals the way she characterizes conflict with her mother: They "don't get along" and "have bad communication." Her mother "puts her down" and they fight about "everything." What her mother has "told" her relates to how she feels about herself. When the teen describes what her mother says and how she says it, the teen is describing her mother's communicative conduct. When she speaks of the way her mother's words affect her, she is providing insight into how she experiences that conduct, thus giving us a broader perspective of her communicative relationship with her mother.

The words of this young person bring into poignant focus the primary purpose of this dissertation. That purpose is to examine the language that teens at risk for suicide use to describe their parents' communicative conduct and their perceptions of that communicative conduct. I will provide a close reading of the actual words that teens used during a semi-structured interview about various aspects of the teens' interpersonal life, including school, family, and friends. The interviews were done with high school teens at their schools as part of an assessment/intervention for teens at risk for suicide. During the interviews, the teens commonly chose to describe the way

their parents talked to them and how their parents' words affected them. Various questions prompted the teens to talk about their parents. Conflict with parents, interactions with their parents about substance use, and the response of parents to the teens' disclosures about suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors were the major prompts for their discussion of their parents. During the summary of the interview, the teens also discussed interactions with their parents.

I acknowledge that by studying the teens' words, only their side of the interaction or the story of the parent-teen relationship is being presented. I believe despite this limitation, there is value in displaying the teens' perspective.

Other researchers have advanced our understanding of the interpersonal world of troubled teens by studying the discourse of adolescents. For example, Eggert and Nicholas (1992) used ethnographic methods to analyze the language of at-risk youth, using the results of their study to launch a program of research addressing the needs of potential high school dropouts. In a later study, Rymes (1995) used ethnography and discourse analysis to investigate moral agency in high school dropouts. More recently, Powers and Welsh (1999) studied interactions between mothers and depressed daughters to explain patterns of conflict.

I used both the ethnography of communication and discourse analysis to guide my study of the language of teens who are at risk for suicide. As the teens talked in the interview, they chose terms and expressions and made choices in language to characterize how and what their parents said to them. These terms and expressions, and the way they were used to characterize or "frame" their parents' communication, became the focus of my research questions. In this introductory chapter, I present an overview of my study and explain what aspects of the ethnography of communication and discourse analysis that I chose to guide my research efforts. I pose my research questions, explaining the rationale for these questions, and summarize the remaining chapters of the study.

Overview of the Current Study

The discourse of the adolescents that I analyzed in the current investigation came from interviews with 77 teens who were potential high school drop outs and who were at risk for suicide. In this study, "at risk for suicide" means that during a screening process, the teens were found to have risk factors for suicide that included thoughts of suicide, a co-occurring depression, substance use, or a prior suicide attempt (Thompson & Eggert, 1999).

The data for the current study were gathered during a two hour semi-structured interview with individual teens at their high schools. The interview format employed two methods of gathering information from the teens: (1) questions that used seven-point Likert-type scales and (2) open-ended questions that asked the teens to elaborate on an area of concern such as stress, depression, substance use, or thoughts of suicide. The 77 teens in the current study were selected from a larger group of 738 cases because the 77 were among a group who had named "conflict with parents" as a major source of stress. As the selected teens responded to the open-ended questions, they wove into their responses many references to, and elaborations on, the troubled relationship they had with their parents. Within those references to their parents were further elaborations of the communicative relationship with parents.

By a "communicative relationship" I mean the entire range of words, expressions, ways of speaking, and nonverbal forms of communication that define the language that connects people. A communicative relationship is only one of the many domains of relationship between parents and their children. Each relationship domain is characterized by a vocabulary as well as by ways of behaving. For example, the legal relationship between parents and children is defined by rules of responsibility. The "currency" of this legal relationship might include the signing of consent forms and permission slips. There is also a financial relationship between parents and children--which may include transactions about allowances and understandings about who pays

for what purchases--where actual dollar bills (currency) could be the defining element of the relationship. In a communicative relationship, the currency is the words, phrases, and expressions set in the larger context of the ways parents and children orient themselves to each other through their words and other forms of communication. The relationship connection is through the medium of verbal and nonverbal communication. When one talks about a communicative relationship, one is talking about "talk" itself. Talking about "talk" itself is also known as speaking meta-pragmatically or reflexively. When someone speaks reflexively about talk, they give voice to how they experience the communicative relationship between themselves and others. The person may use direct reported speech to re-enact a moment in the interaction or may use his/her own words to characterize the communicative relationship from his or her perspective. For the current study, I use the terms "communicative relationship" and "discursive relationship" interchangeably. The terms "communicative action," "communicative conduct," and "communicative practices" refer to verbal behaviors of parents as described by the teens. I use the term "talk," as in "the teen's talk" to refer to the discourse of the teen during the interview.

A basic premise of this study is that the communicative relationship between parent and teen is a vitally important factor of the teen's development (Grotevant & Cooper, 1983; Hauser, 1991; Noller, 1995). The communicative relationship is enacted in daily, routine interactions, as well as in more involved conversations, that together contribute to and are constitutive of major tasks of adolescence: identity exploration, values clarification, development of personal competencies, social skill-building, etc. (Noller, 1995; Steinberg, 2000). The communicative relationships among family members are an important indicator of how supportive or stressful the family environment is.

Family support is a major protective factor against adolescent problem behavior.

including depression and suicidal behavior (Resnick et al, 1997). Family strain, of which parent-adolescent conflict may be a component, is linked indirectly to teens' suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Wang, 2000). The main purpose of my study is, then, to analyze the way teens at risk for suicide (who choose to talk about parents' communication) characterize their parents' communicative actions, especially around conflict between the teen and the parents. I am studying the teen's perspective on the "how" and "what" parents say. To clarify, the what of the teens' talk are the words, phrases, and expressions the teens use. The how of the teens' talk is the construction of their utterances, such as the teens using direct reported speech to recount a speech event. I believe that studying these aspects of the talk of teens at risk for suicide can illuminate aspects of the " communicative relationship" between parents and teen and can lead to new understandings of the often-studied, but still incomplete variables of parent-teen conflict in adolescent suicide risk.

My exploration of youth suicide risk in the context of family relationships is grounded in the work of numerous other researchers. For example, youth self-harm thoughts and behaviors are linked to lower levels of family social support (Windle & Windle, 1997), parent-child discord (Brent et al.,1998), emotional disparity with parents (Dukes & Lorch,1989), and a stressful relationship with the mother (Smith & Crawford,1986). Parent attitudes (Ary, Tildesley, Hops, & Andrews, 1993), lack of openness of communication (Kafka & London, 1991), and a coercive, controlling parenting style (Barnes & Farell, 1992) were associated with adolescent substance use, a potent risk factor for adolescent suicide (Metha, Chen, Mulvenon, & Dode, 1998) and one of the reasons for its inclusion as a topic for my study investigation.

These studies are examples of how investigators have made valuable contributions to the field of adolescent suicide by studying various aspects of the parent-teen relationship. What is missing in the field is exploration of the particularities of the communicative relationship,

especially from the perspective of the teen who is vulnerable to suicide. This dissertation seeks to address this gap in the research on adolescent suicide. Through ethnography of communication (EC) and discourse analysis (DA), I offer an interpretive perspective that seeks descriptive power.

The larger study from which I selected these teens' interviews is committed to finding ways to help troubled teens. To help troubled teens, researchers and clinicians seek understanding of the perspectives of the teen. A useful way to gain that perspective is to have background knowledge of the vocabulary, terms, expressions, and experiences of the teens. The descriptions, terms, and expressions examined in this study can sensitize helpers of teens in new ways. By "sensitize" I mean being aware of the linguistic devices teens use to describe conflict with their parents and to know questions to use to help teens express their feelings about parents' responses. Thus, I propose to use an interpretive approach to gain insight into the world of teens at risk for suicide, deriving from the teens' words an understanding of how they perceive their parents' words and the reported effects those words have on them. In the next section, I will explain in more detail the interpretive approach that I have used in my study.

An Interpretive Perspective to Studying Adolescent Suicide

Broadly speaking, an interpretive approach to an issue denotes a study of meaning in actions and texts, trying to discover the ways that people make sense of their world through their communicative behaviors (Putnam & Pacanosky, 1983). The goal of interpretation is not to uncover laws that govern events, but rather to discover the ways that people actually understand their own experience (Littlejohn, 1996). The stance of the researcher is to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual (Denzin, 1997). The interviews with the teens at risk for suicide have presented to us, researchers and clinicians, the opportunity to hear the teens' perspective of selected experiences in the intimate social world they inhabit with their families. Both the ethnography of communication and discourse analysis guided my efforts. Each

method emphasizes the study of talk for its own sake (i.e., what is revealed in the construction of the discourse itself.) Both stress the study of language in use. By language in use, I mean people deploying words to make themselves understood, to do things, and to produce meaning in social life (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001b). Although they share this commitment to studying language in use, each has spawned its own field of research and brings its own unique perspective to the study of language and its context.

Ethnography of Communication

The ethnography of communication (or ethnography of speaking) focuses on particular ways of seeing and experiencing the world and how these different perspectives are reflected in particular ways of speaking. As originally set forth by Hymes (1962), the ethnography of communication is concerned with the "means" of speech–the tools and devices that are the words, expressions, metaphors, etc.--and the meanings of these tools and devices for the users. Hymes pioneered the study of language in use to discover the particular ways in which communication is conceptualized and practiced. With a focus on speaking itself, Hymes (1962) noted that speaking, like language, is patterned, functions as a system, and is describable by rules.

Fundamental to Hymes' theories and to those theories as further developed by Philipsen (1992, 1997) are the beliefs that speaking is distinctive, varies by social group, and has social consequences. Foregrounded in this perspective are both the social nature and the consequences of speaking. As Philipsen points out, "Distinctive ways of acting and distinctive ways of experiencing social life articulate with each other in the life of a person or group and thus are constitutive, that is, bring about or enact a distinctive social reality" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 13). My findings in this study bear out Philipsen's analysis. The subset of teens used for this study had all identified conflict with parents as a major stressor. This conflicted relationship between parent

and teen is constitutive of a social reality for the teenager; that is, the teen experiences life from the perspective of a person who, at this point in life, has identified conflict with parents as a major stressor in his or her life.

Discourse Analysis

The theoretical approach of discourse analysts Potter and Wetherell (1987) also guided this study. Consistent with Hymes and Philipsen, Potter and Wetherell view discourse as a social practice in itself, with its own characteristics and practical consequences. Utterances are speech acts, and language is functional all the time. Wetherell and Potter (1988) offer guidance for how to analyze the teen talk by using the concepts of function, linguistic variation, construction, and interpretative repertoire.

In Wetherell and Potter's scheme, "function" means the consequences of a speech act, and linguistic variation provides the analytic clue to what function is being performed in the speech act. The term "construction" implies that discourse is action-orientated and also denotes that discourse is manufactured out of pre-existing linguistic resources with properties of their own. The interpretative repertoires are the broader linguistic resources, "the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 172). When I use the term "linguistic resources" throughout this study, I am referring to the total means available to the teen to verbally express himself or herself. The teen draws from this "total available means" to construct utterances. I use the term "linguistic form" to refer to a specific resource used by the teen such as direct reported speech.

Wetherell (2001) explained that discourse analysis is conceptually broad, encompassing at least four approaches. In the first approach, the discourse analyst focuses primarily on the language itself. Patterns that are identified in the language-in-use are studied for their variations, and these variations may be described in terms of vocabulary, structure, or function. As

Wetherell points out, "The analyst's interest is, broadly, in regularities within an imperfect and unstable system" (p. 8). In the second approach, the analyst is more focused on the "use" than the "language." Interaction between speakers becomes the major interest. Patterns in use are identified by the sequence of contributions to an interaction. In the third approach to discourse analysis, the pattern within language in use revolves around a set or family of terms which are related to a particular topic or activity. This approach views language as situated or contextualized within a particular social and cultural context, rather than within a specific interaction (as in the second approach above). The fourth approach is the broadest, and in it the analyst seeks to identify patterns of language and practices to show how these patterns and practices constitute aspects of the larger society.

I presented these four approaches to discourse to provide the context for the study I have undertaken. I used the third approach described above in the sense that I am displaying a set of terms and expressions based on a particular topic: suicide-vulnerable teens' perceptions of their parents' communicative behaviors (i.e., the unifying context is that all the teens have met criteria for a certain level of suicide risk). Yet within this somewhat broad landscape, I am using the first approach described above: focusing on the language itself (the vocabulary of conflict, for example). As the analysis unfolded, I was compelled to attend to some particular uses of language being employed by the teen speakers. Thus, I was drawing also from the second approach described above.

Taking the "action orientation" to the study of language advised by Potter and Wetherell (1987), combined with an emphasis on functionality suggested by Philipsen (1997) and the ethnography of speaking, I chose to focus on three communicative phenomena. The first of these was the linguistic action verbial. A linguistic action verbial (LAV) is a term that refers to what a speaker is doing in a particular linguistic act, such as "speak," "argue," or "told."

(Verschueren,1989). LAVs describe linguistic action. They are the words people use to express what people do with words. Verschueren coined the word "verbial" to cover simple one-word verbs (e.g., "talk" and "say") and verb-like expressions such as "to shoot questions at" (Verschueren, p. 218).[1]

Examination of the LAVs in my materials led me to the second linguistic form used by the teen speakers, extreme case formulations (ECF), which is a way of stating something in its maximum state, such as "always," "every time," and "brand new" (Pomerantz, 1986). The third linguistic device of focus to emerge was reported speech (Holt, 1996). The analysis of these three phenomena led to a fourth area of concentration: how the use of these devices or resources particularized the experience of the teens as it related to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Next, I will discuss how these communicative phenomena relate to discourse analysis and the ethnography of speaking.

Focus on Communicative Phenomena

My overall goal of this project was to better understand the reported communicative relationship between the teens at risk for suicide and their parents, using semi-structured interview data. Based on the descriptions of EC and DA above, I first examined "what was there" and from that examination, selected the phenomena that addressed the questions I brought to this project. As Carbaugh (1996) explains, "Ethnographic interpretations are creatively formulated then, by describing communicative practices in social settings and by being cognizant of (but not necessarily constrained by) the participant's reports about those practices" (p. 15).

Thus, there are two levels of description of communicative practices in this project--referential and functional. The referential level is the teens' descriptions of their parents'

---

[1]Verschueren proposed that basic linguistic action verbs were those verbs that could not be defined in terms of a different linguistic action verb. The nine basic LAVs he proposed were: TO ANSWER, TO ASK, TO NAME, TO SAY, TO SPEAK, TO TALK, TO TELL, TO THANK, and TO WRITE.

communicative conduct, and the functional level is my examination of the teens' language use (communicative practices) as they report on their parents' practices (Taylor, 2001). When the teens are presented with a situational frame by the interviewer, such as the question "Can you tell me more about what is especially stressful about 'conflict with parents'?" attention is focused on actual social settings, the communicative practices being used in those settings (an order of enactment), and the participants' sense of the communicative practices that are being used there (an order of reports about enactment), similar to work by Carbaugh (1996). For example, if the teen uses "bitching at me" to describe his mother's communicative conduct, the term "bitching" is a linguistic action verb in gerundial form deployed by the teen to describe what his mother does. When the same teen uses direct reported speech (DRS) to tell a story to the interviewer about his mother bitching at him, the analyst now may study the teen's report and reconstruction of the interaction. The analyst's interest now is to interpret or attempt to understand what function for the teen was being served by using DRS. In other words, what social action was the teen enacting by using DRS? And in doing so, what was the teen saying about the parent's way of communicating?

Research Questions

To address the exploration of the teens' language and its meanings to the teens, the following questions were posed:

RQ 1. When characterizing the communicative conduct of parents, how do teens at risk for suicide and who report having conflict with parents use the linguistic resources of:

a) Linguistic action verbials (LAVs).

b) Extreme case formulations (ECFs).

c) Reported speech

RQ 2. What are the meanings of these characterizations for the teen speakers?

RQ 3. What do the teens identify as the outcomes or effects on them of the parents' communicative behavior and do these outcomes relate to the teens' risk for suicide?

Value of Doing this Study

This study has the potential to contribute to both communication research and research on youth suicide. Youth suicide continues to challenge researchers and health professionals. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds following unintentional injuries and homicide. Completed suicides of adolescents ages 15 to 19 occur at a rate of 9.5 per 100,000. (National Institutes of Mental Health, NIMH, 1999). High percentages of teenagers think about or attempt serious self-harm. In a 1997 survey of 12,000 American teenagers, 10.2% of girls and 7.5% of boys had considered suicide without attempting it. Suicide attempts were reported by 3.6% of the adolescents (Resnick et al., 1997).

Teens who think about or engage in self harm need, but only sometimes seek, help. Help comes in the form of counseling, social support, and school-based prevention programs that use multiple strategies, which range from general classroom self-esteem building (Stivers, 1990) to specialized classes targeting domains of risk and protection in youth (Randell, Eggert, & Pike, 2001; Thompson, Eggert, Randell, & Pike, 2001). Researchers interested in understanding family dynamics have urged greater attention to parent-adolescent communication (Davilla, 1995; Noller & Callan,1990). The current study can provide for educators, counselors, and parents sensitizing concepts, terms, and phrases that will assist them as they deal with distressed youth. Links among events, feelings, and reactions to parental communicative behaviors can inform the helpers of adolescents who are at risk for suicide.

Applications of ethnography of speaking and theories of discourse analysis to suicidal adolescents illustrate the usefulness to clinical problems provided by these important communication frameworks. For researchers in communication and adolescent health, the

findings of the current study can elaborate on the construct of parent-adolescent conflict, an often used construct that lacks specificity in definition. The findings can also be used to compare to the research on the talk of adolescents with other kinds of problems. Investigation of the linguistic devices of action verbials, extreme case, and reported speech extends the work of other scholars in communication to new and provocative contexts of parent-teen conflict and teen suicide.

Value of Asking These Research Questions

As noted above, and as will be examined in Chapter 2, researchers have investigated multiple aspects of family factors in adolescent suicide. Wagner (1997) reviewed over 200 studies on family factors and adolescent suicide. Of these, many dealt with communication issues. Although some of these studies used interview methods, none of them analyzed the teen discourse for what the patterns in the discourse itself could reveal.

I also noted that when studies of adolescent suicide address family conflict, parent-teen discord, or "communication issues," the nature of the familial relationship issues studied was often non-specific. For example, "poor relationship with mother," "parent-child discord," or "poor communication" are informative, but, they are general, sometimes vague, and incomplete. This incompleteness fueled my interest in a deeper examination of the particularities of the parent-teen communicative relationship. Furthermore, leaders in the fields of adolescent suicidology (Wagner, 1997) and parent-adolescent conflict (Cox & Brooks-Gunn, 1999) have encouraged researchers to study the actual discourse of troubled teens.

The communicative phenomena that I chose to study emerged as important tools to the teen speakers through multiple sifts of the body of data. The teens used linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, and direct reported speech in ways that suggested these tools were important resources to the teens and that their use was meaningful to the teens in particular ways. Other researchers have made important observations of language in use by studying these

resources, albeit not in the context I am examining. Thus, these are devices worthy of study in their own right, but also to expand our understanding of the nature of conflict in the communicative relationship of parents and teens. A brief explanation of the context for these devices follows below. They are discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

In this study, I view discourse as social action. The teens' uses of language resources may be constructive and constitutive of social life. In this study, viewing discourse as social action calls on us to examine the origins of meanings (Wetherell, 2001). Meanings build on conventions and norms. For example, the teens may refer to a parent's practices as "just like a parent." They are drawing on agreed upon understandings about parents' behaviors that we comprehend because we are part of the same speaking community. We can thus study meaning from a broad cultural context or from a local sense which Wetherell calls "indexical." The local sense is the view for the current project. The placement, form, variation, and emphasis in the teens' talk reveals the significance and meanings of the linguistic devices for the teens who use them. Through an examination of the resources such as direct reported speech and extreme case formulations we can better understand how the teens produce meaning.

Study of these foundational units of discourse can lead to a search for larger "building blocks of conversation" termed "interpretative repertoires" (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984). Through interpretative repertoires, one can uncover the basis of shared understandings among a community of speakers. Through understanding what particular interpretative repertoires mean, we can appreciate their experience. Thus, there is great value in a close analysis of these critical linguistic resources.

Preview of Chapters

In the following chapters, I proceed toward answering the research questions put forth in this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 begins with a review of research about adolescent suicide

relative to family factors. Following this review, I present an overview of discourse analysis and ethnography of communication as methodological tools, along with discussion of the research about the communicative phenomena that were analyzed in this study.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used for the current study. In this chapter, I describe in detail the larger project from which the teens at risk for suicide were selected. I also give the characteristics of the teens in the study group. The format of the videotaped interviews from which the discourse was transcribed is explained. The method of transcribing the videotapes and assembling the utterances of the teens into a corpus of materials is described. The process of analyzing the utterances is explained. Issues of validity and reliability are addressed, as is the role of the investigator in the project.

Chapter 4 is divided into four parts, each addressing an aspect of the research questions. Part I is concerned with the description of the linguistic action verbials related to conflict with parents and the vocabulary surrounding these LAVs. In Part II, I examine the teen's use of extreme case formulations. In Part III, I analyze the teens' responses to questions about disclosures to parents relative to the teen's suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors. The teens' use of DRS in the formulation of their accounts of these disclosures to parents is the phenomenon of interest. In Part IV, I analyze what the teens report as the consequences for them of the communicative practices of their parents. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the entire work, investigates limitations of the study, and discusses implications for future research and for informing clinical practices.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to anchor the current study to the theory and research that guided the investigator as the study progressed. Two streams of research frame the current investigation. One is the study of adolescent problem behavior, specifically, the problem of adolescent suicide risk behaviors. Jessor's (1995) theory of how risk and protective factors impact adolescent problem behavior is an overarching framework. The review focuses more narrowly on the family as the context for adolescent suicide problem behavior. Research on parenting styles is a further attenuation of the literature review.

The other stream of research pertains to the study of communicative practices. I have organized the background on communicative practices into four sections. The theory and methodology to study the talk of the adolescents at risk for suicide in this study are derived from the work of ethnographers of communicationon and discourse analysts. Second, background on the study of parent-adolescent interactions is presented. The talk of the adolescents in this study has been selected, not for helping us understand for example, their issues with school or peers, but for helping us to understand the communicative practices of parents through the eyes of their teenagers. Thus, the third section of the literature review on communicative practices relates to studying adolescent talk. The fourth section deals with parent and/or adolescent talk in the context of the problem behavior of adolescent suicide. There is no research that deals specifically with the talk of adolescents at risk for suicide as they explore their parents' communicative practices, which is the gap in the literature the current study aims to address.

Risk and Protective Factors in Adolescent Health

Researchers have used the framework of risk and protective factors to study a wide range of adolescent health issues: substance use (Felix-Ortiz & Newcomb, 1992; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992), delinquency and illegal drug use (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996), adolescent suicide

(Brent et al., 1998; Marttunen & Pelkonen, 2001; Randell, Eggert, & Pike, 2001; Wichstrom, 2000), and adolescent health enhancing behavior (Jessor, Turbin, & Costa, 1998). Risk factors are the variables or conditions that are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes–behaviors that can compromise health or well-being (Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995). Protective factors are not simply the absence of risk or at the low end of a risk variable (Rutter, 1987), but rather are treated as conceptually distinct from risk factors. Protective factors are variables or conditions that decrease the likelihood of engaging in problem behavior. Research on adolescent suicide risk behaviors has been enhanced by the application of risk and protective influences in the domains of the individual, family, school, and peers. The family domain has been of special interest because the family can be a source of tremendous support, and thus protection, but can also put the adolescent at risk if the family increases the adolescent's stress (Sandin, Chorot, Santed, Valiente, & Joiner, 1998). Research into the family as a risk and protective influence on the adolescent is presented next.

Family Risk Factors in Adolescent Suicide Risk

Family risk factors for adolescent suicide risk behaviors are conceptualized in various ways in the literature: family strain, (Wang, 2000), family psychopathology (Wang, 2000), family dysfunction (Shafii et al., 1985; Wagner, 1997), and family stress (Randell, Herting, Eggert, & Thompson, 1998). After controlling for other variables, family disorganization (Joffe et al., 1988) and low support (Lewinsohn et al., 1994) were found to be related to risk for suicide.

Thompson et al. (1994) determined that a measure of family strain was significantly higher in high risk youth with suicidal ideation as compared to other high risk youth or typical youth. Subjects reported more conflict with parents, unreasonable parental expectations, and thoughts of running away from home. Family strain was found by Wang (2000) to influence indirectly adolescent suicide risk behavior through the adolescents' level of personal

competency. Two indices comprised family strain: conflicts with parents (including serious conflict/tension and perceived unreasonable parental expectations) and unmet family goals (no parent to talk to, not being trusted by parents, unfair family rules, and family not doing things together).

Other studies documenting the link of suicidal behavior and family factors have used measures of general family functioning that specify a lack of family support and presence of bad feelings in the family (Adams, Overhoser, & Lehnert, 1994; King, Hill, Naylor, Evans, & Shain, 1993; Morano, Cisler, & Lemerond, 1993). Weakened family support in the previous year was linked with completed suicide in Finnish adolescents (Marttunen, Aro, Henriksson, & Lonnqvist, 1994). Low levels of attachment-felt security with parents was discovered in adolescents with suicidal behavior (Armsden, McCauley, Greenberg, Burke, & Mitchell, 1990; West, Spreng, Rose, & Adam, 1998).

Adams, Overholser, and Lahnert (1994) examined adolescent perceptions of general family functioning. Four groups of high school students were studied: psychiatric inpatients who had attempted suicide, non-suicidal psychiatric inpatients, high school students reporting suicidal ideation, and non-suicidal high school students. The attempters and ideators reported greater dysfunction in the family system and in mother-adolescent relationships than did the nonsuicidal high school students. The suicidal adolescents often perceived their families as being poor at problem-solving, prone to crises, and as having trouble adapting to change. They perceived their families as having "insufficient, ineffective, or confusing communication" (p. 504). Suicidal youth reported problems in their relationships with their mothers, including power struggles, ineffective control, disagreement over what was important, and poor communication related to both practical and emotional areas.

Using a semi-structured interview, de Wilde et al. (1993) compared suicide attempters to

depressed and normal adolescents. Higher levels of family conflict discriminated attempters from normal, but not from depressed, teens. Swedo et al. (1991) determined that suicide attempters were differentiated from normal controls by their hopelessness, suicidal ideation, level of family support, and family communication patterns.

Family Conflict

As can be seen in the studies just listed, family "conflict" seems to be a salient feature in the research linking family factors and adolescent suicide risk. Conflict can be defined as the verbal and nonverbal expressed disagreement between individuals or groups (Stewart & Logan, 1991). "Verbal and nonverbal" convey that conflict may manifest itself as both words and gestures, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues. "Expressed disagreement" draws attention to the way conflict was studied in the current work, that is, as being manifested interpersonally between parents and adolescents as opposed to an internal feeling state such as "feeling conflicted."

The systems model of family functioning proposes that families develop self-maintaining patterns of interaction (Minuchin, 1974). The moves toward autonomy and independence by the teenager challenge the family as it adapts to these previously established homoeostatic patterns. Some conflict is an expected and normal part of the adaptation process (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1999). However, the ways in which families cope with and attempt to adapt to the challenges of individuation determine whether the typical stress and strain are resolved or reach clinical proportions (Robin & Foster, 1989).

Parent adolescent conflict is a well documented but inconsistently defined risk factor for adolescent suicidal behavior. For example, investigators have used the following terms when studying the association between parent-adolescent conflict and suicide behavior: parent-adolescent discord (Brent et al., 1998), conflict with parents (de Wilde, Kiehorst, Diekstra, &

Wolters, 1993; Lewinsohn, Rhode, & Seeley, 1992; Shagle & Barber, 1993; Thompson, Moody, & Eggert, 1994), poor family communication and problem solving (Miller, King, Shain, & Naylor, 1992; Wagner, 1997), and family discord (Pfeffer, Normandin, & Kakuma. 1998).

Shagle and Barber (1993) showed that parent-adolescent conflict may exert its influence on suicidal behavior through self-evaluations the teen makes. In their work. family conflict and parent-adolescent conflict had significant associations with teen self-derogation. The authors speculated that adolescents blamed themselves for the family conflict or that a poor parenting environment characterized highly conflicted homes, which then influenced negative self-conception in the adolescents.

Some studies indicate that conflict with parents carries a greater risk for females than it does for male adolescents (Kashani, Goddard, & Reid, 1989; Lewinsohn et al..1993). Kashani et al. (1989) reported that in a community sample of adolescents with suicidal ideation, females with suicidal ideation endorsed significantly more items of family distress than did non-suicidal females. There were no differences among suicidal and non-suicidal males in their reports of difficulties with their parents. Lewinsohn et al. (1993) found that females with a past suicide attempt reported the greatest degree of conflict with parents, but males with a past attempt reported the least conflict with their parents. Young women and men with no reported past attempt had middle range scores of conflict with parents. Thompson et al. (1994) found also that family strain was a more important discriminator for young women than for young men.

Gould et al. (1996) surveyed 120 completed suicide victims and found that poor communication with father was a significant predictor of completed suicide for adolescents over age 16 after controlling for adolescent disruptive disorder. substance disorder, or mood disorder. Poor communication with mother was a significant predictor for both younger and older adolescents after controlling for substance abuse disorder and adolescent disruptive behavior disorder, but became a non-significant predictor after

controlling for a mood disorder.When Brent and colleagues (1994) studied completed suicides among adolescents, they found that parent-child discord was a strong predictor of completed suicide. A lifetime history of parent-child discord was a more significant risk factor than parent child discord over the past 12 months. Further analysis revealed, however, that after controlling for depression, conduct disorder, and substance use in the teens, parent-child discord no longer significantly contributed to the risk of adolescent suicide. These findings led the researchers to speculate that discord with parents contributes to suicide indirectly through an association with mental disorders in the youth or that discord could be an outcome of psychopathology in both teens and their parents.

Numerous researchers have found evidence that suicidal adolescents were more likely to have a family member (parent and/or sibling) with psychopathology, defined as having depression, alcohol/drug abuse, violence, and completed or attempted suicide (Brent et al., 1994; Joffe, Offord, & Boyle, 1988; Kashani et al., 1989; Kienhorst et al., 1992; Thompson et al., 1994; Wang, 2000). Wang (2000) used structural equation modeling to show that the effect of family psychopathology on adolescent suicide risk behaviors was mediated through the teen's emotional distress and drug involvement.

Parenting Styles and Adolescent Suicide Behaviors

Teens' perceptions of the support and control dimensions of the parent–adolescent relationship have been studied for their link to teen suicide thoughts and behaviors. For example, youth reports of low levels of maternal warmth and harsh discipline were associated with suicide ideation (Wagner & Cohen, 1994). A study that specifically investigated support and control was reported by Martin and Waite (1994). They used the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) to assess adolescents who had suicidal thoughts, had engaged in deliberate self-harm, or were depressed. The PBI uses two main subscales: a care subscale and a protection subscale. Care is conceptualized as bipolar with one pole defined by expression of affection, emotional support, and fair treatment, and the other pole by neglect

and rejection. Protection is also bipolar, with one pole termed as psychological autonomy and the other psychological control. Psychological control is defined by features of intrusiveness, parental direction, and control through guilt. The authors combined the quadrants into parenting styles: optimal parenting (high care/low protection), affectionate constraint (high care/high protection), affectionless control (low care/high protection), and neglectful parenting (low care/low protection).

The researchers found that assignment of mothers or fathers to a style of affectionless control (lower care/ higher protection) was associated with increasing levels of depression. Assignment of mothers to affectionate constraint (high care/high protection) carried almost as high a relative risk for depression, suggesting that maternal overprotection may be linked to depression. In regard to suicidal thoughts, higher maternal and paternal care scores were associated with an absence of suicidal thinking for both males and females. Conversely, lower mean care scores were linked significantly with suicidal thoughts, as were higher mean scores for maternal and paternal protection. Assignment of mother or father to the quadrant of affectionless control doubled the risk for suicidal thinking, tripled the risk for deliberate self-harm, and showed a five-fold increase in depression among the adolescents.

The Parental Bonding Instrument plus a Criticism scale was used to assess the relationships among hopelessness, parenting style, and adolescent suicide (Allison, Pearce, Martin, Miller & Long, 1995). Adolescents' perceptions of parental criticism, parental overprotection and lack of care were significantly related to suicide. Perceived parenting style and hopelessness made significant unique contributions to suicidal behavior. Most of the direct effects came from parenting style, with the remainder being mediated through hopelessness.

This review shows that family factors emerge as an important component of most models of adolescent suicide behavior. Causal relationships are difficult to make since most studies use cross-sectional designs to find associations between increased suicide risk and family factors such as general

family dysfunction, general parenting styles, and factors that describe more specific relationship issues, such as a construct of family strain (conflicts with parents and unmet family goals). Nonetheless the strength of association of the family as an influencing factor on adolescent suicide risk argues for continued research to advance the understanding of family influences on adolescent risk for suicide.

Family Support Factors in Adolescent Suicide

Just as the family can be a factor which increases risk for adolescent suicide, the family can also be protect against suicide risk. Jessor and colleagues (Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995) found that a supportive family is a powerful protective factor that decreases the likelihood of engaging in problem behaviors. Additionally, several researchers have found evidence of a supportive family environment to be protective for adolescents against the problem of suicidal risk behavior (Dukes & Lorch, 1989; Fremouw, Callahan, & Kashden, 1993; Proctor & Groze, 1994). Youth at risk for suicide were found to report low levels of family support in a study by Randell and colleagues (Randell, Eggert, & Pike, 2001). When Wang (2000) examined family protective factors against youth suicide, she found that studies in the literature define family protective factors against suicide as family cohesion, parent/family connectedness, and family support.

Family cohesion refers to adolescents' perception of positive emotional involvement and consultative decision-making among family members (Wang, 2000). Regarding family cohesion, suicidal adolescents rated their families as the least cohesive and most rigid, compared to psychiatric controls and normal controls (Miller, King, Shain, & Naylor, 1992). Other researchers have identified that adolescents perceived having a positive emotional connection with their parents as protective against adolescent suicidal behaviors (Blum & Rinehart, 1997). The Add Health study showed that connectedness to parents and school were protective for every risk factor except teenage pregnancy (Resnick et al., 1997). Better parent-teen communication, more parental warmth and empathy, and less

paternal over protectiveness were associated with community non-suicidal youth as compared to suicidal youth (Miller et al., 1992). Community non-suicidal youth also reported higher mean scores on communication with their mother and father. They also perceived greater mother warmth and understanding and greater paternal caring. For general family support, Yuen and colleagues (1996) found that suicide attempters reported less family support than did non-attempters. Among Native Hawaiian high school students the researcher concluded that family support was a significant protective factor against suicide attempts.

Mediating Factors with Family Influence on Adolescent Suicide Risk

The review so far has situated the family as a context for examining adolescent suicide risk. In many of the studies reviewed however, the authors acknowledged that the pathway of family influence was complex and could be mediated by personal factors in the adolescent. For example, in Allison et al. (1995), hopelessness in the adolescent partially mediated the adolescents' perceptions of parenting style. Four key personal characteristics that are reported as important mediators of family influence on adolescent suicide risk are: (a) depression,(b) substance use,(c) personal competency, and (d) hopelessness. Each of these is briefly considered.

Depression

The strongest predictor for adolescent suicide continues to be an affective disorder, especially depression (Eggert et al., 1998; Haliburn, 2000; Lewinsohn, Rohde and Seeley, 1993; Martin, Rozannes, Pearce, & Allison, 1995; Wichstrom, 2000). Haliburn (2000) studied 104 suicidal patients (aged 12-20 years) and found that more than 80 percent suffered from major depression.

A theoretical model of adolescent suicide behavior was tested using four predictor variables, depression, hopelessness, self-esteem, and substance use, and one criterion variable, suicide risk (Metha, Chen, Mulvenon, & Dode, 1998). Subjects were 192 males and 329 females junior high students. The predictor variables contributed to suicide risk, as hypothesized although there were

gender differences. Males progressed from depression to substance use and then to suicide risk, while females progressed directly from depression to suicide risk. Depression was also a stronger predictor of low self-esteem for females than for males. In ths study, hopelessness predicted substance use, but did not predict suicide risk.

Depression, hopelessness, and low self-esteem are intimately related and have been theorized to be proximal causes of suicidal behavior (Harter & Marold, 1994). The relationships are complex, however, In one study, hopelessness was more strongly linked with suicide attempts than to ideation.(Negron, Piacentini, Graae, Davies, & Shaffer, 1997) . Self-criticism, a dimension of depressive cognition, was compared to perfectionism (Donaldson, Spirito, & Farnett, 2000). Self-criticism was the cognitive variable most strongly associated with hopelessness.

Substance Use

The use of alcohol and drugs is also strongly associated with an adolescent suicide risk behavior (Berman & Schwartz, 1990; Brent, 1995; Brent, Baugher, Bridge, Chen, Chiappetta, 1999; Burge, Felts, Chenier & Parrillo, 1995; Gould et al., 1998). Adolescents who are depressed and use substances are especially at risk (King, Hill, Naylor, Evans, & Shain, 1993). Adolescents who use drugs are also more likely to have conflicts with parents (Berman & Schwartz, 1990).

Personal Competency

Personal competency was selected as a personal characteristic, because Wang (2000) found that family strain had a direct, negative effect on a teen's personal competency and an indirect effect on the teen's adolescent suicide risk. Personal competency was defined as including four life skills: (a) having problem-solving coping skills—thinking about options, imagining oneself solving problems, and facing problems head on; (b) a perceived sense of personal control, (c) perceiving oneself as capable of learning to adjust to one's problems; and (d) self-confidence--believing that one can make good things happen for oneself (Eggert et al., 1994). Others have also found evidence suggesting that

higher levels of personal competencies are associated with lower levels of suicide risk behaviors (Cole, 1989; Thompson, Eggert, & Herting, 1996; Wilson, Stelzer, Bergman, Kral, Inayatullah, & Elliot, 1995)

Hopelessness

Empirical evidence provides support for hopelessness as a significant predictor of adolescent suicidal behaviors (Beck, 1986; 1988; Fremouw et al., 1993; Levy et al., 1995; Lewinsohn et al., 1994; Mazza & Reynolds, 1998; Thompson et al., 1999). In a study of 102 recent suicide attempters, Levy and colleagues (1995) found that hopelessness significantly predicted adolescent suicidal ideation and suicide intent In a case-control study of 143 psychiatric inpatients with and without suicidal behaviors and community youth, Fremouw and colleagues (1993) found that together, depression, hopelessness, and family cohesion accounted for 58.5% of the variance in adolescent suicidal behaviors. Similarly, Mazza and Reynolds (1998) found that changes in hopelessness significantly predicted changes in suicidal ideation one year later for both females and males.

Lewinsohn and colleagues however (1993) had different findings. They found that current hopelessness was associated with past suicide attempts, but this became non-significant after controlling for depression. In their one year follow-up study, Lewinsohn and colleagues (1994) found that current hopelessness significantly predicted future suicide attempts, but this also became non-significant after controlling for depression. These study findings indicate that hopelessness is a significant predictor of adolescent suicidal behaviors; however, the influence of hopelessness on suicidal behaviors is varied after controlling for depression.

Summary of Family Factors Related to Suicide

In this portion of the background literature I reviewed studies that show how the family can be a potential risk or protective factor for suicide risk in adolescents. Family dysfunction increases adolescent risk for suicide ideation and behaviors. When researchers study family dysfunction, strain,

or family stress as a risk factor, elements of communication are implicit (tension among family members, lack of affection, conflict) and sometimes explicit (poor communication). Family support may be a powerful protector for a variety of adolescent problem behaviors, including suicide risk behaviors. Likewise, when researchers attempt to specify "family support," they use words such as warmth, empathy, understanding, and use scales that measure "communication." These descriptors are highly useful in explanatory models of adolescent suicide risk.

The many studies I reviewed have used multiple approaches, but none has displayed, from the individual teen's perspective, in the teen's words, the substance, feel, and effect of the parent's communication practice on the teen. None of the studies investigated in detail what is the vocabulary of teen speakers when they recount conflict or tension with parents. What expressions and terms are drawn on to articulate the consequences of their parents' behaviors? What constructions of speech are the linguistic resources for the suicide vulnerable teens and what are the meanings of those resources for the teens as they speak about their parents' communicative conduct? A "close to the ground" display and examination is needed.

Some of the researchers whose work was reviewed have called for qualitative approaches to the study of adolescent suicide risk (Wagner, 1997). Studying the discourse of teens is a qualitative approach that can give information about how teens' perceive and evaluate important parts of their lives. Examining the means of speech and their meanings for the teens interviewed for this study holds promise of new understandings of suicide vulnerable adolescents. Both discourse analysis and ethnography of communication, which are concerned, in particular cases, with the means of communication and their meanings to those who use them, potentially provide the needed approaches to examine the discourse of teenagers in this study.

The Study of Communicative Practices

As was outlined in the introduction to this chapter, theory and research related to

communication and its practices is the second stream of research that forms the background of the current study. This important topic is further divided into four areas for discussion here. In the first section I argue for a view of communication as transactional (i.e., that individuals in dialogue are changed and shaped as they interact). Language is viewed as both a vehicle to aid understanding of persons and events and as constitutive of actions and events. The theory of discourse analysis used in the current study buttressed by ethnographic perspectives is put forth in this section as well. In the second section I cover communication as the focus of study among adolescents and in adolescent-parent relationships, where only a few studies have used ethnographic approaches or discourse analysis methods. The third section provides background on parent adolescent interactions specific to suicidal behavior. In the fourth section, I review the relevant research on the linguistic resources chosen for analysis in the current study.

Perspectives on Language: Ethnography of Communication and Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, as used in this project, follows Potter and Wetherell (1987) who take a social psychological approach to the study of speaking to gain a deeper understanding of social life and social interaction. Their perspective does not take up the study of variations in language use of different social groups (e.g. Labov, 1972), nor the role of cognition in discourse, which would include such things as comprehension of texts. Instead, their perspective is that language is a form of action conducted in discourse between individuals with different goals and thus must take the social context into account. Furthermore, when people talk, their discourse is not merely about actions, events, and situations. It is also a potent and constitutive part of those actions, events, and situations.

Lawrence Wieder's (1974) study of felon/residents in a half-way house illustrates what is meant by the "constitutive" nature of language. His study was based on an intensive period of participant observation in a half-way house in Los Angeles in the late 1960's. His research involved spending time around the house, observing what went on, and most importantly, building a rapport

with the inmates and staff so he could converse easily and at length with them about their lives.

Wieder began with an approach of identifying a set of informal rules that were operating in the institution which he termed "The Code." The Code included maxims (rules) for behavior known to all the felons (e.g., no snitching or taking advantage of fellow inmates). Utilizing the view that it is common to find such insider rules operating in institutions, Wieder treated the Code as independent of the talk surrounding it.

However, Wieder went on to look more closely at how the Code was derived and how the Code itself was used in practice by the inmates and others in the house. For example, a friendly exchange between Wieder and an inmate might be stopped abruptly by the inmate saying, "You know I won't snitch." Instead of immediately abstracting this comment as one that exemplified the rule and part of the Code, Wieder asked what the utterance was doing and what it achieved. He realized that the comment was formulating the immediate social environment (i.e., Wieder was asking the inmate to snitch). It then allowed the inmate to not answer. Thus the resident had supplied himself with a motive and a reasonable explanation for not replying. Finally, the utterance reminded all involved that this conversation was happening between an inmate and a person defined as an "outsider," because snitching only occurs between inmates and outsiders. Thus, the resident's comment gave a definition of what was going on in the immediate circumstance. The utterance "you know I won't snitch" is not only a description of a rule, it also formulates the nature of the action and the situation and produces practical consequences for the interaction.

Ethnographers of communication share with discourse analysts this perspective on the socially constitutive nature of language. For example, Philipsen (1992, 1997) has engaged in a program of research that has focused on the resources persons use in the daily conduct of their lives. As Philipsen relates, "distinctive ways of acting and distinctive ways of experiencing social life articulate with each other in the life of a person or group and thus are constitutive, that is, bring about

or enact a distinctive social reality" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 13).

Philipsen, following Bernstein (1972), has used "speech code" to capture the systematic sense of these resources. Speech code theory deals with culturally distinctive notions and resources pertaining to human connectedness–the situated communicative resources people use to manage their connections. A speech code is defined as "a system of socially constructed symbols and meanings, premises, and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct" (Philipsen, 1997, p. 126). Philipsen (1992) applied the concept of speech code to show the ways males in a Chicago neighborhood spoke of their "neighborhood" and imbued their speech with a strong sense of place. Others have used ethnography of communication to explore social identities enacted at national sporting events (Carbaugh, 1996), how Colombian speakers of Spanish used the word for mother to define their relationship to a woman (Fitch, 1991), and how Israeli speakers used the term "dugri" to explain to a conversant that they were using an especially direct and frank way of speaking (Katriel, 1986).

Goldsmith and Baxter (1996) studied everyday speech events of college students to advance the notion that different types of personal relationships are constituted in different speech events. These authors asserted that social and personal relationships, such as a friendship pair or a parent/child dyad, are constituted or embodied by the various kinds of jointly enacted communication episodes that occur.

Frameworks of Discourse Analysis and Ethnography of Communication

The above discussion gave evidence of the similar ways that social psychological discourse analysts and ethnographers of communication conceptualize language in use. Why use both to study the discourse of the adolescents interviewed for this study? The answer is that the two approaches offer complementary, but distinct, guidance for analysis of language. In this section, I will discuss the aspects of each that guided the current study.

