

Friends and Friendships in Emerging Adulthood

Carolyn McNamara Barry*

Loyola University Maryland

Stephanie D. Madsen

McDaniel College

“I’ll be there for you, when the rain starts to pour.”¹ These lyrics began each episode of the popular sitcom *Friends*. The trials and tribulations of these six “20-something” friends captivated the American public for a decade until Ross, Monica, Joey, Phoebe, Chandler, and Rachel eventually transitioned to adulthood at the show’s closure. Perhaps the show’s popularity was due to having some truth in the fiction: (a) friends can be a proxy family for young people, offering invaluable advice, support, and companionship; (b) friends can be of the same or opposite sex, but these two types of friendship work differently; (c) friends may engage in casual sex, but may also become involved romantically; (d) friendships are central to the lives of emerging adults, especially those who are single and not in a serious romantic relationship; and (e) friends help people to figure themselves out and influence their behavior, potentially for both good and bad. As is the case with all TV shows, there is also pure fiction in this sitcom: these six friends lived in the same apartments in the same city and often held down the same job for over a decade. Instead, instability is more the norm among real-life emerging adults. Also, most American young people get married and become parents in their late 20s rather than the 30s (as the sitcom depicted). So while close friendships are critical to emerging adults’ happiness, search for their identities, and true loves, friends become less important once they’ve figured out the big questions of life and “settle down” in marriage, parenthood, and careers. Still, for emerging adults, friends can fill the growing gap between the time when they leave the families they grew

* Carolyn McNamara Barry is an associate professor of psychology at Loyola University Maryland. Stephanie Madsen is an associate professor of psychology at McDaniel College.

up in and when they establish families of their own.

Can Men and Women Be Friends?

As a chosen relationship between two equal persons over time, friendships can be with persons of the same or opposite sex. Children need same-sex friendships in order to develop into socially skilled, moral, and empathetic adults. From the teen years on, it is common to make friends with both sexes, and these friendships can be of good quality, as seen in Rachel and Joey's friendship—they regularly shared problems, offered support, and simply enjoyed each other's company. Still, people most prefer same-sex friendships throughout their lives, and it is less common for men and women to be friends beyond college or after one friend marries. Friendships between men and women differ in some ways from those between people of the same sex. Men's friendships with women are more emotionally intimate than their friendships with men. And heterosexual men often seek friendships with women to whom they are sexually attracted. Not surprisingly then, approximately half of opposite-sex friends in college report that they have engaged in sexual behavior, which has the potential to hurt the relationship. However, many college students believe that sex enhances a friendship's quality and helps them to consider whether they want to remain "just friends" or move on to something more.

What Are Friendships Like?

There appears to be some truth to the old adage "birds of a feather flock together." Certainly we saw this portrayed in the six characters on *Friends*. All shared the same ethnicity (European American), enjoyed the same activities (sipping coffee at Central Perk), and had similar levels of social skills (though Joey seemed more adept at getting dates than Ross or Chandler). Such similarities offer a common ground that strengthens friendships and helps them to endure.

Women's friendships are often communal—offering companionship, intimacy, emotional security, and affection. Friends Rachel and Monica supported each other with late-night chats. Men's friendships emphasize competition and are more agentic—providing help, a reliable alliance, and self-validation. Friends Joey and Chandler

competed in videogames from matching recliners. Still, men and women value friendships with all of these features (perhaps placing greater importance on the communal).

From the teen years on, intimacy becomes the hallmark of friendships and is related to how close we feel toward our friends. Emerging adults' friendships are even more emotionally intimate than their friendships of just a few years earlier. Relationship quality depends not only on what you give friends, but also what you get. In addition to the healthy dimensions we described above, friendships can also have negative aspects, such as frequent conflict, power inequities, and antagonism. Women's friendships, in particular, can fall prey to co-rumination, where women obsess over problems in their lives in conversations with friends instead of taking fruitful action. In one episode of *Friends*, Chandler sought support from the girls following a break-up; they urged him to talk about his feelings (adding, "if you want to cry, that's OK too").² While such talk offers support and fosters intimacy, it can also lead to depression. Thankfully, positive friendship qualities can help buffer negative ones.

Friends focused on one particular cultural and ethnic group. Likewise, current research on emerging-adult friendships largely ignores cultural influences on friendships, though important differences exist. For example, different ethnic groups seek different friendship qualities. Asian Americans emphasize an amicable exchange of ideas, African Americans seek acceptance and respect, Latino Americans highlight the importance of relational support, and European Americans focus on meeting individual needs of each friend.

