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# Elements Affecting Disclosure of Abusive Dating Relationships: Attachment Style Sex of Research Participant and Importance of Disclosure Target

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ELEMENTS AFFECTING DISCLOSURE OF ABUSIVE DATING

RELATIONSHIPS: ATTACHMENT STYLE, SEX OF RESEARCH

PARTICIPANT, AND IMPORTANCE OF DISCLOSURE TARGET

by

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ABSTRACT

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Michael Alexander Keefer
Old Dominion University, 1998
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This study examined the influence of attachment style,
sex of research participant, and relationship importance of
disclosure target on the self-disclosure of abuse in dating
relationships using a hypothetical dating aggression
scenario. The two dependent variables were willingness to
disclose and perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure.
Research participants were classified according to
Bartholomew's model of adult attachment (i.e., secure,
preoccupied, dismissing, or fearful). Attachment style of
research participants significantly affected perceived
helpfulness of self-disclosure. Fearful participants
perceived the most helpfulness from disclosure and were the
most willing to self-disclose. Sex of research participant
did not have a significant effect on willingness to self-
disclose or perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. Male
and female research participants showed nearly identical
disclosure patterns except that female participants were more
affected by the relationship importance of disclosure
targets. Female research participants were more willing to
self-disclose and perceived more helpfulness from disclosing
to important target persons. Female research participants
were less willing to self-disclose and perceived less

helpfulness from disclosing to unimportant target persons. Relationship importance of disclosure target had significant effects for both willingness to self-disclose and perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. Research participants were more willing to self-disclose and perceived more helpfulness when disclosing to targets they judged important (significant) as compared to unimportant (non-significant) targets. Overall, the results suggested that attachment style and relationship importance of disclosure target are valuable concepts for understanding self-disclosure patterns. Results also question the relevance of sex of research participant for understanding self-disclosure patterns except when sex of research participant is interacting with importance of disclosure target.

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The successful completion of this thesis has added strength to my belief in the old saying: Success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. For realizing this, I want to thank my family and friends, especially Atlas, for encouraging me to maintain the creative child in me. Additionally, I want to thank my teachers, especially Dr. Derlega, for helping me learn the lessons of hard work, discipline, and precision. To everyone, Thanks a lot!

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INTRODUCTION[*]

"Forgive me father for I have sinned." This phrase is the beginning of a traditional confession when individuals reveal information about an incident that causes them grief. In doing so, distressed persons are hoping for reconciliation between their self and God, but also hoping for relief from the distress they feel inside. Disclosure of sins to the father-confessor has been, for many persons, the start on the road to spiritual and mental recovery. The Bible says, "Confess your sins one to another and pray with one another so that you may be healed" (James 5:16). The importance of personal disclosure has moved, however, from the "house of the holy" to the "chair of the clinician." Despite the differences of location, the importance of self-disclosure is still of the same magnitude. To the same degree that the priest take the confessional seriously, clinical psychologists and therapists should face their tasks with equal seriousness and responsibility.

As the priest found the relationship with God to be the centerpiece of confession, today's psychological professionals find the mental and physical well-being of an individual to be their focus. It is logical to think that mental turmoil (related to repressed feelings) could cause mental dysfunction, but research has revealed that there are physical ramifications as well. Pennebaker (1990) reported that actively repressing one's thoughts and feelings could gradually undermine the body's defenses by causing problems

[*]  This thesis adheres to the format of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1994).

with the immune system, the heart and vascular systems, and even the biochemical workings of the brain and nervous system.

Although the clinical psychologist's position as recipient of disclosure is clear, the clinician is often not the individual chosen for self-disclosure. This role is more commonly asked of family members, close friends, and other individuals who the discloser feels is important in their life. A meaningful question for research psychologists to answer is: what factors affect disclosure to various members of one's social network?

Much research has been conducted on the elements that affect an individual's decisions about whether or not to self-disclose about oneself as well as to whom to self-disclose. One factor influencing disclosure that has been frequently studied is the gender of the discloser. Most studies find that women disclose more than men as judged by self-report and behavioral measures (Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Cunningham, 1981; Derlega, Durham, Gockel, & Sholis, 1981; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991; Gitter & Black, 1976; Morgan, 1976; Morton, 1978; Reisman, 1990; Williams, 1985). This trend also seems to exist across nationality and ethnic background. Despite the majority of agreement that women are more disclosing and intimate, Cunningham (1981) in a longitudinal study, concluded that male college students rate themselves as more open and disclosing than male students of ten years ago. Furthermore, Reisman (1990) found that males want to be more disclosing.

The trend for males being more self-disclosing, now compared to many years ago, and to express a greater preference to self-disclose, now than in the past, is probably continuing to close the gap of gender differences in self-disclosure. But, at this point, the majority of research indicates that women demonstrate greater quantities of self-disclosure.

Research shows that women are not only the disclosers of more information, but that they are the receivers of more disclosures as well (Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Reisman, 1990; Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988). Logically, if women disclose more, and are more likely to be disclosure recipients, they are probably disclosing to other women, more than to men. Despite a possible feedback loop of women reciprocating relatively high disclosures to one another, research shows that men also prefer to disclose to women. Studies show that men do not disclose as intimately to their closest male friends as they do to their closest female friends (Dosser, Balswick, & Halverson, 1986; Reis, Senchak, & Solomon, 1985; Winstead, Derlega, & Wong, 1984). Some studies report that men find their relationships with women to be more emotionally close than their relationships with men (Bell, 1981; Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Fischer & Narus, 1981). Above all else, the dyad with the highest level of disclosure tends to be the female-female, best-friend pair (Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991; Fischer & Narus , 1981; Safilios-Rothschild, 1981). As Buhrke and Faqua (1987) note, "in same-sex relationships, women have more contact when under stress; are closer; more satisfied

with initiation, balance, and closeness; and perceive themselves as knowing the other and being known by the other more that do men" (p. 339).