Components of Discourse Analysis

Potter and Wetherell (1987) wrote that there is no step by step recipe to discourse analysis, but rather the researcher must comb the discourse again and again discovering nuances with each repetition. To assist the analyst, they have outlined four components to discourse analysis: function, variation, construction, and interpretative repertoire.

Function. The first point Potter and Wetherell (1987) stress is to consider the functionality of speech (i.e., that people use their language to do things, such as request, persuade, or accuse). But, as they point out, one must take into account the context of the person's utterance to understand the meaning. For example, a teenager says to her mother, "Can I borrow the car to go to Jane's to study?" The directness of the request makes her meaning clear. However, she might have said, "I sure could learn this material better if I were at Jane's studying it with her." There is nothing intrinsic about this latter statement that makes it a request, but most likely the mother recognizes this statement as a veiled appeal for the use of the family car. The mother uses her knowledge about history of similar requests, the time of the evening, and other contextual clues to "read" the meaning of her daughter's statement. The analysis of function thus can not be seen as a simple matter of categorizing pieces of speech. The analyst must include context in the interpretation of the utterance.

The second point about functionality made by Potter and Wetherell (1987) is that the function may be specific or global. In the above example of the teenager, it may be to the teenager's advantage to make her request indirectly, as she may think her mother will be more likely to "suggest" the solution of allowing the daughter to use the car (making it the mother's idea); whereas the first request, in its directness, may have, for some reason, triggered an immediately negative reaction from Mother. Thus the teen is making a global self-presentation as having a need and having the need met by her mother's idea. "Global self-presentation can be achieved with particular kinds of formulations which emphasizes either good or bad features" (p. 33).

Variation. Potter and Wetherell (1987) emphasize that when talk is oriented to many different functions, global and specific, any analysis of language over time reveals substantial variation. As in the example above, it is in the variation of how the utterance is put together that reveals not only what function is being performed, but aspects of the relationship and how the teenager is presenting herself. What the teenage girl above was doing was using language to construct a version of her social world, by casting her mother in the role of fulfilling her daughter's need, not demand. Thus, a principle tenet of discourse analysis is that "function involves construction of versions, and is demonstrated by language variation (p. 33).

Another source of help for discriminating linguistic variations in the discourse of the adolescents is provided by Stiles' (1992) taxonomy of verbal response modes (VRMs). The VRM system is a method of classifying utterances in discourse by whether the utterance is concerned with the speaker's or the other's experience. Each of the eight major VRM categories represents a type of micro-relationship, a way that one can understand a speaker in relationship to an other for one utterance. A previous examination of adolescent's discourse used the VRM system to reveal different degrees of agency expressed by teen speakers (Huhman, 1999).

Construction of language. The use of the term "construction" in Potter and Wetherell's scheme is appropriate for several reasons. First, it suggests that people's speech is built out of "pre-existing linguistic resources." Like the boards, bricks, and beams of a house, these are the words, idiomatic phrases, metaphors, etc. that make up the basics of language. Second, it captures the sense that people choose which of the resources to use when communicating. Third, the idea of construction highlights the consequential nature of the choices made. Discourse analysts to do not take for granted that accounts reflect underlying attitudes or dispositions and thus do not expect that an individual's discourse will be consistent and coherent. "Rather, the focus is on the discourse itself: how it is organized and what it is doing" (p. 49).

Interpretative repertoire. How the discourse is put together in terms of function, variation, and construction conveys to the analyst the linguistic resources the interlocutor is using. In some instances, the analyst can find from these elements a broader design to the discourse. Potter and Wetherell (1987) call this an "interpretative repertoire." An interpretative repertoire is a somewhat enigmatic concept which is intended to capture the systematic sense of the way interlocutors are using specific linguistic resources. As defined by the authors, interpretative repertoires are "recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena" (p. 149). A repertoire may be organized around certain metaphors or figures of speech and is constituted through a limited range of terms used in particular stylistic and grammatical ways. The interpretative repertoires are the broader linguistic resources, "the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 172).

Interpretative repertoires are to Potter and Wetherell much like speech code is in Philipsen's theory. The one difference I can ascertain is that interpretative repertoire is more often applied to analysis of accounts where one finds an underlying system of linguistic resources used by an interlocutor to explain a situation. For example, Potter and Wetherell found an interpretative repertoire of "community" in the use of a cluster of terms and metaphors which the participants put forward selectively to provide evaluative versions of the events which took place in a "riot." Speech codes, on the other hand, can be deployed as an explanatory resource, but are also marshaled to express a broad range of social meanings about communicative conduct. Also, speech code theory is particularly useful when taking a cultural approach to exploring speech events.

Components of Ethnography of Communication

Like Potter and Wetherell's (1987) use of function, variation, and construction, when Hymes (1972) developed his descriptive theory of communication, he acknowledged that "some heuristic schema are needed" (Hymes, p. 52). These schema are provided in a descriptive framework Hymes

devised as a foundation of the methodological approach to producing ethnographies of communication. Hymes offered a series of concepts to help the researcher organize an approach to analyzing speaking events.

The first and one of the primary units of analysis in EC is the speech community which is defined as "a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (p. 54). When Philipsen (1992) identified a code of dignity operating among males in a Chicago neighborhood, the group of inhabitants who deployed that speech code formed a "speech community."

Speech situation, the speech event, and the speech act are terms that form a hierarchy of progressively more focused locations of interaction (Jabs, 1997). Situation refers to instances in the community where it is typical to have speaking or not have speaking, such as a fundraiser or a concert. Speech events are those activities that are "directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes, p. 56). A speech event may consist of one or more speech acts. Thus, at a wedding ceremony (speech situation), the pronouncement of vows would be an example of a speech event. Hymes gave the example of a party as a speech situation, a conversation at the party as a speech event, and a joke told in the conversation as the speech act.

Speech acts are the minimal terms of speech events and implicate both linguistic form and social norm. Thus, an utterance that is a polite question (linguistic form) is actually a command (social norm) when spoken by a superior to a subordinate (Hymes, 1972). Whereas a speech act may comprise a speech event in and of itself, most often there will be difference in magnitude. Thus the utterance, "I do" is a speech act in a pronouncement of wedding vows (speech event).

Hymes (1972) developed a framework to guide the analysis of speech acts. The framework is comprised of 16 speech components that can be observed, noted, and compared across speech events and situations. Hymes organized the components into the mnemonic device SPEAKING, where every

letter refers to one or more of the components . A summary of the components follows.

S refers to the setting

P refers to participants, which may be speaker, addressor, hearer, or addressee

E is the ends, which refers to the purpose: goal or outcome

A refers to the act sequence. Is the message form and message content of the speech act, and also includes topic

K is the key: tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done

I refers to instrumentality. Instrumentalities include the channels of speech (visual, aural) and forms of speech. Forms of speech can refer to written or oral, but can also refer to means of speech, such as verb usage.

N means norms of interpretation and interactions–such as whether it is appropriate or not appropriate to interrupt another participant

G stands for genre (poem, prayer, lecture, form letter, etc.)

The components of the SPEAKING framework form an "etic" grid for directing the researcher to the elements of a speech event or situation under analysis. For the teen discourse in this project, the components that were analyzed were communicative phenomena found mainly in the act sequence, in the instrumentalities, and the outcome of the act (ends). These components are discussed in more depth in Chapter 3 in the section on process of data analysis.

Communicative Phenomena

In the ethnography of communication and in discourse analysis, one is concerned with the detailed examination of communicative phenomena in their social contexts. Included are direct observations of how people use speech and how they respond to their own and others' communicative conduct (Philipsen et al, 1997). For the present project, the practices of interest were (1) linguistic action verbials, (2) extreme case formulations, and (3) reported speech. I turn now to an explanation of

each of these phenomena.

Linguistic Action Verbials

Wierzbicka (1997) showed that the study of vocabulary can illustrate significant aspects of social and cultural life. Linguistic action verbials (LAVs) make up an common part of anyone's vocabulary because people use LAVs to refer to actions of speakers, such as "speak," "argue," "told," etc (Verschueren,1989). LAVs are part of a larger group of communicative phenomena known as metapragmatic terms or "terms for talk." For example, a description of conflict could include LAVs like "fight," "confront," "bicker," or "attack." My interest in a detailed description of teens' characterizations of conflict in the adolescent-parent relationship prompted me to choose LAVs as a main component of my study.

Dirven, Goossens, Putseys, and Vorlat (1982) chose the high-frequency English linguistic action verbs "speak" "talk," "say," and "tell" to show that each of these verbs perspectivize[2] the language action in a particular way. For example, "say" and "tell" tend to focus the linguistic action on the message, such as, "She tells me I must do better" or "They say I am the best candidate." In these examples, the underlined phrase is the message of the verb "tell" or "say." Of the two verbs, "tell" and "say," "say" has the greater message focus, because "say" permits indirect and direct enunciations (e.g., "He says to me, 'Come on.'")

Dirven et al. (1982) found, on the other hand, that "speak" and" talk" focus on the linguistic action itself. "Talk" especially frames linguistic action as discourse–a series of transactions–and is usually used in an interactive sense. The prepositions "to" and "about" are often used with "talk." "About" often explicates a topic. "Talk" implies a bi-directionality of the linguistic action, such as "We talked. . ." Thus, the verbs of "talk" and "tell" and how they were used by the teen speakers

[2]Perspectivise is not a word in the dictionary, but was used extensively by Dirven et al.(1982) to express the sense of persons giving a certain perspective when the person uses an action verb, such as an LAV.

became an important observation as the analysis unfolded.

As already mentioned, LAVs are a kind of metapragmatic term. Metapragmatic terms are part of a larger conceptual system known as reflexive speech. Lucy (1993) described this part of language saying, "In every language it is possible to speak about speech, that is, to use language to communicate about the activity of using language. Such uses of language are reflexive in nature" (p. 9). He also noted that this reflexive aspect of language is important because it "underlies much of the power for language both in everyday life and in scholarly research" (p. 9).

LAVs are reflexive inherently because one must use language to talk about verbs. Thus, to make the statement, "They talked about sports" is a reflexive statement. As Lucy claims:

> In sum, speech is permeated by reflexive activity as speakers remark on language, report utterances, index and describe aspect of the speech event, invoke conventional names, and guide in the proper interpretation of their utterances. This reflexivity is so pervasive and essential that we can say that language is, by nature, fundamentally reflexive. (p. 11)

Extreme Case Formulations

Extreme case formulations are the second communicative phenomenon of interest in this study. As described by Pomerantz (1986), extreme case formulations (ECFs) are descriptions or assessments that express something in maximum terms such as, "every time," "everything," "completely innocent," and "brand new." Pomerantz observed that interactants use ECFs as a tool of persuasion when they are complaining, accusing, justifying, and defending their positions. Pomerantz (1986) isolated three uses of ECFs in the discourse she analyzed:

> 1) to defend against or counter challenges to the legitimacy of complaints, accusations, justifications, and defenses,
>
> 2) to propose a phenomenon is "in the object" or objective rather than a product of the interaction of the circumstances,

3) to propose that some behavior is not wrong, or is right, by virtue of its status as frequently occurring or commonly done. (pp. 219-220)

Pomerantz (1986) demonstrated the first use above when she analyzed the situation of a woman telling an adjudicator in small claims court that she deserved compensation from a dry cleaners that damaged her "brand new dress." Although the judge first referred to the dress as "new" the woman corrected his perception, telling him it was "brand new." Even though she had worn the dress several times, she wanted to orient the hearers of her claims to the newness of the dress by asserting it was "brand new." She is orienting to an audience who might be aiming to disprove the legitimacy of her claims, that is, an unsympathetic audience.

Pomerantz (1986) examined the utterance of a person, (S), telling another person, (A), about a friend of his. He (S) says to (A): "You'd like him. Everybody who meets him likes him." (S) first claims that (A) would like his friend. The explanation for why (A) would like (S)'s friend is because "everybody" likes him. "Everybody" is a maximum case usage to support the claim that (A) would like him. But (S) is not explaining that it is the attributes of his friend that makes him likeable, his personality or characteristics of his friend, but rather that the reason is because "Everybody who meets him" likes him. "Everybody who meets him" is the object or the cause of why she would like him. Thus, the speaker uses the ECF "everybody. . ." as the cause of the phenomenon.

To explain the third usage of ECF above, that of proposing that some behavior is not wrong, or is right, because it is commonly done, Pomerantz cited a sequence of discourse where a caller to a crisis center tells the crisis center worker that she has a gun. As the worker tries to account for the caller having a gun, the caller says that "everyone" has a gun. By saying "everyone" has a gun, the caller offers that keeping a gun in the house is an acceptable practice rather than a special occurrence requiring explanation. The caller is proposing that her behavior is right and acceptable because this practice is frequently occurring or commonly done.

Edwards and Potter (1992) included extreme case formulation as one of the devices participants use when giving an account of an event, action, or a situation. They argued that when someone develops a version of something that happened in the past, or develops a stretch of talk that puts blame on someone or some category of persons, they are engaged actively in the production of factual accounts. Hence, factual accounts are more than simple descriptions. They are social accomplishments that are constructed as factual using a variety of devices, one of which is extreme case.

In an extension of Pomerantz' work, Edwards (2000) explored the conceptual and empirical features of extreme case formulations. Edwards pointed out that ECFs, by their very extremity, are "rhetorically brittle" and can be interactionally risky for a speaker to use because by making a claim of "everyone" or "always" a speaker risks having their allegation easily challenged by one counter example. To manage the brittleness of ECFs, participants use softeners as a reply to the challenge to the facts of an ECF. The speaker might say, "Well, almost always" if presented with a challenge to "always" behaving a certain way. Edwards noted that a significant feature of ECFs is that they remain worth saying and retain their performativity even if they are refuted.

Edwards identified two other features of ECFs. The first is that ECFs demonstrate a speaker's investment in the description being given. Simultaneously, as a speaker uses ECF to actively construct a version of an event or situation, they signal their investment. Thus, Edwards noted that ECFs can be interpreted as displaying the speaker's investment rather than a description's literal accuracy. Edwards' third observation is that ECFs are used in situations of teasing or joking, again not to be taken in a literal sense, but "as if it were so." Thus ECFs can be oriented to in a metaphoric sense.

Reported Speech

Reported speech is the third communicative phenomenon in which I was interested. When a person gives a report of a speaking event, Emma Vorlat in Dirven et al. (1982) pointed out there are

two speech act levels. Level 1 refers to the person who is giving the report itself. Level 2 is a description of the communicative event itself. Thus, if Amy says, "Helen disagreed with Mike," contained within this statement is Amy saying something (level 1) and then her description of Helen disagreeing with Mike (level 2). Distinguishing these two levels makes it possible to make several points about sentences that describe speaking events. One, the reporter situates the communicative event in the context of the situation in which it is uttered. He or she chooses the linguistic action verbial (argue, disagreed, fought) to describe the speech act and chooses how to express the utterance. The reporter can make comments about the speaker's behavior, can convey the emotional tone, and can give a judgment on the truth value of the utterance (e.g., "He was lying when he said, '. . . ' ").

In Vorlat's essay (Dirven et al., 1982), she identified three ways in which the reporter can frame the information transfer, or the message: (a) direct enunciation (She said to me, "I left the party at 9," (b) indirect enunciation (She told me that she left the party at 9), and (c) synthesis (She told me what she did). Lucy (1993) pointed out that the modes of reporting speech differed in details of their function and structure. The direct form imitates or presents the reported speech event from the perspective of the reported speech situation where as the indirect form and synthesis form analyze or interpret the event from the perspective of the current reporting event. Coulmas (1986) explained that direct reported speech (DRS) is distinguished from indirect and from other kinds of utterances in that DRS "evokes the original speech situation and conveys, or claims to convey, the exact words of the original speaker in direct discourse" (p. 2) Although speakers often switch from indirect to direct forms of reported speech and vice versa, it is usually possible to distinguish one form from the other (Holt, 2000).

Direct and indirect forms of reported speech have generated recent interest as linguistic devices that perform a variety of functions in everyday speech (Holt, 1996, 2000; Li, 1986; Mayes, 1990). Holt (1996) analyzed the features and functions of direct reported speech and found that DRS is

an effective and economical way to report a previous interaction and also allows the speaker to give evidence of what was said. Among its distinguishing features, the pronouns, temporal references and verb tenses are all appropriate to the context of the situation being reported on. DRS is usually preceded by a pronoun such as "he" or "she" and a linguistic action verb, usually "said," but can be "like," "goes,"or "says." "Said" is most common because prosody can then be used to indicate the way in which the utterance was spoken, thus making unnecessary descriptive LAVs like "whispered" or "screamed" (Holt, 1996).

Researchers disagree on the degree to which a direct quote should be considered an accurate quotation of the original utterance (Clark & Gerrig, 1990). Mayes (1990) determined that speakers use DRS in conversation as evidence or justification for their claims even though she doubted the authenticity of 50% of the 320 naturally occurring examples in her collection. Li (1986) asserted that a direct quote communicates a more authentic piece of information than an indirect quote in the sense that a direct quote implies "a greater fidelity to the source of information than an indirect quote" (p. 41). Wood and Kroger (2000) caution discourse analysts to frame DRS as a construction of an original utterance that has been transformed by the reporter into the current context in which it is uttered. What was said in the original speech event is not known. The researcher can only analyze what is being recounted and to glean the meanings it has for speaker. Nonetheless, Holt (1996) argued that "by reproducing the 'original' utterances or utterances, speakers can provide access to the interaction being discussed, enabling the recipient to assess it for himself or herself" (p. 229).

Another feature of DRS is how it enables speakers to dramatize an event and to depict the attitudes of the original speaker without having to describe them. Holt (2000) found in her corpus that DRS commonly occurred when recounting an amusing story that involved an interaction. The DRS was the punch line or the climactic moment in the story. As Holt pointed out, storytellers wants the recipient to agree with their interpretation or assessment of the incident, that is, that the hearer would

think the story was funny. Tellers of stories hint at the reaction they are hoping for by injecting laughter as they approach the reported speech as the punch line of the funny story. What often happens when reported speech is deployed for a story, rather than making their assessment of the event explicit, reported speech (within a sequence containing implicit assessment) is used to give the hearer access to the utterance, thus allowing him or her to react to it and the teller to then collaborate in that reaction. This could be viewed as a subtle way to establish and maintain intersubjectivity (Holt, 2000, p. 451).

Discourse and Language in Adolescent-Parent Relationships

The first section of this background and review focused on family factors related to adolescent suicidal risk behavior. In the second section, I explored key concepts in communication studies (i.e., ethnography, discourse analysis, and language use). A few, but growing number of researchers are bridging these two arenas by studying discourse among adolescents (Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990), parent adolescent discourse (Hofer, Youness, & Noack, 1998), and in a very few cases, adolescent or parent discourse in suicidal adolescents. To examine adolescents' perceptions of their parents' talk, one must place this examination in a context of parent-adolescent relationship. This is the next subject of this review. The last step in the review is to examine research which has focused on parent adolescent discourse related to suicidal adolescents.

Adolescent-Parent Communication

Studies about parent-adolescent communication are often situated in the context of the parent child relationship (Dixon, 1995; Youniss, 1983). Contemporary views of communication support this contextualization where communication is viewed as a transaction in which each person is being changed and defined in relation to the other (Fitzpatrick & Badzinski, 1994; Stewart & Logan, 1993). Indeed, customary usage of the term "communication" in American culture indicates that people situate "communication" in a larger context of meaning about interpersonal work that includes concepts of "self" and "relationship" (Philipsen, 1992). On the other hand, much of the management

of relationships is accomplished through routine, daily interactions (Dixon, 1995; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989).

During the teenage years, the relationship between parents and child changes as the adolescent strives to establish an identity separate from parents (Erikson, 1968; Hauser, 1991). Marcia (1966) named this process, "individuation." In the past, the process of individuation of the adolescent was seen as one of breaking away from parents (Josselson, 1988). Parent-child conflict, among Western cultures, was viewed as a necessary part of the individuation process because adolescents needed to detach emotionally from the parents or the parental figures (Steinberg, 1990).

Contemporary views of individuation place the process of breaking away in the context of the parent-adolescent relationship (Cooper, Grotevant, & Condon, 1983). In fact, prevailing theorists concede that, while development of the adolescent's separateness as an individual is important, continuing "connectedness" between parents and adolescents is pivotal (Cooney, 1997). Connection to parents is considered not only beneficial, but essential to the individuation process. For example, Bell and Bell (1983) found that among girls, parents are a critical source of validation of their unique emerging selves in the process of individuation. Family bonds provide a secure base from which the adolescent can explore worlds outside the family. Thus, the individuated relationship is one that manifests a balance between individuality and connectedness.

Essential to the processes of individuation and identity establishment is a family environment that values connectedness while permitting or even encouraging the adolescent to explore new ideas, values, and alternative ways of looking at the world. The types of families that accomplish the establishment of such a climate are likely to be generally supportive, open in their communication, to tolerate difference, and to be democratic in terms of control (Noller, 1995). Baumrind (1991) termed the parenting style that produces this family environment "authoritative." She developed the authoritative model of parenting as an alternative to the permissive model and the authoritarian model

(Baumrind, 1996). The authoritative parent is warm and involved, but is consistent and firm, in establishing and enforcing guidelines for behavior of the adolescent. While a warm, nurturing, yet firm, parent is important for all stages of child rearing, Steinberg (2000) found that the added component important for the adolescent years was for parents to encourage the teen to cultivate his or her own opinions and beliefs. Steinberg and colleagues called this parenting behavior toward the adolescent "psychological autonomy-granting" (Steinberg, Elman, & Mounts, 1989). Rollins and Thomas (1979) termed "coercive control" those parent behaviors that discourage autonomy and are experienced as non-supportive and intrusive by the adolescent.

What are the linkages of parenting styles to adolescent problem behavior? Manscill and Rollins (1990) compared coercive control measures to supportive measures by parents and found that adolescents who perceived their parents as using coercive control measures reported feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and lower self-esteem. In contrast, adolescents who perceived their parents' behavior as supportive (warm, nurturing, and highly interactive) reported positive feelings of self-esteem. Barnes and Farrell (1992) reported that coercive control methods (yelling, hitting, and removing privileges) were linked to more problem behavior. High levels of support by mother and father were associated with the lowest level of illegal drinking, illicit drug use, deviance and school misconduct.Adolescents from homes with authoritative parents perform better in school, report less depression and anxiety, higher self-esteem, and are less likely to engage in delinquency and substance use (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, 2000). Other researchers have also found that openness of communication with a parent was negatively correlated with substance use (Kafka & London,1991).

Studies that describe effective parenting as "supportive," or controlling parenting as "critical," commonly do not capture the particulars of the interaction of parents and teens. Only a few researchers have used discourse analysis to study specific family interaction patterns. Hauser (1991) asserted that

moment-to-moment exchanges among family members reflect basic themes like respect, empathy, abuse, and indifference. Hauser studied sequences of interactions to understand how styles of interaction served to enhance or undermine adolescent development. His qualitative analysis included a framework of analyzing specific parent interactions as aiding or constraining adolescent development. Hauser asserted that "enabling interactions" by parents contribute to adolescent progression. Enabling interactions are explaining, focusing the adolescent's ideas, expressing empathy, engaging in problem solving, and expressing curiosity. By engaging in these communicative behaviors, the parent is communicating acceptance and understanding of the teen. Focusing, in particular, is linked to increasing self-definition and self-control. In focusing interactions, the speaker attempts to make the other person's ideas more coherent and closer to the point at hand. Specific speaking behaviors may include dramatization of another's point or paraphrasing. Focusing conveys the message that the adolescent has been listened to carefully and demonstrates and encourages respect for individuality (self assertion and separateness) (Hauser, 1991).

Constraining communicative behaviors tend to hinder development. One of the most visible is distracting or interfering with the expressed perception, thought, or feeling of one another by making tangential points or changing the subject. Consistent parental judging that is revealed through often dogmatic and critical responses was found to characterize lower stages of ego development. Other constraining interactions are withholding, communicating indifference, excessive affection, and making comments which devalue the other person. Such interactions by parents and adolescents undermine, discourage and obstruct exchanges with one another.

Hauser's (1991) findings, based on 136 adolescents and their families, intersected consistently with the notions about individuation and connectedness expressed by Cooper and colleagues and described above (Cooper, Grotevant, & Condon, 1983). The enabling interactions that fostered connectedness were characterized by openness to the other's viewpoint (permeability) and respect for

the views of others (mutuality). The teens who were more advanced in Hauser's schema of development had more complex insights into problem solving and were more confident in the expression of their viewpoints to parents (individuality). Thus, the parent-teen relationships that showed higher levels of individuation were successfully balancing individuality with connectedness.

In summary, there has been a shift in recent decades away from viewing adolescence as a time of breaking away from parents toward viewing adolescence as a time of renegotiation of the parent and child roles. The most effective style of parenting is termed "authoritative" where the parents are firm, but warm and nurturing, and encourage the child to develop his/her own opinions and beliefs. Patterns of interaction between parents and teen influence the teen's development. Negative communicative patterns such as devaluing, withholding affection, indifference, and a style of interaction marked by interfering with the expression of thoughts or feelings can inhibit self and ego development.

Discourse Analysis and Ethnography of Communication Applied to Adolescent Discourse

The application of discourse analysis and ethnography of communication to adolescents has furthered our understanding of how teen speakers conceptualize their social world. For example, quotes from children of divorce (aged 3-18 years) were analyzed to show that there were "devastating" results of parental discord on the young people (Oppawsky, 2000). Regarding interaction processes between adolescents and parents, discourse data from 61 mothers and their 11-17 year old daughters showed that verbal interactions are vital in the processes of individuation and renegotiation of relationship between adolescents and their parents (Hofer & Sassenberg, 1998). Wild (1998) used coded interactions to study family interactions in non-adoptive and adoptive families.

Powers and Welsh (1999) investigated the relation of mother-daughter interactions to daughters' symptoms of depression. They found that mothers and daughters have difficulties negotiating autonomy when daughters have high internalizing symptoms (i.e., depression, anger,

anxiety). These difficulties in negotiating autonomy predict further increases in daughters' internalizing symptoms. They found that chronic internalizing symptoms in girls lead to high levels of both conflict and submission. There was a curvilinear relationship between mothers' conflict, humor, and sarcasm to daughters' future symptoms, such that daughters showed higher levels of future symptoms when mothers' conflict, humor, and sarcasm were either too high or too low.

Researchers have used EC and DA to advance our understanding of troubled adolescents. Eggert and Nicholas (1992) used ethnographic methods to study the language of high school students who were "skippers" from school. Analyses of the adolescents' talk revealed significant problem areas in the youths' lives which would not have been revealed using other methods, including substance use and negative connections with school personnel and parents. Rymes (1995) analyzed the narratives of six high school drop-outs to demonstrate that the adolescents effectively created a sense of self and moral agency through their talk.

Parent Adolescent Interactions Specific to Suicide Behavior

The review up to this point has advanced an argument for the importance of investigating parent factors both in normal adolescent maturation and in the occurrence of adolescent problems that can lead to suicidal ideation and behavior. The next topic is concerned with parent and/or adolescent perceptions of parent communication about the teen's suicide thoughts or behavior. Although this would seem to be an interesting area for exploration, there are surprisingly few studies that have dealt with this topic.

One study investigated family interactions in the 24 hours following a suicide attempt by an adolescent in the family and published a case report about a 14-year old female and her family (Kaslow, Wamboldt, Wamboldt, Anderson, & Benjamin, 1989). The family was videotaped during a semi-structured discussion about the suicide attempt. A 10-minute section of the tape was transcribed and coded using Benjamin's Structural Analysis of Social Behavior Model (SASB). The SASB coding

provided a picture of each parent-child relationship, including details such as the presence of complex communications (i.e., two or more distinct messages, representing two or more interpersonal postures are held simultaneously by one person). The complex communications were judged to contribute to the difficulty of the adolescent to self-differentiate. By analyzing the family interactions, the authors concluded that the adolescent's overdose could be viewed as "a response to an interpersonal climate in which concurrent, complex messages of both hostile control and hostile autonomy-giving" were being given to an adolescent by her family (Kaslow et al. p. 195)

Discourse analysis and ethnography of speaking have been used to examine important aspects of adolescent suicide. The "stories" of three young women were used to show how normal developmental issues of adolescence provided a context in which to situate the distress from abuse in their lives (Crockwell & Burford, 1995). The authors noted that listening to narratives of suicidal teens could be seen as a blending of qualitative research and clinical practice.

In a recent study particularly applicable to the current project, researchers studied the verbal and emotional reaction of parents to their adolescents' suicide attempts (Wagner, Aiken, Mullaley, & Tobin, 2000). Although the construction of the talk itself was not the focus of the study, open-ended questions were highly productive to assessing the range and complexity of parent reactions. Feelings of caring, sadness, and anxiety were more common than hostile feelings, although 50 percent of the mothers reported hostile feelings across the time points. Upon discovering the suicide attempt, parents were less likely to verbalize hostility than they were to verbalize support and to be careful what they said.

Summary of the Literature Review

In this review, I have cast the net wide to explore research on language use and research on adolescent risk for suicide. The claims of the communication researchers whose work I reviewed are that studying words as they are used and what those words mean to the users is of great value in understanding our social world. The adolescent health researchers claim that the way the processes of communication are enacted in the family crucible contribute to the outcomes, good and bad, for the children in the family.

I will briefly summarize these claims in terms of risk and protection, the framework which I introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Support from the family may be protective for adolescents against depression and suicidal behavior. Conversely, family strain and stress can put an adolescent at risk for problems, including depression, substance use, and even suicide. Unhealthy communication behaviors may hinder the normal individuation process of adolescence. Parent-adolescent conflict caused by parental criticism and parenting styles of affectionless control are linked to suicidal ideation, but these routes to negative outcomes of suicidal thinking are not well understood. Thus, in a certain sense, the parent-child communicative relationship is one site of the problem for the teens I am studying. But this is not the whole story.

Communication scholars reviewed here showed that analyzing a person's words is a vehicle for understanding the person and his or her social world. Ethnography of communication and discourse analysis offer frameworks for organizing the teenagers' talk and offer tools to analyze the discourse. I am applying this belief to study the words of adolescents as a vehicle to understand an important part (the parent-adolescent relationship) of the social world of a particular type of person--the teenager at risk for suicide. Thus, words as the carriers of hurt can also be the means for understanding. In the next chapter, I will describe how I approached the teens' words and the process of analysis I used to study their discourse.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This chapter comprises two parts. Part I concentrates on data collection tools and methods of analysis. Part II describes the teen participants in the study. In Part I, I begin by summarizing the Measurement of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS) study for which the teen interviews that I transcribed for my project were conducted. Second, I will describe how I selected the subgroup of youth whose discourse was analyzed for the current study. Third, I describe the instruments that were used to collect the data. Fourth, I will recount the process of analysis I used and include information about my role as a researcher in the MAPS project. In Part II, I will profile as a group the 77 teens whose discourse was analyzed for the current project in terms of demographics and suicide risk and protective factors.

Part I: Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

Videotaped interviews of 77 youth at risk of high school dropout were the main sources of data for the current enterprise. The 77 interviews were part of the data collected for a federally funded study: Measurement of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (RO1 NR 03550) (National Institute of Nursing Research).

Research Program in which Current Study Data were Collected

The MAPS study was conducted over four years and involved over 1500 high school students in grades 9 to 12 in multiple sites in the American Southwest and Pacific Northwest regions. Youth who met specific high-risk criteria entered the study in cohorts over a three-year period, from 1995-1998 (Randell, Eggert, & Pike, 2001). The 77 participants in the current project went through a 3-step process of identification and enrollment. The 3-step process is outlined below.

Stage 1: Identification and Invitation to Study. A pool of youth at risk for school failure or dropping out were identified using a method previously validated (Herting, 1990). Combinations of the following criteria were used for study participant identification: (1) prior school drop out status, (2)

below-expected credits earned for current grade level, (3) a history of many school absences (in the top 25th percentile for days absent per semester), (4) grade point average (GPA) below 2.3 with a pattern of declining grades, or a precipitous drop in GPA greater than 0.7, and (5) referral from school personnel indicating concern about the student failing or dropping out. These youth were considered at "high risk" for school dropout and comprised the study pool. From this pool, randomly selected youth were personally invited by research staff to be a participant in the study. Standardized invitation procedures were used for all cohorts and IRB approved, informed consent was obtained from each teen and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Stage 2: Questionnaire Data Collection and Suicide Risk Screening Protocol. Students agreeing to participate in the larger study completed the High School Questionnaire: A Profile of Experiences (HSQ) (Eggert, Herting, & Thompson, 1989, 1995). The HSQ covers areas of general stress, school and family distress and support, self-esteem, personal coping, drug involvement, and measures related to suicide risk. Validity and reliability of the HSQ were established in previous studies (Eggert, Thompson, & Herting, 1994) The measure of suicide risk, the Suicide Risk Screen (SRS), is embedded in the questionnaire and consists of three scales: a 5-item Depression scale; a 5-item Suicide Risk Behaviors scale tapping suicide ideation, threats, prior attempts; and a 10-item Drug Use scale, tapping frequency of use of alcohol and other drug types (Thompson & Eggert, 1999). Those youth screening in as being at risk for suicide (based on the SRS) entered Stage 3 of the study.

Stage 3: Comprehensive Assessment Protocol. Within five to 10 days of completing the baseline questionnaire (HSQ), all youth who were identified as being at risk for suicide received an in-depth assessment and counseling intervention called "Counselors CARE" (C-CARE). The C-CARE prevention protocol is a one-on-one, computer-assisted interview that combines the Measurement of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS) with a counseling intervention. The two major elements of the protocol included, (1) a 1.5 to 2 hour, personalized, interactive interview (the MAPS) that assesses

direct suicide risk factors, related risk factors, and protective factors (Eggert et al., 1994; Walsh, Randell, & Eggert, 1997), and (2) a brief, motivational counseling intervention designed to offer empathy and support; deliver relevant personal information, reinforce positive coping skills and help-seeking behaviors, and increase access to help and social support. The MAPS component of C-CARE includes a motivational introduction and then an assessment of the youth's stressors, depression, hopelessness, anxiety, suicidal behaviors, risky behaviors, drug involvement, personal resources, coping strategies, and social support resources. C-CARE is videotaped and delivered at the student's school by specially trained, advance practice clinicians. The videotaped interview is followed by (1) a counseling session and (2) a social network "connection" intervention. During the counseling session, the clinician summarizes the results of the assessment, clinician perceptions of the teen's strengths and problem areas are shared and validated with the teen, positive coping strategies are reinforced, and a plan of action for enhancing support resources is jointly developed. The social network intervention follows during which: (a) each youth is personally connected with a case manager in the school (counselor or school nurse trained by the research staff) and/or the youth's favorite teacher to foster communication between the youth and school personnel; and (b) a telephone contact/connection with the parent or guardian of the youth's choice is arranged. The intent of the school and parent contacts is to promote social network connections, support, and future accessibility of help. The C-CARE protocol is completed in 3.5 to 4 hours. Of more than 1500 high school students who were recruited into the study, 738 who were at risk for suicide completed Stage 3 of the protocol. Upon completing Stage 3, the youth were assigned to an interviewer tho administered the C-CARE protocol. The 738 teens were termed "suicide vulnerable youth" (SVY) or "at risk for suicide." For the purposes of clarity, this group of teens will be called "All SVY."

The Current Project

The data for the current project were from 77 of the 738 semi-structured interviews done as

part of the MAPS study. All 77 participant completed the C-CARE protocol. The data were teens' responses to questions that were posed during the interview. The interview was designed to go down "pathways of questioning" depending on initial responses in each section. The pathways of questioning that interested me dealt with the teens speaking about interactions between the parent and the teen about conflict, disclosures about suicide thoughts and behaviors, and about substance use. Early in the study, I thought that teens' perceptions of parents' communication about substance use would be an important area to investigate because of the links of substance use with suicide risk. The interviews did not have much teen talk about substance use, however, so questions about these aspects of teens' perceptions could not be addressed as originally planned. This will be further explained later in this chapter and addressed in Chapter 4 as well. To find the interviews that contained the pathways of interest, I conducted a process of identification and selection based on questionnaire and interview information. The process is described below:

Step 1) All 738 youth at risk for suicide who completed the C-CARE protocol comprised the pool of candidates who were eligible for inclusion in the current project (i.e., at risk for suicide based on the results of the Suicide Risk Screen embedded in the High School Questionnaire). Of these 738 teens, the teens who, in the interview, chose "conflict with parents" as one of their top three stressors, were selected. Twenty-five percent of the teens, 185 youth, chose conflict with parents as a major stressor.

Step 2) From the 185 teens who chose conflict with parents as a stressor, I used questionnaire data to select teens who scored in the top 25% on drug use involvement (meaning most involved) and those teens who scored in the bottom 25% on drug use involvement (reporting no drug involvement). Drug use involvement was determined by responses on the HSQ and is explained below in the Instruments Used section. There are several reasons I selected drug involved and non-drug involved teens. First, the co-occurrence of drug involvement and suicide risk behaviors heightened my interest.

Thus, I wanted to examine if teens who were heavy users of drugs and alcohol experienced their parents' communicative behavior in the same way as teens who were not substance-involved. For example, both groups of teens might report, but in different ways, the monitoring activities of their parents. Also, teens with drug/alcohol involvement might characterize differently conflict with parents or the way parents dealt with suicide disclosures. Finally, drug use is known to co-occur with suicide risk behaviors.

Step 3) This selection process garnered 90 teens with either high or no drug involvement. Forty six reported no or very low involvement. Fifty four reported high drug involvement.

Step 4) Of these 90 cases, 77 of the videotaped interviews could be transcribed. Those that could not be used had audio or camera difficulties or in a few cases, the videotape could not be found. The group of 77 SVY teens who had conflict with parents and were high and low substance users are called the "Current Study Group."

Instruments Used for Data Collection

The Counselors-CARE (C-CARE) Protocol.

The C-CARE intervention was conducted face to face between the trained interviewer and the teen at the teen's high school. The 2-hour interview was computer-assisted, such that all interview directions and questions were scripted into a computer program and read by the interviewer to maximize consistency in the way the questions were asked. The interview program used several different styles of questions. One form of question asked the teen to choose items from a list. For example, in the stressor section the teen was shown a list of 40 stressful events and was asked to choose all those he or she had ever experienced. A second type of question used 7-point Likert-like scales that required the teen to give a number or choose an adjective that represented the teens' opinion about the question posed. A third type of question was open-ended, asking the teen to elaborate on or describe a situation.

Central to the current project were questions from the sections on stressors, depression, risky behaviors, and suicide thoughts and actions. For example, one of the stressors the teen could choose was "conflict with parents." The teen was asked to use the 7-point scale to quantify how much they were bothered by that stressor in the previous two weeks, from 0 (not at al) to 6 (a great deal). The teen next was asked to identify the top three items that were affecting them the most from a larger list of stressors they had experienced. The teen was then asked the open-ended question. "Is there something special about these three events that would be helpful for me to understand (why were they especially upsetting to you)?" As previously noted, 185 teens chose "conflict with parents" as one of their top three stressors and responded in their own words as to what was special about "conflict with parents" that could help the interviewer understand it more or why it was especially upsetting to the teen. These 185 were the group from which the final 77 interviews were chosen.

Although I had not initially planned to use any of the teens' responses in the Depression/Anxiety section, I found the teens' answers to the following question often described the effects on the teen of the conflict with parents, "What do you think causes you to feel depressed (whenever you've felt that way)?

The questions for the substance use were embedded in a section on risky behaviors. At the end of the risky behavior section, the interviewer summarized the teen's responses. At the end of the interview, in the final summary, if the interviewer felt, based on the teen's summary scores that the teen's substance use placed the teen at risk for serious harm, the interviewer informed the teen of the need to talk to parents or get help for the teen in some other way (e.g., school drug counseling). Negotiation with the teen about what and how to tell parents about substance use behaviors the teen was engaging in produced the data for analyzing the teens' perceptions of parents' communicative behavior about substance use.

The questions posed by the interviewer to the teen that rendered descriptions of parents'

communicative conduct about suicide thoughts and behaviors came from the sections of the interview that probed extensively for current and past thoughts and behaviors related to suicide. Much of this section opened with short answer questions such as, "Whom have you told about your suicide thoughts? " followed by a 7-point scales question like, "Rate on the scale how much you think they believed you." If the teen had told a friend, teacher, parent, or other trusted adult about the suicide thoughts, the follow up question was open-ended: "What did you tell them?" Another important question for the current study was, "What was the most disappointing response [to your disclosures] that you received" and "What was most helpful?" Teens also volunteered information to the interviewer that supplanted specific questions. Appendix A contains these questions.

High School Questionnaire: Profile of Experiences

As stated above, I used data from the High School Questionnaire: Profile of Experiences (HSQ) to select the participants in the current study group. The HSQ is a self-report survey measuring a range of risk and protective factors. Although the current project is qualitative in the methodology and interpretive in the purpose, the quantitative data in the HSQ and interviews posed an opportunity to further my understanding of the teens whose utterances I analyzed. I wanted to explore the demographic and psychosocial characteristics of these teens. Descriptive information could also suggest future avenues of research. Additionally, I wanted to understand the current study teens in relation to other teens in the MAPS project, especially other teens at risk for suicide but different from my study group either in substance use characteristics or in conflict with parents as a major stressor.

Variables most pertinent to the current study are described below. All measures were derived from standard measures or constructed specifically for the HSQ. Validity and reliability measures have been determined in previous studies ((Eggert, Herting, & Thompson (1989, 1995; Eggert, Herting, & Thompson, 1996; Thompson & Eggert, 1999). Scales were based on 7-point, Likert-type response options ranging from 0 to 6. Higher values indicated higher levels of the measured construct. The

scales used for the current study are described below. Alpha levels of each scale that have been established from previous studies are also given. The scales are also included as Appendixes B, C, and D..

Suicide-risk behaviors. Suicide risk behaviors were measured using a five-item scale (α=.86) with indicators of attitude favorable to suicide, the frequency of suicide thoughts, direct and indirect suicide threats, and suicide attempts within the past month.

Related-risk factors. Related risk factors were four measures of emotional distress: depression, hopelessness, anxiety, and anger. A depression scale measured depressed affect, using six items adapted from the CES-D (Radloff, 1977) for use with adolescents (α = .76) including: "I feel depressed," "Nobody cares," "I can't shake off feeling 'down' or blue," "I feel lonely," "I feel that people dislike me," and "I feel sad." Earlier studies found the validity of student self-reports was corroborated with teacher ratings on depression (r = .74). Anger control problems were measured using a 4-point scale (α = .65) of items such as: "when really mad, I feel out of control" and "shouting and yelling when angry." Hopelessness, a 3 item scale, measured feelings of hopelessness compared to satisfaction with life (α = .63). Anxiety was based on a 4-item scale (α = .82) that tapped the teen's perceptions of physical, emotional, and cognitive signs of anxiety.

Protective factors. Three protective factors measured were self-esteem, sense of personal control, and problem-solving coping. Self-esteem (α = .68) was measured using three indicators of a scale taken from Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Personal control, defined as perceived self-efficacy in coping with problems and influencing positive outcomes, was measured by a 5-item scale (α = .76) consisting of "confidence in handling problems," "ability to make good things happen for self," "ability to learn to adjust/cope with problems," "confident about feeling better eventually," and "feeling capable and in control." Problem-solving coping was based on three items (α= .76), measuring the degree of active problem-solving coping approaches used.

Family factors. The HSQ included three scales with items specific to family issues. The Family Distress scale consists of three items that cover conflicts and tensions with parents, thoughts of running away and level of approval by parents of friends ($\alpha = .53$). The Family Goals measure is 4 items ($\alpha = .83$) that relate to the degree to which specific goals are met at home: having fair rules, doing things together, parents who recognize things the teen does well, and parents that the teen can talk to about most things. The Family Support ($\alpha = .86$) scale deals with how satisfied the teen is with home life, communication and sharing of problems with parents, time spent together and the teen's perception of support and acceptance from the family. Acceptable reliability coefficients and construct validity have been established for the protective factors and the family dimensions using confirmatory factor analyses (Thompson, Eggert, & Herting, 2000; Thompson, Mazza, Herting, & Eggert, 1999).

Measures of alcohol and drug involvement. The measures of substance use that were used to define the high and low substance-involved teens were two subscales from the Drug Involvement Scale for Adolescents (DISA). The DISA is embedded in the HSQ questionnaire and has undergone extensive confirmatory factor analyses (Herting, Eggert, & Thompson, 1996). The two subscales of the DISA, Adverse Use Consequences and Drug Use Control Problems were highly correlated ® = .88) in a higher order confirmatory factor analysis (Eggert, Herting, & Thompson, 1996) and thus, were selected as two indices of a single dimension. Adverse Drug Consequences were assessed by an 8-item scale ($\alpha = .80$) that reflects the aftermath of AOD use, including intra personal effects (e.g., feeling guilty, depressed, and angry); as well as interpersonal consequences related directly to the current study, such as conflicts with family and friends. Drug use control problems were measured using a 4-item scale ($\alpha = .75$) tapping problems and outcomes associated with failure to exercise control. These items were the following: "I usually didn't stop with 1 or 2 drinks," "I used more alcohol/drugs than intended," "I was told I was using too much," and "I felt sick from using too much." For both the Adverse Consequences and Drug Use Control Problems subscales, students

endorse items using an 8-point scale ranging from 0 = Not at All, to 7 = Several Times per Day in the last month or last year.