How Do Friendships Change across Emerging Adulthood?

Given the many transitions that emerging adults face, it is not surprising that their friendships change as well. Transformations in friendships and friendship networks relate to life stage rather than age. So knowing that a person is 20 versus 26 does not tell us much about their friendships. Instead, knowing whether they are romantically involved or have children is much more informative than age alone.

Friends are frequent companions, getting together at least once a week for no specific purpose (for example, gathering at Central Perk just to talk) and less frequently

for events such as movies, parties, and concerts. Friends find less time to get together as they progress toward adulthood. Despite these overall changes in approaches to friendship networks, emerging adults keep their individual patterns of interacting with friends. So a very social or very shy teen will adopt the same approach to friendship networks as an emerging adult.

The small friendship network on *Friends* remained stable over 10 years—not at all typical of most emerging adults' networks. Instead, emerging adults become increasingly flexible in whom they include in friendship networks and how they maintain these networks. They grow more accepting of opposite-sex friendships, even keeping former boyfriends or girlfriends on as friends. European American emerging adults' friendship networks become more diverse (especially if they are exposed to more diverse social networks through college or work), but the networks of African American, Latino American, and Asian American emerging adults become less diverse (especially if they invest in activities and groups linked to their ethnicity). Relative to the rest of the lifespan, friendship networks are the largest during early emerging adulthood and get smaller later on in emerging adulthood. Although women have more close friends than do men on average, men's and women's friendship networks are of equal size. Still, the friendship network on *Friends* did illustrate the density that is typical of emerging adults' friends. It is common for many network members to share common links (working at the same place, living in the same building) or even to be friends with each other.

How Do Friendships Change when Life Changes?

People tend to form relationships with others in their same social situation. True to life, the characters in *Friends* shared roughly the same place in life when their group formed. They were single, had no or few childcare responsibilities, and were still searching for meaningful careers. More on the side of fiction, the friendship network of these television friends did not change in response to their own life changes, as is typical.

Friends seldom featured the workplace, but many emerging adults find friends there as they explore career pathways and settle into adult work roles. Career stage influences the lives of single emerging-adult men, especially. These men often have large

friendship networks precareer, but have few friends who provide emotional or instrumental support; the time constraints inherent in beginning a career bring friendship networks down to a more manageable size. Career transitions don't seem to alter single women's friendship networks in the same way—women maintain friendship networks during their careers that are similar in size to those they had while in their late teens and early 20s.

The characters on *Friends* had many romantic involvements, and whether emerging adults are single, dating, or married affects friendship networks. Single and dating people are strongly attached to friends, naming friends as their top companions and confidants. In contrast, romantically involved emerging adults change the time they spend with friends. Early in their relationships, emerging-adult couples spend *more* time with friends to introduce them to their new romantic interest. But as the relationship gets serious, the couple withdraws from the circle of friends. This was shown in the final season of *Friends*. By then Monica and Chandler had hooked up, fallen in love, and gotten married. When the group of friends gathered to celebrate Rachel's daughter's first birthday, Monica and Chandler instead opted to sneak away for a romantic weekend alone. Typically, withdrawal is selective, with couples spending less time with peripheral friends and more time with friends who support their relationship.

A few *Friends* characters became parents, an event that typically happens at the end of—or even after—emerging adulthood. Although their tight friendship network remained stable, parenthood normally reorganizes friendship networks. New parents report fewer friends following the birth of a child, and fathers, especially, report less satisfying and supportive friendships than they experienced beforehand.

Family members generally do not try (and in truth feel that they *should* not try) to influence who emerging adults' friends are or what they do with these friends. And friendships don't often influence family relationships. Instead, some emerging adults view their friends as “being” family. Sexual-minority emerging adults whose families reject them sometimes adopt a family of choice from a network of supportive friends. Other emerging adults do this too, as shown when *Friends* characters spent Thanksgiving together instead of joining their families. Likewise, it is common to hear emerging adults describe a good friend as being “like a brother.” In other cases,

emerging adults sometimes consider family members (especially siblings or cousins) to be friends. For example, Ross and Monica were siblings who offered each other companionship and emotional intimacy. Finding close ties among family members provides a ready source of support, but being more involved with peers helps emerging adults weather some transitions better (for example, moving away from home).