There have been many studies which show that the topic of information and setting in which disclosure occurs affects the level of disclosure. Caldwell and Peplau (1982) found "clear sex differences in the nature of interactions with friends. Women showed emphasis on emotional sharing and talking; men emphasized activities and doing things together" (p. 721). Women also disclose more when under stress (Buhrke & Faqua, 1987). Furthermore, women are more willing than men to disclose information about their feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, and fear to their female friends (Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988). Above all else, women's desire for intimacy (marked by a very close association, contact, or familiarity) in disclosure has been found in many studies (Bell, 1981; Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Derlega, Durham, Gockel, & Sholis, 1981; Dosser, Balswick, & Halverson, 1986; Gitter & Black, 1976; Morgan, 1976; Morton, 1978; Reis, Senchak, & Solomon, 1985; Reisman, 1990; Safilios-Rothschild, 1981; Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988; Williams, 1985). Logically, men tend to disclose less than women on "feminine" topics, which emphasize personal concerns and sensitivities. Interestingly, men and women have not been found to differ in disclosure on "neutral topics'' or on "masculine topics" which emphasize assertiveness (Derlega et al., 1981). Furthermore, Derlega, Winstead, Wong, and Hunter (1985) found that men, among acquaintances, may exceed women

in disclosing personal information in order to control the development of the relationship. "It seems safe to conclude that intimate relationships serve as a general social goal" according to Reis, Senchak, and Solomon (1985, p. 1204). But in terms of expressing strong emotional or intimate feelings, research indicates that women demonstrate a greater quality and quantity of self-disclosure.

The clear dichotomy that exists between males and females, relating to if, to whom and the quality of disclosure, is often explained by sex-role differences (Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Derlega & Chaikin, 1976; Kleinke & Kahn, 1980; Morgan, 1976; Reis, Senchak, & Solomon, 1985; Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988; Williams, 1985). Males have been rated as "better adjusted" when failing to disclose personal problems. Conversely, women have been seen as "better adjusted" when they disclose personal problems (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976). Moreover, highly disclosing females are preferred when disclosing information about a parental suicide or about sexual feelings, but less favorably when disclosing about feelings of competitiveness (commonly associated with male sex-typed behavior). Males, however, have been rated less favorably when disclosing on all topics (Kleinke & Kahn, 1980). The less favorable ratings attributed to self-disclosing men has been attributed to appearing emotionally vulnerable (Williams, 1985). The research shows that Western societies enforce sex-role stereotypes. Men are expected traditionally to be strong, aggressive and unemotional; especially around other men.

Women, on the other hand, are expected to be emotional; they are also not expected to step into the aggressive/assertive realm of men. Men or women breaking these societal expectations, may suffer ridicule from society.

Another variable that affects willingness to disclose is one's relationship to the various people to whom one may consider disclosing. It is reasonable to expect that a person would be more willing to disclose to those individuals that he or she feels are closer to them. Several studies have simplified the numerous potential targets of disclosure into two categories, important (significant) and unimportant (nonsignificant) others. Many studies have defined important others as parents, siblings, and best friends (Berger, 1990; Cowles & Rogers, 1994; Marks, Bundeck, Richardson, Ruiz, Maldonado, & Mason, 1992). Marks and his associates (1992), when studying self-disclosure of an HIV-positive diagnosis, found that HIV seropositive individuals were more likely to disclose to important compared to unimportant others.

A newcomer in the study of factors affecting self-disclosure is the concept of attachment. Attachment theory was originally used to classify the way infants bonded to their mothers. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) found distinctive patterns of infants' reactions to the "strange situation," a setting in which the mother left her child in an experimental observation room and subsequently returned after a relatively short period of time. The distinct reactions of the infants to the mother's return were classified as either secure, avoidant, and ambivalent. Secure

infants cried after noticing their mother's absence and
stopped crying after the mother returned, picked up, and
comforted them. Secure infants were willing to explore new
environments as long as the mother was in sight. The mothers
of secure infants were characterized as loving and consistent
in their style of nurturing to their child. Avoidant infants
also cried after realizing the mother's absence, but they
would tend to push away from the returning mother's
comforting embrace. The pushing away demonstrated by avoidant
infants was interpreted as the infant's way of punishing the
mother for leaving it, and the avoidant reaction was
associated with mothers who demonstrated inconsistent
caregiving styles to their children. Ambivalent infants
tended to display no differences in behavior whether the
mother was in the infant's presence or not. The ambivalence
of these infants to their mother's return was attributed to
the infants being unaccustomed to receiving their mother's
attention or nurturing. Overall, attachment styles have been
associated with mothers' caregiving style (environmental
aspects that influence children's psychological development)
and how children are likely to react to future strange
situations (reactions to life's difficulties) (Bartholomew,
1990).

Researchers believe that these differing infant
characteristics might affect a child's general personality
and the way a child might later interact with his or her
environment. Support for this hypothesis has been
demonstrated in many studies, (e.g., Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby,

1982b). Implicit in the models of adult attachment is the belief that the type of intimate reactions that Ainsworth et al. (1978) found with infants and their mothers developed into the intimate responses of adults to their friends and loved ones. With the expansion of attachment from describing children to describing adults, new models (based closely on the infant models of Ainsworth and Bowlby) have been developed.

Bartholomew's four-category model of adult attachment (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Horowitz, Rosenberg, & Bartholomew, 1993) has been increasingly used in research. This model presents a two by two matrix based on one's "model of self" (positive or negative views of self) and one's "model of others" (positive or negative views of others). The four cells, which represent the different styles of adult attachment, are: secure (positive view of self and others), preoccupied (negative view of self but positive view of others), dismissing (positive view of self but negative view of others), and fearful (negative view of both self and others). See Figure 1 for a summary of Bartholomew's model.

In Bartholomew's (1990) model of adult attachment, secure attachment is typified by comfort with intimacy and autonomy. Also, secure individuals have an expectation that other people are generally accepting and responsive. Preoccupied attachment is symbolized by being absorbed with finding and maintaining relationships. Preoccupied individuals have a sense of unworthiness in love relations

Figure 1

Bartholomew's Model of Adult Attachment

MODEL OF SELF
(dependence)

|  | Positive (Low) | Negative (High) |
|---|---|---|
| **Positive** (Low) | CELL I **SECURE** Comfortable with Intimacy and autonomy | CELL II **PREOCCUPIED** Preoccupied with relationships |
| MODEL OF OTHERS (Avoidance) | | |
| **Negative** (High) | CELL IV **DISMISSING** Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependence | CELL III **FEARFUL** Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant |

Note. From "Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four-category model" by K. Bartholomew and L. M. Horowitz, 1991, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61, p. 227.

combined with a positive evaluation of others. Dismissing attachment is characterized by purposefully ignoring intimacy and being overly independent. Dismissing individuals feel worthy of love but protect themselves from others who they feel might be potentially threatening. Lastly, fearful attachment is exemplified by fear of intimacy and social avoidance. Fearful individuals have a sense of personal unworthiness, but they also find others to be untrustworthy and rejecting. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) reported the percentages of the different attachment styles in the general population to be approximately 49% secure, 12% preoccupied, 18% dismissing, and 21% fearful.