Data Analysis Process

Ethnography and discourse analysis are not neutral, technical forms of processing, but involve the incorporation of theoretical backgrounding and decision making (Taylor, 2001). In this section, I will describe the steps in the data analysis process. As Miles and Huberman (1994) noted, data analysis begins for a qualitative project even as the materials are being assembled. I will begin this section by describing the process of watching the videotapes and choosing what to include in the initial collection of materials.

Assembly of the Materials

I was interested in assembling key terms, expressions, and linguistic forms used by the teens in the study as they talked about their parents' communicative behavior during the videotaped interviews. The videotapes were between one and three hours in length. I used the pause and playback features on the video cassette recorder to stop the videotape and to enable me to transcribe sections of the interview. I was careful to be inclusive rather than exclusive in the initial collection of materials. The sections that were transcribed from every videotape were.

1) Teen's response to "Conflict with parents as a major stressor."

2) Teen's response to "What makes you feel depressed when you have felt that way?"

3) Parts of the risky behaviors section where there the teen described interaction with parents.

4) Teen's response to open-ended questions on the suicide risk assessment section

5) Parts of the interview summary that dealt with parents.

In the next step, I eliminated from the initial transcription data that were unrelated to parents or another family member. I retained a teen's explanation surrounding an interaction when it provided helpful context. The amount of data from each case varied considerably across the interviews. For

example, case number CN10 has almost 50 lines of discourse, whereas case number CN20 has only 10 lines. After these successive steps of reduction, I had compiled across the 77 interviews a final corpus of materials comprising approximately 1100 utterances that dealt with the teens' interactions with parents and other family members.

Selection of Data for Analysis

As I reviewed the corpus, I used a process of inductive analysis to look for patterns and themes in the teens' utterances (Jackson, 1986; Patton, 1990). The process was open-ended and iterative, going over the data again and again. I was guided by the concepts of function, variation, construction, and interpretative repertoire as described by discourse analysts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter,1988; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2001). I sorted the data in multiple ways. Using the cut and paste function of the word processing program, the data first were arranged by the interviewer-instigated frames: conflict, depression, substance use, and suicide disclosures. I sorted the data in this way because I thought that analyzing the teens' talk within the contexts of conflict, depression, substance use, and suicide would be the most productive approach. All 77 cases entered into the analysis at this stage.

For conflict, I focused first on the teens' explanation of why conflict with parents was especially upsetting to them. I examined the topics of the conflict itself (e.g. money and chores) but little regularity was found. I then used Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING framework to categorize the utterances across the 77 cases. The first category, Setting (S) proved to be unimportant to the analysis because the teens rarely mentioned aspects of the setting. Participant (P) was of initial interest because I suspected patterns might emerge in who engaged in an interaction. For example, perhaps the teens would describe conflict situations as occurring with one or the other parent or both parents. However, there was no apparent pattern.

On the other hand, the category of ends (E), or outcomes of the SPEAKING framework,

entered into the analysis of the consequences for the teens of their parents' communicative action. The next step was to examine the instrumentalities (I), (the forms, devices, and means of speech) which was highly productive for addressing Research Question 1. The concept of instrumentalities produced the vocabulary, terms, and expressions I was seeking to find in the discourse. I had not initially planned to include teens' responses about what they thought caused them to feel depressed, but the teens often named their relationship with parents and parents' communication (or the lack of it) as a reason for their depression. Thus, data from the depression section became part of the ends (E) analysis. The category of emotional tone (K) was also useful as the emotional nature of the teens' perspectives began to emerge from the data.

For the section on risky behaviors, I expected to find descriptions of interactions between parents and teens about substance use, but only a few of the teens mentioned any communication with parents about substance use. Those that did used the same linguistic forms as they did in their descriptions of conflict as a stressor (i.e., the same linguistic action verbials and adverbs).

As I reviewed the data from the suicide risk section, I was struck by the teens' use of direct reported speech (DRS). The DRS was almost exclusively used with the linguistic action verb "say" or "said." The DRS was the message of the parent to the teen; thus, it was the direct object of the verb "say."

To summarize, when I sorted the data by the sections (contexts) of the interview, the patterns were occurring across sections of the interview, and except for the DRS in the suicide risk assessment, were not section-specific. Noting that the LAVs were the key to other patterns that were present, I changed my approach in the analysis to sort the data by beginning with the linguistic action verbial. For example, the co-occurring terms with the LAVs led me to the adverbs as part of the architecture of extreme case formulations. The LAV "say" was not itself particularly important, but was significant as the link to the direct reported speech used by the teens in describing parent responses to disclosures

about suicide risk behaviors. The central role of the LAVs led me to sort through the data by first selecting all the LAVs and then selecting six terms for analysis from the exhaustive list. The process is described below.

Linguistic action verbial selection. I asked the following questions as I developed the initial exhaustive list of LAVs.

1) What linguistic action is present in this utterance? Following Verschueren (1989), I highlighted all words that fit the definition of a linguistic action verbial (LAV); that is, any verbs or verb phrases that referred to what a speaker is doing in a particular linguistic act, for example, "speak," "tell," "fight," "argue,"or "promise." I listed all the LAVs and examined the way in which the teens used them. Six of the 77 cases did not contain any LAVs. In these six interviews, the teens gave very brief responses or were descriptive of parent behavior, but not interactions with the parent. There were 45 LAVs used by the teens to describe communicative behavior by a parent or between the teen and parent. The complete list of LAVs is given in Table 3.1 at the end of this chapter.

2) What LAVs are prominent in the discourse of the teens? Of the 45 LAVs, 37 were used five times or less, with most of them used only once or twice, for example the LAVs "confronted," "complained," and "threatened" each occurred once. There were no patterns of construction or function with these LAVs; thus, they were omitted from the analysis. Eight remaining LAVs were more prominent in the discourse. These LAVs were "ask," "yell," "fight," "argue," "say/said," "talk," "tell," and "get ___." "Get" occurred with a variety of descriptors making a verb phrase, such as "gets mad" or "get on my case." However, "get" occurred much more frequently with "along" creating the verb phrase of "get along/not get along." Of the 77 interviews, one of more of these eight LAVs occurred in 56 of the interviews.

3) What is the criteria for selecting an LAV to analyze? The LAVs were chosen because they occurred much more frequently than the other LAVs, they were embellished with co-occurring terms,

and they were more expressive of the communicative relationship with the parent. "Yell," "fight," "argue," and "get along/not get along" were LAVs used to describe communicative behavior that the teens termed as "conflict." "Talk" and "tell" were LAVs that occurred frequently, were associated with "conflict," but were also linked to vivid descriptions of communicative actions that were both helpful and problematic for the teen. These six verbials were the LAVs analyzed in the study. "Ask" was used by six of the teens and was not linked consistently to conflict. "Say/said" had significance because of the message related to direct reported speech; thus, it was linked to the DRS analysis. The selection process is summarized below.

Linguistic Action Verbial	Number of times in the corpus	How selected
Yell	32 occurrences 19 teens	Frequency, significance, used as terms to describe "conflict." All occurrences of the 4 LAVs (yell, fight, argue, get along/not get along) were selected for analysis.
Fight/fought	30 fight/fought 24 speakers used as noun 16 times	
Argue	Used by 16 teens, 9 as argue and 12 as argument	
Get along/not get along	17 occurrences by 12 teens	
Talk/talked/talks	26 occurrences	All selected for analysis
Tell/told	25 occurrences	All selected for analysis

Extreme case formulations. Using the six LAVs, I first searched for all co-occurring terms that were descriptive of the communicative action--adverbs such as "constantly," "always," and "never" (e.g.,"We argue **constantly.**"). Extreme case formulations emerged as an important linguistic resource from the examination of co-occurring terms. I then observed that ECFs were associated with communicative action that was described by the teens as broader than just "yelled" such as describing mother coming to school to talk to the counselor. Across the 77 cases, 37 of the them contained ECFs. I selected the following three cases for in-depth analysis in the results section. Case CN46 had four ECFs, Case CN43 had eight ECFs, and case CN51 had seven ECFs. These cases were chosen because

they exemplified patterns that were occurring in other cases throughout the corpus.

Direct reported speech. Repeated examination of the corpus led me to discover direct reported speech (DRS) as an important resource for the teens. Nineteen of the teens reported specific parent communicative behavior around the subject of suicide; ten of the teens used DRS to recount that behavior. Nine cases were selected for analysis. The items of analysis were the utterance containing the DRS. The DRS that was analyzed specifically for the DRS features dealt with talk about suicide behavior. DRS occurred in 13 additional cases in the corpus, unrelated specifically to suicide. Much of this DRS was incorporated into the analysis of linguistic action verbs or extreme case formulations. Additional analysis was facilitated by discriminating linguistic variations in the discourse of the adolescents as described by Stiles' (1992) taxonomy of verbal response modes (VRMs).

Ends. By examining the data from the perspective of Hymes' (E) or ends. I saw that the teens were articulating how the communicative practices of their parents were affecting them. Forty-one utterances over 28 of the interviews were analyzed and displayed in Table 4.9 at the end of the results chapter. The outcomes of communicative events with parents, such as statements of the teens as to how what their parents said made them feel and what behaviors they enacted as a result of encounters with their parents were analyzed. Analysis of the expressed affect linked the communicative practices to the topics of suicide thoughts and behavior. The "ends" analysis was incorporated into Part IV of the results.

Researchers who use qualitative data are encouraged to explain the extent to which their data are "naturally occurring." In the most idealized "natural" form, the teens would have spoken the words they did whether or not the interviewer had been there, unaffected by either the interviewer or the recording equipment (Taylor, 2001). The interviews were conducted in a fashion that facilitated a supportive and trusting climate and allowed time for the participants to adjust to the recording equipment. Still, the naturalness of the data had many constraints for ethical and clinical reasons.

Consent forms were signed by teen and the parent or guardian. The teens were told the topics of the interview, that they could refuse to answer any question, and that the information was confidential except if the teens shared information that raised concerns for their safety.

For the current study, the discourse of the teens was given in response to interviewer-initiated situational frames. Within those frames, the teen speaker was free to elaborate without particular direction. For example, the teens were not asked to expand on how a parent's way of speaking made them feel. Some of the teens made such a link as they talked about the stress of conflict with their parents: The discourse of the teens was "naturally-developing" at that point. Both the interviewer and the teen interviewee were sometimes surprised at the facility of the teen disclosing information about the highly personal topics of the interview. Thus, I acknowledge the constraints on "naturally occurring talk," but argue that the range and depth of disclosure apparent in the corpus is evidence that the teens felt they could speak freely and "naturally" about their concerns. I also contend that the careful scripting of the questions facilitated the ease with which the teens reached points of safety and trust in the interview where they disclosed about events and feelings they had shared with no one previously.

Display of Data

The transcript as text is a construction based on many decisions by the analyst. Although the transcript was talk that was "written down," I followed the spoken words as faithfully as possible, but excluded most speaking fillers such as "hmm" or "ah." Thus, "yeah" was used for "yes" if "yeah" is what was said by the speaker. The talk was organized roughly into sentences but included some of the irregularities typical of ordinary unscripted talk, such as abrupt endings. Certain irregularities that were pronounced on the videotape were included, for example, "fussin'" and "fightin' " instead of "fussing" and "fighting." I recorded the words spoken but did not include other detail such as pauses, interruptions, or emphasis in the display of utterances as would have been done if I had been doing

conversational analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). There were a few instances of bracketed words [ ] that were included as they referred back to an earlier part of the speech act and were needed to provide essential context for the utterance. Teen's names were not used or, as in one case, a fictitious name was substituted.

To support my findings, I selected excerpts from the transcript for display in the text. Utterances displayed in the text were denoted as "Excerpt" to capture the sense that they were exact selections, not "examples" (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Excerpts were numbered consecutively throughout the results chapter. The number in parentheses after the excerpt refers to the case number assigned to the teen in the RY program. The case numbers of my study teens ranged from (01) to (CN77). An example is given below.

> Excerpt 1 (CN34)
>
> My mother is always yelling at me saying, "Do better in school." I have to go into college.

For this excerpt, the number "1"denotes the order in which the excerpt appears in the text. "CN34" refers to the case number or code number for this teen. The original code number assigned to each teen in the Reconnecting Youth project was altered for the current study to protect the teen's identity. The quote given that begins with, "My mother. . ." is verbatim from the videotape. The quoted discourse of the teens is without quotation marks as is the common practice in discourse analysis (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). However, when a teen quotes another person, usually a parent, quotation marks are used for the direct reported speech, as in excerpt CN34 above, "Do better in school." For the analysis of longer passages of discourse, I used an arrow to refer to a particular line of discourse. To illustrate certain features within an utterance, I bolded certain words or phrases.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative researchers are encouraged to discuss their qualifications and role as a participant

in the research process as criteria for evaluating the validity of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To address this issue, I will summarize my role in the research project thus far.

I worked for three years as one of the advanced-practice clinicians in the Reconnecting Youth project. As a C-CARE interventionist, I was one of five clinician-interviewers involved directly with the collection of the data that was analyzed for my dissertation. In fact, it was the experience of talking with the youth during the interviews that piqued my interest to study the teens' perceptions of the communicative relationship with their parents. I was struck by the large numbers of the teens who related problems with their parents as a major source of stress for the teen. The teens' apparent sadness and hopelessness surrounding parental issues persuaded me of the critical nature of this problem in the teens' lives. However, I did not begin this study until after I completed my work as a clinician-interviewer.

All of the clinician-interviewers were instructed to stay within the computer-assisted scripting of the interview, except for "active listening" types of responses that were appropriate following a teen's disclosures. The careful scripting of the C-CARE interview supplanted by weekly supervision kept the clinicians within a circumscribed range of supportive responses and feedback to the teens being interviewed. The scripting and supervision were designed to maximize uniformity among the clinicians.

Part II: Description of the Youth Whose Discourse was Analyzed

Before turning to the results of the analysis in Chapter 4, I will use data from the High School Questionnaire (HSQ) to describe my study sample as well as the larger sample (n = 738).of teens at risk for suicide from which my study sample was drawn. I chose to examine demographics, family characteristics, personal characteristics (e.g., depression, anxiety, self esteem and self-efficacy), drug involvement, and thoughts and actions related to suicide.

The group of 738 teens at risk for suicide was divided into three groups and the groups were

explored using SPSS 10.0.5. Descriptive statistics were performed, and comparisons among the groups were made using a cross tabs statistic for categorical data from the HSQ. Analysis of variance was used for the scaled data. The breakdown of the three groups was as follows:

Group 1: Current Study Teens. This group comprises the teens at risk for suicide, reporting "conflict with parents" as a major stressor and in the upper and lower quartile for drug involvement (no drug involvement versus most drug involvement) ($\underline{n} = 77$).

Group 2: Conflict with Parents, moderate substance users. This group is the 108 teens from the total of 185 youth with conflict with parents as a major stressor and who were in the middle range of substance use, ($\underline{n} = 108$).

Group 3: All SVY. These are the teens at risk for suicide but not reporting "conflict with parents" as a major stressor and reporting a full range of substance use behaviors from "not at all" to "a great deal." This group began as the 738 teens that was the study group from which was drawn the 185 teens who reported conflict with parents, ($\underline{n} = 553$).

Demographics and Living Arrangement

Forty-seven of the 77 teens whose interviews were selected for the current project were female. The 77 teens ranged from 14 to 19 years in age with a mean age of 15.8 years. They were ethnically diverse with 40 percent Euro-American youth and a minority representation of approximately 60 percent. For the variables of age, gender, and ethnicity, the study group of 77 was not significantly different from the other groups, Group 2 and Group 3.

All grades of high school were represented, with 56 percent of the Current Study Teens in 10th grade. Using a cross-tabs procedure, the number of 10th graders in the study group was significantly more than the number of 10th graders in the other two groups (Pearson $\chi 2 = .006$). The breakdown of the sex, age, grade, and ethnic grouping is given in Table 3.2 at the end of this chapter.

Forty percent of the Current Study Teens lived with both biological parents. The other 60 percent lived with various combinations of biological and step parents, or grandparents and guardians acting as the parent. In general, "conflict with parent" meant having conflict with the parent or parent-figure with whom they lived. The breakdown of living arrangement was similar among all three groups and is summarized in Table 3.2 which can be found at the end of Chapter 3.

Suicide Risk Factors and Related Risk Factors

Suicide Risk Behaviors

Suicide risk behaviors were measured using five items that tapped attitudes favorable to suicide, suicidal thoughts, direct threats, and the number of suicidal attempts within the past month. The current study group of 77 teens was similar to the larger groups from which it was drawn as is displayed in Table 3.3.

Related Risk Factors

The mean depression score for the current study group was 2.96 (on a 0-6 scale) which was similar to other suicide vulnerable teens ($F(2,732) = 1.18$, $p > .05$). The current study group was also similar to the other suicide vulnerable teens on the dimensions of anger ($F(2, 735) = 2.62$, $p > .05$), perceived stress ($F(2, 735) = 1.10$, $p > .05$), and anxiety ($F(2, 735) = .24$, $p > .05$). On the dimension of hopelessness, the current study teens' mean hopelessness score was 3.20, which was not significantly different from other teens with conflict with parents, but a post hoc test using Tukey's revealed that the current study teens' hopelessness score was significantly different from the group of teens for whom conflict with parents was not a major stressor ($F(2, 733) = 5.00$, $p < .05$). The related risk factor means and standard deviations of the groups of teens are given in Table 3.3.

Drug Involvement

Drug involvement was a selection criteria for the Current Study Teens. The Current Study group of teens was made up of the lowest users and the highest users of alcohol and drugs among the

185 teens who reported conflict with parents as a major stressor. Thus the mean value of drug involvement for the Current Study Teens was .85, which was much higher than the mean values for the other groups. Levene's test of equality of variance had a value of .000, showing that comparisons of the three groups violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance. Thus, to make a more valid comparison of the teens, all teens with conflict with parents as a stressor were combined on the dimension of drug involvement. The mean score of drug involvement of all 185 teens with conflict with parents was .61, which was significantly different from the 508 teens in the suicide-vulnerable-only group, mean = .49. Thus the teens with conflict with parents as a major stressor reported significantly more drug involvement than did the suicide vulnerable-only teens ($F(1,730) = 3.68$; $p < .05$).

Protective Factors

The teens were compared on the dimensions of personal control, self-esteem, and problem-solving coping. The Current Study teens were not significantly different from the other antecedent groups on these dimensions. The data on protective factors are summarized in Table 3.3 at the end of this chapter.

Family Factors

Family support. Family functioning support was measured by the Family Apgar scale (0 to 6 with higher values meaning more support). The Current Study teens' mean was 1.83, compared to 2.06 for the other group of teens with conflict with parents, and 2.73 for the antecedent All SVY group of teens, ($F(2,734) = 17.79$; $p < .001$). Post-hoc test using Tukey revealed that both conflict with parent groups of teens were significantly different from the All SVY group and the conflict with parent groups were similar to each other. Data on Family Factors are summarized in Table 3.4 at the end of this chapter.

Family distress. On the Family Distress scale, the patterns were similar to family support with the two groups with conflict with parents being similar to one another, but significantly different from the All SVY teens ($F(2, 734) = 37.24$; $p < .001$), and confirmed by Tukey's Post hoc test.

The HSQ baseline survey measured several dimensions of family support and distress that facilitated further examination of aspects of the teens' perceptions of their parents. For example, there were no significant differences among the groups of teens on a scale asking about amount of support the teen gets from the father. However, teens in both of the groups with conflict with parents indicated they received significantly less support from mother than did the teens in the All SVY group ($F(1,716) = 15.0$, $p < .001$).

Summary and Observations on the Characteristics of the Current Study Teens

Examining the demographics and data on risk and protective factors provided an opportunity to profile characteristics of the teens at risk for suicide in the RY program. All of the teen groups are similar on demographic dimensions, on indices of suicide, and on the psychosocial personal protective and risk factors, except for hopelessness. Not surprisingly, all 185 teens noting conflict with parents reported less family support and more family distress than did the teens without conflict with parents as a major stressor. The data suggest that for the teens with conflict with parents, mothers are perceived as more problematic than fathers.

An intriguing finding of this descriptive and exploratory analysis is that drug involvement was significantly greater among all teens with conflict with parents as compared to teens without conflict with parents. This finding suggests an important direction for future research.

Another compelling observation from the descriptive profile is that the only major risk dimension, other than family support and distress, that differentiated the teens with conflict with parents from the suicide vulnerable only teens was hopelessness. Perceived parenting style and hopelessness made significant unique contributions to suicidal behavior in the study by Allison et al.

(1995) reviewed in Chapter 2. This dimension also was suggested in the discourse of the current study group of teens, which will be analyzed further in the next chapters.

Table 3.1
List of All Linguistic Action Verbials (LAVs) found in the Corpus

LAV	Frequency	LAV	Frequency
yell	32	reminds me	1
fight	30 (as LAV, 16 as noun)	flip out	2
argue/argument	21	freak out	2
tell	26	screamed	5
talk	25	bothering	1
get along/not get along	21	get into verbal sparring matches	1
say/said	25 (say) 10 (said)	gives me a hard time	1
ask	9	bitches	4
get mad	11	blows up	1
get really mad	2	lecture	2
get frustrated	1	confronted	1
get upset	2	complained	1
exploded	1	promise	1
get on my case	3	bring it up	1
get dumped on	1	bugging	4
get into it	2	make a big deal	1
speak	2	calling me names	1
blames	3	discussing	1
tries to step in	1	downsizes	1
nagging	3	fussin'	1
interfered	1	hollered	1
go off	1	hassled	2
threaten	1	puts me down	2
jump to conclusions	1	communicates	1
chewed	1	whines	1

Table 3.2
Demographic Characteristics for Current Study Participants

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Sex	
Female	47	(61)
Male	30	(39)
	Age: mean	
15.8 years		
	Grade in School	
9th	14	(18)
10th	43	(56)
11th	8	(10)
12th	12	(16)
	Ethnicity	
Caucasian	31	(40)
African-American	11	(14)
Asian American	12	(16)
Hispanic	10	(13)
Mixed	10	(13)
Other	2	(1)
	Living With	
Both biologic parents	31	(40)
Mother only	15	(20)
Father only	7	(9)
Biologic & stepparent	11	(14)
Other	4	(4)

Table 3.3
Comparison of Groups by Risk and Protective Factors

Dimension Subscale	Group 1 SVY w/ parent conflict & hi-lo drug use Current Study Participants n = 77 Mean	(SD)	Group 2 SVY w/ parent conflict as major stressor, moderate drug users n = 108 Mean	(SD)	Group 3 SVY youth without parent conflict as a major stressor n = 553 Mean	(SD)	*df*	*F*	*p*
Suicide risk behaviors	,88	(1,10)	,81	(,95)	,78	(1,02)	2	,289	,749
Related Risk Factors									
Depression	3,00	(1,21)	2,71	(1,23)	2,74	(1,21)	2	1,53	,208
Hopelessness	3,20	(1,34)	3,07	(1,44)	2,77	(1,36)	2	5,00	,007
Anger	2,97	(1,44)	2,81	(1,46)	2,61	(1,45)	2	2,62	,073
Anxiety	2,43	(1,42)	2,50	(1,35)	2,40	(1,34)	2	,24	,784
Perceived stress	3,8	(1,30)	3,55	(1,22)	3,60	(1,29)	2	1,10	,335
Protective Factors									
Self-esteem	3,32	(1,31)	3,2	(1,27)	3,36	(1,31)	2	,98	,375
Personal control	3,40	(1,30)	3,20	(1,24)	3,5	(1,31)	2	2,92	,054
Perceived Coping Ability	2,59	(1,62)	2,54	(1,59)	2,81	(1,59)	2	1,77	1,71

Table 3.4
Comparison of Groups by Family Factors

Dimension/subscale	Group 1 SVY's w/ parent conflict & hi-lo drug use Current Study Participants n = 77 Mean	(SD)	Group 2 SVY's w/ parent conflict as major stressor, but moderate drug users n = 108 Mean	(SD)	Group 3 SVY's without parent conflict as a major stressor n = 553 Mean	(SD)	*df*	*F*	*p*
Family Functioning/Support	1.83	(1.30)	2.06	(1.49)	2.73	(1.580	2	17.77	.000
Mother Support	3.38	(6.07)	4.40	(5.04)	5.68	(4.92)	2	8.38	.000
Father Support	2.06	(6.4)	3.15	(5.68)	3.77	(5.80)	2	2.86	.058
Family Goals Met	2.09	(1.44)	2.75	(1.67)	3.28	(1.47)	2	24.02	.000
Family Distress	2.70	(1.20)	2.56	(1.31)	1.68	(1.28)	2	37.24	.000

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of my analysis of the adolescents' discourse. The results are organized by the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

RQ 1. When characterizing communicative conduct of parents, how do teens at risk for suicide and who report conflict with parents use the linguistic resources of

a) Linguistic action verbials (LAVs).

b) Extreme case formulations (ECFs).

c) Reported speech

RQ 2. What are the apparent meanings of these characterizations for the teen speakers?

RQ 3: What do the teens identify as the outcomes or effects on them of the parents' communicative behavior and do these outcomes relate to the teens' risk for suicide?

The chapter is divided into four parts. Part I deals with the teens' use of linguistic action verbials. In Part II, I examine the teens' use of extreme case formulations. Part III is concerned with how the teens incorporated reported speech into their talk. Part IV focuses on how and what the teens specified were the outcomes, for them, of their parents' communicative practices. In each part, I briefly review the set of materials that supported the findings of the section. I provide excerpts of the teens' discourse to illustrate the analysis. The excerpts are numbered consecutively throughout the chapter. I turn now to Part I of the analysis which deals with the linguistic action verbials used by the teens.

Part I. Linguistic Action Verbials

One of the principal findings of the materials I produced for this study is the teens' use of linguistic action verbials (LAVs) to characterize their parents' communicative conduct. Studying the LAVs was particularly fruitful for understanding reported conflict with parents as a major stressor for the teens. A careful analysis of how the teens talked about their parents' talk in situations that they, the teens, characterized as "conflict with parents" showed that there are six key terms and expressions that the

teens used regularly in such talk. They are "yell," "fight," "argue," "talk," "tell," and "get along with/not get along with." I grouped the terms to facilitate the analysis. First, I analyzed the terms directly related to conflict (yell, fight, and argue). Second, I analyzed the teens' use of "talk" and "tell." Third, I analyzed the verbal phrase "get along with/not get along with." I now turn to an examination of each one of these terms and expressions. The following research questions guided my analysis of these terms.

RQ 1. When characterizing communicative conduct of parents, how do teens at risk for suicide and who have conflict with parents make use of selected linguistic devices. In other words, what are the linguistic action verbials that emerged from the teens' talk as important in their characterization of their parents' communicative behavior?

RQ 2. What are the meanings of these characterizations for the teen speakers?

Yell, Fight, and Argue

The analysis of "yell," "fight," and "argue" is presented first. Each of the three LAVs is analyzed by co-occurring terms and directional presentation of the LAV. Analytical points are illustrated with the excerpts from the corpus, but every occurrence of the LAV is presented in the appropriate table at the end of the chapter.

Yell

"Yell" was a prominent linguistic action verbial (LAV) denoting conflict in the discourse, appearing 32 times, and used by 18 of the teen speakers to describe interactions between the teens and parents. Every time the teens used "yell" (inflected form, yelled or yelling), they were describing communicative behavior involving the parents. Thus, I included all 32 occurrences of yell in the analysis and have selected excerpts from the text to illustrate the findings. A complete list of the utterances with "yell" and the co-occurring terms is Table 4.1 at the end of this chapter.

I found three important features of "yell" that I will discuss and illustrate below: the co-occurring

terms that the teens used with "yell," the directionality of the communication, and its use as a generalizing term for conflict. I will begin with co-occurring terms. The utterances that include "yell" are displayed in 4.1 with the co-occurring adverbs and verbs the teens used to convey a similar linguistic action to "yell." Together, they give a range of words associated with "yell." Some of these words are also linguistic action verbials, such as "screams" and "cry," while others describe more generally the way the parent is communicating, for example "gives me a dirty look," "is rude," or "calling me names."

Co-occurring terms. When I analyzed how "yell" was being used by the teen speakers, one of the features I noted was the presence of co-occurring terms with "yell." The co-occurring terms were of two syntactic forms: (a) verbs or verb phrases that explained more about the linguistic action of the parents that the teens described as "yell" or (b) adverbs, adverb phrases, or adjectives that described the linguistic action of "yell." An exhaustive search yielded 49 co-occurring terms with yell, which are listed in Table 4.1. In Excerpt 1 below the teen is describing his mother's behavior when a male friend visits. The co-occurring terms and phrases with "yell" are "hits," "screams," and "kicks me out of the house."

Excerpt 1 (CN65)

If one, if one comes, she hits or **screams** at me, or **yells** at me, or **kicks** me out of the house.

In the next excerpt (2), the teen uses the LAV "bitches" as a co-occurring term with "yelling."

Excerpt 2 (CN26)

In a way, yeah, but not the way he gives it to me. He **always be yelling** at me. He has never said anything to me like, "Good job." "How was your day?" Comes home and **bitches** at me, to do my work, my chores. **Always yelling, yells** at my brothers **all the time.**

The second type of co-occurring term was modifiers of the LAV: adverbs or adverb phrases that

were usually used to convey the frequency of the LAV (e.g., "always," "all the time," "a lot"). Co-occurring adverbs denoting frequency were also part of Excerpt 2, to describe the father's linguistic action-- "always" (used twice) and "all the time." In Excerpt 3, the teen uses "always" and the adverb phrase "for like a half an hour" to frame the linguistic action of "yell"as occurring frequently and extensively.

Excerpt 3 (CN46)

Because I'm **always** getting **yelled** at for doin' something. Like, if I forget to take out the garbage, he'll **yell** at me **for like a half hour** or he's told me that I'm stupid.

Two of the teens used "yell" to express what they wanted changed in their life--for the parents to stop yelling. These are given below:

Excerpt 4 (CN13)

My mom to not **yell** at me **all the time**.

Excerpt 5 (CN65)

Mom to stop **yelling** at me about **every little thing**, like a crumb on the table or my shoes under the table.

The utterances from these two teens indicate how problematic the yelling is for them--of all the things in their life they could have changed these two teens wanted the parent to stop yelling about "every little thing" and "all the time."

What are these teens doing when they use these co-occurring terms? The teens are conveying the ways that "yell" is a problem behavior for them. The adverbs of frequency, such as "always," legitimize their experience that conflict with parents is stressful for them. It is not only that parents "yell," but also that the frequency of the yelling makes it more stressful. The use of additional LAVs, such as "bitches" and "screams" strengthens the teens' claim of stressfulness because the teens perceive parents as using multiple and varied communicative actions which have negative

connotations. When the teen in an earlier excerpt used, "kicks me out of the house," he was using a vivid metaphor of a physical action to describe a communicative behavior–along with her other harsh communicative actions, the mother tells her son to leave the house.

Directionality of yell. When teens made the linguistic move to characterize a parents' communicative practice as "yell," I discovered that teens were giving a clue to how they frame their relationship with the parent. I observed that "yell" is usually followed by "at" implying that the communicative action is unidirectional: usually toward (at) the teen. "Yell" does not have to be used in this way. For example, one could say, "She yelled for help" or "Jim yelled the directions across the field" indicating that the person was speaking in a loud voice, but not necessarily that there was anything disparaging directed to the hearer. However, when "-at" follows "yell," it carries a message to the teen that something more than a loud vocalization has occurred. Rather "yelled at" characterizes the teen as the recipient of an unpleasant, derogatory message directed at him or her. In a sense, they are powerless to engage with the yelling, because the message is unidirectional: it is coming at them.

To illustrate this phenomenon, in the next passage, the teen's words capture vividly the unidirectional nature of "yell" as well as the generalized sense of "yell." This teen speaker also specifies that "yell" instead of "talk" is what is occurring in the interaction with parents. Co-occurring terms of "nagging," "sit there," and "listen to" convey that the teen is a passive recipient–she is supposed to obediently take in what the parents have to say, which she doesn't have time for. Furthermore, when they have something to say to her, they do not really "talk," the parents "kind of **yell.**" They could talk to her, implying perhaps the use of a calm, supportive kind of "talk," but instead, her parents "yell."

Excerpt 6 (CN16)

Then when my parents start **nagging** me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time

to sit there and **listen to** what they **say** because you know I have homework and work and when they do **talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell.**

The one-directional nature of "yell" fit with the pejorative sense that the teens wanted to convey in their characterization of their parents' communicative action. When they included several co-occurring LAVs, they used "yell" as the general term or "covering term" to summarize several LAVs. Thus, the reason the parents are "yelling" could be related to a variety of topics and could include other actions such as "bitching" or "nagging" but the covering term is "yell." Excerpt 7 is an example.

Excerpt 7 (CN72)

And when they came back, my parents got mad and they started hitting me because I am the older one and it is my responsibility. My mom **yelled** and my dad hit. They **yell** a lot and have a lot of threats.

Although it occurred infrequently, a few teens used "yell" to characterize their own communicative action, as in the next example. The teen states his perception in such a way that it sounds as if the parents and teen are not necessarily yelling at each other. Rather, either parents or teen "get mad" and begin yelling. It is as if episodes of yelling occur as separate events. The co-occurring terms of "so mad" and "to be irritable" as well as his desire to have his parents stop bothering him illustrate the dilemma for the teen.

Excerpt 8 (CN06)

They perceive me as being irritable. I'm not saying they're the only ones that get mad and start **yelling. It goes both ways.** I don't try to be irritable but they just do things that make me so **mad.** I want them to stop bothering me.

Reflecting on the properties of "yell" as examined in the utterances above (Excerpt 8), I concluded that for these at risk teens, yelling is characterized as a general way of speaking in a negative way, occurs frequently, and usually is directed at the teen. "Yell" is accompanied by other communicative

conduct that is perceived as negative, such as screaming and name-calling. Further analysis of "yell" will follow in this chapter as comparisons are made to the other five verbs of conflict. As will be seen, the next term for analysis, "fight" shares characteristics with "yell," but also has properties that work differently in the discourse of the teens.

Fight

The term "fight" (inflected forms: fighting or fought) was another prominent linguistic action verbial to describe conflict with parents. "Fight/fighting/fought" was used by 24 of the teen speakers to characterize communicative conduct with parents. "Fight" was used as both a verb and a noun: 30 times as a verb and 16 times as a noun (e.g., When we try to talk, it becomes a fight.) The complete list of utterances with "fight" is given in Table 4.2.

Co-occurring terms There were 50 co-occurring terms with fight. As with "yell," "fight" co-occurred with adverbs denoting frequency, and to a lesser extent than "yell," other verbs of conflict, such as "fussin" and "yell." There were 22 adverbs indicating frequency or amount. Four excerpts are given below to illustrate both the adverbs of frequency and the other LAVs.

Excerpt 9 (CN01)

Me and my mom **fight a lot.**

Excerpt 10 (CN06)

Parents. We just **always fight constantly**.

Excerpt 11 (CN44)

Just the **fussin'**, the **fightin, every day, every night.**

Excerpt 12 (CN57)

Conflict with parents–Since my dad is gone, I'm **fighting** quite a bit with my mom, which I **just don't like doing**. I don't really care when she **yells** at me but like when my dad called up last night, he **chewed me out**. And it is **stressful for me to be fighting** with my mom

and my sister.

The adverbs and adverb phrases with "fight" were very similar to those with "yell." Some are given in the four excerpts above; for example, "a lot," "constantly," "every day, every night."

As with "yell," the teens often use the adverbs to express the maximum example–not sometimes, but "every day, every night." Excerpt 13 is another example of maximum case, using "every single time" and "absolutely every way you can think of." The phenomenon of maximum case or "extreme case" will be covered in depth in Part II of this chapter.

Excerpt 13 (CN43)

. . .we don't really talk very much any more and **every time we do, we fight, every single time. .** .but then I'm being sarcastic, I mean **absolutely every way you can possibly think** of and it just doesn't seem to work. (CN43)

Directionality of Fight. The excerpts above and the list of utterances with "fight"in Table 4.2 show that the teens perceive "fight" (like yell) as occurring "constantly" and "a lot." Do the teens characterize a similar directionality to "fight"as they did with "yell?"

I looked first at the definition of "fight." The American Heritage Dictionary (Pickett, 2000, p. 517) defines the verb "fight" as "to engage in battle" or "to engage in a quarrel, argue." Both of these definitions characterize "fight" as a struggle between two or more parties. "Engage" as an intransitive verb means "to participate in" or "interlocking." Like the formal definition of "fight," the teens characterized "fight" as an engagement between them and the parent, using "we" or "me and my mom." The teens also used "fight with" for example, "I fight **with** my parents on that" and "Since my dad is gone, I'm **fighting** quite a bit **with** my mom." As opposed to a term such as "harassed" that implies that one party dominated the other, fight is characterized differently by the teen speakers. It is a struggle between the two parties. This is quite different from "yell at" where the action was unidirectional and was usually directed toward the teen who was a passive recipient of the linguistic

action. The two-directional presentation of "fight" is shown in Excerpt 14.

Excerpt 14 (CN10)

Me and my parents were like really angry at each other yesterday. My dad pisses me off. I love him, but I get along with my mom better than I get along with my dad. He doesn't like my boyfriend so he kinda gives me a hard time about him, which makes me mad which makes us mad at each other which causes like the family to get upset, I guess. When I do things wrong, my dad blames my boyfriend instead of me. **We fight about me having an attitude, me being rude. I called my mom some names and stuff like that. We don't get in fights a lot because I am really close to my mom, but when we do it's really stressful.**

In Excerpt 14, the teen gives information about the nature of fighting with each of her parents. She states, "me and my parents were like really angry at each other yesterday" which gives the hearer the impression of an engagement of all parties. Then she gives a list of verbs that focus on the dad (pisses me off, doesn't like my boyfriend, gives me a hard time) and then she shows how the conflict escalates with her getting mad at her father which makes them mad at each other, which then upsets the whole family. Her father misplaces the blame from her to her boyfriend, so her father can justify not liking her boyfriend. This in turn explains the conflict with her father. Again, "we fight" implies the struggle that engages both of them in regards to her attitude and being rude. She then explains how she is rude: "I called my mom some names and stuff like that." She and her mom, however, don't get in fights a lot, because she is really close to her mom. The closeness to her mom could account for the fighting with mom as being "really stressful."

The above passage illustrates the insight of this teenager about how conflict works with her parents. This speech act is rich with description of communicative practices of all parties. She clearly identifies areas of friction among the three of them, how the emotions escalate, that she "gets along

with" mom better than dad, and that the fights with mom, though not often, are especially stressful because she and mom are "really close." I interpret her experiences here as stressful, but also perhaps as a healthy struggle between dad and teen: They have real differences of opinion about her boyfriend. Furthermore, the use of the term "fight" denotes the bi-directionality of the struggle, contributing to the sense of give and take in their discourse. The teen is essentially a partner in the conflict, not a recipient of communicative action, as characterized by the teens who used "yell" to characterize their parents' conduct.

In Excerpt 15, the teen is characterizing the conflict with her parents as, "I fight with my mom and dad" again as an engagement of the three of them. Then she corrects herself, that she doesn't "really fight" with them–it's less than a fight, more like an argument. To this teen, an argument is less of a conflict than a fight.

> Excerpt 15 (CN54)
>
> I **fight with** my mom and dad a lot. I don't really **fight**, but I argue a lot **with them**. I **fight with** my brother and sister a lot. Since I got saved I'm really trying not to **fight with** them so much.

The teen in the following excerpt, Excerpt 16 identifies that because she is now "fighting back" with parents, there is more conflict, whereas, when she was younger, she did not engage in the conflict. She is asserting her opinion when she says, "I think I do. . ." This teen also displays insight into the dynamics of the conflict: that when she was younger, she did not fight back, in other words, engage with parents. Her words indicate that she realizes her assertiveness in fighting back is causing conflict with her parents. However, she asserts that it is age-appropriate for her to press for her opinion in the form of "fighting back." I believe that her words are constitutive of her age-appropriate drive for autonomy.

Excerpt 16 (CN52)

Conflict with parents: They sometimes think that I do things only for myself and not anybody else. I think I do a great deal more for the family than anybody else I know and the conflict starts up because I'm **fighting back** with them, when I used to not **fight** about it, because I was too young for that.

To summarize the LAV "fight" as used by these teen speakers, "fight" is characterized as communicative conduct that is bi-directional, typically engaging both teen and parent. The communicative practice of "fight" occurs frequently in the families of these teens and is associated with other LAVs such as "chewing me out," but with fewer other LAVs as compared to "yell." The next term of conflict for analysis is "argue" which was a co-occurring term with both "fight," and "yell."

Argue

The LAV "argue" (inflected forms: argued or arguing) was a third prominent word used by the teen speakers to characterize conflict with parents. Sixteen of the teen speakers referred to communicative action as "argue" or "argument," with a verb or noun form occurring a total of 25 times in the corpus. The complete list of utterances with "argue" appears as Table 4.3 at the end of this chapter.

Co-occurring terms. Like "fight" and "yell," "argue" was accompanied by other LAVs. Compared to the co-occurring LAVs for "yell" or "fight," "argue" had fewer verbs synonymous with "argue." Co-occurring terms included "hassle" and "nag." An example is given in Excerpt 17 below.

Excerpt 17 (CN59)

My parents always **argue** with me. I'm in counseling. Everyday my mom has **to hassle me, nag me**, about every little tiny thing. The stuff she has already told me, she just has to repeat herself.

One of the reasons for less variety among the co-occurring LAVs with argue, is that the teens relied on characterizations of "fight" to explain linguistic action with parents they termed as "argue." The differentiation was mirrored in the formal definition of "argue." The definition of "argue" when used as a transitive verb is "to debate or influence by reasoning" (Pickett, 2000, p. 76). Used as an intransitive verb, the meaning is similar in that it reads, "put forth reasons for or against," or also "to engage in a quarrel or dispute" (Pickett, 2000, p. 76). The definition of "fight" was "to engage in battle or quarrel;" thus the definition of "fight" suggests a more intense struggle than to "argue." The distinction between "argue" and "fight" is subtle in the dictionary meanings, but the distinction was made quite explicit by the teen speakers, and one they chose to emphasize as the utterances in Excerpts 18 and 19 demonstrate.

Excerpt 18 (CN54)

I **fight** with my mom and dad a lot. **I don't really fight, but I argue a lot** with them.

Excerpt 19 (CN40)

I **fight** with my parents and it gets kinda irritating. **It's not like a fight. It's a fight like an argument, but it feels like fights.**

The teen quoted in the next excerpt, Excerpt 20, is describing conflict with parents and with friends. Although her utterances ran together as she was speaking of conflict in both contexts, she clearly differentiates "fight" and "argue."

Excerpt 20 (02)

Me and my parents, we just don't agree to many things. Some of the things. Friends. **We hardly get into fights, like arguments, we get into little arguments. That's all.**

Similarly, the teens in Excerpts 21 and 22 downplay the negativity associated with arguing with parents–by using "just" and "once in a while" in Excerpt 21 and normalizing the conflict (pretty normal teenage-parent thing) in Excerpt 22.

Excerpt 21 (CN71)

Conflict with parents is **just arguing once in a while. It happens.**

Excerpt 22 (CN49)

Conflict with parents is **disagreements and arguments**. Probably pretty normal teenage–parent thing.

The co-occurring adverbs were similar to those used with "yell" and "fight." Two examples are given below in Excerpts 23 and 24.

Excerpt 23 (CN59)

My parents **always argue** with me.

Excerpt 24 (CN75)

We're **always arguing**.

Directionality of argue. Like fight and yell, "argue" had a directional presentation. Similar to "fight," "argue" was characterized by the teen speakers as action they did with the parents. For example, "My parents always argue with me."

Comparisons of Yell, Fight, and Argue

The prominence of the three LAVs, "yell," "fight," and "argue" led me to compare these terms to one another to better understand the significance of each of the terms. Using Potter and Wetherell (1987), I examined the utterances with the LAVs of "yell," "fight," and "argue" for variations in their usage and for the way the utterances were constructed. I used the components of linguistic action as described by Dirven et al. (1982) to assemble a table of comparisons of the LAVs (Table 4.4 at the end of this chapter).

When I compared "yell," "fight," and "argue," I saw similarities and differences. One of the similarities is that mothers and fathers seem to both be involved in the actions that teens describe as "yell," "fight," and "argue." What I mean by this is that it did not seem that one or the other gender was

more involved.

Another similarity was that, when used as verbs, the three verbs are almost always used by the teens as intransitive verbs; that is, they do not have a direct object.[3] In general speech, "argue" is often used transitively, for example, "We argued money issues" or "We argue politics." But the teens did not use "argue" in this way. Rather, they used "argue" intransitively, such as, "My parents always argue with me." I believe that the teens' almost exclusive construction of the LAVs "yell," "fight," and "argue" as intransitive verbs is because the teens experience conflict with parents in a general sense, as "yell," "fight," and "argue." The teens are not foregrounding the topic of the yell, fight, and argue nor the specific message–as would be found in the direct object of the LAVs. The teens instead are viewing the linguistic action as complete, in and of itself. The importance of this view is that the teens are using "yell," "fight," and "argue" as terms of generality of linguistic action. The teens' perspective is that there is a bundle of linguistic action with parents that is subsumed under each of these terms, that the conflict is not specific to a topic in most cases, but is perspectivized as general activity of conflict.

