

All girl getaways: The importance of female friendship throughout the life-cycle

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A recent article, published in *Annals of Leisure Research*, 'Girlfriend getaways over the life course: change and continuity' by Gibson, Berdychevsky and Bell discusses the burgeoning trend of all-female holidays, the many different purposes and effects for those participating and the relationship to the life-cycle of the women. The basis of the article was a study conducted by the authors featuring 79 women of different race, social class, nationality and marital and familial status. They were interviewed about their experiences of an all-female holiday and the information was categorised into themes such as bonding, escape, personal growth and adventure. For each person they fulfil a different role, depending on life stage. Their findings were divided into four life-stages: adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood.

During adolescence, all girl holidays are a bond forming experience where participants get to discover the nitty-gritty of their friends' personalities, form another dimension to their friendship and use their experiences to create unforgettable memories. They live out their desire for independence and express their rebellion and need to break away from family.

At the early adult stage female getaways were found to represent adventure, experimentation, often post-graduation when life changing decisions are being made about their future. These getaways form a 'rite of passage' to the next life stage away from education towards career and family.

Female breaks in middle [adulthood](#) enable women to feel young and free and have a break from family commitment. On the other hand they often facilitate less joyful transitions such as divorce or a traumatic life event like the death of a loved one. This life stage is when women have a drive to fulfil travel dreams whilst they are still able.

During late adulthood, women see a female getaway as a statement of independence and confidence they may not have had in younger life, when they would not have travelled without a husband. Women of this age also use travels as a coping strategy for widowhood. One widow might travel with another to offer support, companionship and friendship. At this life stage friendship is a very important part of [women's](#) lives. Friendship is cherished and travelling together helps cement this bond and form valuable memories.

For some, female getaways are an occasional thing but for others they are a whole life phenomenon. This article examines the importance of a girls' getaway to reconnect intimate [friendships](#) which have an important influence on female identities. Female group leisure time is the ideal opportunity to converse, support, self-discover and share resources and overall socialise in a way that positively impacts health and well-being throughout life.

More information: Heather J. Gibson, Liza Berdychevsky & Heather L. Bell, Girlfriend getaways over the life course: change and continuity, *Annals of Leisure Research*, Volume 15, Issue 1, 2012, [DOI: 10.1080/11745398.2012.670963](#)

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