We are Friends, Lets Have Sex!

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**Abstract**

This journal will go into depth on Friends with Benefits Relationships with a strong focus on college students. The journal will go into detail describing that these relationships are not always what they are cut out to be. The major themes covered will be gender differences, initiation because of alcohol, and rule`s between the people in the relationship. The paper will conclude with practical advice on how to handle the three topics mentioned above.

**Friends with Benefits**

 “Friends with benefits relationships (FWBRs) are defined as relationships between cross-sex friends in which the friends engage in sexual activity but do not define their relationship as romantic” (Hughes, Morrison, & Asada, 2005). Being in a Friends with Benefits relationship sounds so good doesn’t it? You can just pick up the phone anytime you want and call your “partner” to engage in sexual activity. It sounds so harmless and drama free. That is usually never the case in these types of relationships, it seems that people have unrealistic expectations that no one will ever get hurt. Is this because of the different perceptions males and females have on FWBRs? Are rules supposed to be established on what’s okay and not okay to do? If rules are established, are they broken unexpectedly? What can you do if the rules are broken? By the time you are finished reading I hope I have helped you see different sides of FWBRs. Maybe they are for you, maybe they are not, just remember, they are much more complicated than 15 minutes of fun.

 FWBRs are most common among college and university students (Bisson & Levine, 2009). FWBRs are usually initiated the first time due to alcohol (Wentland & Reissing, 2011). The researchers believe that is because of the awkwardness of the situation if done sober the first time. Wentland and Reissing conducted four separate focus groups with twenty-three participants. The focus groups topics were Friends with Benefits, casual sexual relationships, one night stands and fuck (sic.) buddies. The researchers found that between the different types of relationships listed above, FWBRs have more rules than the others. They have to discuss whether or not the public should know they are sexually active, when to contact each other, monogamy etc. The researchers found that a general rule was that partners in a FWBR were monogamous unlike one-night stands and FB. When these rules are broken it ends with one partner usually becoming upset and it could also damage the friendship.

 Weaver, MacKeigan, and MacDonald (2011) interviewed twenty-six participants about their experiences with FWBRs. All participants stated that the most important part of a FWBR are the rules that need to be established to maintain the relationship. The most common rule (stated by 65% of the participants) was that FWBRs are not expected to be exclusive to one partner. The subjects talked about how they are not allowed to be mad if they find out their “partner” was hooking up with someone else or started to gain feelings for someone other than them. Another common rule was that in a FWBR there is to be no hand holding, staying the night at each other houses or cuddling. The researchers found that this was because it is to typical of a romantic relationship and that if they do these things there is a better chance feelings will occur, which is not what should happen. 57% of the participants also said that each partner must understand the rules on whether other people are supposed to know about their relationship. The common theme among the women was that they did not want people to know because the fear of being judged by their peers. Yet males wanted their friends to know but not other girls, which is not surprising. Like the article written by Bisson & Levine (2009) some of the participants stated that most of their FWBRs started with the consumption of alcohol. When intoxicated the friends are not thinking about whether it will be awkward. They are in the heat of the moment and one thing leads to another.

 Lehmiller, VanderDrift, and Kelly (2011) surveyed 411 individuals on sex differences in approaching FWBRs. They found that the two main reasons why FWBRs start are because of sexual and emotional needs by the partners. The researchers found that men are more likely to initiate a FWBR because of sex and women are more likely to start them because of emotional needs. These researchers were really interested in the future of a FWBR relationship. They found that most of the results showed that the sample wanted the relationship to stay the same, develop into a romantic relationship or become “just friends” again. They found that women are more likely than men to hope that their FWBRs will turn into something more serious. The researchers also found that women will stay in a FWBR longer because of this sometimes-false hope.

 Gusarova, Fraser, and Alderson (2012) took advanced qualitative research that Fraser had conducted on FWBRs and turned into a quantitative research study. They found that the most common reason to enter a FWBR was to avoid emotional attachment with the opposite sex. The researchers were also very interested in gender differences regarding FWBR. There research showed them that men are more willing to enter a FWBR again than women. Women go into FWBR with wishful thoughts. They tend to hope that their FWBR will turn into more at some point, which we already know. Men are more interested in having sex with their partner without the emotional attachment and commitment. The researchers concluded that is why women have more of a negative outlook on FWBRs, because they tend to get emotionally hurt more often then men do.

**Practical Advice**

 The research that was analyzed above showed that there were three common themes found within the scholarly journals. These themes were: rules established in FWBRs, how alcohol is usually the reason FWBRS are initiated, and how genders differ on how they feel about them. This section will give the reader practical advice on how to handle FWBRs and what to do when you or a friend is involved in one.

 The first theme I am going to discuss is how FWBRs are usually initiated because of the consumption of alcohol. Let’s face it; platonic friends usually do not hook up with each other when sober. The awkwardness to start the sexual encouter is too much to handle for both parties. When college students become intoxicated they become horny and look for sexual partners. Researchers found that people find it easy to hook up with friends intoxicated because they feel so comfortable around each other. I would advise college students to not get too drunk around friends of the opposite sex they have sexual feelings for. When intoxicated it is hard to say “no” when drunk. When hooking up with your friends intoxicated it makes for an awkward next day because most of the time both parties do not know how to interact with each other and the experience could hurt the friendship. The only strong advice I can give is to be careful when getting drunk. You can’t just not drink with your friends so do it with caution.

 Men and Women both have different opinions of FWBRs relationships. Men have more of a positive outlook on them and women have more of a negative outlook. Women who have an emotional attachment to the guy she is in a FWBR with should get out of it immediately (or never engage in it). If one of the partners do not know how to label their relationship then they are going through what researchers call relationship uncertainty (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2011). Guys usually enjoy FWBRs because of the sex. My advice towards guys is to keep having fun but make sure the female is not emotionally attached. It is not fair to lead on a girl who likes you just for a little bit of fun. I know this is easier said than done, but come on gentlemen.

 The last piece of advice I am going to comment on is the establishment of rules between the partners. From the research that I read it is something that is brought up constantly in scholarly journals. Rules need to be established before entering a FWBR. Some of the rules that need to be set are rules on monogamy, definition of relationship (click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zIn7IMf3xI) for an example of a relationship not defined), secrecy, emotions, cuddling, and where and where do sexual acts take place are just some of the rules that need to be established before entering the relationship (click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w79ip9fm-kg&feature=relmfu) to see an example of two parties establishing rules). If both parties understand the rules then there is less of a chance of someone getting hurt. If there are ever questions or concerns both parties should be open to questions and conversation. I would advise that if rules are broken then the relationship should be terminated (for additional advice on FWBRs click [here](http://articles.cnn.com/2008-10-09/living/tf.friends.with.benefits_1_bounty-hunter-dude-foreign-language?_s=PM:LIVING)).

 All in all FWBRs have their pros and their cons. In some cases the pros do out weigh the cons but most of the time they do not. If readers take the advice above then they should not be hurt by a FWBR again. There are same cases when FWBRs turn out well and to you all I say, have fun and wrap it up.

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