Although the LAVs "yell," fight," and "argue" were used similarly as intransitive verbs, a difference among them is the use of "yell" when the conflicts is particularly problematic. For example, appearing in the corpus is the utterance, "My mom always yells at me, 'Take your pills.'" The young speaker had, earlier in the interview, explained that she is anemic. She also had indicated earlier that she was close to her mother: "My mom. She really worries me a lot because I love her more than anything in the whole world. When I see something affecting her, it affects me double time." Although this teen has conflict with her parents, she has positive feelings about her mother. Perhaps the mother "yells" (shouts in a loud voice), "Take your pills." as the teen reports, but more likely, the mother has to remind her daughter to take her medication, a reminder which is annoying to the teen and is perceived as

---

[3]An exception was the utterance: "I am always depressed because my dad, you see, when I am home is always **yelling things** at me or calling me names," where "things," is the direct object.

"yelling" by the teen. Thus "yelling" may not be yelling at all, but may be the way a teen characterizes interactions with parents that are especially distressing to him or her.

Another utterance with "yell" and "yelling" that was given previously was: "He **always be yelling** at me. He has never said anything to me like, 'Good job.' 'How was your day?' Comes home and bitches at me, to do my work, my chores. **Always yelling, yells** at my brothers **all the time.**" In this case, the teen provides more evidence of the nature of the parent's communication, in that he backs up his general claim of his father "always be yelling" with claiming that his father never praises him or even asks a neutral question like, "How was your day?" Furthermore, his dad "bitches at" him, and again is "always yelling" and yells at the other children in the home. Does his dad come home and "always" (constantly) shout in a loud voice? Or is the teen perceiving his dad as communicating in a way that has the effect on him of constantly shouting in a loud voice? The teen is perspectivizing linguistic action of his dad as the following: frequently vocalizing at me in a way that is not positive, is similar to bitching, and is irritating.

The strength of the negative experience the teens associated with "yell" is exemplified in the following utterance, reported previously "So I have no fear of him hurting me physically, but he **yells** at me a lot and sometimes it **gets overbearing and it depresses me**." The teen reports that the yelling "gets overbearing" and is depressing. When "overbearing" is used as an adjective, it is defined as "(1) domineering in manner, arrogant; and (2) overwhelming in power or significance" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000, p. 991). A synonym is "dictatorial." This teen perceives that his father is frequently vocalizing at him, that he seems to perceive the linguistic action as domineering, or overwhelming in power, perhaps even dictatorial.

The main differences among the terms was in the way the verb denoted the direction of the locutionary act, that is, if it is one-directional, the receiver is a receptor. If the act denotes bi-directionality, then the receiver becomes an interactor. "Yell" is virtually always characterized as one-

directional–from parent to teen, whereas "fight" and "argue" are characterized as two-directional. In one-directional LAVs, such as "yell" the one-way action is conveyed through the preposition "at." This is distinctly different from the way "fight" and "argue" utterances were constructed by the teens. because these LAVs typically occurred with the preposition "with" Thus, "fight" and "argue" implied turn-taking in the linguistic action occurring between parent and teen. "Fight" and "argue" were also used by the teen with pronouns such as "we" and "my mom and I" further indicating that the participants were all engaged in the linguistic action. The back and forth sense of the conflict in the next utterance, Excerpt 25, and the use of "We've" to convey that both parties are active in the conflict.

Excerpt 25 (CN10)

My mom helps me through everything. She's like my best girlfriend and now I'm mad at her and she's mad at me and I don't know how to deal with it. We've been **arguing a lot.**

Excerpt 26 supports the distinctions that the teens make between fight and yell. What I mean by this is that the speaker characterizes "fight" as something mom does with her, as is true with arguments, as she says "I have arguments with my mom" whereas "yelling" takes the view of an action that is done at each other. She uses "gets in fights" as a whole view of the contentious situation with the specific conflict consisting of they just "yell at each other." This was the only teen speaker who described she/he and the parent as "yell/ed/ing at **each other**."

Excerpt 26 (CN13)

Conflict with parents. I always have **arguments** with my mom. And my stepdad tries to step in. He's rude. My dad says, "Try to control it. Don't listen to 'em. Try to ignore it if they are **yelling** at you." So I try to turn my head and try to not listen. And he gives me a dirty look and **yells** at me. My mom always gets in **fights** with me. We just like **yell** at each other. Sometimes I just ignore it and I just try to have control and try not to have it bug me. Try not to let it bug me.

Excerpt 26 illustrates the third difference among the terms "yell," "fight,"and "argue." Whereas "yell" was used exclusively as an verb, the teens used the noun forms of "fight" and "argue" (argument). As was noted earlier in this chapter, the teens often linked the noun forms with the verb phrase "get in," exemplified in Excerpt 26 in line 5 as, "My mom **gets in fights** with me." In this case, the teen explains what "getting in fights" is: "We just like yell at each other." It was uncommon for the teens to explain the linguistic action involved with "get in fights." In this sense, "fight" and "argue" or "argument" are less descriptive and less specific than "yell"or "yelling." "Yell" specifies communicative behavior of loud vocalization. "Fight" could involve several kinds of behaviors, such as hitting or throwing things. "Getting in a fight" or "getting in an argument" is also non-specific. My data suggest that the overall conflict situation of "fight" or "argue" is similar whether the teen uses the LAV "fight" or "argue" as opposed to the noun forms of "get in fights" or "get in arguments." Of the three terms, "yell" is the most expressive of the communicative action. The teens choose to express the conflict as "yell" when they want to be more specific and want to characterize the conflict as more distressing to them.

In a review of 87 common linguistic action verbs (Verschueren,1985), the only LAV that can use "at" in the same way as "yell," is "shout." Synonyms of "yell" listed in the on-line version of The American Heritage Dictionary (2000, yell, May 25, 2002) are "shout," "scream," and "holler," all of which characterize linguistic action in a way similar to "yell." These terms are typically used intransitively with the preposition "at" and imply a loud vocalization. Yet, of these terms which could be used interchangeably, "yell" was almost exclusively chosen by the teens. These observations plus the prominence of "yell" in the corpus leads me to make the following claim: The reason the teens chose "yell" is that "yell" has a particular meaning to them, as a general or covering term denoting communicative behaviors that range from merely irritating to loud and threatening cries by parents. These linguistic actions are directed at the teen and are perceived as adversarial in a domineering way.

Hence, vocalizations, not necessarily loud, that are of a critical nature are generalized to "being yelled at."

Summary of "Yell," "Fight," and "Argue"

The teen speakers in this study used a variety of terms to describe their parents' communicative behavior. Three of the terms that the teens used to characterize conflict were: "yell," "fight," and "argue." Further characterizations made by the teens are that these behaviors occur frequently and are associated with other conflict-related terms such as "hassled" or "gets mad." "Fight" and "argue" are experienced as action done with a parent, are most often expressed as verbs of action, but are also used to connote situation, such as an argument or a fight (e.g., get in fights). Whereas "yell" implies a loud vocalization, its meaning to the teen is less explicit. It is used by the teens as a covering term for a variety of interactions that are experienced as negative verbalizations directed at them.

In the next sections, I analyze "tell," and then "talk," two more high frequency terms that were present in the teens' discourse. "Tell" and "talk" are basic linguistic action verbs as proposed by Verschueren (1985). "Tell" and "talk" were two of the four high frequency basic LAVs chosen for in depth analysis by Dirven, Goossens, Putseys, and Vorlat (1982).

Tell and Talk

"Tell" and "talk" are LAVs that were prominent in the discourse of the teens as they described linguistic action occurring between their parents and them. I became interested in these LAVs because of their frequency in the corpus and the way the teens used them to characterize their interaction with parents. I was also interested in applying to my corpus the work of Dirven and colleagues (1982) in their exposition of how speakers perspectivize linguistic action. "Tell" and "talk" were two of the four basic LAVs analyzed by Dirven and colleagues. The other two were "say" and "speak." "Speak" hardly occurred in my corpus, and "say" did not carry the linguistic significance of "tell" and "talk" when the teens described daily interactions with parents. "Say" became important in the teens' use of direct

reported speech which is discussed in Part III. I turn now to analysis of "tell" and "talk."

Tell

As explained by Dirven et al. (1982), "tell" frames linguistic action as consisting of a person who vocalizes, a person vocalized to, and a message. An example is, "She tells anyone, 'I'm three years old.'" In this example, a person (she) vocalizes (tells) a message (I'm three years old). As is seen in this example, "tell" is almost always followed by a word or phrase which answers the question "what?" (e.g., tell stories, told us their troubles, a direct quote, etc). Dirven et al. called this the "message focus" of "tell."

Dirven et al. (1982) noted that "say" frames linguistic action in a way similar to "tell:"commonly consisting of a person giving a message. An example is, "I say, 'Stay for dinner.' " Here, "stay for dinner" is the message and is the focus of the utterance. Thus, for both "tell" and "say," the speaker is drawing attention to the message.

"Talk" is quite different from "tell" and "say" because "talk" usually is not followed by a word or phrase that answers the question, "What?" For example, "The President talks at 10 PM" or "They talked until morning." The focus with "talk" is on who is interacting and how they are talking, but not on the message.

The importance of the content-message to the focus of "tell" is because the word "tell" is used commonly to indicate that there is a transfer of information. Indeed, The American Heritage Dictionary (Pickett, 2000, p.1418) lists five ways of using "tell" as a linguistic action verb, all of which convey a transfer of information–"tell" as "to inform," "narrate" (as a story), "express in words," "make known" (reveal/divulge), and "make out" (discern). The latter usage of "make out" or "discern" implies a mental activity and is marginal as a linguistic action verb (Dirven et al., 1982). Putseys (1982) in Dirven et al. found that the INFORM meaning of "tell" accounted for 97% of the 2355 instances of the word "tell" in the corpus she used. In the current corpus, INFORM-tell also figured prominently. However, for the

teen speakers, variations on INFORM-tell seemed to have special meaning. These variations were ORDER-tell and ATTEMPT TO INFORM-tell. These variations are distinctive from what Putseys describes because Putseys found that "tell" presupposes a willingness to receive the message on the part of the adressee. As is illustrated below, the ORDER-tell and ATTEMPT TO INFORM-tell variants violated this presupposition.

In addition, the teens made distinctions between "tell" and "talk" that revealed how the teens characterize their parents' linguistic action differently when using one term or the other. First, I will examine INFORM-tell in its typical usage and then discuss the variations.

INFORM-tell. The following four utterances illustrate one of the common ways that "INFORM-tell" appears in the corpus. As noted by Dirven et al. (1982), when the INFORM-tell frame contains a message, this direct object message may take the form of a direct quote, a reported statement (cf. Excerpts 27, 28, and 29), a what or how clause (cf. Excerpt 30) or a noun phrase. In the excerpts below, each of the teen speakers is describing communicative behavior of a parent or other family member, identifying the parent (or brother) as speaker, the teen as the person spoken to, and the message being given. Dirven et al. noted that when the speaker is described as "tell/telling," the speaker is performing the act of "tell." However, Dirven et al. found in the corpus they used that "tell" was almost never purely performative, but rather in the majority of cases, "tell" had the illocutionary force of "threaten," "promise," "guarantee," "warn," "advise," and so forth. As the next four examples illustrate, for these teen speakers, the content-message is more than just being told something. The message has an illocutionary force of "finding fault" or "criticize" (e.g., "stupid," "not smart enough").

Excerpt 27 (CN23)

She's always **told** me that I'm not smart enough or good enough to do things.

Excerpt 28 (CN46)

. . . or he's **told** me that I'm stupid.

Excerpt 29 (CN20)

Maybe it's because my brother **tells** me I'm stupid and stuff, puts me down.

Excerpt 30 (CN14)

My parents have been getting really sick of that and they don't hesitate **to tell** me at every opportunity how much they don't like that.

ORDER-tell. Dirven et al. (1982) noted that the meaning of ORDER-tell is a variant of INFORM-tell. The basic reading of the following utterances (Excerpts 31, 32, and 33) suggests the teen characterized the parent's communicative conduct as intending to inform the teen of the need to do something. In fact, one could substitute "order(s)" for "tell" in these utterances and get the same meaning. The ORDER-reading of the message is conveyed by other parts of the utterance (e.g., a prepositional phrase or a direct object) as in the following examples:

Excerpt 31 (CN08)

Parents-just come home and every time **tell** me to do this, do that, all that stuff.

Excerpt 32 (CN41)

She's my momma and she **tells** me what to do.

A striking feature of excerpt 32 is what may be read as invoking a cultural norm: Mothers determine what a child does and, more importantly, mothers dictate verbally: They "order" or "tell" their child what to do.

In the next excerpt (33), the teen indicates an interaction style of his father as he differentiates between "ask," which would imply a negotiation of a request, and "tell" wherein the teen perceives his father as ordering the teen to comply with a request.

Excerpt 33 (CN17)

That's just how he is though. He is really straightforward. He doesn't ask you to do something. He **tells** you to do something. I mean it's stuff he's trying to work with.

The teen indicated that his father's way of speaking is "straightforward" which adds to the meaning of "tell" as direct and not circuitous. But the teen notes, this way of speaking may be something his father is aware of and is attempting to modify or to "work with."

When "tell" is used in the ORDER-tell manner, it has the illocutionary force of authority and could indicate that the speaker is making a bid for corrective action on the part of the addressee. In the next utterance (34), the teen has the authority with siblings, and in (35) with the teen's mother:

Excerpt 34 (CN52)

My brothers are always fighting all the time. They share the same room and it gets annoying which stresses me out because I'm constantly **telling** them **to be quiet.**

As Dirven et al. (1982) note, sometimes the context of an utterance needs to be considered to determine if the meaning of "tell" is INFORM-tell or ORDER-tell. In the next utterance (Excerpt 35), the teen uses "tell" in the INFORM-tell sense, but from the context, she is asserting authority over her mother. The context suggests that the mother is distressed or perhaps depressed by her illnesses and when ordered by her daughter to see that "nothing is wrong," the mother begins to cry.

Excerpt 35 (CN53)

I get tired of listening to her problems of being sick. I **tell** her there's nothing wrong, but she'll start crying.

Similarly, the teen in Excerpt 36 depicts her parents as combining the authority sense of ORDER-tell with the tone of criticism described by other teen users of "tell." Excerpt 36 gives a vivid picture of the teen's irritation at being told (i.e., criticized) "stupid crap every day" like them "trying to tell" (inform and order) her that she does not know what she wants: that after all, she is "only 15." When the teen speakers used "tell" in a combined ORDER and INFORM- (criticize) meaning, the invocation of authority plus the sense that the information was critical and non-negotiable could explain why the hearer of the order often reports being irritated, especially if the hearer/recipient of the

order/information is an adolescent seeking independence.

Excerpt 36 (CN73)

It makes it harder on me because I have to live with them **telling** me stupid crap every day -- like **trying to tell** me that I don't know what I want. That I'm only 15. How can I make that decision?

ATTEMPT to INFORM--tell. In the teen utterances, as in Putseys' (Dirven et al. 1982) corpus, most of the utterances were of the INFORM-tell frame, although many of the utterances in the current corpus have the ORDER-tell variation of INFORM-tell. In the next three excerpts (37), (38), and (39), the teen interviewee is describing her/himself as the speaker, with parent(s) as the recipients of the message. In these cases, where the teen is wanting to inform the parent of something, the teen characterizes the interaction not as "I told," but rather as "I tried to tell. . ." or "I told them time and time again." These utterances have the INFORM-tell meaning, but have a subtle additional meaning that I am calling "ATTEMPT TO INFORM-tell." The distinguishing feature of these utterances is the teen speaking to the parent in a manner requiring extra effort, and in none of the three cases did the teen report that the parent acknowledged or changed behavior. It was an attempt-to-inform the parent, but was unsuccessful for the teen. In each of these excerpts, the extra effort is apparent. In Excerpt 37, the teen says she has told them "time and time again," a strong statement of effort. In Excerpt 38, the bolded words of "Every time" and "tried to tell" indicate her effort. Likewise in Excerpt 39, the teen replies to the interviewer that she "always" tells her parents, but they don't take it "seriously." The teen in Excerpt 39 is using "seriously" here to indicate that she wants to be listened to. Since she uses the LAV "tell" this may cue us that the interaction is one-way--toward her parents with no satisfactory level of interaction.

Excerpt 37 (CN67)

I mean I've told them about it, **time and time again**. It's just the way they parent.

Excerpt 38 (CN01)

Every time you try to tell her, like. I mean. I love her and everything but I think it's best I stay with my grandparents. I **tried to tell** her, but most of it is.

Excerpt 39 (02)

Interviewer: Do you tell them ways they can help you?

Teen: I **always tell** them, but they don't take it **seriously.**

When the parent is the one pursuing an ATTEMPT TO INFORM-tell, the teen is also frustrated because now the parent is characterized as having to "hassle," "nag," and "repeat." In the next excerpt (40), the teen seems to be saying that Mom does not need to repeat every little thing–the teen "has already been told" the information. From the teen's perspective, she/he has to make an effort to tell, but when the parent is making the effort, it is "hassling" and "nagging."

Excerpt 40 (CN59)

Everyday my mom has to **hassle** me, **nag** me, about every little tiny thing. The stuff she has already **told** me, she just has to repeat herself.

In this section, I have analyzed the ways that "tell" was used by the teen speakers to frame linguistic action. As Putseys (Dirven et al., 1982) wrote in "Aspects of the Linguistic Action Scene with "Tell," "tell" perspectivizes linguistic action as consisting of a speaker, a message and an addressee, with a focus on both the content-message and the addressee. I found, as did Putseys, that teens usually used the INFORM-tell sense of meaning of "tell" with some notable variations on Putseys' findings. One variation is that the teen speakers used "tell" in the context of "attempting to inform" parents of a message which was couched in frustration with the difficulty of making the teens' message understood by parents. The teens also used "tell" to frame linguistic action that was an order to them (ORDER-tell) by the parent. The message in the ORDER-tell sense was "to do something" which supplied the context required to make the interpretation of a message of "ordering." In the next section, I analyze how "talk"

is used to characterize linguistic action of parents and teens.

Talk

The verb "talk" focuses on linguistic action as discourse; that is, it implies a series of transactions (Dirven et al., 1982). Where "tell" focuses on the message itself, "talk" implicates extensive linguistic activity. The teen speakers used "talk" to frame linguistic activity in three ways. One way was "talk" as communicating at a very personal or intimate level of interaction. A second way, more or less at the opposite pole to intimacy, was "not talking," indicating a lack of linguistic interaction, a situation the teens found unsatisfactory. The third way was to use "talk" and "tell" in the same speech act, providing a kind of differentiation between the two LAVs, even indicating the effect on them of the different types of linguistic activity of "talk" versus "tell." Each of these ways is examined below.

Talk as intimate interaction. In the next excerpt (46), the teen is speaking about being arrested. Her father is difficult to deal with, but her mother is more supportive: "I can talk to her more." The teen's entire speech act gives clues to how helpful her mom is: "pretty cool" and "understands more." The talking that the teen does with mom is calming to her mother.

Excerpt 41 (CN03)

My mom is pretty cool about it. I **talk** to her more about it. She understands more. And calms her down too.

In Excerpt 42, the teen is describing an argument with her parent, where she threatens to kill herself. Her father responds supportively and the teen's summary comment is, "But I always **talk** to my dad."

Excerpt 42 (CN13)

I just said, "I'm going to kill myself" and I screamed it to them. I didn't say it to them. My dad goes, "That's silly. Don't **talk** like that. Don't ever **talk** like that. You know you will never do that. You are a beautiful young lady." Blah, blah, blah. **But I always talk to my dad.**

The excerpts in 41 and 42 were the only occurrences of teens using "talk" to describe positive, supportive speech with parents. In fact, as will be seen in the next section, the absence of "talking" was the most common perspectivization of "talk." There were two instances where the teens used "talk" to describe in a positive vein linguistic action with persons other than parents. These are offered here as counter examples of "talk" as intimate interaction that is characterized by the teen as occurring with either a sibling or with friends.

In the (A) portion of the next passage, the teen reports that the communicative relationship with her mother was marked by "the fussin, the fightin, every day, every night" but then frames her relationship with her sister as one which is supportive and close, using "talk" to describe their mutually supportive communicative activity:

Excerpt 43 (CN44)

A. My mom always with violent boyfriends or they just crazy of some sort. We always hate coming home. It wasn't all my mom. Just the fussin', the fightin'. every day, every night. Me and my sister we're real close. We stay to ourself and **we talk about it.**

B. I always have to be by myself. I don't like **talking to anybody** about how I feel because I don't like to cry. It's like if I'm feeling depressed, I stay by myself in a dark room. I sit in the dark and think or something. I always have to be by myself.

Although the teen in the above example (43) says she talks to her sister about the conflict with their mother, she indicates in (B) that when she is depressed, she prefers to be alone. But the reason she gives for not wanting to talk about how she feels is that talking touches an emotional part of her and implies if she talks about how she feels, she would cry, and she does not like to cry. To her, "talk/talking" connotes intimate, personal interaction.

The teens also used "talk" to convey close, supportive speech events with friends. "Talk" as a give-and-take activity or a series of transactions (Dirven et al., 1982) is exemplified in Excerpt 44 as the teen

describes how friends talk to her and then she is supportive.

Excerpt 44 (CN15)

I have lot of friends going through pregnancy right now and they **talk** to me about their problems and I try to be supportive to them and they are so stressed.

Talk in the context of no interaction. When Dirven (Dirven et al., 1982) analyzed "talk," she found that "talk" implies a series of transactions with back and forth discussion. "Talk" can also mean that linguistic action has occurred by a speaker to an addressee, such as, "The minister talked to the family." It can also be used with a negative adverb (e.g., not or never) to mean that linguistic action did not occur: "The minister did not talk to the family." From the receiver's point of view, there are also two possibilities: The receiver responds in an active way and contributes to the conversation, where he or she is called an "interactor," or the receiver shows no signs of reaction meaning that no linguistic interaction occurred. In the latter case, the receiver is viewed as a mere receptor (Dirven et al.). "Talk" in the corpus was used most frequently in the no-interaction sense. Either (a) the speaker did not communicate (talk), (b) there was an effort to talk, but it was unsuccessful, or (c) the receptor did not respond, so no interaction occurred.

In the next utterance--Excerpt 45--the teen expresses the case of parents as mere receptors and poignantly describes what no-interaction means to her; that is, they don't seem to listen. The meaning of this situation to her is that no one is hearing her and she is all alone.

Excerpt 45 (CN16)

Most of the time like when I **try talking** to my parents, they don't seem to listen and no one is hearing me and I just feel like -- you're all alone.

For the teens whose talk was excerpted in (45) above, it was the teen herself who did not communicate with family. The teen in the next excerpt, (46), uses "talk" in the sense of extensive linguistic action, but again the linguistic action did not occur. "Didn't talk" seems to mean that she shut herself away from

them. In the second example the teen shut herself away from her mom by moving in with her father.

Excerpt 46 (CN45)

I feel alone, left out by family and friends. I maybe had an argument with my friends and I was depressed and didn't **talk** about it with my parents or family members at all. So I shut myself away from them.

Excerpt 47 (CN77)

I **didn't talk** to my mom for two months because she went through my things. I moved in with dad.

In some cases, when efforts to talk are unsuccessful, the result is stressful interaction of another kind, described earlier as part of the teen vocabulary of conflict: "fight" and "yell." The next two excerpts exemplify how efforts to talk result in conflict. Also, both teens use the adverbs "every time" indicating how discouraging it is to "try to talk," when every time, it becomes a fight.

Excerpt 48 (CN46)

Me and my mom have **tried to talk** about it [situation with dad]. I haven't with my dad because **every time** we **try to talk**, it becomes a **fight**.

Excerpt 49 (CN43)

We all, my mom goes into her room when she gets home and locks herself in her room and I have a lock on my bedroom door now too and my sister has a lock on her bedroom door. so we don't **really talk** very much any more and **every time** we do, we **fight. every single time.**

In (49) above, the teen uses "we" to indicate that her mother, her sister, and she do not interact together and more, that they do not "really talk" which could mean that they do not engage in personal, intimate speaking together. Rather, when they do attempt to talk, they devolve into fighting. The terms "really talk" take on a similar meaning in the next excerpt (50).

Excerpt 50 (CN16)

> Then when my parents start **nagging** me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just **end up in a fight** and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time to **sit there and listen** to what **they say** because you know I have homework and work and **when they do talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell.**

The statement in excerpt 50 is important for its clear differentiation in the teen's mind of "talk" and "yell." The teen perceives that the parents think they are talking to her, but she is experiencing the linguistic action not as "talk," but as "yell." A close look at excerpt 50 reveals co-occurring terms that contextualize "talk" versus "yell." The first of these is "nagging" and then "end up in a fight." The phrase "sit there and listen" frames the teen as a passive recipient (albeit she is "listening") followed by "say." Goossens (Dirven et al., 1982) found that "say" has a greater message focus than "tell," "speak," or "talk." And in fact, "what" the parents are saying (the message focus) is getting in the way of her more important task–homework and work. The linguistic action is not in the form of an exchange of information or "close, supportive speech" (as "talk" implies), but rather is the pejorative "yell." Interestingly, the teen qualifies the "yell" as "kind of yell" which means to me that she is not hearing the parents as vocalizing loudly, but rather is experiencing their words in a negative, distressful, and critical way. Furthermore, implied in the teen's words is that the "yell" is "at me." I conclude this implication because she frames herself as a recipient of linguistic action and even with "talk" uses "to me" instead of "with me."

To the teen in the next example, her father does not know important aspects of her life, about "what's going on with me," for example, about school, <u>because</u> he does not have the opportunity to **talk** to her. One interpretation of this speech act is that whatever "fathering" means to her, it does not feel right when he does it, because he does not know enough about her world, again, because he doesn't have the chance to talk to her. She implies that if he were at home more, there would be opportunities to

talk and then he would be more informed about her life.

Excerpt 51 (CN03)

My dad works nights and I am in school when he is home and when I'm home, he's at work. I rarely see him. So when he comes home, he tries to father me. It's like it doesn't feel right. I don't know. My mom says I am really mean to him, but it doesn't feel right. 'Cause he doesn't know what's going on with me because he doesn't have a chance **to talk to me.** He doesn't know what's going on at school.

The next passage is part of a longer speech event where the teen expressed at length her frustration with her mother's handling of the teen's sliding grades. The teen gave a detailed description of how she would like her mother to "talk" to her. This excerpt is rich in its use of indirect and direct speech and the simile "talk to me like a human."

Excerpt 52 (CN51)

If she **talked** to me like a human being would **talk** to a human being, like I would **talk** to a friend, even though that's a little too much to ask for a mom to **talk** to their daughter. But if I were to **talk** to my best friend whom I care about and love a lot. "Stop doing this because it's bad for you," I'm **talking** to her kind of like a mother would **talk** to a daughter. But is it too much to ask to have my mom sit down and **talk to me like a human**? And not sit there and freak out and yell and scream and cry and say I'm going to work at Burger King the rest of my life?

This teen seems to be saying that when you care and love a person, you talk to them in a certain way. One can advise or protect a loved one from continuing an unhealthy activity. That kind of talking is "kind of like" a mother could talk to a daughter, which she questions if that is too much to ask. Talking like a human is the kind of talking one does with a best friend and is the kind of talking she would like from her mother. This teen seemed to be implying that "talking like a human" means to have a sense of

calmness and equality: to sit down, but not engage in linguistic activity characteristic of conflict as described by other teens in this study, such as freak out, yell, scream, and cry.

Excerpt 53 (CN03)

My mom would **flip out** if she knew I was using drugs. My dad is very strict. My dad would **freak out**. My mom would **freak out**. I have **talked** about stuff in the past with them. They have no understanding whatsoever. They just don't know how to deal with it. They're really verbal, you know, they are really mean, you know. Their reaction? No. I don't want to go through that.

For the teen in excerpt 53, "talked. . .with them" is an activity she has done previously. Here it seems she is perspectivizing "talked" as sharing of information because she uses "with" to imply an exchange of messages. She compares "talked" as a past activity, to her current situation of experiencing her parents as "really verbal" and also "mean." All of the other LAVs are in the present tense and all of the verbials indicate linguistic action which is unpleasant.

Talk versus Tell

Dirven et al. (1982) found that "talk" was used by the speaker to indicate a larger discourse and that "tell" could occur in the same, or an adjacent utterance with a direct object as a specific message. In the next example, the teen speaks of "talk" in the negative sense (can't talk), meaning inability to communicate or express him/herself to a parent. The teen then proceeded to use "tell" to specify what is problematic about "can't talk."

Excerpt 54 (CN25)

My mom's got a mental situation 'cause she gets really depressed sometimes and I, that means I **can't talk** to her. **Tell** her all about my feelings without her getting all upset and it kind of bothers me.

This teen suggests that to "talk" with her mother would be to communicate a highly personal message:

"all about my feelings." But her mother gets depressed and that means that the teen can not share her feelings with her mother because her mother would become upset or perhaps more depressed. This inability to share with her mother in this way is distressing to the teen.

In the next passages, the speaker expresses two thoughts about being unable to talk to a parent(s). In (A), the teen expresses a desire for a serious discussion with her mother about sexual activity. In her next statement, (B), she speaks about inability to connect by talk with her parents because they tell her what to do.

Excerpt 55 (CN09)

A. I want birth control, but I **can't talk** to my mom about it. Was going out with a guy and all he wanted me for was sex. I **couldn't talk** to my mom about it. No sex for a couple of months.

B. My parents bother me all the time. I **can't talk** to my parents at all. They always **tell** me what to do. I'm "only 15." I know that, but still they don't have to **tell** me everything.

"Tell" and "talk" are different from "yell," "fight," and "argue" because the LAVs "tell" and "talk" require elaboration for them to be used as terms of conflict. The LAVs of conflict convey meaning through the verb itself, while utterances that use "tell" convey a great deal of meaning from the direct object, which answers the question, "What is she telling? –She tells me what to do. "Tell" has some adverbs of frequency (constantly, every time), but the adverbs of frequency were meaningful when considered with the direct object of "tell." Thus, "My mom constantly tells me what to do" conveys a different type of conflict than: "We fight constantly."

"Tell" and "talk" are prominent LAVs in the corpus that perspectivized linguistic action in ways that were significant for the teen speakers. The sixth verbial that I analyzed was the verb phrase "get along/not get along," to which I now turn.

Get Along/Not Get Along

"Get along" and "not get along" are verb phrases that were used by several of the teen speakers to characterize the relationship they had with their parent(s). Twelve teen speakers used "get along" and "not get along" to characterize what the teens were calling "conflict." A complete listing of utterances with "get along/not get along" appears in Table 4.7. The teens used the expression in several ways. One way was to use the phrase as a general descriptor of the relationship, followed by more specific explanation, as in Excerpt 56 below. Another way was to compare their relationship with one parent to the other; that is, one parent they "got along with" and the other, they "don't get along with." (See Excerpts 58 and 59 below as examples.) "Get along" is not a linguistic action verb per se, but "get along" is listed in The American Heritage Dictionary (Pickett, 2000, p. 583) as a verb phrase meaning "to be on harmonious terms." The phrase is descriptive of a relationship and the teens sometimes linked the phrase to communicative behavior (e.g., Excerpt 57).

Excerpt 56 (CN50)

I **don't get along** with my parents, maybe because I'm getting older. It seems like they expect me to do everything. I mean it feels like everything.

Excerpt 57 (CN46)

Living situation: me and step dad **do not get along** at all. I feel that nothing I do is good enough for him. Because I'm always getting yelled at for doin' something.

Excerpt 58 (CN10)

My dad pisses me off. I love him, but I **get along** with my mom better than I **get along** with my dad.

Excerpt 59 (CN12)

Conflict with parents is like I **get along** with my mom, but my dad and I have **never gotten along** with him.

Excerpt 60 (CN17)

Parents--me and my dad **don't really get along.** He sees everything I do wrong and doesn't see anything right but I do a lot of things wrong.

There are some differences in the pattern of characterization of conflict when the teens used "don't get along" as compared to "yell" and "fight." "Get along" is used bi-directionally, like "fight" and "argue." Compared to the previously analyzed terms, "get along" had fewer qualifiers, fewer co-occurring negative terms, and fewer negative consequences as reported by the teens. The reason for the perspectivization as less negative could be that there were fewer occurrences of "don't get along" and thus fewer opportunities to compare the terms. However, when "fight" or "yell" was a co-occurring term with "get along," the consequences reported by the teen were very similar to "fight" or "yell." When "get along" was used by itself, it seems the teen perceived the relationship as less contentious than when the teen used "fight" or "yell." It may be that when the interaction (communicative conduct itself) is specified as consisting of "yell" and/or "fight," in fact, the relationship is more stormy than with the milder expression of "don't get along." Another feature of "get along/not get along" is that communicative conduct characterized by these phrases is used to compare/contrast relationships among different persons. The evidence of this phenomenon is observed from four of the five utterances above in which the teen compared his/her relationship with one parent to the other.

Summary of Linguistic Action Verbials

In this first section of results, I have examined the teens' discourse for references to their parents' communicative behavior that used resources of linguistic action verbials. All linguistic action verbials in the corpus were examined and six terms emerged as key terms because of frequency and links to co-occurring terms: "yell," "fight," "argue," "get along with/don't get along with," "talk," and "tell." The first four of these terms/phrases (yell, fight, argue, get along with/don't get along with) were specific

descriptors of conflict-related speech events with parents. "Talk' and "tell" were used by the teens to characterize speaking events that were problematic and more complex.

Examination of the terms that co-occurred with "yell," "fight," and "argue" showed that the "yell," "fight," and "argue" communicative behaviors of parents often were associated with other LAVs of conflict and were used with descriptors such as "depressed," "stressed," and "mad." Examination of the construction of the utterances when these three LAVs were used showed that the teens experienced the communicative behavior associated with the LAV in different ways. When teens described their parents' communicative practice of consisting of "yell," the teens' use of co-occurring terms suggested that they experienced "yell" as a negative, stressful interaction occurring in one direction–at the teen. When teens experienced the communicative behavior as "fight," "argue," or "don't get along" they experienced the interaction as bi-directional, with a decided preference for the construction of the utterance using the pronoun of "we" or "my parents and I." The four LAVs of conflict were used almost exclusively as intransitive verbs, with no message transfer.

"Tell" and "talk" are basic linguistic action verbs that indicate quite different communicative conduct from the other four LAVs. "Tell" was generally experienced as negative by teens because they characterized family members as using "tell' in the INFORM-tell sense with a disparaging message directed toward the teen or in the ORDER-tell sense of the teen being commanded to do something (i.e., "told what to do"). The third way that "tell" was used in ATTEMPT-TO-INFORM sense where the teen reported wanting to tell a parent something, but not being satisfied that the message got through or that the parent understood. Thus, "tell" was almost always used as a transitive verb with a negative message for the teens. "Talk" was cast as a decidedly more positive linguistic action–as an intimate and supportive activity, that was seen by the teen as occurring infrequently or that was an attempted activity that was unsuccessful and became instead, "fighting" or "yelling."

This analysis of the six prominent LAVs has shown that the teens characterize their parents'

communicative conduct in different ways and that embedded in the uses of these linguistic action verbials are different meanings for the teens. This examination of the terms and their meanings for the teens illuminates aspects of the communicative relationship between the teens and their parents and gives information on the nature of the parent-adolescent conflict construct that is measured in quantitative terms in many studies of family stress relative to teens at risk for suicide.

This first section shows that there are common terms for the parent-teen relationship described by the teen as one of "conflict." LAVs such as "yell," "fight," and "argue" show that the teens perceive the relationship as being enacted with these types of communicative behaviors. "Yell" is a communicative action of a parent that is the embodiment of a communicative relationship. In this way, these LAVs are constitutive of a social reality for these teens, known as "conflict with parents."

Part II: Extreme Case Formulations

The preceding analysis in Part I of this chapter included identifying adverbs of frequency such as "always" and "every time" as co-occurring terms with the LAVs, "yell," "fight," "argue," "get along with/don't get along with," "talk," and "tell." Thus, characterizations by the teens of communicative behavior of parents commonly included maximum case references such as "always yelling," and "we fight constantly." Such adverbs of frequency and adjectival descriptions, such as "most difficult" were widespread in the corpus. The use of such extreme characterizations known as "extreme case formulations" (ECFs) led me to examine more closely the construction and variation of the ECFs and, following the methodological guidance of Potter and Wetherell (1987), to ask what function is being served by the teens' deployment of this resource? In this section, I provide excerpts from the corpus to show how the teens' uses of ECFs have features similar to those identified by Pomerantz (1986) and Edwards (2000), but also have conceptual and empirical differences; thus, performing specific functions for the teens.

As described by Pomerantz (1986), ECFs are descriptions or assessments that express something in

maximum terms, such as "every time," "everything," "always," and "ask anyone what is the worst possible thing." Pomerantz showed how extreme formulations work to legitimize claims when interactants are complaining, accusing, justifying, and defending their positions. When Edwards (2000) extended Pomerantz' work on ECFs, he showed how ECFs can be softened by terms such as "almost" or "virtually," as in "virtually brand new." Edwards also showed that speakers are displaying their investment (i.e., their commitment, determination, or certainty) when they use ECFs. Speakers are also providing for nonliteral or metaphoric uses which convey that "it was as if" or could be interpreted as "it is essentially this way."

For Part I, I searched exhaustively on the six terms that I analyzed. I thought that it was important to demonstrate the teens' extensive use of LAVs. I used a different approach to analyze ECFs. I provide two excerpts to illustrate the way the teens are using ECFs that are similar to those identified by Pomerantz (1986) and Edwards (2000). I then analyzed a longer piece of discourse that I am using as a case example of several features of ECFs, not identified by Pomerantz (1986) and Edwards (2000). I used the following research questions to focus my analysis.

RQ 1. When characterizing communicative conduct of parents, how do teens at risk for suicide and who have conflict with parents use the linguistic resources of extreme case formulations.

RQ 2. What are the meanings of these characterizations for the teen speakers?

Overview

The ECFs deployed by the teen speakers during the interviews were situated in the context of the teen's view of their home and their parents as a source of tension, stress, sometimes criticism, or as a source of unwanted control. The ECFs enabled the teens to express more forcefully their views of the tension and stress and they deployed the ECFs in two different ways. The first is that ECFs functioned as a vehicle for emotional expression about how they experienced their parents as a stressful force in their lives. The ECFs signal the emotional pressure the teens experienced relative to their parents'

communicative conduct. The other use I found was as a specific defense I am calling "to invoke a universal audience." Both bold text and line markings (↦) are used to point the reader to examples in this section.

Emotional Pressure

In the first excerpt below, the teen is answering the interviewer on the computer-prompted question about why conflict with parents is stressful

Excerpt 61 (CN46)

↦ Me and my step dad do not get along **at all.**

I feel that **nothing** I do is good enough for him. Because I'm **always** getting

yelled at for doin' something.

Like, if I forget to take out the garbage, he'll yell

at me for **like a half hour** or he's told me that I'm stupid.

In this speech act, the teen uses several ECFs including "at all," "nothing," "always," and "like a half hour." A closer examination of the utterances reveals a well formulated argument beginning in line 1 (marked with an arrow) with a general description of the relationship between he and his stepdad (that they don't get along) and ends with the ECF: at all. The next utterance, line 2, begins with, "I feel" signaling to the hearer that the defense of the claim has an emotional component. The complete utterances in lines 2 and 3 explain what "not getting along at all" means–that his actions do not measure up to his father's expectations. How does the teen know this? He knows this because his dad yells at him for what the teen does and because his dad tells him he is stupid.

The teen's use of "I feel" is important, because the words "I feel" orient the hearer to the emotional nature of the teen's experience. "I feel" expresses that the teen experiences "not getting along at all" in an emotional way. The teen indicates that what he does is not particularly valuable to his stepfather because it does not measure up to his stepfather's expectations and because he has been

told by his stepdad that he is stupid. The teen also uses the LAV "yell" with the ECF "always." In the previous section, the claim was made that the uni-directional nature of "yell" is experienced in a particularly negative way by the teens. For the teen in excerpt 61, the many ECFs and the teen's use of "yell" give the hearer a sense that the teen feels under siege. He perceives that he is always being yelled at and for an extended length of time. What is the significance to the teen of using ECFs in his characterization of how he and his stepfather do not get along?

Pomerantz' (1986) identified that one of the common ways participants use ECFs is to defend against challenges to the legitimacy of a complaint or an accusation. Pomerantz pointed out that a speaker might anticipate an unsympathetic hearer and thus mount a more vigorous defense by using ECFs. In the case of this teen during the interview, there is no challenge being made to his assertions. The teen might interpret the interviewer, as an adult, as being an unsympathetic hearer and therefore could be inclined to side with the parent, however, the interviewer takes great care to position her or himself as a caring professional. Rather than an unsympathetic hearer, the participant is an empathic interviewer/interlocutor, open to the teen's concerns and trustworthy of the teen's feelings and disclosures. Rather than sensing a challenge from the interviewer, I believe the teen senses an opportunity to "tell his story" to a supportive ear and in doing so, express some of the frustration he feels. Although the teens sometimes stated directly that parents' actions made them feel a particular emotion, the ECFs were highly useful in characterizing the depth of the frustration or stress that they felt. The ECFs are a specific tool to signal the "emotional pressure" experienced by the teen speaker.

Another illustration of emotional expression through the ECF is in the following excerpt of a teen who is first describing discord with her sister, but quickly links the conflict to their mother with her sister.

Excerpt 62 (CN43)

Oh conflict with my sister? Oh, she'**always** been Mom's favorite, I guess**Always** been

> the one she dotes on and **always** says she loves her and **always been Miss Perfect** Gets **absolutely everything** she wants. We had a big fight the other day. She can stand six feet away from me and say "ouch" and my mom comes running and screaming at me. "Okay Mom, see she's six feet across the room." She **always** gets her way. **I can't stand it.**

In the above excerpt, the teen peppers her dialogue with ECFs such as "always" and "absolutely" to explain why she is angry with her sister and mother. The teen draws a verbal picture of a scene where she is standing beyond touching distance (six feet), but her sister emits an "ouch" which suggests a minor physical pain–not able to be inflicted at any rate because the teen speaker is too far away. The response from Mother to the minor pain is extreme: Mother does not simply say something to respond to the minor affliction, she runs in and screams at the study teen. The teen punctuates her story with an expression of frustration "I can't stand it." The words, "I can't stand it" signal to the hearer the emotional pressure she is experiencing.

Like the teen in the first ECF excerpt, the teen in Excerpt 62 above characterizes her relationship with family members as one where she is beleaguered. She casts herself as the victim of harsh communicative practices that arose from being misunderstood and then judged unfairly. Part of her victim posture is seeing herself as an outsider in the trio. Through the ECFs of "always" and "absolutely" and "I can't stand it" she indicates that she doesn't see much recourse to balance the power in the relationship between her and her sister. Indeed this teen later says that she has given up hope for a positive relationship with her mother and sister. After she leaves next year, she said in a later utterance, "I won't ever have to talk to her [Mother] anymore."

When Edwards (2000) advanced Pomerantz' (1986) work, he noted that ECFs index the speaker's stance or attitude to an object or situation to which they are being applied. Edwards asserted that when ECFs are used in this way they indicate the investment or commitment of the speaker and are not intended to be taken literally. The teens in my study use ECFs in two ways. One is the way Edwards

suggested: as a signal of emotional investment and not to be taken literally. A teen in an earlier excerpt gave such a signal by using "like" to make a simile when he was describing his father's yelling as, "like a half hour." The other way is that the ECFs describe the way the teen experiences the action, when the teen said that he is "always getting yelled at" Thus, the teen uses the ECFs to clue the interviewer as to how he experiences his step father. The ECFs are an important resource for the teens because to describe, "accurately," the situation, they must use maximum case. If you are a teen feeling under siege and you use an extreme case example to support your claim of duress, in doing so, one also communicates frustration, and perhaps even use of ECF as a vehicle for release of tension. The use of ECFs has a rhetorical purpose and a therapeutic purpose to enlist the support from the interviewer for how the teen experiences the interaction.

The therapeutic process involves the articulation, acknowledgment, and validation of one's life experiences. In Gottman's (1997) work with families, he and colleagues established the importance of helping children talk about their emotions, label them, and feel understood. Even though the participants in these interviews have only just met, within a few moments, the teen is talking with the interviewer about life experiences the teen may have not shared with anyone previously. One of the important life experiences for these particular adolescents is a reported troubled relationship with parents accompanied by complex emotions. Expression of those emotions makes them available to the interviewer for validation of the teen's experience and serves also to release emotional tension of the teen. However, precise labeling of feelings is often difficult for adolescents (Gottman.1997). They may lack the vocabulary to name the feeling. Additionally, societal norms often discourage expression of feelings, especially among boys (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). Thus, for these teens, ECFs become a resource for making known the extent of distress they are experiencing.

Using ECFs to Invoke a Universal Audience

The next excerpt illustrates several features of extreme case formulation. This speech act occurred

during the summary portion of the interview with one teen. On the videotape, this teen spoke rapidly and articulately. In quoting her mother and herself, and using extreme case formulations, she constructs rhetorically her rationale for being upset with her mother.

Excerpt 63 Part A (CN51)

Well sometimes the stuff she does stresses me out even more. She thinks I am being like a little brat when I say this stuff, but she does stuff I'm glad she does, like reminds me every night, "Do your homework. What homework do you have?" Blah, blah, blah. But then she does stuff like, coming to the school to talk to my counselor and people don't understand, that's like **really embarrassing**, kind of humiliating although those are like the same. I can deal with it. I'm not a 3 year old. "Well you didn't deal with it before." "Well give me the benefit of the doubt

➸ **just once**." So she is coming to school to talk to my counselor and I can

➸ tell you, **you can ask any kid,** "Is it like horrible, is it like the **end of**

➸ **everything** to like have your parent come to school?"

It is. I don't want my mom at school. And stuff like that. She goes about it the wrong way. And she doesn't trust me enough.

➸ "Well I have no reason to trust you."

