Examples

Men and women define intimacy very differently, generally that is, and of course this is not a blanket inclusion of all men and women in each category.  Like most descriptions of male's and female's, there are exceptions to each.  **Intimate relationships** can include up to **four dimensions:  physical, intellectual, emotional, and shared activities (pg. 305)**.  At first glance it may be easy to pick out which dimension is going to be used by men and women to a greater degree.

Let's define each and discuss which are used more for men versus women, or both.  The **first dimension is Physical, the fetus experiences a physical closeness with its mother...  children are continually nourished by physical intimacy: being rocked, fed, hugged, and held (pg. 305)**.  Since we were new to this world we are physical with parents and loved ones.  As we get older it seems that women express more physical aspects in a relationship than do men.  Through my teen years, I was very nervous about any physical aspects of a relationship in public.  Women seem to be more pronounced in showing physical aspects of a relationship in public and private.  In men - men relationships, a general hug is the most physical that most men will allow.

The second dimension is **Intellectual, which is to engage another person in an exchange of important ideas, a kind of closeness develops that can be powerful and exciting (pg. 305)**.  Depending on the type of person and relationship, men - men, women - women, or men - women for example, this can have a huge impact on the type of conversation and subject matter.  As we discussed in the past, men - men conversations usually involve day to day activities, current events, weather, or sports.  Unless the conversation is between two men that are very close, deep conversation is usually absent.  Women are more likely to have intellectual conversations on a deeper level with friends.

The third dimension is **Emotional**, which means **exchanging important feelings (pg. 305)**.  The text describes this as **sharing of personal information can both reflect and create feelings of closeness (pg 305)**.  Men - men conversations (unless they are close friends) usually don't involve much disclosure of personal information.  This type of exchange is more common in women - women, and men - women conversations.

The fourth dimension is **Shared Activities, shared activities can include everything from working side by side at a job to meeting regularly for exercise workouts (pg. 305)**.  Men would define intimacy more in this category and although both sexes put some type of emphasis into this dimension, men are more likely to rate it higher on the priority list than women.  The text states: **In one study, more than 75 percent of the men surveyed said that their most meaningful experiences with friends came from activities other than talking (pg. 307)**.  To have a friend come over and help with a project is very important to men and the building of those relationships.

I think that these differences are dependent on our societal upbringing and our biological influences.  Throughout this text we have discussed the influences of biology and society.  It has become clear to me that even though we have an innate influence within ourselves based on biology, that we should act a certain way if we were a male.  But, since that male could be brought up in so many different cultures, the results on how much influence they give is all over the board.  I think that there are to many variables to give a concrete answer to that question.  It depends on cultural, biological, environmental, and social in

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Men and women generally have different INTIMACY STYLES (p. 307). Women tend to be “somewhat more willing than men to share their thoughts and feelings.” (p. 307) While women bond by disclosing personal information with each other, “men grow close to one another by doing things together.” (p. 307)

I believe these differences are mostly cultural, though they probably have biological roots. I grew up in Vietnam. Over there, men bond just like how women do. They talk about personal things, and can show physical displays of intimacy without being labeled as homosexual. In the US, it is ingrained into us that men have more distant, action-oriented relationships.

As for biological factors, men being more action-oriented may have started during the agricultural revolution. Men are generally more physically strong, and are able to work the fields more efficiently than women. While the men would all work together outside, the women would be inside taking care of the house/kids. The women would have more time to talk to eachother.

Our text defines **intimacy** (p.305) as being close to someone in one or more aspects, or dimensions.  The four dimensions of intimacy between two people include: **physical, intellectual, emotional, and shared activities** (p.305).  The **physical** dimension has to with the sharing of special physical contact and it’s not necessarily sexual in nature.  The **intellectual** dimension deals with the sharing of important ideas.  The **emotional** dimension involves the exchange of important feelings.  Finally, the **shared activities** dimension deals with experiencing important events with someone.

The text cites research that shows women generally are more willing than men to disclose their thoughts and feelings, leading to more intellectual and emotional intimacy (p.307).  However, the text stresses that **gender role is a better predictor of intimacy than biological sex** (p.308). In other words, intimacy is often achieved differently, depending if the person is masculine, feminine, or androgynous.  For example, a masculine man will express intimacy through helping others or shared activities, whereas a man with certain feminine characteristics will show intimacy through sharing his feelings (p.308).