Friends and friendship networks also influence romantic relationships. For example, emerging adults often find new romantic partners within their existing friendship networks. This means that the diversity found within an emerging adult's friendship network influences the likelihood that he or she will date someone of a different race. Friends complain loudly when too much time is spent with a romantic partner (but they are likely to support the romantic relationship if they know the boyfriend or girlfriend well). Friends' support (or lack of support) for a romantic relationship affects the couple's level of commitment to the relationship. Perhaps knowing this, emerging adults are sometimes selective about the friends to whom they introduce a new romantic partner. Friends can influence break-ups, but they do so infrequently. Couples don't stay together for the sake of their friends, even though there can be a high cost to breaking up with a romantic partner when they share the same friends. For example, throughout the series, Ross and Rachel had an on-again, off-again relationship. Each time they broke up, it disrupted their friendship network.

Why Do Friendships Matter to Emerging Adults?

From toddlerhood to old age, we have friends. But why are they so important in the lives of emerging adults? First, friends support emerging adults' identity development. Friendships provide feelings of worth as well as opportunities for story telling and frank discussions about religion, life aspirations, moral dilemmas, and relationships. Certainly, friends' banter at Central Perk not only rehashed the week's events, but also tried to make sense of the world around them. The intimacy forged through these heartfelt discussions not only helps with finding oneself, but also nurtures close friendships.

Second, friendships contribute to how emerging adults feel about themselves; feeling good (or bad) about your friendships coincides with feeling good (or bad) about

yourself. Emerging adults who rarely spend time with their friends are lonely. But spending time with friends who validate their feelings brings happiness (perhaps this explains why Joey was perpetually happy, despite not having much success as a working actor). In short, friends can elevate mood and promote adjustment, both of which are useful during the many—and at times anxiety-inducing—transitions that emerging adults face.

Third, friendships support emerging adults' understandings of how relationships work, and, in fact, many discussions center on these ties. Friendships provide occasions to see things from someone else's point of view. This, in turn, helps emerging adults to think through issues more critically and carefully.

Fourth, friendships offer companionship—both in person and from afar—during what can be a lonely time. Over the past decade, emerging adults have increasingly relied upon cell phones, texting, instant messaging, and social networking sites like Facebook to communicate with friends. Online friendships can be good ones, especially when they last long enough to develop into emotionally close and supportive relationships that supplement existing friendships. On the other hand, having 800 “online friends” is not equivalent to having friends you see regularly. In the coming years, maybe we'll know what benefits online-only friendships serve and when it is that technologies improve—rather than undermine—friendships. For now it is safe to say that most emerging adults use technology to enhance existing friendships rather than to replace them.

Lastly, friendships involve intimacy and interdependence, and the development of these skills supports ongoing and future romantic relationships. Same-sex friends regularly discuss their romantic relationships—especially problems. Given that men find the most intimacy in their friendships with women, these friendships probably help them to develop emotional intimacy skills they'll need for other close relationships.

Can Birds of a Feather Shape a Flock?

Emerging adults report that friends affect their major life decisions. In fact, friends' behaviors affect emerging adults' positive outcomes, including church attendance. Friends' behaviors also influence more negative outcomes (e.g., those with aggressive

friends are more likely to abuse their romantic partners). Besides friends' behavior, the quality of the friendship matters, with "better" friendships promoting positive adjustment and reducing problem behaviors. We don't yet know whether these effects are due to choosing a bird with similar feathers or birds shaping each other's behavior—likely it is a bit of both.

What Does *Friends* Teach Us about Friends?

Friends went off the air in 2005, but through DVD releases and syndication it continues to illustrate core concepts about emerging-adult friendships today. This show offers key implications for practitioners working with actual 20-something friends.

1. Friendships are important in emerging adulthood, but their importance changes as romantic relationships become more salient and stable. Amid emerging-adults' numerous transitions, practitioners should ask troubled young people about any changes in friendship patterns.
2. While the *Friends* characters have meaningful and (mostly) platonic opposite-sex friendships, in reality these are less common than same-sex ones. As seen in Ross and Rachel's relationship, the line between a friend and a romantic/sexual partner is often fuzzy, creating feelings of anticipation and disappointment. Practitioners should be careful not to assume that opposite-sex friendships among heterosexuals are platonic *or* romantic.
3. Practitioners should strive to create environments that support friendships with diverse peoples. For many young people, moving out on their own provides their first exposure to individuals with substantially different backgrounds and ideas from their own. Interactions with these individuals can support growing maturity.
4. Friends are influential for better and for worse. Helping emerging adults form friendships with people who show positive behaviors (e.g., Monica's career success) will, in turn, promote successful development. Likewise, emerging adults whose friends are making poor life decisions may find it helpful to distance themselves from these friends and align themselves with other friends who are making better decisions.