"Well you have **every reason** to trust me." The thing is she doesn't realize I'm not the worst kid in the world. I could be doing a lot worse stuff. I'm not saying it's good that I suck at school. She's like, "Your grades are bad. And this is the **end of the world**. Pretty soon you're going to be like murdering people. You're going to be having crack babies. Go on a shooting spree." Like, "No Mom, I got a D. That doesn't mean I'm going

to go on a shooting spree." That's what she does that **really pisses** me off.

But like I'm going to tell her that and she's going to listen.

There are multiple ECFs in this excerpt, but the ones that are most relevant here begin at the arrow-marked lines when the young woman began to describe how embarrassing, even humiliating, it is to have her mother come to school to see the counselor. She says, "people don't understand" meaning probably other adults, other parents, and certainly her mother does not understand how demeaning this is. By saying, "people don't understand" she is marking a separation between herself and a universe of "people." In lines 10 to 12, the teen begins the telling of her mother coming to school by telling the interviewer, "Ask any kid. 'Is it. . . like the end of everything to like have your parent come to school?'" In breaking out of the flow of her utterance and deploying this challenge "Ask any kid." the teen again is invoking a kind of universal audience of supporters, which is now "any kid" or in other words, all other teenagers. Asking any kid means that there exists a universal understanding among teenagers; it is not simply her opinion. The teen asserts that she could also tell the interviewer how bad it is to have a parent come to school, but to build an even stronger case for her point, she confidently asserts that every teenager feels this way. "Any kid" proposes that regardless of who is asked, the reaction to a parent school visit would be the same. Other teens become a collection of "any teen in this circumstance."

The use of the ECF "to invoke a universal audience" is a familiar one in everyday talk. Specifically, this practice is similar to one of the uses of ECFs identified by Pomerantz (1986). Pomerantz showed that a classic example of an ECF, originally identified in a 1964 lecture by Sacks (as cited in Pomerantz, 1986), is the "Everyone does a carry a gun" sequence from a call to a suicide prevention center. Pomerantz identified that as part of a complaint sequence, a person might propose that a behavior is not wrong, or is right, by virtue of its frequency or because it is commonly done. The example in Excerpt 63 above however, is not the same as "Everybody does . . ." as if a behavior is the

action in question. Rather, the teen's command, "Ask anyone" is a challenge to the interlocutor to prove her wrong. This particular use of ECF may only be used when the speaker is confident of her/his position because it does present a challenge to the hearer. In this way, the ECF of "invoking a universal audience" is factually brittle because a counter example would be easy to find and thus is vulnerable to refutation (Edwards, 2000).

The teen answers her own question, "It is," meaning it is the end of everything to have your parent at school, adding, "I don't want my mom at school." This teen displays some insight into her mother's motivations when she says that her mother does not trust her enough. Following this insight, she quotes a dialogue with her mother that she could have or perhaps has had with her mother. "I have no reason to trust you" (mother speaking to teen) followed by "You have every reason to trust me" (teen speaking to her mother). This dialogue illustrates the perceived gap in understanding that exists between mother and daughter.

The explanation for the differences in the two perspectives is found in the talk of the teen: The teen's grades are poor. Apparently, her mother was a good student and the mother has expectations for her daughter to do well. The teen acknowledged her capability when the teen said during the interview, ". . .because I am really smart." The teen realizes she is in the study because she isn't doing well in school. The mother is taking appropriate steps in meeting with the school counselor. To the mother, the daughter is making poor choices about homework leading to poor grades. It follows that the mother would say to her daughter, "Why should I trust you?" But to the teen, there are much worse things she could be doing: Her mother has <u>every</u> reason to trust her not to do really stupid things. The use of extreme case formulations in this example illustrates the polarity of perceptions that increase the tension and stress between parents and teens. It also establishes the teen's case of how far apart are the appraisals of mother and daughter while further establishing her identity as an individuated person.

One of the particularly interesting moves made by the teenager in this example is that she portrays

her mother as using extreme case formulations and uses her mother's practice of making extreme case formulations as a reason for why she, the teen, is making extreme case formulations. The teen reports that her mother is upset with the teen's grades and that the mother draws irrational conclusions from a situation that to the teen is, in her reality, not that bad. She quotes her mother as escalating in an argument from pointing out the teen's grades are bad, to the situation is "the end of the world." The progression for the teen will be from the bad grades to having crack babies and then murdering people. In the teen's view, this catastrophic prediction by her mother is even more absurd given that, while her grades "suck," she is not a bad person and she could be doing "a lot worse stuff."

The teen is portraying herself as not extreme at all, instead, her mother is using extreme case formulations about her, which she admits "really pisses her off." The teen perceives her mother as using extreme case formulations to justify the mother's concerns for her daughter, and visiting the school counselor, while the teen uses her mother's use of extreme case as one of the reasons why she is so angry with her mother. In the sequence of lines 16 to 18, the teen uses direct reported speech to portray her mother's verbal escalation of extreme case. First, it's bad grades, which is the end of the world, followed by a prediction of her daughter murdering people, having crack babies, and finally just go on a shooting spree. As Holt (2000) noted, direct reported speech can be used to appear to communicate a previous locution as it was said originally but, at the same time, conveys implicitly the speakers' attitude toward the comment in question. The teen implies that her mother is irrational, especially because the mother predicts her daughter committing homicide as the next step after bad grades. The escalation of assumptions is very frustrating to the daughter. Thus, while the mother, as we are told, is speaking for the wrongness of her daughter's practice of making bad grades, the daughter is speaking for the wrongness of her mother's extreme case formulation.

Topping off the impasse between mother and teen, the teen punctuates her presentation with a kind of sarcastic comment: "But like I'm going to tell her that,and she's going to listen." It is unclear what

"that" is referring to, but I would suggest the meaning of "that" is, "I'm going to tell her that her catastrophic expectations is what really pisses me off, and she's going to really hear me and do something different." The use of sarcasm adds to the sense that the situation seems to the teen to be impossible to resolve.

However, the interviewer next asked the teen what the mother could do that would be positive, for example, help her focus on her homework. The teen immediately changes her tone by removing her use of ECFs when she describes what her mother could do to be helpful. The teen's response is given below.

Excerpt 63 Part B (CN51)

She needs to sit down and be more human about it. She can sit down and do:

➸ "Hey, you're not doing your work, do you know, this is going to suck? Yes, there
➸ are people who have succeeded by not doing their work, but it gives you a better
➸ chance you know of succeeding if you do your work, so just do it." If she talked to
me like a human being would talk to a human being, like I would talk to a friend,
even though that's a little too much to ask for a mom to talk to their daughter.
➸ But if I were to talk to my best friend whom I care about and love a lot, "Stop
doing this because it's bad for you." I'm talking to her kind of like a mother
➸ would talk to a daughter. . . But is it too much to ask to have my mom sit down
and talk to me like a human? And not sit there and freak out and yell and scream
and cry and say I'm going to work at Burger King the rest of my life. But just to
➸ sit down and say, "Hey I'm going to be realistic. It's not the funnest thing to do,
to do homework, but please do it."

In this excerpt, the teen modifies her style of speaking dramatically as she talks the way she would like to have her mother talk to her. The teen specifies what these ways are: (1) to ask questions, (2) to

use moderate words (e.g., "better"), (3) to soften her tone by saying, "you know," (4) to empathize with her daughter: "It's not the funnest thing to do. . .", and (5) to use "please" to ask her daughter to do her homework. Enlarging on these points, the teen appears to want her mother to be encouraging by saying, "It gives you a better chance you know of succeeding. . .". The teen also depicts that her mother could be more effective by using a persuasive style, stating what the situation is –"you're not doing your work"–, a consequence–"this is going to suck,"– an argument– "others have been able to succeed using your methods,"–but it's not the easiest way, "so. . . just do it." There is a striking change in the use of ECFs in that there are virtually no extreme descriptors given as she suggests how her mother could be helpful. The teen also poignantly portrays this kind of speaking as being more human, "like a human being would talk to a human being." It seems like this way of speaking would be respectful, would mean sitting down together, talking. This type of "talking" would be, as in the third line with the arrow, like the way the teen would talk to her best friend, implying that this is a caring way of talking. In the line marked by the last arrow, the teen gives another preferred way for her mother to speak: for the mother to make an "I"- based statement, with "please" added, a sincere request.

This style is juxtaposed with the way she perceives her mother's communicative action: "to freak out," "yell," "scream," "cry," and to predict that the teen is headed for a career as a fast food service worker. Clearly this teen is telling the interviewer that her mother's current communicative behavior is stressful, makes her angry, and she is not very hopeful about her mother changing. In this complex sequence, the teen portrays four perspectives of communicative style: two of her mother and two of herself. Her mother's styles are portrayed as being either intrusive and catastrophizing or being nurturing and calm. The daughter's two styles are defensive and angry as opposed to caring and accepting.

As with all the other teens in this study, only the teen's side of the story is told. Embedded in this

teen's story, however, is also a sense of a mother understandably concerned about her daughter's poor grades, the choices her daughter is making, and what her current choices might mean for a future career. The mother's action of meeting with the school counselor is entirely appropriate. Nevertheless, at the moment, from the daughter's perspective, the mother is over-reacting and which is being communicated by the teen via the teen's use of extreme case examples.

As noted in the discussion above about emotional release, when Edwards (2000) extended Pomerantz' (1986) work, he noted that when speakers use ECFs, they not only allow for a speaker to emphasize or insist on a point, but they are simultaneously being used to signal a speaker's investment in that point. ECFs orient a speaker to a rhetorical purpose, and build the speaker's case for the point being made. As in many of the teens' speech acts throughout the corpus, this teen's description with the many ECFs communicates that a number of her mother's communicative practices are very stressful to her. It is important to her to make her position clear in how stressful this is, saying in line 9, "But is it too much too ask to have my mom. . ." Like the two other teens quoted in this section, this utterance conveys her wish to be treated in a way she would see as more fair: "to sit down and talk to me like a human."

Pomerantz (1986) illustrated how ECFs are used by interlocutors to complain, accuse, justify, and defend the descriptions in which they appear. For example, a complaint sequence might contain an extreme description to help "portray a situation as a legitimately complainable" (Pomerantz, 1986, p. 227). But as Edwards (2000) pointed out, because ECFs are expressed in extremes, they are rhetorically brittle, requiring the use of softeners as responses to anticipated or actual challenges.

Edwards showed that rather than displaying the literal accuracy of a description or assessment, ECFs signal the speaker's investment in a description. The analysis here extends the investment feature of Edwards' work to show that teen speakers who are distressed by communicative behavior or relationships use ECFs to communicate their emotional distress. In the absence of clear statements

of feelings, extreme formulations allow the speaker to more effectively convey the intensity of distress. The frequency of their use and the ease with which the teen speakers used this resource suggest they have therapeutic value because they allow for expression of emotional tension and at the same time "invite validation" from the interviewer.

Most uses of ECFs in this corpus did not suggest the teen speakers were anticipating a challenge to their claims, but rather that the interview could be seen as constitutive of a release of emotional tension and frustration. It is not know what happened internally for each of the teens during the interview, but the process of talking about feelings and emotional events is viewed as therapeutic (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). The use of ECF occurs as a challenge when invoking a universal appeal to an absent audience, "Ask any kid." This challenge strengthens the speaker's claim that they are so sure they are right, they challenge the hearer to ask anyone. Unlike other ECFs used by the teen speakers, the universal appeal, while not to be taken literally, does imply a willingness to have the participant attempt to refute the claims, which I think reflects the confidence of the claim.

Another consideration is the extent to which the teens' use of ECFs during the interviews reflects their stage of adolescent development; that is, that ECFs are a resource for characterizing the way they experience major parts of their lives: in hyperbole, especially in regard to their parents. Extreme case formulations are a way of demonstrating their emotional lability. ECFs communicate their perception that experiences of their parents' communicative conduct are overwhelming, stressful, really bad, and extreme.

Summary

In this section of the results, I have concentrated on the teens' use of extreme case formulations. ECFs are maximum case examples such as "always" and "every time." The teens in the study group actively deployed ECFs to characterize their parents' communicative conduct in two ways. One, the ECFs were used as a resource to express the intensity of their perspective of their parents' ways of

communicating. The use of ECFs was especially meaningful to the teens as a way to characterize the degree of occurrence of the LAVs of conflict. The ECFs reflect the emotional tension associated with the teens' perceptions of parents' communicative conduct and the use of the ECFs facilitates teens' linking of the parents' practice with the emotional fallout for the teens.

The second way that ECFs were used was to invoke a universal audience. By using the silent consensus of "all other teens," the teens were working to make a more persuasive argument for their position. While ECFs in general have the feature of being easy to refute, their use to invoke a universal audience is a particularly vulnerable way to marshal support because a counter example of one person (which could be the interviewer) shatters the strength of the claim. I turn next to the resource of reported speech and its use in a particular context that revealed its importance for the teen speakers.

Part III: Characterizing Linguistic Action by Using Direct Reported Speech

The teens in this study used various terms, expressions, and linguistic forms to characterize their parents' communicative action. I analyzed, in Part I of this chapter, how the teens use LAVs to describe communicative action (e.g., yell, fight, tell). I analyzed next how the teens use extreme case formulations (e.g., "always" and "worst possible thing") to emphasize aspects of their parents' verbal action.

I now turn to a third way the teens framed their parents' communicative action: using quoted, or reported, speech to recount a specific speech event. The teens used both indirect and direct quoted speech (DRS); however, the way they used DRS suggests that DRS gave the teens access to the speech event in a particularly meaningful way. In this section I analyze utterances that contained reported speech and argue for its particular meanings for the teens. I begin by displaying some of the general features of the teens' use of reported speech. I move next to the important way the teens deployed reported speech when they recounted interactions they had with their parents about suicidal

thoughts or behaviors. To focus my analysis, I used the following research questions:

RQ 1. When characterizing communicative conduct of parents, how do teens at risk for suicide and who have conflict with parents use the linguistic resources of: reported speech.

RQ 2. What are the meanings of these characterizations for the teen speakers?

Features of the Teens' Reported Speech

The teens used both indirect and direct reported speech to describe parents' communicative behavior. They used the LAVs "say/said" and, to a lesser extent "tell," followed by the reported speech. As Dirven et al. (1982) noted, the LAVs "say" and "tell" commonly focus the linguistic action on the message: What is being said or told?[4] However, the distinction between direct and indirect forms of reported speech in everyday talk is sometimes difficult to make. Speakers often switch back and forth between the two forms. For example, the teen in Excerpt 64 used both.

Excerpt 64 (CN60)

Conflict with parents is just that they are so overprotective. They won't
➸ let me do a lot of things. They say it's because I'm young and they don't
want me to mess up like my older sisters have. But I think it's because
she don't trust me. Spend a night at my friend's house, go to the movies.
➸ But they say, "No, Susan, they're too old to hang out with."
(Name of teen changed.)

In line 2 of Excerpt 64, the teen uses indirect reported speech in the utterance, "They say it's because I'm young. . .," using "say" to cue the hearer that reported speech of some form is to follow, but using the pronoun "I" to indicate that she is quoting her parents indirectly. No quotation marks are needed. The teen changes to DRS in line 5, again using "say" to cue the hearer that reported speech

[4]I showed in the analysis of "tell" in Part I of Chapter 4 that the teens used "tell" to focus the linguistic action on the efforts to inform and attempts to tell, especially in the context of conflict as a stressor. As will be seen, the message focus of "tell" became important in the suicide risk assessment section of the interview.

will follow, but uttering the phrase now as if her parents were speaking to her directly. Instead of "I," her name is used: Quotation marks are needed. As the example in Excerpt 64 shows, and as pointed out by Holt (2000), it is usually possible to categorize a quotation as indirect or direct because of presence or absence of pronouns or other grammatical devices.

While the differences in the construction of indirect and direct forms of reported speech are subtle, the differences in what the speaker conveys can be highly important. The critical difference between direct and indirect forms lies in the perspective of the speaker. For indirect forms, the quoted utterance is from the point of view of the current speaker. The current speaker is modifying the original words to retell the speech event. In direct reported speech, the pronouns, tone of voice, etc. are from the point of view of the original speaker (Holt, 2000; Wierzbicka, 1974.) DRS reflects a desire of the speaker to give an authentic rendering of the original. Thus, in the excerpt above, by "quoting" her parents, the teen makes more specific and definite her parents' utterance.

Holt (1996, 2000) found that Western culture speakers use reported speech in everyday speech in two ways: to complain about someone in a more compelling way and to tell an amusing story. Because conflict with parents was a focus of the teens in this study, complaints about the actions of parents were common. Twenty three of the teens used quoted speech to express their dissatisfaction about, and resentments toward, their parents. The teens used quoted speech to describe conflict as a stressor, but it was not a striking feature. DRS, however, was used to express distress and dissatisfaction in the context of a certain kind of story, not as an amusing story, but rather as a climactic recount of a hurtful encounter with the parent.

Reported Speech and Discourse about Self-Harm

The feature of DRS that I found compelling was its association with interactions about the teens' suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Nineteen of the teens reported specific parent communicative behavior around the subject of suicide; ten of the teens used DRS to recount that behavior. Nine cases

are analyzed in this section. All ten of the cases are displayed in Table 4.9.

As described in Chapter 3, the parts of the interview that assessed the teen's risk for suicide included closed-ended questions like asking the teen to whom they had spoken about their thoughts of ending their life. If they disclosed to anyone, the next question was open-ended: What did you tell them? A few questions later, the teen was asked to describe what was the most helpful response they experienced and then the most disappointing response they experienced. A similar series of questions was asked in regard to a suicide attempt: Whom did they tell about the suicide attempt, what was the most helpful, supportive response experienced, and what was the most disappointing, or hurtful response they experienced.

For the analysis of the teen's talk about the teen/parent exchanges related to suicide, I asked what purpose was being served by the use and placement of the DRS. I reflected on the meaning of the DRS as expressed by the teen. Secondarily, I reflected on the parents' words. Admittedly, all of the discourse of the teens is a construction of the events, the context, and the content of their communicative relationship with their parents. DRS is constructed speech as well, even though it is presented by the teens as a precise reproduction of the interaction. It is, nonetheless, what the teen heard and for the context of suicide, is of great importance to examine what the teen has "heard" and to interpret the meaning of the communicative action for the teen. Most of the DRS events analyzed in this section reportedly occurred during arguments between the teen and the parent, heated moments that could have ended in tragedy because of the suicide vulnerability of the teen. My analysis of these events is an opportunity to gain insight about the dynamics of communication at a critical moment for the teens at risk for suicide.

Perspectivizing the Parent Who Says "Do it"

In excerpt 65 below, the teen uses both indirect and direct reported speech to recount the speech event with her mother. Like other teens who told their parents about their suicidal inclinations or prior

attempts, this teen gave a very specific retelling of the speech event. At times the teens became emotional as they recounted the event.

Excerpt 65 (CN23)

Interviewer: What was the most hurtful response you received?

➳ Teen: Probably when my mom said that, "Do you think it's easy to kill

➳ yourself? Well it's not. You can't do it, ha, ha, ha." She told me to go ahead and try.

The arrows show where the teen uses DRS to quote her mother--as indicated by the quotation marks--even though she used the pronoun "that" to preface her mother's statement. In this case, the teen is still quoting her mother directly. In the excerpt above, the teen speaker gives three utterances of DRS: one a question from her mother: "Do you think it's easy to kill yourself?" followed by her mother's own reply, "Well, it's not." Then, the mother seems to challenge the daughter. "You can't do it" followed by the mother's mocking laughter "ha, ha, ha." The teen then uses indirect reported speech to convey her interpretation that her mother told her to go ahead and try–a clear example of the speaker infiltrating the original form by commenting on or interpreting the meaning of the quotation.

In the next excerpt (66), the teen chooses to cast the majority of her answer to the interviewer as DRS. As illustrated here, and as the next excerpts reveal--at least for the suicide disclosure frame--the teens preferred DRS.

Excerpt 66 (CN08)

Interviewer: What did you tell Dad in the argument?

Teen: I tell him, "Watch when I die then you'll feel bad." He just said, "Do it. It's not going to matter to me. I'm not going to cry, if you take your life. If you die any other way, I cry."

Excerpt 66 is from the part of the interview where the interviewer asks the teens, "Who have you

talked to about your suicide thoughts?" The teen in Excerpt 66 identified only his father. The interviewer then is scripted to ask what he has told his father. This is the point at which the teen described that he and his father were in an argument. The teen replied to the question, but added his father's response, which, according to the teen, consisted of four utterances. The father's utterances were first a command, "Do it," meaning go ahead and take your life. It is apparent that this is what the father means because in the next three utterances the father reportedly reveals his understanding that the son is speaking about suicide when he speaks of his son taking his life and in a statement by the father, "It will not matter to me. I'm not going to cry " meaning he will not be sad if his son takes his life. If the son dies any other way, he would be sad and cry, but not if the son commits suicide. What is known about this speech event is that son and father were in an argument which seems to have included threats by the teen to take his own life. The father's judgment of how best to reply may have been affected by the tension and emotion of the moment. It is noteworthy that the teen uses the word "when I die" rather than "if" as though the teen were thinking that suicide was definitely going to happen.

At this point in the interview the teen explains over about 60 seconds of talk that his father had expressed a belief previously that suicide is a sin in their religion. It is like, "telling God you think your life is not worthwhile. . ." The father's religious beliefs about suicide somewhat mitigate for the teen the effect of the father's dismissive attitude–known because the teen rates his father's response in a series of scaled questions. His father's response was "somewhat" helpful" (2 on a 7 point scale) and "moderately" disappointing (3 on a 7 point scale). To the interviewer's question, "What was the most helpful response you received?," the teen replied, "Nothing." To the question, "What was the most disappointing or hurtful response you received?" the teen replied, "That he didn't care." I believe that in these latter words, the teen reveals his interpretation of the father's words as the father not caring about the son's pain and the son's life situation that got the teen to the point of thinking of suicide as a

solution.

There are two important points about the analysis of this excerpt. One is that the message of the parent's communicative action to the teen, as recounted in the four utterances, was interpreted by the son as not caring, even though the son knew his father had strong religious beliefs against suicide and that his father's words reflected that belief. The take-away message for the son was that his father "did not care" about the extent of the teen's distress. The core beliefs of the father that led him to respond as he did to his son could not mitigate against the message heard by the son. The second point is that the teen used four consecutive utterances of DRS to recount his father's communicative action. I would argue that fidelity to the verbatim utterances was important to this teen because it was painful to hear and by presenting the utterances in this objective manner, they stand on their own as powerfully reprehensible. A similar pattern is observed in the next passage.

Excerpt 67 (CN37)

Interviewer: Whom did you tell about your thoughts of suicide?

Teen: My mama. I said, "Mama" because she was like yelling at me.

yelling at me. And I said, "How would you like it if I was to die?" And

➸ she like, "Go ahead and do it. If you're crazy enough to do that." I said

that like once or twice before.

As in the previous excerpt (66), the teen indicates that the interaction between him and his mother is heated--because he describes his mother as "yelling, yelling" at him. Similar to the previous teen, this teen delivered a challenge to his mother: "How would you like it if I was to die?" The teen recounts his mother as responding with a command to "do it" (line 4), but recounts as well that his mother implied in line 4 and in subsequent utterances that suicide is "crazy," or "stupid."

As the teen from Excerpt 67 continues to describe the exchange, he uses DRS to explain why his mother's response was both helpful and hurtful to him. He responded to the interviewer's question as

to what was the most helpful response he received by saying,

> Teen: She said, " If you want to go ahead and die you can be just that stupid enough to do it." So in a way she was like telling me. "You can die, that's if you're stupid enough to do it." She's like, "That's up to you. How can I stop you?"

However, as to what was most disappointing or hurtful, the teen replied,

> When she told me to go ahead and do it. But in her own way, she was
> telling me not to do it.

Like the parent in the first example, this teen recalls his mother as saying "do it" with an implicit meaning to the teen to go ahead and commit suicide. Subsequently the teen uses "do it" four times as he mimics his mother's words. Three of those uses are in the positive, go ahead sense. The last one (indicated by the arrow) is linked to a negative word, "not." The importance of the "do it" words to him are revealed through the repetition of them. In fact, he chooses the words of his mother to "go ahead and do it" as the most hurtful response he received to his disclosure of thoughts of self harm. The command, "Do it," is potentially lethal when delivered by a significant other (mother) to a teenage male. Males make fewer suicide attempts than females, but are successful more often because the method of males is more lethal (National Institute of Mental Health,1999). The interpretation by the teen that his mother said, "Do it" is an action-oriented, short, and direct command which for an impulsive teenager could be a lethal command. Apparently, he had threatened self-harm before, as indicated by his words, "Well I've said it to her once or twice before."

The teen revealed to the interviewer that his mother's response is somewhat confusing to him. On the one hand, the teen says his mother's communication to him was helpful because he interpreted her words as saying she did not want him to commit suicide: "in her own way, she was telling me not to do it." On the other hand, he was hurt by her words to go ahead and "do it." He is balancing both

perspectives, neither of which are particularly appealing. Using DRS helps him to communicate effectively the balancing of perspectives. The teen's presentation of the two conflicting perspectives illustrates his confusion. Like the parent in excerpt 66, the teen chooses to interpret his parent's communicative action about his suicide threat such that she has not taken it seriously. It is portrayed as a far-fetched notion, as if she were indicating: "if you were to be that stupid, then I just give up." Although it seems like a poor response, the mother's response that suicide is an absurd idea is interpreted by him as communicating that he would not commit suicide, therefore he hears it as indicating she does not want him to "do it."

Below, in Excerpt 68, I display a variation on the patterns of the teens' perspective of the parent as making a command to "do it" or "go ahead." The female teen is responding to the series of scripted questions about to whom she has disclosed her thoughts of suicide and what was the response. This excerpt epitomizes the build up to the most painful part of the parent's reported response. In this example, the teen uses indirect report speech to relate what she told her parents and, apparently, a cousin and then ends with DRS of her father.

Excerpt 68 (CN59)

Interviewer: What did you tell them?

Teen: That I hated everyone. I told my mom and dad that I was really mad at them and I was going to go run in front of a car. I told my cousin I was really upset.

Interviewer: What was Mom's response?

➸ Teen: She didn't say anything really.

Interviewer: What was most hurtful?

➸ Teen (crying): My dad said, "I hope you would die and not come home crippled."

The teen in the above excerpt begins with all indirect reported speech. In line 5 (indicated by the arrow), the teen indicates that her mother may have said something, but the teen's use of "really" means that the teen recalls her mother's response as inconsequential. What was important was her father's response which was so hurtful to her that she began crying. To recount his response, she uses DRS, as indicated by the arrow, reporting his words without qualifiers or "like." Although this is a recall of her father's words, her use of "said" with no other qualifiers, her emotional response, and her recall of the word "crippled" suggests to me a fidelity to the father's original statement. Although this is constructed dialogue by the teen, this is likely the teen's perception of what her father said, and it had considerable impact on her, indicated by her emotional response.

The father's words could have suggested several things to the teen. First, he is not recoiling at the notion of her threat of suicide. Second, the problem he presents is that if she bungled the job, then the family would be burdened. The preferable situation would be for the teen to be dead, rather than alive and a burden to them. What do these statements tell the teen of her value to her father? We do not know, but could speculate that on some level, she knows that her father does not want her to commit suicide. Still, her tears expose the pain for her of her father's response and the meaning it has for her. His words to her indicate that his concern is not for her, but for himself and his family being burdened by a mistake of hers.

Perspectivizing the Dismissive Parent

In the next three excerpts, the teens again use DRS to characterize the parents' communicative action. In these cases, the type of response from the parent as reported by the teen is a dry, unemotional reaction.

Excerpt 69 (CN28)

Interviewer: What was the most hurtful response?

Teen: My dad. He said, "Don't be stupid. People have it a lot worse, (teen name)."

Excerpt 70 (CN24)

Interviewer: What was hurtful about your response from Mom?

Teen: She said, "Here's another way you are like your sisters."

A teen who took sleeping pills and drank alcohol was hospitalized after his attempt. The most disappointing response to his attempt was:

Excerpt 71 (CN14)

My mom she was like kind of, "Yeah, it's too bad you tried to kill yourself." It's like not caring all that much, like caring a little bit, but not as much as you would expect she would care. You know I was used to it, but you want a little bit.

In these cases, the parent is not portrayed as being angry or harsh, but DRS is again used to describe the interaction. For these teens, and as displayed by all of the previous excerpts in this section, there is one climactic statement by the parent that is etched into the memory of the teen.

In Excerpt 72 below, the teen reports he had made a prior suicide attempt by cutting on his wrist. He received no treatment, however, so his parents did not know about the event.

Excerpt 72 (CN65)

Interviewer: What did you think would happen if you did this [cut your wrist]? Teen: I thought my Mom would probably be happy, or

➸ something; that I'd be gone. That she'd say something like; well I've

➸ said it to her before, "Well, there'd be more food for me."

For the previous excerpts, the teens were asked about the response they received from a disclosure to parents. Although a report of a verbal response is not specifically requested in the interview script, the teens preferred to report what they recalled parents had said to them. For Excerpt 72, the question, "What did you think would happen if you did this (cut your wrist)?" is designed to assess the teen's perception of the lethality of the action. In other words, did the teen think the action would (a) get the

attention of others,(b) result in hospitalization, or (c) would result in death. The teen in excerpt 72, reports that he thought if he died, he would be making his mother happy. In lines 3 and 4, he implies that he has threatened suicide before, and that based on previous experience, his mother would say, "Well, there'd be more food for me." Again, the teen uses DRS to punctuate his report of the event.

The next excerpt (73) is also from the suicide section of the interview. However, I am using Excerpt 73 as a contrast to the previous excerpts in this section. One of the contrasting features is that the teen in Excerpt 73 uses DRS to frame the communicative action of the speech event but follows the DRS with a statement that characterizes her relationship with her fathers as positive and as an explanation of her reaction to her father's words.

As the teen indicates, she is talking to both of her parents. Her dad's response, while still somewhat discounting, was rated by the teen as helpful. On the videotape, the teen used a caring tone of voice as she recounted her father's words and how he said them.

Excerpt 73 (CN13)

Interviewer: What did you say?

Teen: I just said, "I'm going to kill myself" and I screamed it to them. I

➸ didn't say it to them. My dad goes, "That's silly. Don't talk like that.

Don't ever talk like that. You know you will never do that. You are a

➸ beautiful young lady." Blah, blah, blah. But I always talk to my dad.

The same teen again used reported speech as she recalled what was the most helpful response:

Teen: "Everyone will miss you. You can't just think of yourself."

This example is different because the teen reports what she said, but clarifies that she did not say her words, but screamed her threat of suicide to her parents. The teen uses a long passage of DRS to report her father's response. Her father's response (➸) is notably different from the reports of the parents' responses given in earlier excerpts. The father responds by taking her threat seriously and

admonishing her not to "talk like that." She reports he then gave her reasons why she should not think of taking her life: She is a beautiful young woman and suicide would be a selfish act because "everyone" would miss her.

A key to the difference in this speech event is contained in line 5 (indicated by the second arrow) where the teen explains that it would be typical of her father to respond powerfully and positively to her. Why? "But I always talk to my dad." The word "but" conveys that it comes as no surprise that her father would respond in a supportive way. Why? Because she always talks to her father. As was found in Part I, the LAV "talk" is used by the teen speakers to frame communicative action that is supportive and understanding.

The next excerpt is another example of the differences conveyed by the use of "talk" in a speech event about suicide. The teen in excerpt 74 is the teen whose discourse was excerpted earlier (Excerpt 72) where he reported his mother's response to his death by suicide would mean that there would be more food for her. However, in the excerpt below, which occurred in the summary portion of the interview, the tone of the teen is strikingly different.

> Excerpt 74 (CN65)
>
> Interviewer: How could you go about telling your Mom how she is hurting you? Teen: I would have her sit down with me. I would tell her we need a serious talk. About what I've been going through. "About what I've been keeping secret from you." And telling her I cut myself.

The teen is cued to use the LAV "tell" by the interviewer's use of "telling." However, the teen uses the word "talk" as a noun, preceding the description of the "serious talk" with setting the context of the talk as "having her sit down with me." The teen continues to reflect on what he would disclose, revealing a willingness to be open with her through the DRS, "About what I've been keeping secret from you."

Direct Reported Speech–Discussion

The use of DRS and the content of the DRS provided by these teens is important to the fields of adolescent suicide and communication. For the field of adolescent suicide, researchers have found that occurrences of parent-child discord can be precipitants to suicidal behavior (Brent et al.,1988). The data herein give insight into a particularly relevant moment of parent-child discord: heated interactions surrounding the teen's threat of suicide itself. None of these teens proceeded to suicide, but the data provide the "close to the ground" view (from the teen's perspective) of discord that could increase the likelihood of suicide for a vulnerable teen. Brent et al. found that, after controlling for other factors, parent-child discord was not associated with completed adolescent suicide, but was linked to attempted suicide of adolescents. However, finding the association of parent-child arguments to completed suicide could be difficult for parents to admit if the nature of the argument included the types of parent statements reported by the teens in this study.

For researchers and practitioners in adolescent suicide, this section speaks to the need to help parents learn to respond to teenagers who make verbal threats of suicide. The moments of interaction described by these teens are emotional ones for parents and teens When their teens talk of suicide, parents' fear and lack of knowledge in how to respond may provoke the kinds of inappropriate responses reported by the teens in this study. For example, a challenge from the teens to the parents such as, "What would you do if I committed suicide?" may trigger a "Just do it" challenge back to the teen.

Another striking feature of this section is that, when asked what they would like to have had from parents during these heated moments, the teens are able to describe the kind of support they wanted. For example, in excerpts 73 and 74, the teens showed that when parents did (or would) take their talk of suicide seriously, the teen experiences parents as a source of support.

For communication researchers, the display of DRS given by these teens shows the importance of

attending to this resource for construction of language. As has been noted by others (Holt, 1996), use of DRS is an effective and economical way of reporting a previous interaction. Additionally, there is a specificity and feel to its use by these teens that suggests that it has special meaning for them. Throughout the analysis of the utterances in this frame, it was difficult to be "objective" about the reported parent responses. The discourse of the teens analyzed here is important because the subset of teens whose experiences are recounted in this section have given to the field of adolescent suicide new information that interactions occur between parent and teens at risk for suicide that are termed "disappointing or hurtful" by the teen. These are parent words that may increase the risk of a teen vulnerable to suicide. We conclude this because the teens reported it as a non-supportive response from the parent.

The structuring of the speech event by the teen speakers indicates that these interactions were often heated moments, for example, by contextualizing the event as an argument. Another way is by the use of resources such as LAVs like "yelling," or use of mimicry such as mocking laughter "ha, ha, ha," or the use of emotionally laden terms like "crippled" and the imperative, "Do it. It's not going to matter to me."

The use of DRS may have accomplished particular aims of the teen speakers. Li (1986) noted that the use of a direct quote communicates a more authentic piece of information than an indirect quote, because a direct quote implies a greater fidelity to the source of information than an indirect quote. By reproducing the "original" utterance, the teen speaker provided the interviewer access to the interaction, allowing the interviewer as recipient to evaluate it for herself or himself. The teens' use of DRS may have helped them to provide an air of objectivity to the parents' words as given in the account. Holt (1996) further explained this point:

> The reported speaker is, in a way, allowed to "speak for himself or herself." Summarizing what was said would not make such a clear distinction between the reported speakers' point of view as

displayed in his or her talk and the current speaker's attitude toward the utterance or utterances being discussed. (p. 230)

In the cases of these teen speakers, DRS may also be enabling them to make an emotional connection with an event that was painful to the teen. The responses of the teens about their parents followed the question, "What was the most disappointing or hurtful response you experienced?" In the following excerpt, the teen elaborated on the pain of the interaction:

Excerpt 75 (CN14)

Teen: My mom she was like kind of, "Yeah, it's too bad you tried to kill yourself." It's like **not caring all that much**, like caring a little bit, but not as much as you would expect she would care. You know I was used to it, but you **want a little bit**.

As the teen reconstructed the interaction, the teen reports his mother as "not caring all that much." He goes on to explain that her level of concern was ". . .not as much as you would expect," implying not as much as you would expect that a mother should care about her son trying to kill himself. He then admits that he was not totally surprised: "You know I was used to it" but he then reveals that he <u>needed</u> her to care more: ". . .but you want a little bit."

By using DRS, the teen enables the hearer to judge the parent response on the hearer's own terms. I believe that the teens had already evaluated the response as shocking and reprehensible–in part because the context was the interviewer's probes regarding what was hurtful. By answering the question with DRS, the teen is objectifying the parent response and is enabling the interviewer to evaluate it for herself or himself. Using DRS dramatizes the parent's response, makes it vivid and authoritative (Lucy, 1993).

From this analysis, I would make the following claim: When an utterance from a previous occasion is evaluated by an interlocutor as contemptible and as personally painful for the person, the use of DRS to reproduce the utterance extends to the hearer an offer to evaluate the utterance in the same way, thus

building for interlocutor A support for his or her judgment and accomplishing an alignment with hearer B.

DRS also was an effective way that the teen could illustrate the hurt of the parent response. These quotes stand on their own as reprehensible, an assessment already made by the teen. It is not known whether the teens were seeking to elicit an empathic response from the interviewer, but there may have been a therapeutic effect for the teen to disclose to the interviewer this acutely painful moment of interaction, without the teens having to name the way it made them feel. The quoted speech also gives credibility to the teens' belief that they feel wronged by their parent and is an opportunity to make credible their claims of their parents as difficult and their relationship as stressful.

One of the themes of this study is the constitutive nature of language. The importance of studying the teens' use of DRS is that through the use of this linguistic device, the hearer gets a certain perspective on the events being enacted in the relationship. In this way, DRS is constitutive of or is an enactment of the teen-parent relationship. I suggest that some types of talk are inherently more "constitutive" than others. For example, the words "I promise" is clearly constitutive of a commitment: The words themselves <u>are</u> the commitment. All of the linguistic devices and the words of that device present a view of the teen's social reality. Of the three linguistic devices analyzed in the current study, DRS in the context used here presents the most sharply defined social reality and is therefore, strongly constitutive of the parent-teen relationship.

<u>Summary</u>

The teen speakers in this study characterized their parents' communicative conduct in multiple ways. DRS was an especially powerful tool that they used to describe a speech event. Although DRS was used by a total of 23 of the teen speakers, its use was striking in the nine cases of association with parents' responses to interactions about the teens' suicidal thoughts or behaviors. My analysis of the teens' discourse revealed that teens who were reporting on speech events involving disclosures to

parents about suicidal thoughts or actions selected DRS to recount the communicative action of their parent. The teens were replying to the interviewer's question of what was hurtful or disappointing about the disclosure. The teens used DRS of the parent's words to answer, providing minimal interpretation of the parent's words. The teens seemed to know that the words of their parents were reprehensible and by giving them as DRS, they were "objectifying" the parent's words and increased the impact for the interviewer as hearer. The teens also typically preceded the DRS of the parent with the LAV "said," which also minimized the interpretation they were making of the effect of the parent's words.

Two main points of this analysis were that the teens showed a preference for DRS perhaps because its use provided a more authentic rendering of a parent's response, a finding which aligns with previous research on DRS (Li, 1986). I proposed that the a teen's use of DRS gave the teen access to a painful event that allowed the teen to communicate the hurt of the parent's words without having to interpret (describe) the emotional effect it had. I proposed also that part of the therapeutic effect of the interview may lie in the alignment with the interviewer around the re-telling of these speech events. The support for this claim is in the ease with which the teens disclosed the information to the interviewer and the fact that in most cases, they had not previously disclosed this painful event to anyone. The interview was a safe environment to tell a painful story. This work extends the research of Holt (2000) who has noted the use of DRS in the telling of amusing stories. A speaker uses DRS to deliver an unexpected or surprising ending that serves as the punch line for a funny story. The analysis here has shown how DRS serves much the same purpose when delivering the punch line of a painful story.

Part IV: How the Teens Experience Their Parents' Communicative Action

In the first three parts of this chapter, I examined three linguistic forms used by the teens: linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, and direct reported speech. Through the

identification and analysis of these forms, I have addressed two of the research questions of my study. My third research question is concerned with the apparent effects of the communicative conduct of parents on the teens' risk for suicide. The answer to the third question is provided in some cases as the teens identified consequences for them of their parents' communicative actions, for example, of "yell," "fight," or "talk." In other ways, the meaning has to be gleaned indirectly from their words. The purpose of this fourth and final section is to examine the teens' perception of the consequences for them of a parent's communicative behavior. The specific research question is:

RQ 3: What do the teens identify as the outcomes or effects on them of the parents' communicative behavior and do these outcomes relate to the teens' risk for suicide?

Consequences of Yelling, Fighting, and Arguing

I began my analysis of the outcomes, for the teens, of their parents' communicative behaviors by revisiting the SPEAKING schema as outlined by Hymes' (1962). "Outcomes" is the "E" in the SPEAKING framework, representing the "ends" of the speech event. The teens often reported these outcomes as the way the speech event episodes made them feel. These reports were especially apparent with the four LAVs, "yell," "fight," "argue," and "get along with/not get along with." The utterances with these four LAVs and the consequences as given by the teens are displayed in Table 4.9.

I chose two excerpts (76 and 77 below) to illustrate how the teens characterized the consequences of their parents' communicative practice of "yell-ed,-ing"

> Excerpt 76 (CN46)
>
> So I have no fear of him hurting me physically, but he **yells** at me a lot and sometimes it **gets overbearing and it depresses me.**
>
> Excerpt 77 (CN29)
>
> **I am always depressed** because my dad, you see, when I am home is always **yelling**

things at me or calling me names.

These utterances and others in Table 4.9 reveal that "yell" behaviors by parents result in the teens feeling "depressed," "stressed out," and "wanting to leave home." Negative feeling states such as depression, stress, and anger are especially important for these teens because they are associated with an increased risk for suicide (Eggert et al., 1998; Haliburn, 2000). Depression, in particular, is one of the most potent risk factors for suicide (Brent, 1995).

We can not establish a causal relationship based on the teens' talk, (i.e., it is not possible to know whether the parent behavior is causing the teen to be depressed or whether a teen's depression is causing him or her to blame parents for the way he or she feels) but we do know that the teens report linking the parents' communicative behavior to the teens' negative emotional states. There are two points to make about the teens' perceptions. One point is that, despite what might actually be happening in the teen-parent relationship, the teen's perception is that the parent's communicative behavior has negative outcomes for the teen. The second point is that it is likely that the teens' perception of a negative outcome of interaction with parents would likely discourage the teen from viewing the parent as a source of support or a resource for advice or guidance--thus making it more difficult for the parent to provide the "connection" that we know is protective for the child (Resnick, 1997). It should be noted, however, that in a few of the cases, teens indicated that they know what they want from parents and are open to repairing the relationship with the parent (e.g., Excerpt 74).

Given that my earlier analysis of the LAVs showed that "fight" shares with "yell" the property of occurring "constantly" and "a lot," I asked whether "fight" was similar to "yell" in the perceived consequences for the teen. Excerpt 78 below exemplifies that the teens linked the term "fight" with negative outcomes.

Excerpt 78 (CN57)

Conflict with parents–Since my dad is gone, I'm **fighting** quite a bit with my mom, which I

just don't like doing. I don't really care when she **yells** at me but like when my dad called up last night, he **chewed me out.** And it is **stressful for me to be fighting** with my mom and my sister.

The discourse from the teen in excerpt 78, like so much of the discourse in the corpus, reveals the way parental communicative behaviors affect many of the teens. The use of the verbial "chewed out" carries the negative meaning of reprimanded or scolded. The consequences of the fighting also seem much like the consequences of "yell." In some cases, the teen has stated a reaction to a combination of "yell" and "fight." Thus, being "stressed out," being in a bad mood," "felt depressed," and "go to the alcohol and drugs" are all ends of the speech event in which the teen and parents "fight."

The reported consequences of conflict characterized as "argue" were less devastating although still an unpleasant and draining experience. Co-occurring terms included "hassle," " nag," and "mad." Utterances with consequences are given below.

Excerpt 79 (CN41)

Me and my mom just **argue** and **I'm tired of it.**

Excerpt 80 (02)

See the problem with my parents see, is that it conflicts with my school. **I mean if me and my parents argue, then they make me not want to go to school.**

There are some differences in the pattern of characterization of conflict when the teens used "don't get along" as compared to "yell" and "fight." "Get along" had fewer negative consequences, as reported by the teens. As mentioned earlier, the reason for the less negative perspective could be that there were fewer occurrences of "don't get along" and thus fewer opportunities to compare the terms. However, when "fight" or "yell" was a co-occurring term with "get along," the consequences reported by the teen were very similar to "fight" or "yell." When "get along" was used by itself, it seems that the teen perceived the relationship as less contentious than when the teen used "fight" or "yell."

When the Outcomes of Parent Talk Relate to Substance Use

When I began this dissertation, I was interested initially in analyzing the differences in the way substance-abusing teens and non-substance-abusing teens characterized their parents' communicative behavior. To meet this objective, I selected a sample of teens who met criteria for substance use. My sample of 77 teens consisted of teens reporting high substance use and teens reporting no substance use. I thought this was an important objective because (a) I anticipated that among the substance users, the teens' drug and alcohol use would provoke conflict with parents, and (b) among all the teens, I thought that the teens would report parental communicative behaviors such as monitoring of the teens' friends and activities, which the teens might characterize as beneficial and supportive, or perhaps, as an annoyance. Parental monitoring is protective against teen substance use; thus, I anticipated finding descriptions of this behavior in the teens' discourse (DiClemente et al., 2001). I wanted also to study this issue because substance use increases suicide risk; thus, I hoped for insight about the links among substance use, suicide, and reported parent-teen interactions about substance use.