Although adult attachment theory has been used primarily in studying adult romantic interactions (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and interactions with friends and family (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), it has also been used as an assessment tool for examining other facets of life. Hazan and Shaver (1990) and others have examined the link between attachment and work-related issues, general task management styles, and interpersonal skills related to coworkers and bosses. Mikulincer and Florian (1994) studied attachment and reactions to stressful situations. Kirkpatrick (1994) examined the impact of attachment on religious beliefs and behavior. Despite the wide variety of directions that researchers have ventured into using attachment theory, one direction of research that could prove to be highly

beneficial is in the area of counseling psychology. Specifically, attachment style could clarify if, to whom, and the quality of self-disclosure about dating aggression situations. Bartholomew and Thompson (1995), state that adult attachment style is "clearly applicable to couples counseling, family counseling, abusive adult relationships, parenting, grief counseling, loss in general, and child abuse" (p. 488). Despite suggestions to use attachment in the areas of counseling and abuse, there have been few studies on this topic.

In the present study, Bartholomew's model was used to investigate the possible impact of attachment style on willingness to self-disclose about aggression in dating relationships. Research participants were first classified according to their attachment style: secure, preoccupied, fearful, or dismissing. Steps were taken to assess whether attachment style and the sex of research participants affect willingness to disclose the aggression in dating relationships to persons who are perceived to be important as compared to unimportant disclosure targets. It is expected that differences in willingness to self-disclose will be evident depending on the various attachment styles. It is also expected that the sex of the research participants will affect willingness to self-disclose. It is expected that female, as compared to male research participants, will be more willing to self-disclose. It is also expected that there will be a difference in the willingness to self-disclose according to the relationship importance of the disclosure

targets. Research participants should be more willing to disclose to important, as compared to unimportant, targets.

Parallel to the predictions about willingness to self-disclose, Bartholomew's model was used to investigate the possible impact of attachment style on helpfulness of self-disclosure about abuse in dating relationships. Research participants were first classified according to their attachment style: Secure, Preoccupied, Fearful, or Dismissing. Steps were then taken to assess whether attachment style and the sex of research participants affect helpfulness of disclosure about abuse in dating relationships to important versus unimportant disclosure targets. It is expected that differences in helpfulness of self-disclosure will be evident depending on the various attachment styles. It is also expected that the sex of the research participants will affect the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. It is expected that female, as compared to male research participants, will perceive more helpfulness from self-disclosure. There is an expected difference in the helpfulness of self-disclosure according to the relationship importance of the disclosure targets. Research participants should perceive more helpfulness from disclosures to important, as compared to unimportant targets.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. There will be an attachment style main effect found for the willingness to self-disclose about a hypothetical, abusive dating relationship. Secure individuals will be most willing to reveal about their abusive

relationship followed by preoccupied, then fearful, and lastly dismissing individuals (secure > preoccupied > fearful > dismissing). The rationale for this disclosure ordering comes primarily from Mikulincer and Nachshon's (1991) research which found that secure and ambivalent (preoccupied) individuals show more self-disclosure than avoidant (dismissing and fearful) individuals. The idea that dismissing individuals should disclose more than fearful individuals is derived from the Bartholomew model. While both fearful and dismissing may be socially isolated and avoid intimacy, the characterization of the dismissing individual is of someone who shows "independence and invulnerability" (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, p. 227). If the dismissing individual were to disclose about an abusive relationship, it would not only be a gesture of intimacy but a display of vulnerability. Dismissing individuals would certainly be unlikely to disclose according to the Bartholomew model.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a sex of research participant main effect found for the willingness to self-disclose a hypothetical abusive dating relationship. Females will be more willing to self-disclose about being in an abusive dating relationship. Most studies show that females are more likely to disclose than males (Buhrke & Faqua, 1987; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Cunningham, 1981; Derlega, Durham, Gockel, & Sholis, 1981; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991; Gitter & Black, 1976; Morgan, 1976; Morton, 1978; Reisman, 1990; Williams, 1985).

Hypothesis 3. There will be an importance of disclosure

target main effect found for willingness to self-disclose a
hypothetical abusive dating relationship. Research
participants will be more willing to self-disclose to
important disclosure targets as compared to unimportant
disclosure targets. There have been few studies that have
investigated the effects of the importance of disclosure
target persons on self-disclosure, but Marks et al. (1992)
when studying self-disclosure of HIV, found that HIV
seropositivity individuals were statistically more likely to
disclose to important as compared to unimportant others.

Hypothesis 4. There will be an attachment style main
effect found for the perceived helpfulness of disclosing a
hypothetical abusive dating relationship. Secure individuals
will perceive the most helpfulness from self-disclosing about
their abusive relationship followed by preoccupied, then
fearful, and lastly dismissing individuals (secure >
preoccupied > fearful > dismissing). There has been no known
research done on the effects of adult attachment related to
the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. The rationale
for the ordering of attachment style's effect on the
perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure comes primarily from
the rationale of the willingness to self-disclose attachment
ordering (Hypothesis 1).

Hypothesis 5. There will be a sex of research
participant main effect found for the perceived helpfulness
of disclosing a hypothetical abusive dating relationship.
Females will be more willing to self-disclose information
about being in an abusive dating relationship. There has been

no known research done on the effects of sex of research
participant on the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure.
The rationale for the sex of research participants' effect on
perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure comes primarily from
the rationale of the willingness of females to self-disclose
(Hypothesis 2).

Hypothesis 6. There will be an importance of disclosure
target main effect found for the perceived helpfulness of
disclosing a hypothetical abusive dating relationship.
Research participants will be more willing to self-disclose
to important disclosure targets as compared to unimportant
disclosure targets. There has been no known research done on
the effects of importance of disclosure target on the
perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. The rationale for
the ordering of importance of disclosure targets' effect on
perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure comes primarily from
the rationale of the willingness to self-disclose importance
of disclosure target ordering (Hypothesis 3).

METHOD

Research Participants

Two hundred and ten research participants served in this study (106 females and 104 males). The research participants were introductory psychology students from Old Dominion University. Of the 210 research participants, 139 (66%) were 18-20 years old, 40 (19%) were 21-23 years old, 13 (6%) were 24-26 years old, 8 (4%) were 27-29 years old , and 10 (5%) were 30 years old or more. Fifteen research participants (7%) described themselves as "Asian", 66 (31%) as "Black", 2 (1%) as "Middle-Eastern", 117 (56%) as "White", and 10 (5%) as "Other". Additionally, 78 (37%) were judged "secure" according to Bartholomew's adult attachment system, 31 (15%) as "preoccupied", 62 (29%) as "fearful", and 39 (19%) as "dismissing." The participants received extra course credit for their participation in this study.

Measures

Attachment style. To assess the attachment style independent variable, research participants were asked to complete the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Horowitz, Rosenberg, & Bartholomew, 1993). The RQ is made up of four short paragraphs. Each paragraph describes one of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing). Research participants were asked a question about, "Which of the following four statements best describes you?"