5. Friendships are particularly important for marginalized peoples (ethnic or sexual minorities), and efforts to form friendships with allies and similar others will serve these young people well. For some, friendship and family networks overlap. Friends may be close enough to be considered “family”; likewise, some emerging adults consider family members to fulfill friendship needs as well, as Monica and Ross clearly did.
6. Although *Friends*' characters were limited to cell phone use, modern-day emerging adults are savvy with technologies such as texting and social networking sites to support existing friendships rather than supplant them. This appears to be a positive dimension of friendships that makes sense given that they are always on the move. But practitioners should encourage face-to-face interactions, particularly for very personal and life-transforming discussions—not all of life's battles can be won or lost via Facebook.
7. Emerging adults weather transitions best when they maintain existing friendships but are open to forming new friendships. For example, upon moving to the city, Rachel rekindled her old friendship with Monica but established new friendships with the other four. This may be challenging for some emerging adults who prefer to stick close to family, but making friends in new settings benefits them in the long run.

Throughout our whole lives—but especially in emerging adulthood, it seems—we need friends who will “be there” for us.

Notes

¹ The Rembrandts (1995), “I’ll Be There for You,” Atlantic Records.

² *Friends* episodes referenced include “The One with Joey’s Dirty Day,” season 4, episode 14; “The One with the Cake,” season 10, episode 4; “The One with All the Thanksgivings,” season 5, episode 8; “The Pilot” (“The One Where Monica Gets a Roommate”), season 1, episode 1.

Annotated Bibliography

Afifi, W. A., and Faulkner, S. L. (2000). On being “just friends”: The frequency and impact of sexual activity in cross-sex friendships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 17*, 205–222.

Can women and men be “just friends”? These authors sampled American university students and found that some emerging adults can have platonic friendships with the opposite sex. However, approximately half of heterosexual college students have had sex with opposite-sex friends. Among those who added “benefits” to their friendships, some did so frequently and others only every few years. The overwhelming majority of these friends were single when sexual encounters occurred, but a third of these friendships included at least one romantically involved friend. Having sex with a friend was relationship-enhancing in some cases and quite damaging in others.

Allan, G. (2008). Flexibility, friendship, and family. *Personal Relationships, 15*, 1–16.

In a comprehensive and current overview of friendships (including friendships in emerging adulthood), this author highlights instances where friendship and family overlap, support each other, and are in conflict with each other. A sociologist, Dr. Allan especially focuses on societal changes over the past 40 years that have allowed people to enjoy greater freedom and flexibility in forming their own personal relationships. He reflects on *suffusion* in relationships (the merging family and friend relationships) but emphasizes that people have distinct understanding of these two types of relationships.

Bagwell, C. L., Bender, S. E., Andreassi, C. L., Kinoshita, T. L., Montarello, S. A., and Muller, J. G. (2005). Friendship quality and perceived relationship changes predict psychosocial adjustment in early adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 22*, 235–254.

It seems that although friends agree about the quality of their relationship, each person has a slightly different view of the relationship. When friends disagreed about their relationship, they felt less satisfied about the friendship and were more hostile. So while having friendships with positive dimensions is important, noting the extent of negative dimensions in the relationship matters as well, particularly as it can shape an individual's well-being.

Barry, C. M., Madsen, S. D., Nelson, L. J., Carroll, J. S., and Badger, S. (2009). Friendship and romantic relationship qualities in emerging adulthood: Differential associations with identity development and achieved adulthood criteria. *Journal of Adult Development, 16*, 209–222.

How do friendships change as emerging adults move toward adulthood? In a study of over 700 emerging adults, these authors found that people who were more “adultlike” actually had *poorer* quality friendships than did those who had not yet made adult commitments. In contrast, adultlike emerging adults had better romantic relationships. It seems that some of the steps toward becoming an adult (settling into a career, avoiding risky behavior, etc.) might happen because of romantic partners more than because of friends.