Instead of discourse about conflict with parents or evidence of parental monitoring in the teens' discourse that I had anticipated, there were two unanticipated findings about substance use and the teens in this study. The first unanticipated finding was that only a few teens reported interactions with their parents about substance use; in fact, only 12 of the teens made any reference to substance use. Of these 12, six of the teens described substance use-related interaction with their parents and even then, it was minimal. The 12 utterances are given in Table 4.10 at the end of this chapter. I selected three of the six occurrences of interactions with parents to analyze in this section. These three were chosen because in the talk of these three teens, the issues about parent interaction and substance use were more developed than in the talk of other teens. After I analyze the three excerpts, I will discuss the second unanticipated finding–about substance use levels among the teens in general–and I will

speculate on the reasons for the teens' minimal reporting of interaction with parents about substance use.

Many of the teens in this study characterized the consequences of parents' communicative behavior as resulting in depression, stress, or other emotional outcomes. The teen in excerpt 81 reports substance use as the outcome or result of interaction with his parents. specifically when he gets "in fights" with family members.

Excerpt 81 (CN76)

Teen: 'Cause when I get in fights with my parents or my sisters I have a tendency to go to the alcohol and drugs so I forget my problems. Then I fight with them but it's not even worth fighting, because I never win.

This teen explains that using alcohol and drugs helps him to cope with the conflict with his parents and sisters because it helps him to forget his problems. He implies that his problems are the result of fighting with his family members. However, the reported outcome continues to be problematic because the word "then" implies that the substance use leads to more fighting where he "never wins." It is not clear what kind, if any, communicative action occurs from his parents about the substance use, only the reverse, interacting with his parents makes him "go to the alcohol and drugs."

The next teen, in excerpt 82, is responding to the interviewer during the summary when the interviewer tells the teen that the teen's drug use is a safety issue that the interviewer must share with the parents.

Excerpt 82 (CN03)

Interviewer: How do you want me to go about telling your parents about the drug use?

Teen: My mom would flip out if she knew I was using drugs. My dad is very strict.

➸ My dad would freak out. My mom would freak out. I have talked about stuff in the past with them. They have no understanding whatsoever. They just don't know how to deal with

it. They're really verbal, you know, they are really mean, you know. Their reaction? No, I don't want to go through that.

The teen in Excerpt 82 presented varied reasons to try to convince the interviewer not to inform her parents about her drug use: Her parents would have a strong and negative reaction; they would "flip out," and "freak out." The proximity of the phrases, "They're really verbal" to "they are really mean" suggests that her parents' verbal reaction would be harsh, about which she says emphatically, "No, I don't want to go through that."

A close reading of this teen's discourse reveals also that she feels she has addressed similar volatile issues ("stuff" in line 3) in the past but reached no accord. One reading of her statement of "talked about stuff in the past" is that she has engaged in discussion with them, similar to the meaning of "talk" as revealed in Part I. "Talk" could produce understanding, but in her case, talk has not produced understanding. And, in her view, her parents don't know how to cope with her substance use.

In the above excerpts (81 and 82), the two teens characterized substance use as linked to highly unpleasant and conflictual outcomes for them. In the next case, excerpted in 83, the teen reports non-contentious speaking events with his father about drug use. The teen reports a conversation with his father, where it seems the father was probing about his son's drug use. The interviewer is exploring the teen's willingness to accept help to stop using marijuana and alcohol. The teen had described earlier in the interview that he is using marijuana and alcohol.

Excerpt 83 (CN17)

Me and my dad don't really get along. He sees everything I do wrong and doesn't see anything right but I do a lot of things wrong. School problems: Not passing two of my classes and have a little problem with attendance too, drug and alcohol use. I smoke cigarettes, like 6 a day. I use marijuana 4 times a week and I drink 3-4 times a week too.

Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed?

Teen: Lack of skill in soccer and just wanting to stop abusing drugs and alcohol and friends bumming me out in general.

Interviewer: What king of supports would you be willing to accept to meet your goal regarding alcohol and drug use?

Teen: Not much. I don't know what kind, but not much. 'Cause I know I can

➸ handle it. I know my dad says, "You say you can handle it, but you haven't handled it yet." I know I can handle it, but I haven't really felt like handling it yet

Interviewer: So you feel you are coming to it on your own?

Teen: That is one way of doing it, but it seems like he doesn't want me to do it that way. He gives me that option. But he wants to interfere. And I don't like that.

There are several points to make about the speech event in Excerpt 83. First, the teen uses (DRS) to describe his dad's strategy of "sensitive confrontation." Sensitive confrontation–pointing out a discrepancy in a person's behavior or reasoning–is exemplified by the teen's quoting of these words of his father: "You say you can handle it, but you haven't handled it yet." The use of DRS suggests that the teen is recalling the exchange with his dad as an important, perhaps influential, moment. Its consequentiality is illustrated by the teen's apparent continued reflection on his dad's efforts as he repeats the word "handle" in the next two utterances. The teen then describes his confidence that he can address his substance use, using a cognitive orientation– "I know I can handle it."–but he uses an emotional orientation when he gives his reason: "but I haven't really felt like handling it yet."

The teen continues to reflect on the communicative relationship with his father about his substance use when the interviewer paraphrases back to the teen, "So you feel you are coming to it on your own?" But the teen reflects that it "seems" his dad doesn't want him to do it on his own. But, "He gives me that option." In other words, the teen feels the freedom to "handle it on my own," but his dad "wants to interfere," which the teen does not like. What is the potential meaning to the teen of

his father's efforts "to interfere?" One interpretation is that, to the teen, his dad is blocking a process the teen wants to handle on his own. Alternatively, the dad is giving direction, support, or some other assistance that is "meddling" to the teen.

The teen's characterization of the dad's behavior exemplifies the difference in meaning the dad's behavior may have for the father versus the meaning for the son. In the speech event in excerpt 83, one senses a dialectic of the parent pushing for involvement while being opposed by the teen's drive for autonomy: The parent engages by using the suggestion, "You haven't handled it yet" followed by the teen, resisting, "I haven't wanted to." The teen then perceives the parent as pushing again, "He wants to interfere," and the teen asserts his autonomy, "And I don't like that." Although it is not possible to know the specifics of the discussion between father and son, using the LAV "says" sets the tone of a non-discordant discussion, even though the son "did not like" it.

From the teen's description, I would, however, assess this parent's communicative action as commendable for two reasons. One, it seems the father and son are in a non-discordant dialogue about the son's substance use--the only instance of this among the interviews. The second reason is that I interpret the father's efforts as an example of "psychological autonomy-giving" as described by Steinberg (2000). In psychological autonomy, the parents encourage and permit the adolescent to develop his or her own opinions and beliefs (p. 173). Although the teen does not seem to fully appreciate his father's apparent skills, he characterizes their interaction as one of dialogue, lacking in rancor.

When I began this substance use section, I mentioned that there were two unanticipated findings. One of surprises was that teens reported so little interaction with parents about substance use. I can suggest several reasons that the corpus lacked evidence of parent communicative behaviors about substance use. One reason is that the interviewers were not scripted to ask specific questions of the teens about parent monitoring behaviors nor about the teens' perceptions of parents' responses to the

teens substance use. A second reason is that the parents are not engaging their teens with discussions about substance use; thus, the teens, even if the interviewers had asked, would not have had anything to report about parents' communicative behaviors and substance use. A possible reason that parents are not engaging in adequate levels of monitoring and talking about substance use is because parents are misperceiving their own behavior. Indeed, Cohen and Rice (1995) found that parents' perceptions of the level of their monitoring and rapport about substance use were considerably higher than their adolescents' perceptions and it was the teen's perception that correlated with substance use. The third possible reason is that parents are clueless about the extent of their teens' involvement with substance use, which is what Herting (2002) observed when he found that parents significantly underestimate their adolescent's level of substance use.

The second unanticipated finding about substance emerged during the analysis of questionnaire data used to describe the study sample. I alluded to this discovery in Chapter 3 when I reported the differences between my study teens as compared to the sample of teens from the overarching study. Because my sample of 77 teens had been divided into high and no substance users, the comparisons with other groups violated assumptions of homogeneity of variance. Thus, for substance use, all of the 185 teens with conflict with parents as a major stressor were combined for comparison to the 508 teens without conflict with parents as a major stressor. The mean score of drug involvement of the teens with conflict with parents was .61, which was significantly different than the mean score of drug involvement of the teens without conflict as a major stressor ($\underline{m} = .49$). Thus the teens with conflict with parents as a major stressor reported significantly more drug involvement than did the other teens ($\underline{F}\ 1,735 = 3.68$; $p < .05$). Because of this statistical association and the support in the adolescent problem behavior literature of the links among the variables of family stress and substance use (Randell et al.,1998; Steinberg, 2000). I expected to find evidence of these links in the teens' talk. If a teen is having conflict with parents and is using substances, is there a relationship–either that the

conflict is leading a teen to use substances as a coping mechanism or that the teen's use of substances is a hot topic between parents and the teen.

There is evidence of both of these in the limited examples in my corpus. In case 76, reported in excerpt 81, the teen said fights with her parents lead to "a tendency to go to the alcohol and drugs so I forget my problems." And in excerpt 82 (CN03), the teen said if her parents knew about her drug use, they would "flip out." The significant association of conflict with parents and substance use found in the statistical analysis of my data leads me to conclude that this area needs further research. The few examples of teen discourse found in this corpus suggest that through talking with teens and parents, we can better understand the nature of the relationship between substance use and conflict with parents.

Anticipated Consequences of Disclosures about Suicide

In Part III, I analyzed how the teens used DRS to characterize their parents' response to the teen's suicidal thoughts, threats, or suicide attempts. The context of the teens' reported disclosure to parents was often an argument, and the teens' disclosure was in the form of a threat of suicide. The analysis revealed that parents' responses were often hurtful and disappointing to the teen. Several of the teens reported the parents' response as a challenge to the teen to "Do it." Other teens interpreted their parents' responses as the parent refusing to take seriously the teen's distress or "not caring all that much."

Another group of the teens I studied had not disclosed to parents anything about their suicide ideation, attempts, or near attempts. In fact, prior to the interview, most of the teens in the study had not talked with any adult about their thoughts of ending their life. Fortunately, during the interview, the teens were quite open about their suicidal thoughts and prior behaviors, enabling the interviewer to make a more complete assessment of the teens' suicide risk.

That the majority of these teens did not make parents aware of their serious distress is of great

concern and merits further examination. Their reluctance can be analyzed, in part, by the teen's responses during these interviews. Prior to beginning the interview and during the summary portion of the interview, the interviewer informed the teen of the need to talk to their parents about the teen's suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The teens often resisted and had to be persuaded by the interviewer of the need to talk to the parent. They had to be reassured that the interviewer would use great skill in informing the parents. In this next section, I examine the concerns of the teens as they anticipated their parent's communicative conduct about the interviewer sharing this information. I am framing this analysis as an anticipated consequence of the interviewer telling the parents about their child's risk for suicide. I formulated a sub-research question to guide my examination:

> RQ 3-A: In the context of informing parents about the teen's suicidal thoughts and behaviors, what are the terms and expressions used by the teens to articulate the communicative conduct they anticipate from parents.

Below are two excerpts where the interviewer is beyond the scripted part of the interview and is coaxing the teen to accept that the interviewer must talk with the teen's parents.

> Excerpt 84 (CN59)
>
> Interviewer: Why wouldn't you want us to tell them about your thoughts of suicide?
>
> Teen: They would **nag at me**: "Why are you **telling** them these things?" My mom would **give me a long lecture**. **They don't understand**. They don't know how the system works. They just always **jump to conclusions.**

In this excerpt, the teen predicts the reaction of her parents as one of misunderstanding and negative verbalizations, mostly directed at her. Applying the earlier analysis of LAVs, the LAV "nag" and the verb phrase "give me a long lecture" indicate that she anticipates uni-directional verbalization by the parents, with her as a passive recipient. Also, the pejorative term "nag" is linked with "Why are you telling them these things?" indicating the teen's concern that her parents would be displeased

about her disclosure of personal information (i.e., "these things"). She may be concerned that her parents will be embarrassed or dishonored as a family. The phrase "They don't know how the system works" adjacent to, "They . . .jump to conclusions" suggests that the teen believes her parents are operating under different assumptions and beliefs about what it means when a person talks about suicide. The teen does not indicate that she would expect a response of concern from the parents or a discussion or conversation between her and her parents.

Other anticipated negative responses from parents included anger, worry, and as above, an inability for the parent to "understand it." In the next three excerpts (85, 86, and 87), the teens express the negative consequences they anticipate. For example, the teen in Excerpt 85 below says in line 3 (denoted by the arrow) that he thinks mom will be "mad at me." And although it could lead to some good discussions, he doesn't want her to know.

Excerpt 85 (CN53)

Interviewer: What do you think your Mom would say if she knows about your suicide thoughts?

➸ Teen: She'd probably **be mad** at me.

Interviewer: Could that lead to some good **discussions?**

Teen: **Probably**.

Interviewer: Is that something I could tell her?

Teen: No. I don't want her to know.

Excerpt 86 (CN45)

Summary: Teen: Talking to my parents about this [cutting on self] is just going to worry them. I don't want to do that. I really don't want to. And I know they're not going to be able to understand it. I wouldn't choose you to speak to either of them.

Excerpt 87 (CN69)

Interviewer: Have you talked to Mom?

Teen: No. Would never want to scare my mom by talking about suicide.

Finally the last excerpt in this section reveals the belief of the teen that no communication from the interviewer can get through to her mother. Her mother will not take her daughter's suicidal tendencies seriously until she would be dead.

Excerpt 88 (CN23)

Interviewer: What can I say to your mom about your thoughts of suicide?

Teen: I don't know. I think it doesn't really matter what you say because she won't take it seriously until like I am actually dead or something.

These teens' words reveal the complex thoughts and expectations underlying their perceptions of their parents' responses to hearing about their child's suicidal thoughts. In the direct reported speech analysis, teens reported responses from their parents in regard to suicide that were hurtful and disappointing to them. In this section, other teens reveal that they have concerns about having their parents know because the parents will be angry, will not understand, will be frightened. When the teen-parent communicative relationship is contentious, the teens appear wary about disclosing suicidal thoughts and actions to parents. As revealed by teens who reported responses from parents who were told, they have good reason to doubt that it will be a positive experience.

The above speech events reveal premises the teens have about communicative conduct regarding disclosure about suicide. These premises include statements of what is (belief) and of what counts as good or bad (value). The belief is that if the interviewer talks to parents about their child's suicidal impulses, a negative outcome will result: The parents will not understand, will nag them, will be frightened or worried. Recalling that these are teens who are experiencing problematic relationships with their parents, it is possible that the teens want to avoid antagonizing their parents. The teens also

may fear that the parent will discount their disclosures about suicidal impulses, leading the teen to feeling worse (or guilty) at having revealed something so intensely personal.

When the interviewers called parents to give feedback on the interview, the interviewers found that parents reacted to being informed of their sons' and daughters' suicide thoughts and actions, not by anger or lack of understanding, but with concern and, when advised, by seeking help for their child. Parents were grateful for the information. In one month follow up interviews, the teens did not relate to the interviewer negative consequences from the interviewer sharing with the parents their assessment of the teen's suicide risk. Nonetheless, my analysis has found that the teens who have a discordant relationship with their parents do not tell their parents about their distress and do not see parents as a resource for help–a situation that should concern adolescent researchers and practitioners.

Teens Reflect on the Ideal and the Real Outcomes of Parents' Communicative Behavior

As I analyzed the teens' talk about the outcomes of their parents' communicative action, two themes emerged. One theme was the outcome just analyzed: negative feeling states like "depressed," "stressed," "feel bad about myself," and "go to the alcohol and drugs." The teens stated these outcomes directly, making explicit their perception of the links between their parents' verbal actions and their effects on the teens. The second theme in the teens' talk is a compelling, albeit oblique, characterization of outcomes that I discerned through various groupings of the terms and expressions from the teens' talk. These words and phrases emerged through interview-scripted questions, like "How disappointing was the response from your mother?" and "How much do you think your parent believed you [when you told them about your thoughts of suicide]?" Embedded in the responses to questions like these were the teens' notions of the communicative conduct they wanted from their parents, especially at certain vulnerable moments. Juxtaposed to their wants, are their reports of what their parents did. I am calling these juxtaposed notions the "ideal and the real" outcomes for the teens. I believe that the data show that the teens understood the dilemma they faced in coping with the

relationship with their parents, and despite the difficulties, they were resilient in their coping. The sub-research question I formulated for this analysis was:

> RQ 3-B Besides the outcomes of the parents' LAVs (yell, fight, etc.), are other outcomes of parents' communicative behavior implied in the teens' talk that could link to their suicide vulnerability?

To analyze the teens' talk from the perspective of this question, I used an orientation suggested by Philipsen (1997) and Medley (2001). This orientation guides the analyst to discover a broader notion of experience by assembling a collection of terms that are embedded in the teens' talk. There are two clusters of terms. One relates to a wished-for experience with parents I am calling an "orientation of caring." The other cluster emerged from the teens' talk as their lived experience which I am calling "an orientation of hopelessness." The first cluster of terms emerged as I sifted through the teens' talk for emotive words and expressions they used to describe the outcomes of their parents' communicative conduct. As identified in earlier analyses, the teens expressed anger, frustration, and other negative emotions as a result of their parents' verbal behavior, but they also expressed indirectly, a sadness about what they were missing in those relationships--expressions of what they believed they should be getting from their parents. These expressions were the "orientation of caring" that I believe the teens were seeking.

As for the second cluster of terms, the search for the "orientation to hopelessness" was stimulated by an unexpected finding during the analysis of the questionnaire data that I analyzed to describe the characteristics of my sample. The unexpected finding was in regard to the variable of hopelessness. I compared three groups of teens: (1) my study teens, (2) the teens with conflict with parents but who were moderate substance users, and (3) teens who did not report conflict with parents as a major stressor. The three groups did not differ from one another on the variables of anxiety, depression, perceived stress, or anger. But both groups of teens with conflict with parents were significantly more

hopeless than teens who did not report conflict with parents as a major stressor. This finding prompted me to consider words and expressions of hopelessness that could be analyzed qualitatively.

I selected the next two excerpts (89 and 90) to begin the analysis of the caring orientation. In Excerpt 89, the teen is telling the interviewer what she, the teen, wrote to her mother in a suicide note.

> Excerpt 89 (CN62)
>
> Interviewer: What did you say in the suicide note to your mom?
>
> Teen: Told her that I'm sorry, but, this was when I was really depressed. Don't remember really. Told her how much I hate my dad and this was all his fault. Explained to her why I thought it had to happen. She confronted me about it. I told her not to take it seriously. I didn't want to commit suicide. **I just wanted to let her know in my own special little way** how much I hated my dad and **I think she believed me.**

The mother is characterized by the teen in excerpt 89 as handling well the teen's suicide threat. The mother "confronted" the teen and seems to have accepted the teen's explanation. The teen summarized what she wanted from her mother: for her mother to know how she felt about the teen's father. Apparently her mother communicated her understanding of the teen's feelings as well as the belief that the teen did not want to commit suicide because the teen says, ". . . and I think she believed me."

This excerpt was one of only a few times in the study in which the teen expressed satisfaction with the parent's communicative behavior. Suicide threats may seem like a dramatic cry for help, but for this teen, it was "my own, special, little way" of letting her mother know what was bothering her. The drama in this excerpt is the teen's last line, "and I think she believed me." I hear a sigh of relief, an affirmation of the teen at an important moment. I offer this excerpt and analysis to illustrate that the teens did articulate their needs to responsive parents. The parent in this excerpt cared and communicated the caring to her daughter.

In the next passage, the teen states explicitly that she sometimes "feels like there is no one caring" and links her depression to the feeling that no one cares about her and that she does not "belong" (fit in with her family). She follows these words with an ominous belief: that maybe "it is better off that I am not here" and that she is ". . .somewhere else, far away." Instead of anger toward her parents, as part of the conflict she has with them, she expresses guilt for being a worry, a source of depression, and "a lot of trouble" to them. She relates that she does not express her anger when she has had arguments with friends, and she did not "talk" about it with parents.

Excerpt 90 (CN45)

Feeling depressed---well somehow, sometimes I will feel like there is **no one caring I don't belong,**and maybe it is**better off that I am not here**and I want to be somewhere else, **far away. I want to be alone, I want to shut myself out from the world.** [Re: conflict with parents]. I think it is better that I am not the**re so they wouldn't have to worry about me**and **I'm the one who is making them feel depressed**nd **I am a lot of trouble to them** I do kind of want to move away and live with my sister in California instead of being with my parents, because I guess they are better off without me. They are happier I think. I maybe had an argument with my friends and I was depressed and didn't talk about it with my parents or family members at all. So I shut myself away from them. Well actually if I'm alone, and if I am able to cope with how I am feeling, I'm better off without any one helping me.

I present excerpt 90 as a contrasting example to excerpt 89. In excerpt 90, the teen can not express what she needs from her parents. One reason that she can not express those needs is related indirectly to her belief that "no one is caring." The outcomes for this teen of "no one caring" are profound: depression, isolation, and wanting to be far away (dead?).

A third utterance that dealt with parents' caring was examined earlier as part of the DRS analysis.

This young man used DRS to identify the difference between what he believed should be a parent's caring reaction to the teen's needs and what he received. The teen is describing his mother's words to him in the hospital after his suicide attempt: "My mom she was like kind of, 'Yeah, it's too bad you tried to kill yourself.' It's like not caring all that much, like caring a little bit, but not as much as you would expect she would care. You know I was used to it, but you want a little bit." (CN14). Clearly this teen is characterizing his mother's words about his suicide attempt as "not caring all that much". However, the teen was "used to it:" the not caring. Still he expected her to care, at least "a little bit" that he had attempted suicide. The outcome of the mother's communicative behavior (or lack of it) was his conclusion that she was "not caring all that much."

For the next part of the orientation-to-caring analysis, I have displayed eight utterances by the teens. As the teens reflected in various parts of the interview on their relationship with their parents, they disclosed what they wished for from the communicative action of their parents:

Would have expected . . . caring
I thought they were. . . supporting me
I think parents . . . are behind me [and then they are not]
I thought parents are supposed to . . . they are there to like help me
I thought parents are . . . supposed to be my friends
Don't remember ever her [mother] . .saying she loves me
I thought she would . . sweep me in her arms and comfort me
I thought he would . . . make everything better

Embedded in their words are the at-risk teens' construct of caring: caring, supporting me, are behind me, there to like help me, supposed to be my friends, saying she loves me, sweep me in her arms and comfort me, and make everything better.

Contrasting with the terms and expressions in the list above are the words and expressions used by the teens to describe what, from their perspective, is their lived experience of their parents'

communicative behavior. The teen in excerpt 91 below was responding to a seven point scale of how helpful and then how disappointing was her mother's response to her suicide attempt. She rated her mother's response as "slightly" helpful and "very" disappointing. The interviewer then posed the question in excerpt 91.

Excerpt 91 (CN67)

Interviewer: What was disappointing?

Teen: My mom acting like it didn't matter. That I was just showing off, even though I was, but.

In the next series of excerpts, I will display more examples of the construction of terms and expressions that are associated with suicidal thinking. First the excerpts are given, followed by a listing of the terms.

Excerpt 92 (CN48)

Interviewer: What did you tell Mom?

Teen: What's **the point of living anymore**? **Everything's going down the toilet**, no point. **My family, school, everything.**

Interviewer: What was most disappointing about the response you received?

Teen: I wished my mom would have given me **more support towards how I felt**. Like we talked about it and she tried to get me into counseling and I did that once. **I told her and that was it.**

One of the questions about a suicide attempt that the interviewer poses to the teen is "What did you think would happen to you when you did this attempt?" This question assesses the seriousness of the attempt. One of the teen's responses to this question was that, although he thought his family would be sad, his death would mean his family had less stress.

Excerpt 93 (8251)

Interviewer: What did you think would happen if you did this?

Teen: I thought I would die and then my friends and family would cry for a while and also my family would have less **stress** on their head - they don't have to deal with me anymore. It would be easier.

For this question, the interviewer expects that the teens will answer that they expected their suicide attempt would get attention, would result in hospitalization, or sometimes death would result. The teen who was just quoted expected to die (his family would be sad) but also, it would be easier for them as they would not have to "deal with" him.

The next excerpt is from the young woman who gave the opening statement in Chapter 1. This teen had referred to the "bad communication" between her and her mother. The teen believed that "feeling like I don't matter" related to her mother. In the suicide section, the young woman disclosed her suicidal thoughts to the interviewer, which the interviewer was mandated to tell to the teen's mother. During the interview summary, when reviewing what to say to the mother about the teen's suicide thoughts, the following exchange took place:

Excerpt 93 (CN23)

Interviewer: What can I say to your mom about your thoughts of suicide?

Teen: I don't know. I think it doesn't really matter what you say because **she won't take it seriously until like I am actually dead or something.**

The words of this teen--and of many others in the study--reveal that the teens experience their parents as "not caring all that much." The teens know what caring parenting is; they expect it; and they want it, but the reality for many of my study teens is removed from an orientation of caring. I believe that the gap between what they want from their parents and what they have with their parents accounts, at least in part, for the hopelessness that is also embedded in their talk. In the last part of this section on the outcomes of the parents' communicative behavior, I will argue that hopelessness is one

of the outcomes of the divergence between the ideal and real communicative relationships they experience with their parents.

The word "hopeless" is defined as "having no expectation of good, or having no possibility of solution" (Pickett, 2000, p. 667). "Having no possibility of solution" is especially relevant to the topic of suicide, as suicide is often seen as a person's response to feeling that there is "no other solution." When professionals counsel people who are considering suicide, they try to help the client develop choices other than self-harm as a way out of a situation that seems intolerable to the person.

As in the analysis of the orientation to caring, for the orientation to hopelessness, I grouped a number of the teens' utterances into a lexicon of terms and metaphors, which are listed next.

What is the point of living? No point.

Everything's going down the toilet

I told her and that was it.

They don't have to deal with me, anymore. It's better for them [if I die].

Feeling there is no one caring. Don't belong. They are better off if I'm not here.

I want to shut myself out from the world.

Doesn't really matter

Won't take it seriously until I am dead or something.

Kind of a trapped feeling

Expressions such as "trapped," "all alone," "no point," "shut myself out," and others on the above list are words that give voice to the teens' experience of having little support, few options, and few expectations of good in the future. All of these expressions were associated with parents' communicative behavior. By associated, I mean that the teens' placed these expressions proximal to descriptions of the parent behavior or used a linking verb to connect the parents' communicative behavior to words and phrases that orient to a construct of hopelessness. Although this cluster of

terms is present, as displayed above, it is not lengthy nor did the teens ever use the term "hopeless." The internal dispositions of the teens can not be determined from these data and the evaluation of such is not the purview of discourse analysts. The evidence for claims is in the teens' words, although I would argue that teens with conflict with parents as a major stressor may express their feelings of hopelessness indirectly as a few teens did here, and indirectly through descriptions of other negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and fatigue with the family stress.

The teens in this study fortunately did not commit suicide, so one might ask whether there was evidence of parents intervening with their teens in ways that were helpful. The excerpt below (94) was analyzed as part of the orientation and is given again to support that a few teens supplied evidence of parent's caring. The context of this utterance is that the teen had written a suicide note and the interviewer asked the teen what the note had said. I believe by the bolded word "it," the teen means her own suicide.

> Excerpt 94 (CN62)
>
> [Suicide note] Teen: To my mom- told her that I'm sorry, but, this was when I was really depressed. Don't remember really. Told her how much I hate my dad and this was all his fault. Explained to her why I thought **it** had to happen. She confronted me about **it.** I told her not to take **it** seriously. I didn't want to commit suicide. I just wanted to let her know in my own special little way how much I hated my dad and I think she believed me.

This excerpt is an example of a parent fortunately responding by questioning the child, albeit the teen reports the parent's response as "confronted me." As the teen continued, her words are evidence of what adolescent suicide researchers believe to be a process underlying some teen suicide behavior–that of a cry for help on the part of the teen. As this teen reports, she told her mother that she did not want to commit suicide, but rather she wanted to "let her [mother] know" in "my own special little way" that the teen disliked her father. And her "own little way" worked–her mother

believed her. One can almost hear the teen's relief when she says, "And I think she believed me." In other words, the teen felt heard by her mother, that is, her mother acknowledged her daughter's considerable distress.

Discussion

The primary research question of this section was how teens characterized the outcomes of their parents' communicative behavior and how those apparent outcomes–or effects–were linked to the teens' vulnerability to suicide. When I first listened to and transcribed the videotapes, I was struck by the large number of teens who had not previously shared with anyone their suicide thoughts or actions. For the teens in my study, they certainly did not share their distress with their parents. Seventeen of the 77 study teens had attempted suicide; only four of the teens reported that parents knew about the attempt. Of the 77 teens in the current study, every teen who told an interviewer about parent responses to suicide ideation or an attempt was included at some point in this results chapter, except for one teen (Case CN54) who had a prior attempt and who simply could not articulate to the interviewer anything about the attempt nor why he did not want his parents to know about it. These findings suggest that teens at risk for suicide who have communicative relationships with their parents marked by conflict are not likely to talk with their parents about their suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The analyses done in this chapter helps to explain the reasons for the teens' reluctance to talk to parents.

Teens who have a relationship with their parents marked by "yelling," "fighting," and parents "telling" them instead of "talking with" may not feel inclined to reveal their intensely personal feelings about harming themselves. The teen may be feeling hurt and vulnerable from the parent's communicative practices and does not want to risk further rejection. Teens also expressed feeling alone, trapped, and like parents did not care. Through the analysis of the words of the teens who used DRS to report their parents' responses, the hurtful and disappointing responses of parents would

suggest the teens' fears of disclosure to parents were well-founded.

Based on the findings of this Part IV, from the teens' viewpoints, parents with a contentious relationship with their teens do not respond compassionately when the teens say they are thinking of suicide. Even in cases where parents sought treatment for the child or were with them at the hospital, the teen reported that it did not seem the parent cared, or that the parent did not do enough. To the defense of the parents of the teens in this study, they are not alone in poor handling of teens who are at risk for suicide (B. P. Randell, personal communication, April 14, 1999). For example, it is still a common, but incorrect, belief that if one talks about suicide, it may "put the idea into the person's head" (Ryerson, 1987). Even the one teen in my study who reported that the dad's response to her threats of suicide was "moderately helpful" related that the dad had admonished her. "That's silly. Don't talk like that. . ." (Case CN13). Although the parents' side of the story is not known for these teens, I believe that it is highly likely that the parents are also frustrated with the teen. Fortunately, this is exactly the situation that the C-Care intervention was designed to address: To help parents gain some perspective on the teen's situation, to give the parent strategies for talking with their teen about the teens' concerns, and to give parents specific resources for additional help.

Summary of Chapter 4

In this chapter I have presented my analysis of the data. I concentrated on four areas of domains of investigation. Three of the four domains were about the linguistic forms used by the teens. Those forms were linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, and direct reported speech. The fourth area dealt with the consequences for the teen of the parents' communicative behavior. In the next and final chapter, I will review the research questions and summarize the major findings, discuss the limitations of the study, and make recommendations for future research.

Table 4.1
List of "Yell" Utterances with Co-occurring Terms

Utterance	Co-occurring Term
The conflict with my family is because I got arrested and they keep bugging me about it and yelling at me about it and bringing it up. They are yelling about all the money it costs to pay my fine. I'm paying for it and they still make a big deal out of it. (CN03)	bugging bringing it up make a big deal
When I used drugs I'd be angry, like, a mad person, and I always screamed and yelled at my parents and I don't like doing it very much. (CN05)	screamed at parents don't like doing it
I'm not saying the only ones that get mad and start yelling. It goes both ways. (CN06)	get mad, goes both ways
I always have arguments with my mom. And my stepdad tries to step in. He's rude. My dad says, "Try to control it. Don't listen to 'em. Try to ignore it if they are yelling at you." So I try to turn my head and try to not listen. And he gives me a dirty look and yells at me. My mom always gets in fights with me. We just like yell at each other. Sometimes I just ignore it and I just try to have control and try not to have it bug me. Try not to let it bug me. My mom to not yell at me all the time. (CN13)	try to ignore, not listen, rude ignore it, control and not bug me all the time
But sometimes they can really stress me and then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time to sit there and listen to what they say because you know I have homework and work and when they do talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell and like my brother, and he is destructive and he is telling my sister and yelling at me. (CN16)	fight don't really talk
Interviewer: What happened to prevent your death? Teen: I think my mom started yelling or something. (CN23)	
In a way, yeah, but not the way he gives it to me. He always be yelling at me. He has never said anything to me like, "Good job." "How was your day?" Comes home and bitches at me, to do my work, my chores. Always yelling, yells at my brothers all the time. (CN26)	always never bitches, always all the time
I am always depressed because my dad, you see, when I am home is always yelling things at me or calling me names. (CN29)	always calling me names
My mother is always yelling at me saying, "Do better in school." I have to go into college. (CN34)	always

Table 4.1 continued

Because I'm always getting yelled at for doin' something. Like, if I forget to take out the garbage, he'll yell at me for like a half hour or he's told me that I'm stupid. And he had no right to do, to yell at me. So I have no fear of him hurting me physically, but he yells at me a lot and sometimes it gets overbearing and it depresses me. . . Mainly when my step dad yells at me- it stresses me out a lot because I want to leave and I love my mom and she doesn't want me to leave. (CN46)	always, half an hour, overbearing depresses stresses me out
But is it too much to ask to have my mom sit down and talk to me like a human? And not sit there and freak out and yell and scream and cry and say I'm going to work at Burger King the rest of my life? (CN51)	freak out, scream, cry rest of my life
My mom always yells at me, "Take your pills." (CN62)	always
My mom; since she broke up with my stepdad, she wants the house perfect; she always wants to impress men. If one; if one comes, she hits or screams at me, or yells at me, or kicks me out of the house. She drives me nuts. (CN65)	always hits or screams, kicks me out
Mom to stop yelling at me about every little thing, like a crumb on the table or my shoes under the table. (CN65)	every little thing
Parent conflicts: It's not that big of a problem, but sometimes they argue a lot at night. They work together [in their jobs]. I don't know if that is expected or not and, but my dad likes to yell.(CN30)	
Last year, I broke the door over something really insignificant, she just barely yelled at me and I got really mad and she just walked off and the way she looks at me, and I don't know, I just get so irritated. And if she rolls her eyes at me or points her finger at me and I just lose it and I get really mad and start yelling. (CN35)	really barely really mad, lose it and get really mad
My sister moved in and bought food saying we can't eat it because it's theirs. Last night I made a cake and I got yelled at and they told me to stay out of their stuff, so I flipped out. (CN36)	flipped out
My mama said. I said, "Mama" because she was like yelling' at me, yelling' at me. (CN37)	
Since my dad is gone, I'm fighting quite a bit with my mom, which I just don't like doing. I don't really care when she yells at me but like when my dad called up last night, he chewed me out. My dad called up and said, "you're not being good." And he is yelling at me. (CN57)	fighting chewed me out
And when they came back, my parents got mad and they started hitting me because I am the older one and it is my responsibility. My mom **yelled** and my dad hit. They yell a lot and have a lot of threats. My parents yell and stuff, and that's all. (CN72)	a lot threats

Table 4.2
Utterances with "Fight/Fought"

Utterance	Co-occurring Terms
Me and my mom fight a lot. Depression-- have things at home like get in a fight with my mom or sometimes just getting in a bad mood and you just get depressed from being in a bad mood. We are too much alike so when we are in the same house, we always fight like cats and dogs. (CN01)	a lot always
Me and my parents we just don't agree to many things--some of the things; friends. We hardly get into fights, like arguments, we get into little arguments that's all. (CN02)	don't agree hardly, little arguments
Conflict with parents- we just always fight constantly. (CN06)	always, constantly
Sometimes I don't want to go home because we get into fights. (CN08).	
We fight about me having an attitude, me being rude. We don't get in fights a lot because I am really close to my mom, but when we do, it's really stressful. (CN10)	 don't a lot stressful
My mom always gets in fights with me. We just like yell at each other. (CN13)	always, just yell
But sometimes they can really stress me and then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight. (CN16)	nagging
We fight about everything: money, going out, just everything, college. (CN23)	everything, just everything
And if she rolls her eyes at me or points her finger at me and I just lose it and I get really mad and start yelling. I do better now, that was pretty much last year. We still get in fights like tha(CN35)	really mad yelling
I'm constantly fighting with my mom. (CN37)	constantly
I fight with my parents and it gets kinda irritating. It's not like a fight. It's a fight like an argument, but it feels like fights. (CN40)	irritating like an argument
My mom? Oh gosh, we've fought for as long as I can remember. We all, my mom goes into her room when she gets home and locks herself in her room and I have a lock on my bedroom door now too and my sister has a lock on her bedroom door, so we don't really talk very much any more and every time we do, we fight, every single time Depression: My mom. Fighting with my mom.	As long as I can remember don't talk every single time

Table 4.2 continued

Every time I try to figure some way of fixing things with Mom and my sister, it doesn't work and I just was talking about that yesterday because we got in a fight and I have tried everything, you know, I've tried scream back, tried the just stand there and not saying anything, ignoring her, I've tried walking away from the situation, you know ignoring her and being rude, tried the talking very calmly, but then I'm being sarcastic, tried the "OK, you're right. I'm wrong," but then I'm being sarcastic, I mean absolutely every way you can possibly think of and it just doesn't seem to work (CN43)	tried everything, scream, not say anything, ignoring, rude talking calmly sarcastic doesn't work
Just the fussin,' the fightin' every day, every night. (CN44)	fussin', every day, every night
Me and my mom have tried to talk about it [situation with dad] I haven't with my dad because every time we try to talk, it becomes a fight. (CN46)	every time
I think I do a great deal more for the family than anybody else I know and the conflict starts up because I'm fighting back with them. I used to not fight about it because I was too young for that. (CN52)	conflict
I fight with my mom and dad a lot. I don't really fight, but I argue a lot with them. (CN54)	argue
Conflict with parents–Since my dad is gone, I'm fighting quite a bit with my mom, which I just don't like doing. I don't really care when she yells at me but like when my dad called up last night, he chewed me out. And it is stressful for me to be fighting with my mom and my sister. My mom got all mad at me for the last 2 weeks we've been fighting a whole bunch. (CN57)	quite a bit yells chewed me out mad at me
My dad. We always fight and I don't enjoy fighting with him that much. So that's a big problem for me. I want to work on that. I hate fighting with my parents 'cause they are there to like help me and I'm not supposed to fight with them. They are supposed to be my friends, I thought. So I figure we might as well try to get along. (CN62)	always get along
If I get in a fight I feel like no one's behind me. I may think my parents are behind me and then I find out they are not supporting me in school or my activities. I just have a lot of things to do. I like to have a lot of things to do. Because it keeps me from being home with my mom. Lately I've been doing too much. My mom gets mad when I do too much. We fought a lot last week. I think I got sick because I was so stressed out. She just wants to be part of everything. (CN67)	no one's behind me not supporting me gets mad a lot

Table 4.2 continued

Felt depressed because my parents. I don't know what they want but they've been fighting and I have fought with my step dad and fought with my mom. They are fighting and they want to get a divorce. My step dad drinks a lot so that is mostly why we are fighting. (CN69)	mostly
We're mostly fighting at home, not a lot, but recently with my father. (CN74).	mostly not a lot
Friends and family, just in general, fighting. (CN75)	in general
'Cause when I get in fights with my parents or my sisters. I have a tendency to go to the alcohol and drugs so I forget my problems. Then I fight with them, but its not even worth fighting because I never win.	never win
We just have fights about my grades in school, me hanging out with guys. I've had problems when I was with [name] one night. I get into fights with my four half sisters and one full blood sister. When I start fighting with them. it's usually my fault, mom says. When I get into a fight with them. I'm the one that's more verbal so she gets mad at me. (CN76)	more verbal

Table 4.3
Utterances with "Argue"

Utterance	Co-occurring Terms
Me and my parents we just don't agree to many things--some of the things; friends--we hardly get into fights, like arguments, we get into little arguments that's all. I mean if me and my parents argue, then they make me not want to go to school. (CN02)	little
My mom helps me through everything. She's like my best girlfriend and now I'm mad at her and she's mad at me and I don't know how to deal with it. We've been arguing a lot. (CN10)	a lot
I always have arguments with my mom. Arguments with parents and friends. (CN13)	always
When I get into an argument with somebody, like a major argument or going through something with your boyfriend and it's hard to cope with everything at one time. (CN15)	major
And I always begin arguments with my dad, no matter what it is. It can be little and he'll just argue about it. (CN26)	always just
We are always getting into arguments. It's such a hassle to argue with my parents. (CN29)	always hassle
I don't know really. I fight with my parents and it gets kinda irritating. It's not like a fight. It's a fight like an argument, but it feels like fights. (CN40)	fight like an argument
Me and my mom just argue and I'm tired of it. Argue about school, my own belongings. (CN41)	just
And she hassled me on that. And I didn't really agree with her and we got in an argument about that. Just basically not agreeing on things. (CN42)	hassled, didn't agree basically not agreeing
I maybe had an argument with my friends and I was depressed and didn't talk about it with my parents or family members at all. I want them to feel guilty instead of happy because of the argument last night we just had. (CN45)	depressed didn't talk about it guilty instead of happy
Grades and getting my work done, the hassles are the school work and conflict with parents is disagreements and arguments. Probably pretty normal teenage-- parent thing. (CN49)	disagreements Pretty normal
I fight with my mom and dad a lot. I don't really fight, but I argue a lot with them. (CN54)	fight, a lot

Table 4.3 continued

We have a money problem so we have a lot of arguments about that. My father doesn't take me out to eat so we don't get to eat with family together. I have arguments with my dad about that. (CN58)	a lot
My parents always argue with me. I'm in counseling. Everyday my mom has to hassle me, nag me, about every little tiny thing. The stuff she has already told me, she just has to repeat herself. (CN59)	always Every day hassle, nag,
Conflict with parents just arguing once in a while. It happens. (CN71)	just once in a while
We're always arguing. (CN75)	always

Table 4.4
Comparisons of Directionality and Syntactic Form for Yell, Fight, Argue

Utterance	Directionality	Syntactic Form
	YELL	
They keep bugging me about it and yelling at me about it and bringing it up.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
He always be yelling at me.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
Try to ignore it if they are yelling at you.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
We just like yell at each other.		
I always screamed and yelled at my parents	One-directional toward parents	Intransitive
. . .and when they do talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
My dad you see, when I am home is always yelling things at me or calling me names.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Transitive
My mother is always yelling at me saying, "Do better in school".	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
Last year, I broke the door over something really insignificant, she just barely yelled at me and	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
Last night I made a cake and I got yelled at and they told me to stay out of their stuff, so I flipped out.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
If one; if one comes she hits or screams at me, or yells at me or kicks me out of the house	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
My mom yelled and my dad hit. They yell a lot and have a lot of threats.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
So I have no fear of him hurting me physically, but he yells at me a lot and sometimes it gets overbearing and it depresses me.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive
And not sit there and freak out and yell and scream and cry and say I'm going to work at Burger King the rest of my life.	Non-directional although context implied at teen	Intransitive
I don't really care when she yells at me but like when my dad called up last night, he chewed me out.	One-directional toward teen (at teen)	Intransitive
Mainly when my step dad yells at me- it stresses me out a lot because I want to leave and I love my mom and she doesn't want me to leave.	One-directional toward teen (at me)	Intransitive

Table 4.4 continued

My mom always yells at me,"Take your pills".	One-directional toward teen (at me).	Transitive
	FIGHT	
Since my dad is gone, I'm fighting quite a bit with my mom, which I just don't like doing.	Bi-directional between mom & teen (with)	Intransitive
Parents--me and my mom fight a lot	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Intransitive
Have things at home like get in a fight with my mom or		
-we hardly get into fights, like arguments, we get into little arguments that's all	Bi-directional between parents & teen	Noun
Conflict with parents- we just always fight constantly	Bi-directional between parents & teen	Intransitive
sometimes I don't want to go home because we get into fights	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Noun
We fight about me having an attitude, me being rude.	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Intransitive
We don't get in fights a lot because I am really close to my mom,	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Noun
a. My mom always gets in fights with me.	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Noun
b. We just like yell at each other	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Intransitive
We fight about everything: money, going out, just everything, college	Bi-directional between mom & teen	Intransitive
	ARGUE	
Me and my mom just argue and I'm tired of it.	Bi-directional	Intransitive
I don't really fight, but I argue a lot with them.	Bi-directional	Intransitive
My parents always argue with me.	Bi-directional	Intransitive
It can be little and he'll just argue about it.	Unspecified direction	Intransitive
It's such a hassle to argue with my parents	Bi-directional	Intransitive
We've been arguing a lot.	Bi-directional	Intransitive
Conflict with parents - we're always arguing	Bi-directional	Intransitive
Conflict with parents is just arguing once in a while	Bi-directional	Intransitive

Table 4.4 continued

We have a money problem so we have a lot of arguments about that	Bi-directional	Noun
Conflict with parents is disagreements and arguments	Bi-directional	Noun
I want them to feel guilty instead of happy because of the argument last night we just had	Bi-directional	Noun