    A.   It is easy for me to become emotionally close to

others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me. (Secure)

B. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them. (Preoccupied)

C. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others. (Fearful)

D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me. (Dismissing)

Importance of disclosure targets. To assess the importance of disclosure target independent variable, fifteen target persons were compiled in the "How Close Do You Feel To ..." section of the questionnaire [best male friend, best female friend, mother, father, brother, sister, male coworker, female coworker, boss, religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.), professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.), male stranger, female stranger, new female acquaintance, and new male acquaintance]. The list of

disclosure targets was loosely based on a similar list used by previous researchers to assess willingness to self-disclose HIV infection to various disclosure targets (Hays, McKusick, Pollack, Hillard, Hoff, & Coates, 1992; Marks et al., 1992).

Participants were asked to rate each of the disclosure targets on a 4-point Likert scale (-2, -1, +1, and +2). Research participants were asked to respond to this statement, "Please use the following scale to rate the degree to which you agree that the following people are important or emotionally significant to you." The negative ratings represent a lack of importance or significance, with -2 being the least important or significant. The opposite is true of the positive ratings, with +2 being the most important or significant. If participants did not have the particular target person (e.g., the father was deceased), they could select E ("doesn't apply"). In this way, research participants were able to identify for themselves the importance of individual target persons as opposed to the target persons being pre-dichotomized (important or unimportant) by the experimenter.

After rating all of the disclosure targets as important (rated positively, +2 or +1), unimportant (rated negatively, -1 or -2), or "doesn't apply" (these targets were eliminated from any further analysis for that participant), the participants' subsequent ratings for the dependent variables (which were also rated for each of the 15 disclosure targets) were kept separated according to their initial rating of

importance (important or unimportant). For example, if participant 1 rated his or her mother and father as important (positively rated), then all further dependent variable ratings which applied to the mother and the father were placed into the important grouping of the importance of disclosure target independent variable. In this way, each participant selected his or her own important and unimportant disclosure targets and provided multiple dependent variable ratings for the targets on the importance of the disclosure target person independent variable (according to the number of targets rated important or unimportant).

For each participant, there are multiple dependent variable ratings for both levels of the importance of disclosure target independent variable, depending on the number of disclosure targets that the participant rated important or unimportant. For the single importance of disclosure target dependent variable rating, the mean of the multiple important target's ratings for each dependent variable was calculated. For example, if participant 1 rated his or her mother and father as significant, the subsequent ratings for the mother and father for the dependent variable of willingness to share were averaged in order to arrive at a single score: Participant 1's willingness to disclose to important targets. In this way, two scores were derived for each participant for each dependent variable: the mean of all the important target's dependent variable ratings become the single "important" rating and the mean of all the unimportant target's dependent variable ratings become the single

"unimportant" rating.

   Willingness to self-disclose. To assess the willingness
to self-disclose dependent variable, each participant was
asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (-2, -1, +1, and
+2) their willingness to self-disclose to several target
persons about a dating abuse incident. The target persons
were the same target persons used to generate the importance
of disclosure target independent variable: best male friend,
best female friend, mother, father, brother, sister, male
coworker, female coworker, boss, religious leader (priest,
rabbi, etc.), professional counselor (therapist,
psychologist, etc.), male stranger, female stranger, new
female acquaintance, and new male acquaintance. The incident
to which the research participants were to respond was a
hypothetical dating aggression scenario which stated:

   You [the research participant] and your dating partner
   are alone at their house. During an evening of
   watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the
   situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of
   anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger
   peeks when they repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to
   hurt your feelings. Finding the situation too big to
   resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your
   dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge,
   no one witnessed this incident except for you and your
   dating partner.

After reading the scenario, research participants were asked
to respond to the following statement: "Please use the

following scale to rate the extent to which you would be likely to share this incident with the following people (-2, -1, +1, and +2)." The negative ratings represent one's unlikeliness to self-disclose to the particular target, with -2 being strongly unlikely to self-disclose. The opposite is true of the positive ratings, with +2 being strongly likely to self-disclose to that particular target person. If participants did not have the particular target person (e.g., the father was deceased), they could select E ("doesn't apply"). In this way, research participants were able to identify their willingness to self-disclose to each of the fifteen disclosure target persons for the hypothetical dating aggression scenario.

Each research participant received two different hypothetical dating aggression scenarios (verbal and physical dating aggression) for which they provided ratings. The scenario provided in the previous paragraph was the verbal aggression scenario ("repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to hurt your feelings"). The physical aggression scenario and subsequent ratings followed the same method as the verbal aggression scenario except that the underlined section was replaced by "push you and slap you in an attempt to hurt you." Both levels of dating aggression (verbal and physical) were placed in the questionnaire in order to gather information for future research. The dating aggression variable was not used in this study's statistical analysis after preliminary results found it to have a limited effect on self-disclosure. For this study's statistical analysis,

the verbal and physical aggression ratings for the willingness to self-disclose dependent variable were averaged in order to create a single score.

Helpfulness of self-disclosure. To assess the helpfulness of self-disclosure dependent variable, each participant was asked to rate on a 4-point Likert scale (-2, -1, +1, and +2) the perceived helpfulness from self-disclosing to several target persons about a dating aggression incident. The target persons were the same as the target persons used in the importance of disclosure target independent variable [best male friend, best female friend, mother, father, brother, sister, male coworker, female coworker, boss, religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.), professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.), male stranger, female stranger, new female acquaintance, and new male acquaintance]. The incident to which the research participants were to respond was a hypothetical dating aggression scenario which stated:

> You [the research participant] and your dating partner are alone at their house. During an evening of watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger peeks when they repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to hurt your feelings. Finding the situation too big to resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge, no one witnessed this incident except for you and your

dating partner.

After reading the scenario, research participants were asked to respond to the following statement, "Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which it would be helpful to share this incident with the following people" (-2, -1, +1, and +2). The negative ratings represent an unlikeliness to self-disclose to the particular target, with -2 being strongly unlikely to self-disclose. The opposite is true of the positive ratings, with +2 being strongly likely to self-disclose to that particular target person. If participants did not have the particular target person (e.g., the father was deceased), they could select E ("doesn't apply"). In this way, research participants were able to identify their willingness to self-disclose to each of the fifteen disclosure target persons for the hypothetical dating aggression scenario.