Bost, K. K., Cox, M. J., Burchinal, M. R., and Payne, C. (2002). Structural and supportive changes in couples' family and friendship networks across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*, 517–531.

Having a baby changes everything—including friendship networks. These authors followed 137 couples from the time they were expecting to their children's second birthdays. Close friendships were especially important to new mothers over this time period, while their husbands' friendship networks declined and became less satisfying. For all parents, having close friendships protected against feelings of depression during this transition.

Carbery, J., and Buhrmester, D. (1998). Friendship and need fulfillment during three phases of young adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*, 393–409.

These scholars examined how friendship plays out in different phases of emerging adulthood defined by family roles rather than by age: the single phase, the married-without-children phase, and the parenthood phase. Emerging adults rely on friends to meet social needs the most during the single phase, slowing down their reliance as they move to the married and parenthood phases. Women call on friends for emotional support more than men do across all three phases.

Deci, E. L., LaGuardia, J. G., Moller, A. C., Scheiner, M. J., and Ryan, R. M. (2006). On the benefits of giving as well as receiving autonomy support: Mutuality in close friendships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 313–327.

Is it better to *give* than to *receive* support? The originators of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) showed that receiving support from authority figures makes a big difference in people's motivation and satisfaction. This study extends their findings to friendships, where each partner is equal in terms of their authority. Indeed, people benefit by giving *and* receiving autonomy support to/from their friends, but it is the *giving* of such support to a close friend that matters more to a person's well-being.

Demir, M., Ozdemir, M., and Weitekamp, L. A. (2007). Looking to happy tomorrows with friends: Best and close friendships as they predict happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 243–271.

While friendship and happiness seem like a natural fit, the story is more complicated. Do all friends make people happy? The scholars find that spending time with a best friend makes people happy, especially when they also spend time with their next-best friend. The qualities of lesser friends do not matter much in terms of a person's happiness.

Femlee, D. H. (2001). No couple is an island: A social network perspective on dyadic stability. *Social Forces*, 79, 1259–1287.

How do friends affect emerging adults' romantic relationships? Interestingly, this study finds that *thinking* that friends support a romantic relationship matters more

than how much they *actually* support it. These perceptions of support from friends lead to more stable relationships, but at the same time, having a really close best friendship makes it *less* likely that a romantic relationship will endure (perhaps because the friendship competes with the romantic partnership for one's time). It seems that friendships can have both positive and negative effects on emerging adults' romantic relationships.

Greif, G. L. (2009). *Buddy system: Understanding male friendships*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Considerable emphasis has been given to women's friendships with their hallmark high levels of emotional intimacy. The author levels the playing field in this book by summarizing extensive interviews with 400 men to describe what makes their friendships tick, affirming the importance of friendships for the well-being of men and communities. Additional interviews with women allow for appropriate contrast between the two genders. The author presents a typology of different kinds of male friendships: *must* (friends with whom it is critical to share important news), *trust* (highly liked friends, but not as useful as a must friend), *just* (acquaintances who are companions), and *rust* friends (long-time friends). Lastly, characteristics of male friendships from early to late adulthood are described and interwoven with meaningful life events that shape these close relationships.

Hartup, W. W., and Stevens, N. (1997). Friendships and adaptation in the life course. *Psychological Bulletin*, 121, 355–370.

These scholars show that friendships add considerable value throughout the lifespan. People's expectations and descriptions of their friends change throughout life, which makes sense given that people's thinking becomes more sophisticated. Regardless of these changes, people of all ages agree that friendships should involve both give and take. How friends engage with one another does change with age and situation. While having friends generally is a good thing for people, it depends upon the identity of friends and the quality of these relationships.

Ledbetter, A. M., Griffin, E. M., and Sparks, G. G. (2007). Forecasting “friends forever”: A longitudinal investigation of sustained closeness between best friends. *Personal Relationships, 14*, 343–350.

Following a cohort of university students from 1983 until 2002, these scholars examine which college friendship characteristics matter in determining how close people feel to their friends decades later. Young people who felt close to their friends for several years *and* who were similar to each other at the start of the study had the closest friendships in the long run. Interestingly, friends in this study were considered similar if they had related academic majors (Sociology and Psychology, for example) and performed well in playing the game *Password* together, which served as an indicator of communication efficiency.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., and Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology, 27*, 415–444.