Table 4.5

List of Tell Utterances with Co-Occurring Terms

Utterance	Co-Occurring Terms
Every time you try to tell her, like, I mean. I love her and everything but I think it's best I stay with my grandparents. I tried to tell her, but most of it is. They let me do more things than she does. We are too much alike so when we are in the same house, we always fight like cats and dogs (01)	every time tried
Interviewer:: Do you tell them ways they can help you? Teen: I always tell them, but they don't take it seriously. (CN02)	always
Parents-just come home and every time tell me to do this, do that, all that stuff. I don't want to go home because we get into fights. I tell him watch when I die then you'll feel bad. He just said, "Do it. It's not going to matter to me. I'm not going to cry. If you take your life. If you die any other way, I cry." (CN08)	every time
My parents bother me all the time. I can't talk to my parents at all. They always tell me what to do. 'I'm only 15.' I know that, but still they don't have to tell me everything. They always tell me what to do, make me do practically everything in the entire house and it bothers me they won't give any free space of my own.(CN09)	always everything always
I wasn't turning in my homework that often. I just can't focus on it. My parents have been getting really sick of that and they don't hesitate to tell me at every opportunity how much they don't like that. So we've gotten into lots of verbal sparring matches (CN14)	every opportunity
He is really straightforward. He doesn't ask you to do something. He tells you to do something. I mean it's stuff he's trying to work with. But that's kind a how he is. (CN17)	
She's always told me that I'm not smart enough or good enough to do things. Interviewer: What was the most hurtful thing: Teen: Probably when my mom said that, "Do you think it's easy to kill yourself? Well it's not. You can't do it, ha-ha-ha." She told me to go ahead and try. (CN23)	always
My mom's got a mental situation cause she gets really depressed sometimes and I that means I can't talk to her. Tell her all about my feelings without her getting all upset and it kind of bothers me. (CN25)	all
When I was growing up with my parents and always having fun, and then one day I never saw my mom again, and then my dad always told us it was my mom who was the bad one. (CN26)	always
The last thing he told me was that he was going on a fishing trip and was down on [name]. He was living at the time. (CN35)	

Table 4.5 continued

Last night I made a cake and I got yelled at and they told me to stay out of their stuff, so I flipped out. We've had family meetings discussing the food and I was not told not to make this stupid cake. (CN36)	yelled
She said if you want to go ahead and die you can be just that stupid enough to do it. so in a way she was like telling me. you can die that's if your stupid enough to do it. She's like, "That's up to you. How can I stop you?" Interviewer:What was least helpful? Teen: When she told me to go ahead and do it, but in her own way, she was telling me not to do it. (CN37)	in a way in her own way
She's my momma and she tells me what to do. (CN41)	
I tried to tell her. I just can't talk to her like that. I just don't want her to know. I know she's already got a lot. I'm going to tell her later on in life, but I don't think this is the right time to tell her.(CN44)	tried
Like, if I forget to take out the garbage, he'll yell at me for like a half hour or he's told me that I'm stupid. I'll never amount to anything. Basically he told me I'll never make it in the Marine Corps. Me and my mom get along great. I can tell her pretty much anything but I usually don't because I don't feel comfortable telling an adult especially my parent (CN46)	anything usually don't don't feel comfortable
I wished mom would have given me more support towards how I felt. Like we talked about it and she tried to get me into counseling and I did that once. I told her and that was it. (CN48)	
So she is coming to school to talk to my counselor and I can tell you, you can ask any kid, 'Is it like horrible, is it like the end of everything to like have your parent come to school?' It is. But like I'm going to tell her that and she's going to listen. If she tried that, and it didn't work, she would have every reason to be the way she is now, but she didn't even try that. I would be so happy, but like I'm going to tell her that. That's all she has to do. (CN51)	
My brothers are always fighting all the time. They share the same room and it gets annoying which stresses me out because I'm constantly **telling** them to be quiet. (CN52).	annoying stresses constantly
I get tired of listening to her problems of being sick. I tell her there's nothing wrong, but she'll start crying (CN53)	
But if I ask him something about his business and who's over at my house he tells me it's none of my business. He also says its not my house, it's my grandma's house. I told my mom if he doesn't move out, I'm going to move out. (CN56)	

Table 4.5 continued

Suicide note: Teen: To my mom- told her that I'm sorry, but, this was when I was really depressed. Don't remember really. Told her how much I hate my dad and this was all his fault. Explained to her why I thought it had to happen. She confronted me about it. I told her not to take it seriously. (CN62)	Explained
Interviewer: How could you go about telling your Mom how she is hurting you? Teen: I would have her sit down with me. I would tell her we need a serious talk. About what I've been going through. About what I've been keeping secret from you. And telling her I cut myself. (CN65)	
Int: Is there something I could say to her about that situation that could help? Teen: No probably not. I mean I've told them about it, time and time again. It's just the way they parent. I have to learn how to deal with that. (CN67)	time and time again
It makes it harder on me because I have to live with them telling me stupid crap every day - like trying to tell me that I don't know what I want. That I'm only 15-- How can I make that decision? (CN73)	stupid crap trying

Table 4.6
List of Talk Utterances with Co-Occurring Terms

Utterance	Co-Occurring Terms
My mom is pretty cool about it. I talk to her more about it. She understands more. And calms her down too. My dad works nights and I am in school when he is home and when I'm home, he's at work. I rarely see him. So when he comes home, he tries to father me, it's like it doesn't feel right. I don't know. My mom says I am really mean to him, but it doesn't feel right. 'Cause he doesn't know what's going on with me because he doesn't have a chance to talk to me. [Re: drugs]My dad is very strict. My dad would freak out. My mom would freak out. I have talked about stuff in the past with them. They have no understanding whatsoever. (CN03)	pretty cool understands calms her Tries to father me. Doesn't know what is going on with me no understanding
Interviewer: If you are feeling suicidal who would you talk to. Parents? Teen: No, no, would talk to babysitter [40 years old, has known for years] or my best friend's mom.(CN04)	
Preg-I want birth control, but I can't talk to my mom about it. Was going out with a guy and all he wanted me for was sex. I couldn't talk to my mom about it, no sex for a couple of months: My parents bother me all the time. I can't talk to my parents at all. They always tell me what to do. Would probably not talk to parents [about suicide]. Mom and I are really close, but after Hawaii, it just went downhill.(CN09)	at all always tell
When you talk about the suicide, make sure it's like you said–that I am overwhelmed and so that she doesn't think I'm going to kill myself (CN10)	
I just said, "I'm going to kill myself" and I screamed it to them. I didn't say it to them. My dad goes, "That's silly. Don't talk like that. Don't ever talk like that. You know you will never do that. You are a beautiful young lady." Blah, blah, blah. But I always talk to my dad. (CN13)	Don't don't ever always
Okay well my brother and sister, I get along with. But sometimes they can really stress me and then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time to sit there and listen to what they say because you know I have homework and work and when they do talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell and. . . Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed? Teen: Most of the time like when I try talking to my parents, they don't seem to listen and no one is hearing me and I just feel like – you're all alone.(CN16)	don't really talk kind of yell try don't listen
My mom's got a mental situation cause she gets really depressed sometimes and I that means I can't talk to her. Tell her all about my feelings without her getting all upset and it kind of bothers me.(CN25)	can't

Table 4.6 continued

My mom always talking about these drugs. She wants me to help her out with the money even though she gets paid more way more. I barely have enough for myself. I'm left with zero. (CN37)	always
We all, my mom goes into her room when she gets home and locks herself in her room and I have a lock on my bedroom door now too and my sister has a lock on her bedroom door, so we don't really talk very much any more and every time we do, we fight, every single timeEvery time I try to figure some way of fixing things with Mom and my sister, it doesn't work and I just was talking about that yesterday because we got in a fight and I have tried everything, you know. I've tried screaming back, tried just standing there and not saying anything, ignoring her, I've tried walking away from the situation, you know ignoring her and being rude, tried the talking very calmly, but then I'm being sarcastic. Oh, that's okay, I'm kind of used to it now, it's kind of hard to get used to, but I'll be out next year and I won't ever have to talk to her anymore(CN43)	don't really fight screaming, not saying anything, ignoring, walking away talking calmly being sarcastic
Me and my sister we're real close. We stay to ourself and we talk about it. I always have to be by myself. I don't like talking to anybody about how I feel because I don't like to cry. It's like if I'm feeling depressed I stay by myself in a dark room. Teen: No, she wouldn't. She be scared. I don't know how she would act. I tried to tell her. I just can't talk to her like that. I just don't want her to know. I know she's already got a lot. I'm going to tell her later on in life, but I don't think this is the right time to tell her. (CN44)	really close tried to tell can't
Me and my mom have tried to talk about it [situation with dad] I haven't with my dad because every time we try to talk, it becomes a fight. Because he feels he's always right and that I am always wrong (CN46)	tried to fight
I wished mom would have given me more support towards how I felt. Like we talked about it and she tried to get me into counseling and I did that once. I told her and that was it. (CN48)	
If she talked to me like a human being would talk to a human being, like I would talk to a friend, even though that's a little too much to ask for a mom to talk to their daughter. But if I were to talk to my best friend whom I care about and love a lot, 'Stop doing this because it's bad for you.' I'm talking to her kind of like a mother would talk to a daughter. But is it too much to ask to have my mom sit down and talk to me like a human? And not sit there and freak out and yell and scream and cry and say, I'm going to work at Burger King the rest of my life. (CN51)	human being friend best friend human not freak out, yell, scream, cry
Teen: I would have her sit down with me. I would tell her we need a serious talk. About what I've been going through. About what I've been keeping secret from you. And telling her I cut myself. (CN65)	tell serious talk
Interviewer: Have you talked to Mom? Teen: No. Would never want to scare my mom by talking about suicide. (CN69)	scare by talking about suicide

Table 6 continued

I didn't talk to my mom for two months because she went through my things. I moved in with dad. (CN77)	went through my things

Table 4.7
List of Utterances with "Get along/Not get along"

Utterance	Co-occurring Terms
My dad pisses me off. I love him, but I get along with my mom better than I get along with my dad. (CN10)	pisses me off love him, but
Conflict with parents is like I get along with my mom, but my dad and I have never gotten along with him. (CN12)	never
Parents, my dad we have been having a little bit we are not getting along right now. (CN15)	having a little bit. . .
Okay well my brother and sister, I get along with. But sometimes they can really stress me and then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight. (CN16)	stress me parents start nagging me
Parents--me and my dad don't really get along. He sees everything I do wrong and doesn't see anything right but I do a lot of things wrong. (CN17)	everything I do wrong anything right
Because my mom and I don't get along. We kinda have bad communication. (CN23)	bad communication
My mom and I have never gotten along. (CN24)	
I don't know. It's stuff from my family-we don't hate each other necessarily but we don't really get along very well. And it comes down to it, I feel the only way I'll be really happy is if I'm not living there, 'cause I end up feeling really guilty And I feel I am making people unhappy. (CN31)	stuff from my family don't hate, but feeling guilty
And if he's givin' her a hard day, she's givin' us a hard day. In a way, I feel like it's my fault. My sister and me. We get along much better when my momma don't have a boyfriend. (CN44)	givin' us a hard day
Living situation: me and step dad do not get along at all. Conflict with parents: me and my mom get along great. I can tell her pretty much anything but I usually don't because I don't feel comfortable telling an adult especially my parent(CN46)	tell her pretty much anything
Don't get along with my parents. maybe because I'm getting older. (CN50)	
Well lately we've gotten along pretty good and so I think I'm just going to keep it up and not complain too much . . .And how I can piss him off and what I can do to make him a little bit happier and it's just that I'm trying to get us to get along better. I figure why not do something once in a while that actually makes him happy. They are supposed to be my friends. I thought. So I figure we might as well try to get along. (CN62)	actually makes him happy supposed to be my friend

Table 4.8

Utterances with DRS that Relate to Interactions with Parents about Suicide

Interviewer : What did you tell Dad in the argument? Teen: I tell him watch when I die then you'll feel bad. He just said, "Do it. It's not going to matter to me. I'm not going to cry. If you take your life. If you die any other way, I cry." Interviewer: What was most disappointing? Teen: That he [dad] didn't care. (CN08)
Interviewer: What did you tell them? Teen: I just sit there and cry and say I don't want to live anymore, and my mom. I screamed in anger "I'm going to kill myself" Interviewer: What was most disappointing? Teen: Nothing (CN10)
Interviewer: What did you say? Teen: I just said, "I'm going to kill myself" and I screamed it to them. I didn't say it to them. My dad goes, "That's silly. Don't talk like that. Don't ever talk like that. You know you will never do that. You are a beautiful young lady." What was most helpful? Teen: "Everyone will miss you. You can't just think of yourself"(CN13)
What was most disappointing? Teen: My mom she was like kind of, "Yeah, it's too bad you tried to kill yourself." It's like not caring all that much, like caring a little bit, but not as much as you would expect she would care. You know I was used to it, but you want a little bit. (CN14)
And it is really bad, and feeling like nobody really understands and I'm kind of by myself, kind of a trapped feeling. She [mother] just often says, "You have a problem. Maybe you're sick or something." She doesn't feel like she's involved with that [depression] at all. Interviewer: What was the most hurtful thing: Teen: Probably when my mom said that, "Do you think it's easy to kill yourself? Well it's not. You can't do it, ha-ha-ha." She told me to go ahead and try. (CN23)
Interviewer: What was hurtful about your response from mom. Teen: She said, "Here's another way you are like your sisters." (CN24)
From suicide section: Whom did you tell about your thoughts? Teen: My mama said. I said, "Mama" because she was like yelling' at me, yelling' at me. And I said, "How would you like it if I was to die? And she like, "Go ahead and do it. If you're crazy enough to do that." I said that like once or twice before. Interviewer: What was most helpful from Mom? Teen: She said if you want to go ahead and die you can be just that stupid enough to do it, so in a way she was like telling me, you can die that's if your stupid enough to do it. She's like, "That's up to you. How can I stop you?" Interviewer: What was least helpful? Teen: When she told me to go ahead and do it, but in her own way, she was telling me not to do it. (CN37)

Table 4.8 continued

What was the most hurtful response? Teen: My dad. He said, "Don't be stupid. People have it a lot worse, (teen name). (CN28)
Suicide section: Interviewer: What was most hurtful? Teen: [Crying] My dad said, "I hope you would die and not come home crippled." Summary: Interviewer: Why wouldn't you want us to tell them about your thoughts of suicide? Teen: They would nag at me. "Why are you telling them these things?" My mom would give me a long lecture. They don't understand. They don't know how the system works. They just always jump to conclusions. (CN59)
Suicide section: Interviewer: What did you think would happen if you did this? [Suicide attempt.] Teen: I thought my Mom would probably be happy, or something; that I'd be gone. That she'd say something like. Well I've said it to her before, "Well, there'd be more food for me." Summary: Interviewer: How could you go about telling your Mom how she is hurting you? Teen: I would have her sit down with me. I would tell her we need a serious talk. About what I've been going through. About what I've been keeping secret from you. And telling her I cut myself. (CN65)

Table 4.9
Consequences of the LAVs Yell and Fight

Utterance with Yell	Consequence of Yell
So I have no fear of him hurting me physically, but he **yells** at me **a lot** and sometimes it **gets overbearing and it depresses me.** CN46	overbearing depresses
Depression? My parents **yell** and stuff, and that's all. (CN72)	Depression
My living situation. My sister moved in and bought food saying we can't eat it because it's theirs. Last night I made a cake and I got **yelled at** and they told me to stay out of their stuff, **so I flipped out.** (CN36)	so I flipped out
Mainly when my step dad **yells** at me- **it stresses me out a lot** because I want to leave and I love my mom and she doesn't want me to leave. (CN46).	stresses me out a lot I want to leave
They perceive me as being irritable. I'm not saying they're the only ones that get mad and start **yelling. It goes both ways.** I don't try to be irritable but they just do things that make me so **mad.** I want them to stop bothering me. (CN06). Then when my parents start **nagging** me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time **to sit there** and **listen to** what they **say** because you know I have homework and work and when they do **talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell.** (CN16).	I want them to stop bothering me so mad end up in a fight
Utterances with Fight	**Consequences of Fight**
Me and my mom **fight a lot.** (01). **Depression--** have things at home like get in a **fight** with my mom or sometimes just getting in a **bad mood** and you just **get depressed** from being in a bad mood. We are too much alike so when we are in the same house, we **always** fight like cats and dogs. (01) We fight about me having an attitude, me being rude. We don't get in fights a lot because I am really close to my mom, but when we do, it's really stressful (CN10)	depression bad mood get depressed really stressful
Conflict with parents–Since my dad is gone, I'm **fighting** quite a bit with my mom, which I **just don't like doing.** I don't really care when she **yells** at me but like when my dad called up last night, he **chewed me out.** And it is **stressful for me to be fighting** with my mom and my sister. (CN57).	just don't like doing stressful
Parents. Just come home and every time tell me to do this, do that, all that stuff. I don't want to go home because we get into fights.	I don't want to go home

Table 4.9 continued

a. Depression: I feel sorry for myself. If I get in a fight I feel like no one's behind me. I may think my parents are behind me and then I find out they are not supporting me in school or my activities. b. My mom gets **mad** when I do too much. We **fought** a lot last week. **I think I got sick because I was so stressed out.** She just wants to be part of everything. (CN67)	depression feel like no one's behind me I got sick because I was so stressed out.
I fight with my parents and it gets kinda irritating. It's not like a fight. It's a fight like an argument, but it feels like fights. (CN40)	irritating
Conflict with parents. Let's see. My dad. We always fight and I don't enjoy fighting with him that much. So that's a big problem for me. I hate fighting with my parents' cause they are there to like help me and I'm not supposed to fight with them. (CN62)	big problem hate fighting
Felt depressed because my parents. I don't know what they want but they've been fighting and I have fought with my step dad and fought with my mom. They are fighting and they want to get a divorce. My step dad drinks a lot so that is mostly why we are fighting. (CN69)	felt depressed
'Cause when I get in fights with my parents or my sisters, I have a tendency to go to the alcohol and drugs so I forget my problems. Then I fight with them, but its not even worth fighting because I never win. (CN76).	go to the alcohol and drugs
Utterances with Argue	Consequences of Argue
. I mean if me and my parents argue, then they make me not want to go to school. (CN02)	not want to go to school
My mom helps me through everything. She's like my best girlfriend and now I'm mad at her and she's mad at me and I don't know how to deal with it. We've been arguing a lot. (CN10)	don't know how to deal with it
When I get into an argument with somebody, like a major argument or going through something with your boyfriend and it's hard to cope with everything at one time. (CN15)	hard to cope
We are always getting into arguments. It's such a hassle to argue with my parents. (CN29) Me and my mom just argue and I'm tired of it. Argue about school, my own belongings. (CN41)	always hassle tired of it
And she hassled me on that. And I didn't really agree with her and we got in an argument about that. Just basically not agreeing on things. (CN42)	hassled

Table 4.9 continued

Utterances with Get along/not get along	Consequences of Get along/not get along
Conflict with parents is like I get along with my mom, but my dad and I have never gotten along with him. (CN12)	conflict never
Okay well my brother and sister, I get along with. But sometimes they can really stress me and then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight . (CN16)	stress me parents start nagging me
Parents--me and my dad don't really get along. He sees everything I do wrong and doesn't see anything right but I do a lot of things wrong. (CN17)	everything I do wrong anything right
Because my mom and I don't get along. I think "feeling like I don't matter" has to do with my mom. She's always told me that I 'm not smart enough or good enough to do things. Plus like I'm always compared to my older sister and that makes it really hard. . Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed? Teen: Last year was a weird situation. One of my close friends tried to kill herself. That triggered it, plus my own family situation. Too much at once. I think it's just like the relationship between my mom and I is really bad, and feeling like nobody really understands and I'm kind of by myself, kind of a trapped feeling. She just often says, "You have a problem. Maybe you're sick or something." She doesn't feel like she's involved with that [depression] at all.	feeling like I don't matter not smart or good enough really hard feeling like nobody really understands trapped feeling
I don't know. It's stuff from my family-we don't hate each other necessarily but we don't really get along very well. And it comes down to it, I feel the only way I'll be really happy is if I'm not living there, 'cause I end up feeling really guilty And I feel I am making people unhappy. (CN31)	feeling guilty making people unhappy
And if he's givin' her a hard day, she's givin' us a hard day. In a way, I feel like it's my fault. My sister and me. We get along much better when my momma don't have a boyfriend. (CN44)	feel like its my fault
Conflict with parents: me and my mom get along great. I can tell her pretty much anything but I usually don't because I don't feel comfortable telling an adult especially my parent(CN46)	don't feel comfortable
Utterances with Tell	**Consequences of Tell**
My mom's got a mental situation cause she gets really depressed sometimes and I that means I can't talk to her. Tell her all about my feelings without her getting all upset and it kind of bothers me. (CN25)	can't talk. . . tell her about my feelings. . . bothers me
Last night I made a cake and I got yelled at and they told me to stay out of their stuff, so I flipped out.	flipped out

Table 4.9 continued

So she is coming to school to talk to my counselor and I can tell you, you can ask any kid, 'Is it like horrible, is it like the end of everything to like have your parent come to school?' . . .If she tried that, and it didn't work, she would have every reason to be the way she is now, but she didn't even try that. I would be so happy, but like I'm going to tell her that. That's all she has to do. (CN51)	end of everything I would be so happy
My mom is pretty cool about it. I talk to her more about it. She understands more. And calms her down too. My dad works nights and I am in school when he is home and when I'm home, he's at work. I rarely see him. So when he comes home, he tries to father me, it's like it doesn't feel right. I don't know. My mom says I am really mean to him, but it doesn't feel right. 'Cause he doesn't know what's going on with me because he doesn't have a chance to talk to me. (CN03)	pretty cool understands calms her Tries to father me. Doesn't know what is going on with me no understanding
. . .then when my parents start nagging me about trying to help my brother and sister, we'll usually just end up in a fight and with all the responsibilities I have I don't really have time to sit there and listen to what they say because you know I have homework and work and when they do talk to me, they don't really talk to me, they kind of yell and. . . Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed? Teen: Most of the time like when I try talking to my parents, they don't seem to listen and no one is hearing me and I just feel like – you're all alone.(CN16)	don't really talk kind of yell depressed no one is hearing me....all alone
My mom's got a mental situation cause she gets really depressed sometimes and I that means I can't talk to her. Tell her all about my feelings without her getting all upset and it kind of bothers me.(CN25)	can't talk without her getting upset-bothers me
We all, my mom goes into her room when she gets home and locks herself in her room and I have a lock on my bedroom door now too and my sister has a lock on her bedroom door, so we don't really talk very much any more and every time we do, we fight, every single time. Every time I try to figure some way of fixing things with Mom and my sister, it doesn't work and I just was talking about that yesterday because we got in a fight and I have tried everything, you know, I've tried screaming back, tried just standing there and not saying anything, ignoring her, I've tried walking away from the situation, you know ignoring her and being rude, tried the talking very calmly, but then I'm being sarcastic. Oh, that's okay, I'm kind of used to it now, it's kind of hard to get used to, but I'll be out next year and I won't ever have to talk to her anymore(CN43)	don't really fight screaming, not saying anything, ignoring, walking away talking calmly being sarcastic

Table 4.9 continued

Me and my sister we're real close. We stay to ourself and we talk about it. I always have to be by myself. I don't like talking to anybody about how I feel because I don't like to cry. It's like if I'm feeling depressed I stay by myself in a dark room. Teen: No, she wouldn't. She be scared. I don't know how she would act. I tried to tell her. I just can't talk to her like that. I just don't want her to know. I know she's already got a lot. I'm going to tell her later on in life. but I don't think this is the right time to tell her. (CN44)	cry She'll be scared [mother]
Me and my mom have tried to talk about it [situation with dad] I haven't with my dad because every time we try to talk, it becomes a fight. Because he feels he's always right and that I am always wrong (CN46)	tried to fight
I wished mom would have given me more support towards how I felt. Like we talked about it and she tried to get me into counseling and I did that once. I told her and that was it. (CN48)	[needed] more support tried to get me into counseling
Interviewer: Have you talked to Mom? Teen: No. Would never want to scare my mom by talking about suicide. (CN69)	scare by talking about suicide
I didn't talk to my mom for two months because she went through my things. I moved in with dad. (CN77)	moved in with dad

Table 4.10
Utterances about Substance Use

The conflict with my family is because I got arrested [for public intoxication] and they keep bugging me about it and yelling at me about it and bringing it up. My dad thinks I'm going to get tooken away or something. They are making a big deal about. They are yelling about all the money it costs to pay my fine. I'm paying for it and they still make a big deal out of it. Say how it is irresponsible. My mom would flip out if she knew I was using drugs. My dad is very strict. My dad would freak out. My mom would freak out. I have talked about stuff in the past with them. They have no understanding whatsoever. They just don't know how to deal with it. They're really verbal, you know, they are really mean, you know. Their reaction? No, I don't want to go through that.(CN03)
Parents--when I used drugs I'd be angry, like, a mad person, and I always screamed and yelled at my parents and I don't like doing it very much. When I do it, it makes me feel bad.(CN05)
I don't want my mom knowing anything about my drug use. She knows about my alcohol use, not my drug use. It would kill her. It would kill her inside. (CN10)
My parents and I have always had kind of a misunderstanding I guess. My parents are Christian coalition, moral majority kind of people and I am like an agnostic. I have had trouble with drugs. the police, I've got attention deficit disorder. I wasn't turning in my homework that often. (CN14)
. . .and have a little problem with attendance too, drug and alcohol use. I smoke cigarettes, like 6 a day. I use marijuana 4 times a week and I drink 3-4 times a week too Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed? Teen: Lack of skill in soccer and just wanting to stop abusing drugs and alcohol. . . Interviewer: What king of supports would you be willing to accept to meet your goal regarding alcohol and drug use? Teen: Not much. I don't know what kind, but not much. 'Cause I know I can handle it. I know my dad says, "You say you can handle it, but you haven't handled it yet." I know I can handle it, but I haven't really felt like handling it yet. Interviewer: So you feel you are coming to it on your own? Teen: That is one way of doing it, but it seems like he doesn't want me to do it that way. He gives me that option. But he wants to interfere. And I don't like that (CN17)
When we get over stressed, my parents and me go off at each other and they threaten to ground me all the time don't let me spend my own [money] because they think I am going to go and get drunk every single week end and at least if I. I usually don't like to stay hom When you call my parents, is it okay if you leave out the alcohol and drugs because that's the part that they get most scared about. (CN18)
Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressedTeen: My parents' divorce, my grandpa's death, a lot of responsibilities, my girlfriends. Some of my friends give me a bunch of crap about how I do drugs and stuff. . .(CN26)

Table 4.10 continued

Mostly I drink--on weekends. Most I smoke pot is once every two weeks. .Just do it to get my mind off of things. .My mom-she went out of town one time and she left me with my dad and he went out for the day and I had a whole bunch of people over and they took my mom's vodka without me knowing it. My mom found out and got really mad. So now I'm trying to gain her trust back. . I did really well last weekend and I got to go out and came home early. .So she is happy about that. (CN28)
And recently my parents and I had differences about my smoking habits. They don't like the idea I was smoking again. (CN38)
Interviewer: What causes you to feel depressed? Teen: Combination of a lot of things, family and schoolwork and friends, and drugs used to cause depression. CN63
Like me, mom's mad that I started smoking. It's her fault that I have. (CN65)
'Cause when I get in fights with my parents or my sisters I have a tendency to go to the alcohol and drugs so I forget my problems. Then I fight with them but it's not even worth fighting because I never win. (9505).

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For this project, I analyzed the discourse of 77 high school students who were at risk for suicide. The discourse was excerpted from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews done at the student's high school. Each interview covered psychosocial and behavioral aspects of the student's life, including personal, family, peer, and school domains. The 77 interviews that comprised the study sample were selected because during the interview, the student said that "conflict with parents" was one of the three major stressors in his or her life.

In this chapter, I will summarize the path I took to complete this study. I will begin with a brief review of the rationale for undertaking this study, followed by the highlights of the methods used, the research questions that guided me, and a summary of the results of each research question. I then address limitations of the study, discuss my recommendations for future research, and offer a concluding statement.

Summary of the Path of the Study

Previous research on adolescent suicide found that family strain or stress, of which conflict between teens and parents can be one component, increases a teen's risk for suicide thoughts and attempts. One of the great benefits of the previous research is that it demonstrated the strength of the association between parent-adolescent conflict and the adolescent's risk for suicide. Little attention has been given, however, to the nature of the conflict, that is, the essential qualities and characteristics of the interactions the teen refers to as "conflict." Through the interviews, I have been able to analyze, from the teen's point of view, an important aspect of the relationship with parents: the communicative relationship. In particular, my interests were the words, phrases, and forms of speech the teens used when they reported on the practices of parents that the teens have identified as causing conflict. There is no published research showing how teens at risk for suicide characterize their parents' communicative behaviors. I sought to narrow this gap

by using the interviews as a source of data from which to excerpt the teens' talk about their communicative experiences with parents.

The central elements in my study are the terms, phrases, and tools of expression used by the teens to characterize their parent's communicative behavior and the meanings that these terms, phrases, and expressions have for the teens. I wanted to learn how the teens talk about their parents' linguistic action as a way to understanding how they experience their parents' communication. I also wanted to know if the teens linked their vulnerability to suicide to their parents' discursive behaviors.

The teens were not asked to specify problematic behaviors about how their parents talked with them. Rather, they were asked to elaborate on the top stressors in their lives issues such as what made them feel depressed and, especially, on what it is about the conflict with their parents that was stressful. We were seeking to understand their top three stressors. As the teens elaborated on these issues, they described what their parents said and how they said it. As the teens described their parents' communicative behaviors, they also provided assessments, evaluations of, and perspectives on, what was problematic about their parents' communication. In giving their perspective, they conveyed their interpretations and the meanings their parents' communicative conduct had for them.

Communicative practices are the regular ways a person talks or converses. They are flexible and creative, but they vary person to person. Communicative practices cover a wide range of behaviors, including actions that create order in interaction such as turn-taking, norms of address, uses of reported speech, and vocabulary. I narrowed my focus of analysis to linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, direct reported speech, and expressions of the outcomes of parents' communicative behaviors. I used these forms of expression to interpret meanings of parents' communicative behaviors for the teens.

To examine the meanings that their parents' communicative conduct had for the teens, I took two

approaches. One was to use the teens' discourse as a face-value resource: I looked carefully for instances where the teens linked specific communicative behaviors of a parent to how they report experiencing that behavior; that is, how they say it made them feel. An example is the opening statement from the young woman who, in one utterance, says she and her mother have "bad communication." In the next utterance, she says, " 'feeling like I don't matter' is related to my mom." I treated the proximity of those utterances as an indication of how the communication between her and her mother led to the teens' feelings of worthlessness. The second way of understanding how the teens experienced their parents' communicative conduct was less direct. In this approach, the construction of the teenager's discourse was the focus of analysis. I asked what was the significance to the teen when he or she used a form of expression to report on the parents' talk, or used certain linguistic action verbs, such as "yell." I approached the questions of linkage to vulnerability to suicide in a similar way by direct reference to thoughts or behaviors related to suicide risk and by clustering terms that could be interpreted as an orientation to "hopelessness."

I examined the videotaped interviews for talk by the teens about interactions with their parents and focused especially on the sections of the interview in which the teens made reference to their parents' communicative practices. The sections of in depth analysis were conflict with parents as a major stressor; causes of depression; interactions related to risky behaviors, especially substance use; and disclosures to parents about suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The process of analysis was based on the theory and methodology of the ethnography of speaking and discourse analysis.

Each teenager's utterances that related to the situational frame of conflict, substance use, or disclosures about suicide were put into various forms of lists and tables to facilitate the analysis of the linguistic action verbs, the co-occurring terms, and the "ends" (Hymes, 1972) or the outcome of the speaking event as expressed by the teenager. Through a qualitative approach, certain recurring features of the teenager's talk emerged as linguistic resources for the teen speakers. The three linguistic devices chosen for in-depth analysis were (a) linguistic action verbials, (b) extreme case formulations, and (c)

direct reported speech. Three specific research questions (RQ) were posed:

RQ 1. When characterizing communicative conduct of parents, how do teens who are at risk for suicide and who have conflict with parents use the linguistic resources of

a) Linguistic action verbials (LAVs).

b) Extreme case formulations (ECFs).

c) Reported speech

RQ 2. What do these characterizations mean to the teenage speakers?

RQ 3. What do the teens identify as the outcomes or effects on them of the parents' communicative behavior and do these outcomes relate to the teens' risk for suicide?

Regarding RQ-1A, I searched the discourse for the linguistic action verbs that were prominent in the talk about conflict with parents as a major stressor. Six terms emerged: "yell," "fight," "argue," "tell," "talk," and "get along with/not get along with".

Three linguistic action verbs, "yell," "fight," and "argue" shared similar features in that adverbs of frequency, such as "always" and "a lot" were used to modify them. By using these adverbs, the teens strengthened their claim that the communicative action was stressful, not only because it occurred, but because it occurred often. Other LAVs that co-occurred with "yell," "fight," and "argue" such as "bitches" and "screams," added vividness to the description and made the more general term more specific. A key observation was that "yell" implied a different directionality within the speech event from "fight" and "argue." "Yell" was characterized as communicative action that was directed at the teen. "Fight" and "argue" depicted the action as occurring between the teen and the parent. I contend that "yell" was being deployed by the teenager to express a sense of being a victim of communicative action that was more or less hurled at him or her. The teens also used "argue" to depict communicative action that was less contentious than "fight."

"Get along with" and "not get along with" were expressions that the teens used in several ways. One way was to compare the communicative relationship with one parent to the communicative relationship with the other parent. For example, he or she might "get along with" mother, but "not get along with" father. "Get along with/not get along with" was also used bidirectionally, implying that the teen and one parent were involved in the conflict.

When the teenaged speakers used the LAVs, the co-occurring terms were manner adverbials and other linguistic action verbials. Manner adverbials, especially those indicating frequency, such as "always," "constantly," and "a lot" conveyed the teens' sense that the linguistic actions occurred often. Co-occurring LAVs were descriptive of similar communicative practices to the LAV but were not necessarily synonymous with the LAV. For "yell," "fight," and "argue," the intransitive syntactic form was almost exclusively used, suggesting that the teen speakers were focusing on the action of the verb, not on a direct object. A direct object such as in the utterance "We argue politics" would have given prominence to the message or to a purpose. Rather, the teens used the LAV with a qualifier, such as "constantly" in "We argue constantly."

The teens voiced how they experienced their parents' communicative conduct by linking the LAVs to emotional outcomes. For example, many said the yelling or fighting makes them "depressed" or "feel bad" about themselves, emotional consequences that are especially pertinent in light of how vulnerable these teens were to suicide. Although causal links cannot be quantified on the basis of the current analysis, I believe it is important that the teens connect negative emotional outcomes to parents' communicative conduct.

I applied Dirven and colleagues' (1982) analysis of the linguistic action verbs "speak," "talk," "say," and "tell,"to this study. The LAV "speak" appeared rarely in the corpus. "Say" was important only because the teens used it with a direct object of direct reported speech. However, "talk" and "tell" were two LAVs used by the teens to give a particular perspective to their parents' communicative

conduct. "Tell" was used by the teen speakers in its most common meaning as "inform," but with interesting nuances. When describing parents' communicative behavior as "tell" the teenager experienced "tell" as the parent "always telling him or her what to do." By adding "always" or using a phrase such as "they tell me this" and "they tell me that," the teens indicated that they experienced the action as harassment rather than simply being informed. Another meaning of "tell" was "attempt-to-tell" which was used by the teens to convey their experience of trying unsuccessfully to explain issues or feelings to their parents.

The LAV "talk" figured prominently in the speech of the teens. There were only a few cases in the corpus where the teens used "talk" as an action that meant "satisfying extensive discourse." Most of the uses of "talk" were in the non-occurrence sense (i.e., "not talking," "don't talk anymore"). Attempts to talk were depicted as ending in a "fight." The teens certainly gave the sense that they see "talking" as a positive action. There were references to "wanting to talk" with parents, "needing to talk," or "not being able to talk." However, the kind of extended discourse the teens wanted just did not occur. They see their lives as consisting of too much "tell" and not enough "talk."

During my analysis of the LAVs, I noticed that the manner adverbials that the teens used to modify the LAVs are part of a larger scheme of linguistic use than just descriptors. A better characterization of these adverbials is to see them as carrying important linguistic freight because they are a linguistic resource known as "extreme case formulations" (ECFs) (Pomerantz, 1986). Therefore, I posed a second sub-research question to guide me toward an understanding of the device. ECF

How do the teens use ECFs to characterize their parents' communicative practices?

As described by Pomerantz (1986), ECFs are descriptions or assessments that use extreme expressions such as "every time," "everything," "always," and "the worst possible thing." By using manner adverbials such as "always," "constantly," and "never," the teens were giving a proportional sense to the LAV and in some cases, casting their parents' practices as particularly egregious. Use of

the ECFs signaled to the hearer that the teenager was frustrated, angry, or sarcastic. ECFs were exaggerations that were purposeful. I believe the purpose of the ECFs was, at least in part, to express indirectly in a socially acceptable way, the stress and frustration the teenager felt.

Another use of ECFs was to invoke a "universal audience." The stance of the teen in this case was to argue that a complaint was justified and of sound rationale because the universe of all other teens would agree with the complaint and rationale. The essential message is "I know I'm right because every other teen would agree with me." The appeal to a universal audience is not limited to adolescents and is common in American culture, but to my knowledge has not been previously identified as a linguistic resource associated with extreme case.

For my study, one part of the interview that was very important was the section that probed for present or past suicidal thoughts or actions. All of the study teens acknowledged present or past suicidal thoughts or behaviors and about a third had reported prior attempts at suicide. The teens were asked whom they had told of their suicidal thoughts and behaviors, what responses they had gotten, and what was helpful or hurtful about the responses they received. Most teens had not disclosed any information to their parents about self-harm inclinations. Many of the non-disclosers explained why they had not told their parent and said that they did not want the interviewer to share such information with their parents. Other teens reported that their parents had interacted with them about their suicide thoughts, threats, or attempts--sometimes because the teens had been hospitalized for an attempt or because the teen had threatened to take his or her life. During the exploration of this section, I was struck by the teens' use of a third linguistic device to characterize their parents' communicative conduct toward them. The device was reported speech, especially direct reported speech (DRS). DRS seemed to be an important tool to communicate especially painful information to the interviewer and worthy of a concentrated analysis, leading to RQ-1C.

How do the teens use DRS to characterize their parents' communicative response when the teen

discloses to the parent about suicide thoughts or behaviors?

Some teen speakers whose discourse I analyzed used reported speech to characterize their parents' communicative practices. They used indirect and direct forms of reported speech, with a preference shown for direct reported speech (DRS). The reasons for this preference relate, I believe, to the conditions under which they used this linguistic device. The conditions that emerged as significant were interactions surrounding events related to the teenager's threats or actions related to suicide or during disclosure by the teen to the parent about suicidal thoughts or behaviors. When DRS was used during these times, it seemed to give the teen speakers access to a speaking event in ways that were meaningful to them.

The use of DRS by so many of the teens when describing their parent's communicative practices supported the findings of others that DRS is an effective and economical way of reporting a previous interaction. A direct quote is a more authentic piece of information than an indirect quote or a description of what was said because it implies a greater fidelity to the truth than an indirect quote. By reproducing the "original" utterance, the teen speakers were providing the interviewer access to their interaction with their parents, allowing the interviewers to evaluate it for themselves. Thus, using DRS gives the speaker a way to seem objective in recounting the interaction. By giving the parent's response as DRS, it is dramatized, is vivid, and authoritative.

The teens in this study used DRS when they perceived the parents' communicative behavior related to suicide as painful or hurtful. On the basis of the teenager's reports, parents communicated various messages of "do it," "just don't come back crippled," "then there would be more food for me," and other messages interpreted and described by the teenager as "not caring."

Unlike the findings of other research, the condition under which the teen speakers in this study used DRS was not as the punch line of an amusing story but rather, as the climax of a painful story. By using DRS, I believe the teen speaker was displaying for the hearer an objective accounting of the

parents' communicative action that the teen speaker had already judged as contemptible. The teen speakers did not reveal what judgment they were making of the remark. They simply quoted their parents for evaluation by the interviewer. I believe they thought these quotes were shocking and inappropriate for a parent to say. In my opinion as an interviewer and clinician, the quotes of parents given by the teens analyzed for this section were shocking, inappropriate, and potentially dangerous to a teenager who is expressing thoughts of ending his or her life. An argument with a parent followed by a threat by the teenager, followed by the message from the parent of "do it" could increase the chance that the child will follow through on the threat. The literature suggests that suicide attempts sometimes follow arguments or fights with parents (Brent, 1995).

At the same time, we must acknowledge that we are only hearing the teen's voice in the descriptions of these interactions. The mother's remark "there would be more food for me" may be indicating a minimal level of resources present in this teen's family that would increase the family's stress and help us to understand the mother's challenges with responding empathically to an unhappy teenager.

The second point about the analysis of the teen's characterizations of a parent's actions as painful and disappointing to them is that it allows us to examine those actions as they seemed to the teenager. Although these communicative actions as reported by the teenager are the teen's recall, I believe these parent communicative practices are a new contribution to our knowledge of adolescent risk for suicide. It is important to know and to build on the knowledge that adolescents are hearing their parents say "do it" and "hope you don't come home crippled." Knowing that teens at risk for suicide are hearing these messages from parents during arguments is important, even if these are not the messages the parents intended to give.

In the examination of the teens' discourse about the teen-parent exchanges related to suicide, I analyzed the nature of the reported speech and proposed what purpose was being served by the use and

placement of reported speech. I also reflected on what was being said by the parent, recognizing that this is the teens' construction of the speech event. However, the teens' construction of the parent's words gives one access to data not otherwise reported in the adolescent suicide literature and merits further examination. Overall, this section of the analysis speaks to the help and support that both teens and parents need in navigating the challenges of adolescence.

The other meaningful aspect about the use of DRS is that it is an effective way for teens to validate their assessment of their parents' words. These quotes stand on their own as reprehensible, an assessment already made by the teenager. The DRS is a powerful way to tell a story that was emotionally charged without having to name the way it made them feel. The quoted speech makes credible the teenager's belief that they feel wronged by their parent and it supports their claims that their parents are difficult and that their relationship with their parent is stressful.

The third major research question was to analyze the outcomes of the parents' communicative practices for the teen speakers. The answer is found in the explicit ends (E) (Hymes, 1972) described by the teens and also through the meanings embedded in the linguistic devices they used. Some of the results of this analysis were included in the results of the first research question. I explained the connection to "hopelessness" as part of the discussion for this–the third–research question. The third research question I posed was:

What do the teens identify as the outcomes or effects on them of the parents' communicative behavior and do these outcomes relate to the teens' risk for suicide?

- The teens connected things their parents said and how their parents said them to how the teen experienced their parents and broader aspects of social life. Many study teens linked parents' communicative conduct to the teens' feelings of depression, worthlessness, frustration, and anger, and a desire to separate from parents. There are two important points about this situation. One is that the teens are characterizing their parents' communicative

> conduct as directly related and even contributing to feeling states such as depression, a known risk factor for suicide. The second point is that a relationship characterized by this level of discord is not going to be a source of support for teens with other, non-parent related stresses. So these teens are at risk on two counts: Their parent's behavior adds to their feelings of stress and depression, and they do not see their parents as a source of support.

Using qualitative research principles, I allowed patterns and regularities to emerge from the teens' discourse; thus, I had no preconceived notions to analyze their emotional states. However, affective aspects of the communicative relationship with parents materialized as important. The discourse was imbued with emotional tones and compelled me to consider issues of emotional pressure and release of tension occurring for the teens during the interview. Previous studies that have employed the C-Care intervention have found that, at one month follow ups, the teens' scores on suicide-related risk factors had improved (Eggert et al., 1998; Randell et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2001). Although one can not conclude that improvements were due to the C-Care intervention, the intention of the intervention was to be therapeutic and was based on principles of therapeutic interviewing. Verbal and nonverbal cues during the interview (relaxation, tempering of affective responses) support my belief that the interview resulted in teens feeling better.

My findings have led me to believe that the interview was a means of expression for the teens' frustrations and concerns, in the case of the teens I studied, about their parents' communicative conduct. This assertion is based on (a) the amount of affective tone present in the linguistic resources used by the teens, (b) the remarkable degree of disclosure of demonstrated by the teens during the interview, especially about reactions of parents to the teens' suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and (c) the direct links the teens make between communicative practices of parents and negative emotional states. That the teens with conflict with parents were also more hopeless (based on quantitative

measures) suggests that something about the conflict with parents is producing a particularly negative situation for the teens.

Steinberg (2000) concluded that the most effective style of parenting, the authoritative style, makes its contribution to the adolescent's development through the emotional climate in the home the style creates. The warmth, firmness, and psychological autonomy-granting practices of the authoritative parent contribute to healthy adolescent development. Psychological autonomy-granting is particularly protective against internalized distress (e.g., anxiety or depression.) There is no way to evaluate the style of parenting used by the parents of the teens in this study. But the data suggest that teens did not experience their parents as encouraging them to explore their own opinions and preferences with parents as supportive listeners. The teens' perceptions suggested that communication was often uni-directional, they were told what to do–leading to the teens feeling isolated from one or both of the parents.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the current study. One limitation is that results were based on semi-structured interviews conducted by several different clinician-interviewers. Though the interviews were carefully scripted, the parts of the interview of most interest for this study were the open-ended questions where some teens discussed their issues with their parents at length, whereas other teens were less verbose. That is why I was careful to minimize assumptions based on the quantity of a linguistic device, but focus instead on the usage of the device, the co-occurring terms, and the meanings the device had for the teen.