Each research participant received two different hypothetical dating aggression scenarios (each describing a situation in which verbal and physical dating aggression occurred) for which they provided ratings. The scenario provided in the previous paragraph was the verbal aggression scenario ("repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to hurt your feelings"). The physical aggression scenario and subsequent ratings were the same as the verbal aggression scenario except that the underlined section was replaced by "push you and slap you in an attempt to hurt you." Both levels of dating aggression (verbal and physical) were placed in the questionnaire in order to gather information for future

research. The dating aggression variable was not used in this study's statistical analysis after preliminary results found it to have a limited effect on self-disclosure. For this study's statistical analysis, the verbal and physical aggression ratings for the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure dependent variable were averaged in order to create a single score.

RESULTS

For the statistical analysis of willingness to self-disclose and perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure data, a 4X2X2 (Attachment Style X Sex of Research Participant X Importance of Disclosure Target) mixed-design ANOVA was performed on each dependent measure. The between-subjects independent variables were attachment style (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful) and sex of research participants (male or female). The within-subjects independent variable was the level of relationship importance of disclosure target persons (important and unimportant). An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. The Tukey HSD test was used for post hoc comparisons of significant main effects involving attachment style as well on the means associated with significant interactions.

Findings for Willingness to Self-Disclose

In testing Hypothesis 1, the effect of attachment was not significant, $F(3, 202) < 1$, ns. For a comparison of willingness to self-disclose as a function of the attachment styles independent variable, see Table 1.

In testing Hypothesis 2, the effect of sex of research participant was also not statistically significant, $F(1, 202) < 1$, ns. For this sample of research participants, male ($M = -.66$, $SD = 1.10$) and female ($M = -.65$, $SD = 1.20$) participants displayed nearly identical willingness to self-disclose about a hypothetical incident of aggression in a dating relationship.

In testing Hypothesis 3, the effect of relationship

importance of target persons was statistically significant,
$F(1, 198) = 741.27$, $p = .0001$. Research participants were
more willing to disclose to important target persons ($M$ =
.21, $SD$ = .85) as compared to unimportant target persons ($M$ =
-1.54, $SD$ = 52).

An interaction effect of relationship importance of
target persons by sex of research participant on willingness
to self-disclose was also found to be statistically
significant, $F(1, 198) = 4.14$, $p = .04$. A Tukey post hoc test
of the four means found the two important disclosure target
means, male ($M$ = .13, $SD$ = .85) and female ($M$ = .28, $SD$ =
.93) research participants, to be statistically different
from the two unimportant disclosure target means, male ($M$ =
-1.49, $SD$ = .62) and female ($M$ = -1.59, $SD$ = .52), but not
different from each other. (For a presentation of the
importance of target persons by sex of research participant
means, see Table 2.) Apparently, regardless of sex,
participants were significantly more likely to disclose to
significant disclosees as compared to non-significant
disclosees. However, the importance of target persons by sex
of research participant means showed an interaction trend
which reveals female, as compared to male, participants to be
affected somewhat differently by the importance level of
their disclosure targets. Female participants were somewhat
less willing to disclose to the unimportant target persons
compared to males, whereas females were somewhat more willing
to disclose to the important target persons compared to
males. For a complete listing of the willingness to

Table 1

Attachment Means for Willingness and Perceived Helpfulness of Self-Disclosure

|  | Attachment Styles | | | |
| DV | Fearful | Preoccupied | Secure | Dismissing |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Willingness | -0.49 | -0.72 | -0.71 | -0.76 |
| Helpfulness | -0.32 | -0.41 | -0.48 | -0.68 |

Note. The scores ranged from 2 (strongly willing or helpful) to -2 (strongly unwilling or unhelpful).

self-disclose results, see Table 3.

Findings for Perceived Helpfulness of Self-Disclosure

In testing Hypothesis 4, the effect of attachment style of research participant on perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure was statistically significant, $F(3, 202) = 2.71$, $p = .046$. However, a Tukey post hoc test of the four means found no statistically significant differences among the means at an alpha level of .05. The ordering of the attachment style means according to perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure found, relatively speaking, that fearful participants ($M = -.32$, $SD = 1.23$) perceived the most helpfulness from self-disclosure followed by preoccupied ($M = -.41$, $SD = 1.24$), secure ($M = -.48$, $SD = 1.16$), and dismissing ($M = -.68$, $SD = 1.15$). Fearful participants are more willing to self-disclose and perceive the most helpfulness from self-disclosure as compared to the participants of the other attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, and dismissing). For a comparison of the attachment means, see Table 1.

In testing Hypothesis 5, the effect of sex of research participant on perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure was not statistically significant, $F(1, 202) < 1$, ns. For this sample of research participants, male ($M = -.47$, $SD = 1.17$) and female ($M = -.44$, $SD = 1.22$) participants displayed nearly identical perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure to hypothetical aggression in a dating relationship. In this sample, male and female participants did not differ in their ratings of the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure and

Table 2

<u>Interaction Means for Sex of Research Participant by</u>

<u>Importance of Target Persons</u>

|  |  | Dependent Variables | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sex | Importance | Willingness | Helpfulness |
| Female | Unimportant | -1.59 | -1.40 |
| Female | Important | 0.28 | 0.49 |
| Male | Unimportant | -1.49 | -1.32 |
| Male | Important | 0.13 | 0.34 |

<u>Note</u>. The scores ranged from 2 (strongly willing or helpful) to -2 (strongly unwilling or unhelpful).

willingness to self-disclose.

In testing Hypothesis 6, the effect of relationship importance of disclosure target on perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 719.14$, $p = .0001$. Research participants perceived more helpfulness from disclosing to important targets ($M = .41$, $SD = .89$) as compared to unimportant targets ($M = -1.35$, $SD = .70$). Research participants perceived more helpfulness from self-disclosing to important targets, but were also more willing to self-disclose to important targets. For a complete listing of the willingness to self-disclose results, see Table 4.