As the title of this article suggests, birds of a feather flock together. Homophily (similarity among persons) prevails in social networks from friendships to marriages to work environments. Indeed, people tend to associate with those similar to themselves with respect to demographics such as ethnicity, behaviors such as political engagement, and personal attitudes and beliefs. Geography, institutional structures, and family ties contribute to homophily. Although people generally enjoy interacting with like-minded others, their exposure to diverse peoples and ideas is constrained.

Pittman, L. D., and Richmond, A. (2008). University belonging, friendship quality, and psychological adjustment during the transition to college. *Journal of Experimental Education, 76*, 343–361.

College students often report that the first year is tumultuous. Students at a public regional university were surveyed at the start of their first and second semesters. Students who felt increasingly connected to their school over the first year felt better about themselves and their scholastic abilities, and fit in better with their peers toward the end of the year. Students who felt increasingly positive about their

friendships also felt better about themselves and had fewer problem behaviors toward the end of the year.

Pulakos, J. (2001). Young adult relationships: Siblings and friends. *Journal of Psychology, 123*, 237–244.

Who did you feel closer to in emerging adulthood—your siblings or your friends? This author found that most emerging adults felt closer to their friends, in part because they didn't feel the need to assert that they were different from friends, as they did with their siblings. Emerging adults also did more things with friends and discussed more topics with them, compared to siblings. Once again, it seems that friends play a unique role in supporting emerging adults' development.

Radmacher, K., and Azmitia, M. (2006). Are there gendered pathways to intimacy in early adolescents' and emerging adults' friendships? *Journal of Adolescent Research, 21*, 415–448.

Feeling close to friends—or *intimacy*—was the focus of this study. Emerging adults and early adolescents were asked to write about a time that they felt especially close to a friend. Compared to early adolescents, emerging adults shared fewer activities with their friends, but revealed more about their lives to their friends. Within emerging adulthood, men and women took different approaches to feeling close. For men, doing things together mattered in feeling close to friends. For women, talking about their lives with their friends made them feel close.

Rawlins, W. K. (1992). *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Young adults have ample opportunities to make friends yet often are lonelier than others. Friendships shape choices in young adults' lives but soon become constrained by time and energy as young adults transition into adult roles. Why might these contradictions be? To make sense of these intriguing phenomena, this author considers communication patterns among friends throughout the lifespan, focusing on the *contextual* (private vs. public, ideal vs. real situations) and the

interactional (independent versus dependent, affection vs. instrumentality, judgment vs. acceptance, and expressiveness vs. protectiveness). The author uses this dialectical perspective to discuss and analyze friendships during each life stage.

Reis, H. T., Lin, Y., Bennett, M. E., and Nezlek, J. B. (1993). Change and consistency in social participation during early adulthood. *Developmental Psychology, 29*, 633–645.

What changes and what stays the same about friendships in emerging adulthood? These authors asked emerging adults (including college students and other adults who were out of college) to keep close records of their activities for two weeks, noting any social interaction lasting 10 minutes or longer. Emerging adults recorded details such as the length of the interaction, who initiated it, with whom they met, who else was there, and how they felt about it. As people progressed in emerging adulthood, they interacted more with opposite-sex friends; these interactions came at the expense of same-sex friendships. It was more common to interact in groups in early emerging adulthood, and the authors suggest that a group context may help ease the transition to college. Older emerging adults who weren't in college interacted with fewer friends overall but spent longer periods of time with these friends.

Stearns, E., Buchmann, C., and Bonneau, K. (2009). Interracial friendships in the transition to college: Do birds of a feather flock together once they leave the nest? *Sociology of Education, 82*, 173–195.

These authors examine how interracial friendships form during the transition to college. They point out that for many young people, college is the first time when they encounter others who are different from them. Having a roommate of another race, living in a dorm where there is a lot of interracial contact, and participating in extracurricular activities lead to forming interracial friendships. European Americans start out with the fewest number of interracial friendships and so experience the greatest gains in this respect, but other racial groups have more interracial friendships overall. While diverse ties can be helpful, it is also helpful to have close ties with those from the same ethnic group, particularly for ethnic minorities.

Ueno, K., and Adams, R. G. (2006). Adult friendship: A decade review. In P. Noller and J. A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 151–169). New York: Psychology Press.

This scholarly review of friendships places emerging-adult friendships in context by contrasting them to friendships in later adulthood. The authors review both theory and recent research findings, noting the gaps in our knowledge, especially with respect to early-adult, non-college-student relationships.