A second constraint on the study, as originally conceived, was the scant reference by the teens to communicative practices of parents surrounding substance use. One of the initial questions of the investigator was how the teens experienced their parents' communicative behavior in regard to alcohol and drug use. The teens' talk contained few references to parents' discourse relative to substance use

so patterns specific to substance use could not be discerned. Instead, the references to substance use that were made by the teen were incorporated into the analysis of the linguistic devices and were analyzed briefly in Part IV of the results as an outcome of parent communicative conduct.

The third limitation is that the findings of this study should be considered in the rather narrow context of teens at risk for suicide who have conflict with parents. The findings may be applied to other teens who have similar important needs and concerns, but the findings should not be generalized to all teens with conflict with parents nor to all teens who are at risk for suicide. The results of this study, however, do present compelling possibilities for further research.

This study is limited also in that it tells the teens' side of the story only; thus, it is important not to over interpret the results. Additionally, the findings of the current study are based on one interview that provides a snapshot of the teens' perceptions. Teens are mercurial and what is horrifically stressful for them one day, may look quite different the next day. I acknowledge also that parent-teen conflict is a normal part of adolescent autonomy-seeking. However, I believe for most of the teens in the current study that the conflict with parents was an ongoing stressor for them. This was validated in the profile of the teens provided by the High School Questionnaire and that conflict with parents was termed a major stressor for all the teens in the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

I used discourse analysis and ethnography of communication to study teens' perceptions of communicative practices of their parents. The teens selected had all met criteria for (a) being at risk for suicide and (b) having conflict with their parents as a major stressor. During the study, additional research questions emerged. These areas of potential research follow and are organized by (a) discourse analysis, (b) ethnography of communication, and (c) family communicative behavior.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis offers researchers an array of options. I focused only on the teens' words to examine their perceptions of their parent's communicative behavior. The interview itself could be the focus of study, studying in-depth the therapeutic benefits of the interview. Research done by other members of the research team showed that as a result of the C-Care intervention, teens had lower scores on depression and suicide ideation. It has been demonstrated that the interview itself had a therapeutic effect (Eggert et al., 1998; Randell et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2001) perhaps through validation of the teen's experience or as a vehicle to release emotional tension. The teens often told the interviewers that they shared experiences with the interviewer they had not disclosed previously with anyone. The information shared in the interview gives the teenager and interviewer access to the painful experience providing an opportunity for the interviewer to be supportive to the teenager. I identified that there were emotional components in the words, phrases, and expressions of the teens, but analyzing the sequencing of talk between the interviewer and teen could lead to a better understanding of the therapeutic benefits of the interview. The degree of disclosure demonstrated by the teens in the interview continues to intrigue me, especially given that the participants begin as strangers and that the content disclosed is highly personal and had often not previously been shared with anyone. The process of alignment and building of trust between interviewer and teen invites the study of these phenomena as examples of intersubjectivity and episodes of the joint production of meaning.

I was guided by researchers who describe their work as "discursive psychology": Potter and Wetherell in Discourse and Social Psychology (1986); Edwards and Potter in Discursive Psychology (1992); and Harre and Gillett in The Discursive Mind (1994). I mention these authors because they have advanced the theory that mental processes come about through expressions using words, which relates to my findings about emotional expression among the current study teens. The discourses

created are constructed jointly by persons and within socio-cultural groups, thus becoming an important part of the person's framework of interpretation. Of particular interest to me is what Harre and Gillett (1994) termed "redirecting the psychology of emotions"--to treat feelings and displays as "being psychologically equivalent to statements" (p. 146). Harre and Gillett extended the work of Stearns and Stearns (1988) who coined the term "emotionology" to describe the study of the emotions. Harre and Gillet suggested we need to identify the rules of use and the vocabulary of "emotion words." While doing this study, I felt the data were inviting analysis into the area of emotionology because the teens revealed that they had strong emotional reactions to their communicative experiences with parents, some of which were revealed in the linguistic devices they deployed. This a rich area of potential research.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) also direct the discourse analyst to discover what function is being performed by the words of the speaker. I addressed this component of their methodology partially by studying the meaning or significance of a linguistic device to the teens who used the device. Studying the responses of the interviewer to the teenager would give insight into the functional perspective. In these interviews, the interviewers limited their probing and asked few questions like, "What do you mean by saying . . . ?" The function and effect of words and expressions could be facilitated by a less controlled setting, but retaining the contexts of conflict with parents among teens at risk for suicide.

Ethnography of Communication

Researchers of ethnography of communication have studied people's attitudes and beliefs about communicative conduct. Some of the teen speakers in my study indicated their attitudes and beliefs when they expressed premises and rules about speaking. For example, a teenager told the interviewer not to tell the teen's parents about the teen's suicidal thoughts because, "I would never want to scare my parents by talking about suicide." These words revealed her belief that talking with parents about her thoughts of suicide is bad and would frighten them. I discussed in Chapter 4 the finding that the

teens in this study were reluctant to have the interviewer talk with their parents about the teenager's suicide vulnerability. Is their reluctance typical of all teens who are at risk for suicide or was my group different because they also had troubled relationships with parents? One topic for future research would be to study teens' attitudes and beliefs about talking with parents about suicide using an ethnography of communication approach. Some parents believe that talking about suicide will increase the likelihood that their child would attempt suicide because talking about suicide would "put the idea" of committing suicide in the child's head. What assumptions do teens have about talking with parents?

A "rule" is "a prescription for how to act, under specified circumstances, which has (some degree of) force in a particular social group" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 8). When a person expresses a rule for speaking, he or she gives an opinion about appropriate communicative conduct. A rule does not predict how a person will act in a situation, but rather is a linguistic resource the person draws on to interpret another's behavior. Rules can be readily accessible for expression ("You should never talk in church") or be only known tacitly.

The corpus contained both explicit and implicit rules about speaking. One example was the teen who said, "She's my momma and she tells me what to do." Embedded in this utterance is a rule about speaking--that mothers tell children what to do, and children are expected to do it. I did not study these teens' rules and beliefs about speaking, but future study of them could help us understand the way adolescents conceptualize communicative practices with others, especially parents.

In the search for patterns, rules, events, metacommunicative devices, and shared meanings in the talk of the youth in this study, one could move to the next step which is to ask if those elements implicate a speech code--a culturally distinctive, systematic way of speaking that has significance for the interlocutors. Examination of common terms, patterns of expression, co-occurring events, and any direct references to "communication" would follow the work of others who have used speech code

theory and its offshoots to study communicative practices and the interpretation of what the practice means to the interlocutors (Carbaugh, 1988; Katriel & Philipsen,1981; Philipsen, 1992, Philipsen, Hartley, & Huhman, 1999). Looking for distinctiveness, systematicity, regularity, and patterning of communicative conduct would help one to understand if a speech code is at work and what function the speech code is performing. By examining the data for the meanings and consequences of communicative practices, the researcher might be able to make links to aspects of self, identity, and personhood of adolescents. My findings of an "orientation of caring" and an "orientation to hopelessness" suggest to me that these orientations might, with more analysis, unveil a speech code.

Adolescent-Parent Communicative Behavior

The original sample of 90 teens chosen for the current study (77 had usable videotapes) comprised half of the 185 teens who had conflict with parents as a major stressor. The teens with conflict with parents were about one-quarter of the entire group of suicide vulnerable teen. One extension of the current study would be to analyze a random sample of the 735 teens who met the criteria of risk for suicide and study their disclosures to their parents about suicide thoughts and behaviors. How do teens who do not have conflict with parents as a major stressor characterize their parents' communicative behavior, especially in the sampling frame of talking to parents about their suicide thoughts and actions? There were almost no examples of supportive behavior by parents given in the suicide ideation and behavior frame. How do the teens without major conflict with parents characterize their parents' speaking behavior? Do they use direct reported speech to punctuate the encounter? Is the encounter portrayed as painful or helpful?

The sampling frame of suicide disclosures to parents deserves further research. Many teens do not disclose to parents their thoughts and actions about harming themselves, which should be of great concern to researchers and practitioners interested in teen suicide prevention. One of the possible reasons that teens who have conflict with parents do not disclose to parents about these thoughts is

that, according to the current findings, parents are not perceived as responding to the teens in a supportive, caring way. Was this idiosyncratic of my sample of teens or is this a widespread problem of teens at risk for suicide who are have conflict with parents? Studies on teens' perceptions of these encounters are not in the adolescent suicide risk literature. Research on this topic could provide a unique perspective on the risk and protection of adolescents in general, and suicide vulnerable adolescents in particular. Insights gained from this research can guide interventions as well.

One avenue of research not pursued in the current study is the developmental perspective of autonomy and connection in parent-adolescent communication environments. Research has shown that teens are seeking autonomy, but also want the support of parents (Steinberg, 2000). Other research has shown that connection to parents is protective against a multitude of risk behaviors. My study showed that the discourse of the teens is fertile ground for researching how teens view themselves in their communicative relationship with parents. When a teen describes his parent as "yelling " at him "all the time" the teen is positioning himself as the recipient of a unidirectional flow of negative discourse. How does this teen conceptualize "self" in this environment? How does he characterize identity seeking in relation to his parent? How do teens in general perspectivize "connectedness" and "autonomy" vis a vis parents during smooth and stormy times in the teenage years?

The current study has been entirely focused on the perspectives of teens who are experiencing conflict with their parents. What about the parents' perspective of dealing with their teens? Steinberg (2000) recently proposed that the future study of dynamics in families during the transitions of adolescence should examine "whether, why, and in what ways this transition is stressful for parents" (p. 173), how the stress affects the mental health of parents and whether parents who have difficulty with their adolescents are more likely to parent ineffectively. Steinberg concluded that parents need help learning how to manage their families during the adolescent phases. Principles of effective parenting and understanding of how the family members are changing in relation to one another are

needed to facilitate the renegotiation of roles that produce adolescents who are individuated, yet remain strongly connected to their parents into early adulthood.

Conclusion

Words spoken in relationships have the capacity to wreck havoc, but also to build understanding among persons, the power to hurt and to help. From the current study teens' perspective, parents' words and ways of speaking are often difficult for them and sometimes cause the teen to be frustrated, confused, hurt, and for some, even hopeless. But I also see new dimensions emerging from the perspectives of the teens. One dimension is that the teens' words spoken in the interview reveal to the researcher the experiences and meanings of the parents' words to the teens. It is through the teens' words that we, as investigators, can gain new understandings of how the teens experience the social world of their families. These are terms and expressions that will sensitize researchers and helpers of teens.

Another dimension is that, I believe, repeating parents' words in the interviews were painful to recall for the teens, but were also healing for them. Language in use, deployed in the interviews, was a powerful revealer and a powerful healer. Through sharing their experiences, I believe the teens found support from the interviewers, and in some cases, found new and helpful ways of viewing the conflict they have with their parents. Part of the goal of the intervention is to help parents understand how their actions are stressful for the teen. The intervention will hopefully continue in the home as parents have new understandings and tools to nurture, protect, and connect with their teens in the ways that are so important for their adolescent development and so important for protecting their children from risks of self-harm.

The young people of our country, and other countries as well, are at risk for self-harm. Multiple factors play a part in an individual teen's risk. As just noted, the family--particularly the parents--can be a risk or protective factor for the teenager. When there is family strain marked by parent-adolescent

conflict, the teenager may find it difficult to deal with the parent's communicative practices that contribute to the conflict and see the communicative practices as a barrier to seeking support from the parent. Thus, parent-adolescent conflict jeopardizes parent-adolescent connectedness, which has been found to protect the teenager from a variety of other health risks.

I have attempted to clarify the parent-adolescent conflict construct of "family strain" by using a close-to-the-ground approach to study the teens' perspective of their parents' communicative behaviors that they have termed "conflict." Clarification was achieved by examination and analysis of the teens' characterizations of their parents' communicative behaviors. Through analyzing three linguistic devices used by the teens, important meanings for the teen emerged. The three linguistic devices were linguistic action verbials, extreme case formulations, and direct reported speech. In addition, through these devices and their co-occurring terms and expressions, I could glean links to the teens' suicide vulnerability. In this way, this study makes an important contribution to the field of communication research and the field of adolescent suicide research.

REFERENCES

Adams, D. M., Overholser, J. C., & Lehnert, M. A. (1994). Perceived family functioning and adolescent suicidal behavior. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 33, 498-507.

Allison, S., Pearce, C., Martin, G., Miller, K., & Long, R. (1995). Parental influence, pessimism and adolescent suicide. Archives of Suicide Research, 1, 229-242.

Armsden, G. C., McCauley, E., Greenberg, M.T., Burke, P.M., & Mitchell, J. R. (1994). Parent and peer attachment in early adolescent depression. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 18, 683-697.

Ary, D. V., Tildesley, E., Hops, H., & Andrews, J. (1993).The influence of parent, sibling, and peer modeling and attitudes on adolescent use of alcohol. International Journal of Addictions, 28, 853-880.

Barnes, G. M., & Farrell, M. P. (1992). Parental support and control as predictor of adolescent drinking, delinquence, and related problem behaviors. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53, 763-776.

Baumrind, D. (1991). Effective parenting during the early adolescent transition. In P. Cowan & E. Hetherington. (Eds.), Family transitions :Advances in family research series. (pp. 111-163). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Baumrind, D. (1996).The discipline controversy revisited. Family Relations: Journal of Applied Family & Child Studies, 45(4), 405-414.

Baxter, L., & Goldsmith, D. (1990). Cultural terms for communication events among some American high school adolescents. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 54, 377-394.

Beck, A. T. (1986). Hopelessness as a predictor of eventual suicide. Annals of the New York

Academy of Science, 487, 90-96.

Beck, A. T. (1988). Depression: Causes and treatment. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Becker, W. C. (1964). Consequences of different kinds of parental discipline. In M. L. Hoffman & L. W. Hoffman (Eds.), Review of child development research (pp 101-115). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bell, D., & Bell, L. (1983). Parental validation and support in the development of adolescent daughters. In H. D. Grotevant & C. R. Cooper (Eds.), Adolescent development in the family: New directions for child development, 22, (pp. 27-42). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Berman, A. L., & Schwartz, R. H. (1990). Suicide attempts among adolescent drug users. American Journal of Diseases of Children, 144, 310-314.

Bernstein, B. (1972). Social class, language, and socialization. In P.P. Giglioli (Ed.), Language and social context (pp. 173-178). Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Blum, R. W., & Rinehart, P. M. (1997). Reducing the risk: Connections that make a difference in the lives of youth. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Brent, D. A. (1995). Risk factors for adolescent suicide and suicidal behavior: Mental and substance abuse disorders, family environmental factors and life stress. Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior, 25, 52-63

Brent, D. A., Baugher, M., Bridge, J., Chen, R., & Chiappetta, L. (1999). Age and sex related risk factors for adolescent suicide. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 38, 1497-1505.

Brent, D. A., Perper, J. A., Goldstein, C. E., Kolko, D. J., Allan, M. J., Allman, D. J., & Zelenak, J. P. (1988). Risk factors for adolescent suicide. A comparison of adolescent suicide victims with

suicidal inpatients. Archives of General Psychiatry, 45, 581-588.

Brent, D. A., Perper, J. A., Morita, G., Liotus, L., Schweers, J., Balach, L., & Roth, C. (1994). Familial risk factors for adolescent suicide: a case controlled study. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 89, 52-58.

Brook, J., Brook, D., Gordon, A., Whiteman, M., & Cohen, P. (1990). The psychosocial etiology of adolescent drug use: A family interactional approach. Genetics of Social and General Psychology Monographs,116, 111-267.

Burge V., Felts, M., Chenier, T., & Parillo, A. V. (1995). Drug use, sexual activity, and suicidal behavior in U. S. high school students. Journal of School Health, 65, 222-227.

Carbaugh, D. (1988). Talking American: Cultural discourses on DONAHUE. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Carbaugh, D. (1996). Situating selves: The communication of social identities in American scenes. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Catalano, R., & Hawkins, J. D. (1996). The Social Development Model: A theory of antisocial behavior. In J. D. Hawkins (Ed.), Delinquency and crime: Current theories (pp.149-197). Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

Clark, H. H. & Gerrig, R. J. (1984). On the pretense of irony. Journal of Experimental Psychology General, 113, 121-126.

Cohen, D. A. & Rice, J. D. (1995). A parent-targeted intervention for adolescent substance use prevention: Lessons learned. Evaluation Review, 19, 159-180.

Cole, D. A. (1989). Psychopathology of adolescent suicide: Hopelessness, coping beliefs, and depression. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 98, 248-255.

Colmas, F. (Ed.). (1986). Direct and indirect speech. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Conger, R. D. & Ge, X. (1999). Conflict and cohesion in parent-adolescent relations: Changes in emotional expression from early to mid-adolescence. In M. Cox & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), Conflict and cohesion in families: Causes and consequences (pp. 185-206). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cooney, T. M. (1997). Parent-child relationships across adulthood. In S. Duck. (Ed.), Handbook of personal relationships. Theory, research, and interventions (2nd ed. pp. 451-468). Chichester: John Wiley.

Cooper, C. R., Grotevant, H. D., & Condon, S. M. (1983). Individuality and connectedness in the family as a context for adolescent identity formation and role-taking skill. In H. D. Grotevant & C. R. Cooper (Eds.), Adolescent development in the family: New Directions for Child Development, 22, (pp. 43-60). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cox, M. J., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Paley, B. (1999). Perspectives on conflict and cohesion in families. In M. Cox & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), Conflict and cohesion in families: Causes and consequences (pp. 321-344). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Crockwell, L., & Burford, G. (1996). What makes the difference? Adolescent females' stories about their suicide attempts. Journal of Child & Youth Care, 10, 1-14.

Crumly, F. E. (1990). Substance abuse and adolescent suicidal behavior. Journal of the American Medical Association, 263, 3051-3056.

Cumsille, P. E., & Epstein, N. (1994). Family cohesion, family adaptability, social support, and adolescent depressive symptoms in outpatient clinic families. Journal of Family Psychiatry, 8, 202-214.

Davilla, R. A. (1995). An intersubjective methodology for studying children and families. In T. Socha & G. Stamp (Eds.), Parents, children & communication: Frontiers of theory and research (pp. 89-99). Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

De Wilde, E., Kienhorst, I., Diekstra, R., & Wolters, W. (1993). The specificity of psychological characteristics of adolescent suicide attempters. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32, 51-59.

Denton, R. E., & Kampfe, C. K. (1995). The relationship between family variables and adolescent substance abuse: A literature review. Adolescence, 29, 476-490.

Denzin, N. (1997). Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

DiClemente, R., Wingood, G., Crosby, R., Sionean, C., Cobb, B., Harrington, K., Davies, S., Hook, E., & Oh, M. K. (2001). Parental monitoring: Association with adolescents' risk behaviors. Pediatrics, 107, 1363-1368.

Dirven, R., Goosens, L., Putseys, Y., & Vorlat, E. (1982). The scene of linguistic action and its perspectivization by speak, talk, say and tell. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Dixson, M. D. (1995). Models and perspective in parent-child communication. In T. Socha & G. Stamp (Eds.), Parents, children & communication: Frontiers of theory and research (pp. 43-62). Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Donaldson, D., Spirito, A.., & Farnett, E. (2000). The role of perfectionism and depressive cognitions in understanding the hopelessness experienced by adolescent suicide attempters. Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 31, 99-111

Dukes, R. L., & Lorch, B. D. (1989). The effects of school, family, self-concept, and deviant behaviour on adolescent suicide ideation. Journal of Adolescence, 12, 239-251.

Edley, N. (2001). Analyzing masculinity: Interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.), Discourse as data: A guide to analysis (pp.189-228). London: Sage Publications.

Edwards, D. (2000). Extreme case formulations: Softeners, investment, and doing nonliteral. Research on Language and Social Interaction, 33, 347-373.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). Discursive psychology. London: Sage.

Eggert, L. L., Herting, J., & Thompson, E. (1989, 1995).The High School Questionnaire: Profile of Experiences. Seattle, WA: Reconnecting At-Risk Youth Prevention Research Program, University of Washington School of Nursing.

Eggert, L. L., Herting, J., & Thompson, E. (1996). The Drug Involvement Scale for Adolescents (DISA). Journal of Drug Education, 26, 101-130.

Eggert, L. L., Herting, J. R., Thompson, E. A., Randell, B. P., McCauley, E., & Nicholas, L. J. (1998). Reconnecting youth prevention research program: Key findings related to youth suicide prevention. Paper presented at the National Institute of Mental Health Conference: Target Approaches to Suicide Prevention, Bethesda, MD, April, 1998.

Eggert, L. L., & Nicholas, L. J. (1992). Speaking like a skipper: 'Skippin' an' gettin' high.' Journal of Language & Social Psychology, 11, 75-100.

Eggert. L. L., Thompson, E. A., & Herting, J. R. (1994). A Measure of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS): Development and preliminary findings. Suicide and life-threatening behavior, 24, 359-381.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. New York: Norton.

Fitch, K. (1991). The interplay of linguistic universals and cultural knowledge in personal address: Colombian madre terms. Communication Monographs, 58, 254-272.

Fitzpatrick, M. A., & Badzinski, D.M. (1994). All in the family: Interpersonal communication in kin relationships. In M. Knapp & G. Miller (Eds.), Handbook of interpersonal communication (pp.726-771). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fremouw, W., Callahan, T., & Kashden, J. (1993). Adolescent suicidal risk: Psychological, problem solving, and environmental factors. Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior, 23, 46-54.

Gergen, K., & Gergen, M. (1991). Toward reflexive methodologies. In F. Steier (Ed.), Research and reflexivity (pp. 76-95). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gilbert, N., & Mulkay, M. (1984). Opening Pandora's box: A sociological analysis of scientists' discourse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goldsmith, D., & Baxter, L. (1996). Constituting relationships in talk: A taxonomy of speech events in social and personal relationships. Human Communication Research, 23, 87-114

Gottman, J. (1997). Raising an emotionally intelligent child. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gould, M.S., King, R., Greenwald, S., Fisher, P., Schwab-Stone, M., Kramer, R., Flisher, J.J., Goodman, S., Canino, G., & Shaffer, D. (1998). Psychopathology associated with suicidal ideation and attempts among children and adolescents. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 37, 915-923.

Graber, J. A., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1999). "Sometimes I think that you don't like me": How mothers and daughters negotiate the transition into adolescence. In M. Cox & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), Conflict and cohesion in families: Causes and consequences (pp. 207-242). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grotevant, H., & Cooper, C. (Eds.). (1983). Adolescent development in the family. New Directions for Child Development, 22. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Haliburn, J. (2000). Reasons for adolescent suicide attempts. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 39, 12-14.

Harre, R., & Gillett, G. (1994). The discursive mind. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Harter, S., & Marold, D. (1994). Psychosocial risk factors contributing to adolescent suicidal ideation. In G. Noam & S. Borst (Eds.Children, youth, and suicide: Developmental perspectives (pp.71-92). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hauser, S., Powers, S., & Noam, G. (1991)Adolescents and their families: Paths of ego development. New York: Free Press.

Hawkins, J., Catalano. R., & Miller, J. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: Implications for substance abuse prevention. Psychological Bulletin, 11264-105.

Herting, G. R. (1990). Predicting at-risk youth: Evaluation of a sample selection model. Communicating Nursing Research, 23178.

Herting, J. (2002). Is there agreement between high risk youth and their parents? Corroborative measures of ATOD use. Poster session presented at the Society for Prevention Research 2002 Annual Meetings, Seattle, WA.

Herting, G., Eggert, L., & Thompson, E. (1996). A multidimensional model of adolescent drug involvement. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 6, 325-361.

Hofer, M., & Sassenberg, K. (1998). Relationship and family discourse in difference situations. In M. Hofer, J. Youniss, & Noack (Eds.), Verbal interaction and development in families with adolescents. Advances in applied developmental psychology, 15 (pp. 49-63). Stamford, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Hofer, M., Youniss, J., & Noack., P. (Eds.). Verbal interaction and development in families with adolescents. Advances in applied developmental psychology, 15 (pp. 5-17). Stamford, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Holt, E. (1996). Reporting on talk: The use of direct reported speech in conversation. Research on

Language and Social Interaction, 29, 219-245.

Holt, E. (2000). Reporting and reacting: Concurrent responses to reported speech. Research on Language and Social Interaction, 33, 425-454.

Huhman, M. (1999). Adolescents who link suicidal ideation to problems with parents: an exploratory study. (Unpublished manuscript).

Hymes, D. (1962). The ethnography of speaking. In T. Gladwin & W. D. Sturtevant (Eds.), Anthropology and human behavior (pp. 13-53). Washington, DC: Anthropological Society of Washington.

Hymes, D. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication (pp. 35-71). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Jabs, L. (1997). Explaining the Challenger launch: Communicate rules, channels, and metapragmatic terms. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Jackson, S. (1986). Building a case for claims about discourse structure. In D. G. Ellis & W. A. Donahue (Eds.), Contemporary issues in language and discourse processes (pp. 129-147). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jessor, R., Turbin, M., & Costa, F. (1998). Protective factors in adolescent health behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75, 788-800.

Jessor, R., Van Den Bos, J., Vanderryn, J., Costa, F., & Turbin, M. (1995). Protective factors in adolescent problem behavior: Moderator effects and developmental change. Developmental Psychology, 31 923-933.

Joffe, R. T., Offord, D. R., & Boyle, M. H. (1988). Ontario Child Health Study: Suicidal behavior in youth age 12-16 years. American Journal of Psychiatry, 145, 1420-1423.

Josselson, R. (1988). The embedded self: I and thou revisited. In D. K. Lapsley & F. C. Power (Eds.). Self, ego, and identity: Integrative approaches (pp. 91-106). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Kafka, R. R., & London, P. (1991). Communication in relationships and adolescent substance use: The influence of parents and friends. Adolescence, 103, 587-595.

Kandel, D. B. (1996). The parental and peer contexts of adolescent deviance: An algebra of interpersonal influences. Journal of Drug Issues, 26, 289-315.

Kandel, D. B., Raveis, V., Davies, M. (1991). Suicidal ideation in adolescence: Depression, substance use, and other risk factors. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 20, 289-309.

Kaslow, N.J., Wamboldt, F. S., Wamboldt, J. A., Anderson, R. B., & Benjamin, L. S. (1989). Interpersonal deadlock and the suicidal adolescent: An empirically based hypothesis. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 17, 195-207.

Kashani, J. H., Goddard, P., & Reid, J. C. (1989). Correlates of suicidal ideation in a community sample of children and adolescents. Journal of the American Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 28, 912-917

Katriel, T. (1986). Talking straight: 'Dugri' speech in Israeli Sabra culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Katriel, T., & Philipsen, G. (1981). "What we need is communication": "Communication" as a cultural category in some American speech. Communication Monographs, 48, 301-317.

Kiehorst, C. W., De Wilde, E., Diekstra, R. F., & Wolters, W. H. (1992). Differences between adolescent suicide attempters and depressed adolescents. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 85, 222-228.

Kindlon, D. & Thompson, M. (2000). Raising Cain: Protecting the emotional life of boys. New York: Ballantine Books.

King, C. A., Hill, E. M., Naylor, M., Evans, T., & Shain, B. (1993). Alcohol consumption in relation to other predictors of suicidality among adolescent inpatient girls. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32, 82-88.

Labov, W. (1972). Language in the inner city. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lamborn, S., Mounts, N., & Steinberg, L., Dornbusch, S. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. Child Development, 62, 1049-1065.

Leeds Hurwitz, W. (1989). Communication in everyday life: A social interpretation. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Co.

Levy, S. R., Jurkovic, G. L., & Spirito, A. (1995). A multisystems analysis of adolescent suicide attempters. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 23, 221-234.

Lewinsohn, P. M., Rohde, P., & Seeley, J. R. (1993). Psychosocial characteristics of adolescents with a history of suicide attempt. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32, 60-68.

Lewinsohn, P. M., Rohde, P., & Seeley, R. (1994). Psychosocial risk factors for future adolescent suicide attempts. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 62, 297-305.

Li, C. (1986). Direct and indirect speech: A functional study. In C. Coulmas (Ed.), Direct and indirect speech (pp.161-227). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Littlejohn, S. (1996). Theories of human communication (5th ed.). Belmont CA: Wadsworth.

Lucy, J. A. (1993). Reflexive language and the human disciplines. In J. A. Lucy (Ed.), Reflexive

language: Reported speech and metapragmatics (pp. 9-32). Cambridge: University Press.

Manscill, C. K., & Rollins, B. C. (1990). Adolescent self-esteem as an intervening variable in the parental behavior and academic achievement relationship. In B. K. Barber & B. C. Rollins (Eds.), Parent-adolescent relationships (pp. 95-120). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Marcia, J. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3, 551-558.

Martin, G., Rozanes, P., Pearce, C., & Allison, S. (1995). Adolescent suicide, depression and family dysfunction. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 92, 336-344.

Martin, G., & Waite, S. (1994). Parental bonding and vulnerability to adolescent suicide. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 89, 246-254.

Marttunen, M. J., Aro, H. M., Henriksson, M. M., & Lonnqvist, J. K. (1994). Psychosocial stressors more common in adolescent suicides with alcohol abuse compared with depressive adolescent suicides. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 33, 490-497.

Marttunen, M., & Pelkonen, J. (2000). Psychiatric risk factors for adolescent suicide–a review. Psychiatria-Fennica, 31, 110-125.

Mazza, J., & Reynolds, W. (1998). A longitudinal investigation of depression, hopelessness, social support, and major and minor life events and their relation to suicidal ideation in adolescents. Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior, 28, 358-374.

Mays, P. (1990). Quotations in spoken English. Studies in Language, 14, 325-343.

Metha, A., Chen, E., Mulvenon, S., & Dode, I. (1998). A theoretical model of adolescent suicide risk. Archives of Suicide Research, 4, 115-133.

Miller, K. E., King, C. A., Shain, B. N., & Naylor, M. W. (1992). Suicidal adolescents'

perceptions of their family environment. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 22, 226-239.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative analysis: An expanded source book. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Minuchin, S. (1974). Families and family therapy. New York: Oxford University

Morano, C. D., Cisler, R. A, & Lemerond, J. (1993). Risk factors for adolescent suicidal behavior: Loss, insufficient familial support, and hopelessness. Adolescence, 28, 851-865.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). (1999, December). Suicide facts. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved February, 10, 2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/researach/suifact.htm.

Negron, R., Piacentini, J., Graae, F., Davies, M., & Shaffer, D. (1997). Microanalysis of adolescent suicide attempters and ideators during the acute suicidal episode. Journal of the American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 36, 1512-1519.

Newcomb, M., & Felix-Ortiz, M. (1992). Multiple protective and risk factors for drug use and abuse: Cross sectional and prospective findings. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63, 280-296.

Noller, P. (1995). Parent-adolescent relationships. In M. A. Fitzpatrick & A. L. Vangelisti (Eds.). Explaining family interactions (pp.77-111). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Noller, P., & Callan, V. (1990). Adolescents' perceptions of the nature of their communication with parents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 19, 349-362.

Oppawsky, J. (2000). Parental bickering, screaming, and fighting: Etiology of the most negative effects of divorce on children from the view of the children. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 32, 141-147.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.). Newbury Park: Sage.

Pfeffer, C. R., Normandin, L., & Kakuma, T. (1998). Suicidal children grow up: Relations between family psychopathology and adolescents' lifetime suicidal behavior. Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease, 186, 269-275.

Philipsen, G. (1992). Speaking culturally: Explanations in social communication. Albany: SUNY.

Philipsen, G. (1997). A theory of speech codes. In G. Philipsen & T. Albrecht (Eds.), Developing communication theories (pp. 119-156). Albany, SUNY.

Philipsen, G., Horkley, N., & Huhman, M. (1999). "Communication" as a key word in contemporary US culture: An interpretive study. Paper presented at the International Communication Association, San Francisco, May, 1999.

Pickett, J. (Ed.). (2000). The American heritage dictionary (4th ed.). New York: Random House.

Pomerantz, A. (1986). Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims. Human Studies, 9, 219-229.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behavior. London: Sage.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1995). Discourse analysis. In J. Smith, R. Harre & L Langenhove (Eds.). Rethinking methods in psychology (pp. 80-92). London: Sage.

Powell-Cope, G. M., & Eggert, L L. (1994). Psychosocial risk and protective factors: Potential high school dropouts versus typical youth. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), Using what we know about at-risk youth: Lessons from the field (pp. 23-51). Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Powers, S. I., & Welsh, D. P. (1999). Mother-daughter interactions and adolescent girls' depression. In M. Cox & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.). Conflict and cohesion in families: Causes and

consequences (pp. 243-282). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Proctor, C. D., & Groze, V. K. (1994). Risk factors for suicide among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youths. Social Work, 39, 504-513.

Pruit, D. B. (Ed.). (1999). Your adolescent. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. New York: HarperCollins.

Radloff, L. S. (1977). The CES-D Scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population. Applied Psychological Measures, 1, 385-401.

Randell, B. P., Eggert, L., & Pike, K. (2001). Immediate post-intervention effects of two brief youth suicide prevention interventions. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 31, 41-61.

Randell, B. P., Herting, J. R., Eggert, L. L., & Thompson, E. A. (1998). Family influences, deviant peer bonding, self-esteem, and adolescent drug involvement. Submitted for publication.

Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. M., Jones, J. Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R. E., Shew, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, L. H., & Udry, J. R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. Journal of the American Medical Association, 278, 823-832.

Rollins, B. D., & Thomas, D. L. (1979). Parental support, power, and control techniques in the socialization of children. In W. R. Burr, R. Hill, F. I. Nye, & I. L. Reiss (Eds.), Contemporary theories about the family (Vol. 1). (pp. 53-67). New York: Free Press.

Robin, A. L., & Foster, S. L. (1989). Negotiating parent-adolescent conflict: A behavioral-family systems approach. New York: The Guilford Press

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57, 316-331.

Ryerson, D. M. (1987). "ASAP": An adolescent suicide awareness programme. In R. Diekstra & K Hawton (Eds.), Suicide in adolescence (pp.173-190). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff

Rymes, B. (1995). The construction of moral agency in the narratives of high-school drop-outs. Discourse and Society, 6, 495-516.

Sandin, B., Chorot, P. Santed, M., Valiente, R., & Joiner, T. (1998). Negative life events and adolescent suicidal behavior: A critical analysis form the stress process perspective. Journal of Adolescence, 21, 415- 426.

Saville-Troike, M. (1989). The ethnography of communication: An introduction. (2nd ed.). Baltimore: University Park Press.

Shafii, M., Carrigan, S., Whittinghall, J. R., & Derrick, A. M. (1985). Psychological autopsy of completed suicide in children and adolescents. American Journal of Psychiatry, 142, 1061-4.

Shagle, S. C., & Barber, B. K. (1993). Effects of family, marital, and parent-child conflict on adolescent self-derogation and suicidal ideation. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55, 964-974.

Smith, K., & Crawford, S. (1986). Suicidal behavior among "normal" high school students. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 16, 313-325.

SPSS for Windows Release 10.0.5. Chicago, IL: Author.

Stearns, C. A., & Stearns, P. W. (1988). Emotion and social change. New York: Holmes and Meier.

Steinberg, L. (1990). Autonomy, conflict, and harmony in the family relationship. In S. Feldman & G. Elliot (Eds.), At the threshold: The developing adolescent (pp. 255-276). Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press.

Steinberg, L. (2000). The family at adolescence: Transition and transformation. Journal of Adolescent Health, 27, 170-178.

Steinberg, L., Elmen, J., & Mounts, N. (1989). Authoritative parenting, psychosocial maturity, and academic success among adolescents. Child Development, 60, 1424-1436.

Stewart, J. & Logan, C. (1991). Together: Communicating interpersonally (4th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Stiles, W. B. (1992). Describing talk: A taxonomy of verbal response modes. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stivers, C. (1988). Parent-adolescent communication and its relationship to adolescent depression and suicide proneness. Adolescence, 23, 291-295.

Stivers, C. (1990). Promotion of self-esteem in the prevention of suicide. Death Studies, 14, 303-327.

Swedo, S. E., Rettew, D. C., Kuppenheimer, M., Lum, D., Dolan, S., & Goldberger, E. (1991). Can adolescent suicide attempters be distinguished from at-risk adolescents? Pediatrics, 88, 620-628

Taylor, S. (2001). Locating and conducting discourse analytic research. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates (Eds.), Discourse as data: A guide to analysis (pp. 5- 48). London: Sage Publications.

Thompson, E. A., & Eggert, L. L. (1999). Using the Suicide Risk Screen to identify suicidal adolescents among potential high school dropouts. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 38, 1506-1514.

Thompson, E. A., Moody, K., & Eggert, L. L. (1994). Discriminating suicide ideation among high-risk youth. Journal of School Health, 64, 361-367.

Thompson, E. A., Eggert, L. L., & Herting, J. R. (2000). Mediating effects of an indicated prevention program for reducing depression and suicide risk behaviors. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 30, 252-271.

Thompson, E. A., Eggert, L. L., Randell, B. P., & Pike, K. C. (2001). Evaluation of indicated suicide-risk prevention approaches for potential high school dropouts. American Journal of Public Health, 91, 742-753.

Thompson, E. A., Mazza, J. J., Herting, J. R., & Eggert, L. L. (1999). The mediating roles of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness on adolescent suicidal behaviors. Submitted for publication

Verschueren, J. (1985). What people say they do with words: Prolegomena to an empirical-conceptual approach to linguistic action. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Company.

Verschueren, J. (1989). Language on language: Toward metapragmatic universals. IprA Papers in Pragmatics, 5, 5-144.

Wagner, B. M. (1997). Family risk factors for child and adolescent suicidal behavior. American Psychologist, 246-298.

Wagner, B. M., Aiken, C. Mullaley, P., & Tobin, J. (2000). Parents' reactions to adolescents' suicide attempts. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.39, 429-436.

Wagner, B. M. & Cohen, P. (1994). Adolescent sibling differences in suicidal symptoms: The role of parent-child relationships. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 22, 321-337.

Walsh, E. W., Randell, B. P., & Eggert, L. L. (1997). The Measure of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS): A tool for assessment and crisis intervention. Reaching Today's Youth, 2, 22-29.

Wang, W. L. (2000). Family and personal factors influencing adolescent suicide risk behaviors. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

West, M. L., Spreng, S. W., Rose, S. M.,Adam, K. S. (1999). Relationship between attachment-

felt security and history of suicidal behaviors in clinical adolescents. Canadien Journal of Psyciatiry,44.(6), 578-582.

Wetherell, M., Potter, J. (1988).Discourse analysis and the identification of interpretative repertoires. In C. Ataki (Ed.), Analysing everyday explanations: a casebook of methods (pp.168-183). London: Sage.

Wetherell, M. (2001). Themes in discourse research: The case of Diana. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. Yates, (Eds.), Discourse theory and practice: A reader (pp.14-28). London: Sage Publications.

Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., & Yates, S. (2001a).Discourse as data: A guide to analysis. London: Sage Publications.

Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., & Yates, S. (2001b.). Discourse theory and practice: A reader. London: Sage Publications

Wichstrom, L. (2000). Predictors of adolescent suicide attempts: A nationally representative longitudinal study of Norwegian adolescents. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 39, 603-610.

Wieder, L. (1974). Language and social reality: The case of telling the convict code. The Hague: Mouton.

Wierzbicka, A. (1974). The semantics of direct and indirect discourse. Papers in Linguistics. 7, 267-307.

Wierzbicka, A. (1997). Understanding cultures through their key words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese, New York: Oxford University Press.

Wild, E. (1998). Family interaction and psychosocial adjustment of adopted and nonadopted adolescents. In J. Hofer & J. Youniss (Eds.), Verbal interaction and development in families with

adolescents. Advances in applied developmental psychology, 15, (pp. 121-132). Stamford, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Wilson, K., Stelzer, J., Bergman, J., Kral, M., Inayatullah, M., & Elliott, C. (1995). Problem solving, stress, and coping in adolescent suicide attempts. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 25, 241-252.

Windle, R., & Windle, M. (1997). An investigation of adolescents' substance use behavior, depressed affect, and suicidal behaviors. Journal of child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied disciplines, 38, 921-929.

Wood, L.A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000). Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Youniss, J. (1983). Social construction of adolescence by adolescents and parents. In H. D. Grotevant & C. R. Cooper (Eds.), Adolescent development in the family. New Directions for child development, 22, (pp. 93-110). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Yuen, N., Andrade, N., Nahulu, L., Makini, G., McDermott, J. F., Danko. G., Johnson, R., & Waldron, J. (1996). The rate and characteristics of suicide attempters in the native Hawaiian adolescent population. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 26, 27-36.

Appendix A

Measurement of Adolescent Potential for Suicide (MAPS) Interview Questions Used in Current Study

Category I. Perceived Stressors/Strain

Interviewer: This list of problems or stressful events contains a range of things that kids experience–as you look at each one, please check if you have EVER experienced it.

4. Conflict with parents

Please tell me how much the events you checked have been bother in you during the last two weeks.

Of all the items you checked which three are affecting you most?

41. Is there something special about these three events that would be helpful for me to understand (why they were especially upsetting to you)?

Category II. Depression/Anxiety

4. What do you think causes you to feel depressed (whenever you've felt that way)?

Category IV. B. Suicide Risk Factors: Planning/Preparation

Interviewer: I'd like to know if you've talked to anyone about your thoughts and about the help or responses you've gotten. First. . .

13. Whom have you told about your thoughts of ending your life–i.e., have you talked to your Family? (Enter #) Mom: _____? Dad:_____? Other Family Members ____?
Friends? (Enter #) _____
Others? (E.G., Teacher, Counselor–Enter #) _____

14. What did you tell them? (What did you say? Anything else?)

18. What actually was the most helpful and supportive response you experienced?

19. And what was the most disappointing or hurtful response you experienced?

Appendix A continued

Category IV. C. Prior Attempt

Interviewer: From how you've responded here, I'm concerned about you harming yourself and I want to know, have you ever purposefully tried to harm yourself?

15. Did you write a suicide not or tell anyone beforehand? What did you say?

18. Whom have you told this attempt to end your life–i.e., have you talked to your Family? (Enter #) Mom: _____? Dad:_____? Other Family Members

21. What actually was the most helpful and supportive response you experienced?

22. And what was the most disappointing or hurtful response you experienced?

Category IV D: High Risk Behaviors

Interviewer: Now I have some questions about what you do if you are feeling angry or upset with yourself and how you express yourself to others. How often do you. . .

15. Use alcohol and/or drugs on weekends, Fridays - Sundays?
16. Use alcohol and/or drugs during the week, Mondays - Thursdays?

Summarize what you've heard here–i.e., provide feedback of your understanding . Ask for a perception check. Review drug involvement here. Indicate that you will want to follow up on this at the end of the interview.

Summary and Intervention

Summarize your impressions with the student; seek validation for your conclusions: share your specific concerns; share how you will proceed.

Negotiate what will be communicated with parents. Provide assistance in facilitating this.

Call parents

Appendix B.

Description of Scales for Suicide Risk Screen and Suicide-Related Risk Factors

Scale	Description of Content Measured in the Scale	Item #	α
Suicide Risk Screen			
Suicide risk behavior	Suicide thoughts in general and thoughts due to drug use		
Suicide ideation		5	.88
Suicide threats	Direct verbal/indirect threats of suicide		
Prior attempts	Frequency of prior attempts		
Depression	Depressed affect–feelings of loneliness, depression, sadness, that no one really cares, and can't shake off the blues	5	.87
Drug Involvement	Freq. of alcohol/drug use, poly-drug use, drug use control problems	10	.90
Related Risk Factors			
Depression	Feeling depressed, lonely, sad, like nobody cares, can't shake off feeling down or blue, feeling that people dislike me	6	.74
Anger Control	Feeling mad, out of control, shouting and yelling when angry	4	.65
Hopelessness	Feelings of hopelessness	3	.63
Anxiety	Uneasy feelings, physical signs of anxiety, frightening thoughts and thought disorganization	4	.82

Appendix C

Description of Scales for Protective and Family Factors

Scale	Description of Content	# of items	α
Protective Factors			
Self-esteem	Feeling useful, self-respect, positive attitude toward self	3	.68
Personal Control	Confidence in handling problems and that will feel better eventually, adjusting and coping with problems, feeling capable and in control	5	.76
Problem-solving coping	Face problems head on until settled, imagine self solving the problem then handling it for real, think about options, choose the best and take action	3	.76
Family Factors			
Family distress	Serious conflict and tensions with parents, things so bad at home that teen thought about running away, parental drug/alcohol use	3	.67
Family goals met	Degree to which specific goals are met at home: having fair rules, doing things together, parents who recognize things teen does well, and parent that youth can talk to about most things	4	.83
Family support	Satisfaction with close, comfortable family ties, open communication and sharing of problem, time spent together, acceptance and support from family, can turn to family for help	5	.86

Appendix D

Description of Scales for Substance Use and Involvement

Scale	Description	# of items	#
Adverse use consequences	Items began with: *Because of my drug and/or alcohol use. . .:* Intrapersonal effects (e.g., feeling guilty, depressed and angry); interpersonal consequences(e.g., conflicts with family and friends,); and social context consequences created at school (e.g., getting an F grade on report card, failing an exam, and getting into trouble at school	8	.80
Drug use control problems	I usually didn't stop with 1 or 2 drinks; I used more alcohol/drugs than intended; I was told I was using too much; and I felt sick from using too much	4	.75

Note: Used an 8-point scale ranging from 0 = Not At All. to 7 = Several Times per Day in the last month or last year.

VITA

Marian Huhman, PhD., RN

Education

University of Washington	Doctor of Philosophy Communication	2002
University of Washington	Master of Arts Nursing	1979
Avila College	Bachelor of Science Nursing	1972