Table 3

4x2x2 Analysis of Variance for Willingness to Self-Disclose

| Source | df | SS | MS | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between subjects | | | | | |
| Sex (Sx) | 1 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.84 |
| Attachment (At) | 3 | 4.62 | 1.54 | 2.18 | 0.09 |
| Sx x At | 3 | 0.23 | 0.07 | 0.11 | 0.96 |
| error (b) | 202 | 142.68 | 0.71 | | |
| Within subjects | | | | | |
| Importance (Im) | 1 | 318.40 | 318.40 | 741.27 | 0.0001 |
| Im x Sx | 1 | 1.78 | 1.78 | 4.14 | 0.04 |
| Im x At | 3 | 0.57 | 0.19 | 0.44 | 0.72 |
| Im x Sx x At | 3 | 0.54 | 0.18 | 0.42 | 0.74 |
| error (w) | 198 | 85.05 | 0.42 | | |

Table 4

4x2x2 Analysis of Variance for Perceived Helpfulness of Self-Disclosure

| Source | $\underline{df}$ | $\underline{SS}$ | $\underline{MS}$ | $\underline{F}$ | $\underline{p}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between subjects | | | | | |
| Sex (Sx) | 1 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.77 |
| Attachment (At) | 3 | 6.52 | 2.17 | 2.67 | 0.05 |
| Sx x At | 3 | 2.95 | 0.98 | 1.21 | 0.31 |
| error (b) | 202 | 164.58 | 0.81 | | |
| Within subjects | | | | | |
| Importance (Im) | 1 | 327.91 | 327.91 | 719.14 | 0.0001 |
| Im x Sx | 1 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 3.11 | 0.08 |
| Im x At | 3 | 2.07 | 0.69 | 1.51 | 0.21 |
| Im x Sx x At | 3 | 1.82 | 0.61 | 1.33 | 0.27 |
| error (w) | 198 | 90.28 | 0.46 | | |

DISCUSSION

The present study produced many interesting results. Some of the results shed light on the research questions that were posed about adult attachment style, sex of research participant, and relationship importance of disclosure targets and how these variables affect self-disclosure of aggression in dating relationships. This study also illuminated some methodological concerns about the relationship with these variables with self-disclosure and prompted possible solutions to these concerns. The following discussion will be divided accordingly: summary of the hypotheses and results, methodological concerns, and possible implications of results.

Summary of the Hypotheses and Results

There were six hypotheses tested in the present study. The first set of three hypotheses related to the willingness to self-disclose dependent variable. Hypothesis 1 predicted a main effect of attachment style on willingness to self-disclose. The results found no significant effect of attachment style on willingness to self-disclose. Hypothesis 2 predicted a main effect of sex of research participant on willingness to self-disclose. The results found no significant effect of sex of research participant on willingness to self-disclose. Hence male and female research participants did not differ in their willingness to self-disclose. Hypothesis 3 predicted a main effect of relationship importance of disclosure target persons on willingness to self-disclose. Research participants were more

willing to self-disclose to disclosure targets they rated as important as compared to unimportant. Besides the results associated with the main effects, an interaction effect of relationship importance of target persons by sex of research participant was found to be statistically significant. Female participants were more willing to self-disclose to their important target persons and less willing to self-disclose to their unimportant disclosure targets, as compared to the male participants who where not as affected by the importance of the disclosure targets

The second set of three hypotheses related to the perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure dependent variable. Hypothesis 4 predicted a main effect of attachment style on perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure. The results found a significant effect of attachment style on perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure. In addition, a trend was found in which the fearful participants perceived the most helpfulness from self-disclosure, as compared to the secure, preoccupied, and dismissing participants. Hypothesis 5 predicted a main effect of sex of research participant on perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure. The results found no significant effect of sex of research participant on perceived helpfulness of the self-disclosure, but instead found that male and female research participants did not differ in their ratings of the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. Hypothesis 6 predicted a main effect of relationship importance of disclosure target persons on perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. Research

participants  perceived more helpfulness from self-disclosing to targets they rated as important as compared to unimportant.

Methodological Concerns

The completion of this research raises some concerns about the methods used to evaluate the impact of the independent variables in the present study and suggests possible solutions that may enable a more sensitive test of the hypotheses in future research. The first methodological concern relates to the research participants' self-disclosure of aggression in dating relationships. It is possible that the topic of dating aggression is not conducive to finding differences in willingness to self-disclose or in perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. If aggression (verbal or physical) is common in dating relationships, then research participants may not have viewed aggression as something they were willing to disclose because they felt it was not an unusual relationship-linked event. For example, does a person need to disclose to a friend that relationships are frustrating or is this fact simply assumed? The suggestion that dating aggression may be an assumed relationship-linked event might account for the non-significant findings in the present study. Furthermore, an assumed dating aggression effect may have weakened the significant results that were found. For a topic of self-disclosure to produce differences for attachment and sex of research participant, the topic might need to be one that the individual does not want to be associated with and simply admitting one's involvement in the

topic provides relief from the anguish caused by ones's involvement. Is self-disclosure simply a release of guilty feelings? If this is true, the topic of disclosure has to produce guilt. It may be true that aggression is so common in dating relationships that it produces no substantial guilt and so it may not be a useful topic to examine as a function of adult attachment style. On the other hand, dating aggression may be an appropriate topic by which to investigate self-disclosure, but the dating aggression scenarios used in the present study may not have been powerful enough to evoke a strong emotional response. In future research, various disclosure topics might be evaluated in order to better understand what components of a disclosure topic affect self-disclosure. Also, future studies might investigate the specific emotions tied to self-disclosure in order to better understand the emotional nature of self-disclose.

A second methodological concern of the present study was the use of a hypothetical scenario to investigate self-disclosure. It is possible that research participants did not feel emotionally connected with the hypothetical scenario. If self-disclosure is associated with the release of strongly repressed feelings, then a hypothetical scenario might not have evoked the necessary emotional response to truly get at the heart of the self-disclosure cycle. The lack of emotional potential related to the hypothetical scenario might account for the non-significant results found in the present study. One solution to this methodological concern may be the use of

research participants who are experiencing real emotional
pain due to aggression in dating relationships or other
disclosure topics. Given that research participants
experiencing real anguish from dating aggression may be
difficult to find, a second solution might be the use of
video taped dating aggression scenarios as compared to a
written scenario. The use of an audio-visual dating
aggression presentation might produce a stronger emotional
response and therefore assist in acquiring a better
understanding of self-disclosure.

A third methodological concern of the present study is
the use of Bartholomew's (1990) Relationship Questionnaire
(RQ), which is the major tool reported in the literature for
assessing Bartholomew's four group attachment system.
Although the RQ is a short and relatively easy assessment
tool, it can be argued that it is oversimplistic. The four
paragraphs used may not as good as they might be in clearly
differentiating the four theoretical attachment groups. If
the assessment tool used in this experiment is not as valid
as it should be, then all findings related to attachment
style are suspect. The possible inadequacy of the RQ's
attachment categorizing and differentiating capacity may be
the cause for the nonsignificant results in the present
study. The RQ was created when the Bartholomew model was just
being formulated. After years of Bartholomew's model being
used in studies, more is known about the differentiating
characteristics of the four attachment styles. These
predictable differentiating factors could be used to create a

revised RQ that is more accurate in differentiating the four attachment groups.

Another methodological problem in the present study may be the use of sex of the research participants as an independent variable. The most clear and predictable effect on self-disclosure in the literature has been due to sex differences in self-disclosure. For both of the dependent variables, willingness to disclose and perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure, there was no effect of research participants' sex on self-disclosure. Is it possible that the sex-role stereotypes that influences these past results are beginning to crumble in a population of college educated students? Cunningham (1981) in a longitudinal study, concluded that male college students rate themselves as more open and disclosing than male students who had been studied ten years earlier. It is possible that contemporary male college students rate themselves even more open and disclosing. Furthermore, Reisman (1990) found that males want to be more disclosing. The results of the present study add support for the decreasing differences in disclosure according to sex of research participant. Rather than sex of participant, some studies point to the relative masculinity/femininity of research participants to be a better predictor of differences in self-disclosure. Staffer, Pegalis, and Bazzini (1996) found that "highly masculine men reliably disclose more to female that to male targets, and only when they anticipated the possibility of cultivating a deeper relationship" (p. 495). Maybe in future studies,

instead of examining the impact of sex differences per se, it would be worthwhile to examine the impact of masculinity and femininity on men and women's self-disclosure.

Possible Implications of Results

Regardless of the possible methodological limitations in the present study, there are implications that can be derived from the present results. There was a significant main effect found for attachment style on the perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure. Fearfully attached participants, compared to the other attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, and dismissing), tended to perceive the most helpfulness from self-disclosure. This trend is contrary to the literature which suggested that securely attached individuals would be the most disclosing. It is possible that a part of being securely attached is being autonomous and content with one's own ideas which limits the need for other's help and limits ones perceived need for self-disclosure. Fearful subjects, according to attachment theory, have a lower view of self and might find it difficult to trust an individual enough to self-disclose. However, finding fearfully attached participants, relative to the other attachment groups, to be perceiving the most helpfulness from self-disclosure may suggest that the fearful research participants' negative view of self somehow allows them to perceive more helpfulness from their self-disclosures. Maybe the fearfully attached participants's negative view of self and negative view of others gives them a sense of hopelessness which might foster a strong desire for intimacy and human contact. It is

possible in real self-disclosure settings, as compared to this study's use of a hypothetical self-disclosure, that fearfully attached participants would want to self-disclose and might perceive self-disclosure to be helpful but would not actually self-disclose. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons why fearful participants perceived the most helpfulness from self-disclosure in the present study, but future exploration into the differences between the perceived benefits of self-disclosure for the attachment groups and actually being able to self-disclose could help understand this fearful attachment trend.

Another important finding in the present study is the significant effect of importance of the disclosure targets on self-disclosure. Regardless of the dependent variable (willingness to disclose or perceived helpfulness of disclosure), research participants were more willing to disclose and perceived greater helpfulness from individuals they considered to be close or significant to them. Although there have been few studies to use significance of disclosee targets as an independent variable, Marks et al. (1992) found that HIV seropositive individuals were more willing to disclose their HIV infection to significant others (parents, friends, and lovers) as compared to nonsignificant others (employers, landlords, and religious leaders). The effects of importance of disclosure targets has a powerful and predictable effect and could be of great benefit in understanding the patterns of self-disclosure. In the present research, participants were able to decide for themselves

those targets who they viewed to be "important" or
"unimportant." In this way, importance or closeness of target
persons was more accurately measured by relying on the
research participants' ratings as compared to the researcher
designating targets as important and unimportant for the
participants. Because the importance of disclosure targets
has such a powerful effect on the willingness and perceived
helpfulness of self-disclosure, it seems reasonable that
future research might try to find the characteristics that
individuals use in determining their significant others. If
self-disclosure is associated with mental health and
individuals are more willing and feel more help from
disclosing to significant others, then it is reasonable that
professional mental health workers, parents, and friends,
should try to incorporate characteristics that make them more
significant. Significance, importance and closeness of self-
disclosure targets seems to hold a lot of potential for
future research in self-disclosure.

Another interesting finding of the present study was the
significant interaction between sex of research participant
and relationship importance of disclosure target. This
finding is particularly interesting in light of the minimal
main effect male and female research participants displayed
on both willingness to self-disclose or perceived helpfulness
of self-disclose. The significant interaction between sex of
research participant and relationship importance of
disclosure target found female, compared to male, research
participants to be affected differently by the importance

level of their disclosure targets. Female, compared to male, participants were more willing to self-disclose to their important target persons and less willing to self-disclose to their unimportant disclosure targets. These findings suggest counseling psychologist may expect females to require a longer period to bond in order to self-disclose, but that once disclose occurs, females may feel more relief from the disclosure. Men, on the other hand, may be quicker to self-disclose, but their self-disclosure may not mean as much to them.

Another implication relates to the use of perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure as a dependent variable. This variable was not well represented in the literature, but has shown great promise in the results of the present study. As the results of the significant interaction between sex of research participant and relationship importance of disclosure target suggest, there is a difference in the quantity and the quality of self-disclosure. In counseling psychology, a main goal is to get at the heart of the emotional concerns of the patient. It is important for the patient to be willing to provide information about their emotional difficulties, but it is equally important for the patient to be connected with the emotions expressed in order to properly work through their troubles. The helpfulness of self-disclosure dependent variable begins to get at the quality issue of self-disclosure. To better understand self-disclosure, future research should keep the balance of the quantity and quality of self-disclosure in mind. Other

quality of self-disclosure variables that could be examined in future research might include perceived emotional connectedness to self-disclosure, perceived emotional relief from self-disclosure, or perceived difficulty of self-disclosure.

In summary, the present study has added to the understanding of the impact of adult attachment, sex of research participant, and the importance of disclosure targets on the willingness and perceived helpfulness self-disclosure to aggression in dating relationships. The results of this study support adult attachment as a useful tool in understand individual disclosure patterns and encourage the discovery of other attachment disclosure trends. The research also creates some doubt that sex (male and female) is an effective differentiating concept when related to quantity of self-disclosure because of a possible increase in male self-disclosure, but encourages the exploration of further sex differences in the quality of self-disclosure. This study supports the continued use of importance or significance self-disclosure target persons as a research variable because of its powerful effect on willingness and perceived helpfulness of disclosure and reminds professional mental health workers, parents, and friends that a close rapport between individuals definitely assists good mental health. The present findings also clarify some differences between willingness of self-disclosure and perceived helpfulness of self-disclosure as separate concepts and suggests a balance between the ideas of quality and quantity of self-disclosure.

Self-disclosure could be one of the most important tools in maintaining good mental health and hopefully this study has added to the understanding of this valuable dynamic.

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APPENDIX

WHAT IS THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT?
This questionnaire deals with different types of abuse in dating relationships. The questionnaire is also interested in people's abilities to share the knowledge of these abusive relationships with "important others." The conducting researchers of this questionnaire realize that this may be an emotional topic for some. In the case that answering this questionnaire triggers painful emotions, we will provide information by which counseling assistance can be provided. If you have any questions or problems with this questionnaire, please contact one of the following individuals:

    Michael A. Keefer ....(Student contact)....XXX-XXXX
    Dr. Derlega..........(Faculty contact)....XXX-XXXX

CONTENTS OF THIS PACKET:
- 1 Scantron form, used to record your responses (carefully darken the whole oval)
- 1 "General Questions" and "A Little About You" (# 1 - 4 )
- 1 "How Close Do You Feel To..."................(# 5 - 19)
- 1 "Sharing" Questions V with "How Helpful" V.. (# 20 - 49)
- 1 "Sharing" Questions P with "How Helpful" P.. (# 50 - 79)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:
This questionnaire is pretty straightforward. Answer the questions to the best of your ability. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or choose to not finish, don't worry, please feel free to stop if you like. THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY.

Please make sure to keep your questions and your answer sheet (Scantron) in the manila envelope that it came in. Furthermore, please do not write your name or other identifying marks on anything that you turn in. We want to keep all answers that you provide anonymous. In this way, you can feel free to answer as openly as you like.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE:
- double check that you have answered all the questions (that are necessary).
- make sure that you have one dark, fully shaded Scantron mark per question.
- RETURN THE FULL, COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PEER ADVISOR or DISTRIBUTING TEACHER.
- GET YOUR EXTRA CREDIT FORM. THANKS A LOT!!!

General Questions

**1.** What is your sex?    (A) Male    (B) Female

**2.** What is your age?    (A) 18-20  (B) 21-23  (C) 24-26

(D) 27-29  (E) 30 and above

**3.** What is your race?    (A) White    (B) Black    (C) Asian

(D) Middle Eastern   (E) Other

A Little About You

**4.**   Which of the following four statements best describes you.

A.    It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

B.    I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

C.    I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

D.    I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

"How Close Do You Feel To ..."

Below are listed a number of different types of people. Some of these people you may feel are close to you (a significant other), while others may be less close or significant to you.

Please use the following scale to rate the degree to which you agree that the following people are important or emotionally significant to you.

| strongly disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | strongly agree | (doesn't apply) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | ex. "I don't have a boss." |
| -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | |
| **A.** | **B.** | **C.** | **D.** | **E.** |

5.  Best male friend
6.  Best female friend
7.  Mother
8.  Father
9.  Brother
10. Sister
11. Male coworker
12. Female coworker
13. Boss
14. Religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.)
15. Professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.)
16. Male stranger
17. Female stranger
18. New female acquaintance
19. New male acquaintance

"Sharing" Questions 1 V.

Please read the following hypothetical scenario:

You and your dating partner are alone at their house. During an evening of watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger peeks when they repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to hurt your feelings. Finding the situation too big to resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge, no one witnessed this incident except for you and your dating partner.

Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which you would be likely to share this incident with the following people.

| strongly unlikely | slightly unlikely | slightly likely | strongly likely | (doesn't apply) ex. "I don't have a boss." |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | |
| A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |

20. Best male friend
21. Best female friend
22. Mother
23. Father
24. Brother
25. Sister
26. Male coworker
27. Female coworker
28. Boss
29. Religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.)
30. Professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.)
31. Male stranger
32. Female stranger
33. New female acquaintance
34. New male acquaintance

"How Helpful ?" Questions 1 V.

In response to the same scenario:

You and your dating partner are alone at their house. During an evening of watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger peeks when they repeatedly cuss at you in an attempt to hurt your feelings. Finding the situation too big to resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge, no one witnessed this incident except for you and your dating partner.

Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which it would be helpful to share this incident with the following people.

| strongly unhelpful | slightly unhelpful | slightly helpful | strongly helpful | (doesn't apply) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | ex. "I don't have a boss." |
| A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |

35. Best male friend
36. Best female friend
37. Mother
38. Father
39. Brother
40. Sister
41. Male coworker
42. Female coworker
43. Boss
44. Religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.)
45. Professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.)
46. Male stranger
47. Female stranger
48. New female acquaintance
49. New male acquaintance

"Sharing" Questions 1 P.

Please read the following hypothetical scenario:

You and your dating partner are alone at their house. During an evening of watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger peeks when they push you and slap you in an attempt to hurt you. Finding the situation too big to resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge, no one witnessed this incident except for you and your dating partner.

Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which you would be likely to share this incident with the following people.

| strongly unlikely | slightly unlikely | slightly likely | strongly likely | (doesn't apply) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | ex. "I don't have a boss." |
| A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |

50.  Best male friend
51.  Best female friend
52.  Mother
53.  Father
54.  Brother
55.  Sister
56.  Male coworker
57.  Female coworker
58.  Boss
59.  Religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.)
60.  Professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.)
61.  Male stranger
62.  Female stranger
63.  New female acquaintance
64.  New male acquaintance

"How Helpful ?" Questions 1 P.

In response to the same scenario:

You and your dating partner are alone at their house. During an evening of watching television, a disagreement begins. Although the situation seemed to be minor at first, the intensity of anger in your partner steadily increases. Their anger peeks when they push you and slap you in an attempt to hurt you. Finding the situation too big to resolve, at that moment, you leave the house with your dating partner sitting on the couch. To your knowledge, no one witnessed this incident except for you and your dating partner.

Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which it would be helpful to share this incident with the following people.

| strongly unhelpful | slightly unhelpful | slightly helpful | strongly helpful | (doesn't apply) ex. "I don't have a boss." |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | |
| A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |

65.  Best male friend
66.  Best female friend
67.  Mother
68.  Father
69.  Brother
70.  Sister
71.  Male coworker
72.  Female coworker
73.  Boss
74.  Religious leader (priest, rabbi, etc.)
75.  Professional counselor (therapist, psychologist, etc.)
76.  Male stranger
77.  Female stranger
78.  New female acquaintance
79.  New male acquaintance

VITA

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Michael received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology, with a minor in Anthropology, from Old Dominion University in May of 1992. He continued his education to receive his Master's degree in Applied Psychology from Old Dominion University in August of 1998. Michael is looking forward to acquiring his Doctorate in either Developmental or Clinical Psychology.

Michael has been working at the Pines Residential Treatment Facility from August of 1992 to the present (six years). He has worked primarily with adolescent sex offenders in a direct care capacity, has also been involved in managing his coworkers, and has become an important member of the residents' treatment team. Michael cares about the children he works with and hopes that his Master's degree will assist his therapeutic work with these residents.